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Postcolonial Politics in Kenya

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Introduction

Politics in developing countries are influenced by their precolonial heritage, (sic) colonial and postcolonial experiences (James Chiriyankandath, quoted in Burnell & Randall 2008:38).

There are three important pillars in the debate on postcolonial politics in Kenya: the precolonial pillar (also known as the traditional pillar), the colonial pillar, and the postcolonial pillar. This chapter examines the three pillars within the framework of contending discourses on postcolonialism.

Proponents of the modernization theory (a highly influential intellectual discourse in colonial history) argue that developing countries can only achieve effective development by more or less following the developmental processes, policies and strategies that the developed Western countries went through. Exponents like Rostow (1960) and Organsky (1965) have propounded the stages of development supposedly applicable to every society, further arguing that 'development' and 'underdevelopment' a reproducts of internal conditions that differ between economies.

Two distinct engines of postcolonialism emanate from the modernization approach. The first is the view of the colonial state as a central agent tasked to modernize the 'primitive' or underdeveloped societies. This view subsumes an image of power and culture where the colonizing power perceives the colonized as infantile and inferior in culture. The second is the perspective that development requires the developed countries to facilitate and enable the developing countries to develop through provision of foreign aid. Consequently, the developing countries are required to learn from the progress, challenges and mistakes of the developed countries. Colonialists extensively used the first viewpoint to subdue and exploit Africa while the second theory is still used by the ex-colonial and imperial powers to continue their subjugation and exploitation of Africa.

The justification and legitimization of the colonial system in Africa was achieved through the 'civilizing mission' thesis, which presupposed a temporary period of political dependence on the 'civilized societies' by the 'uncivilized world'. This continues until the 'uncivilized societies' have advanced to a point where they are capable of sustaining liberal institutions and self-governance. Self-governance is, however, viewed by dependency theorists as a theoretical condition of independence and sovereignty which in reality is a condition of economic and political dependence on foreign imperial powers (Prebisch 1950; Nkrumah 1965).

Dependency theorists further argue that it is through the de-linking of Western economies from Third World economies that the latter will develop. Proponents of the dependency theory argue that the linkage as constituted by the former colonial powers is that of exploitation and is only there to serve the interests of the imperial powers. They further argue that it is possible for Africa to progress if its local industries are developed and are made safe from the exploitation of the former colonial powers (Prebisch 1950; Nkrumah 1965; Rodney 1972). This chapter, therefore, has two objectives: (1) to examine the colonial political structure and its politics of exclusion; and (2) toanalyse the postcolonial structure and its neocolonial influence in Kenya. It is argued in this chapter that the debate on neo-colonialism in Kenya can be better understood from the perspective of two contending theoretical paradigms, namely, modernization and dependency. The two paradigms correspond to alternate visions and activities of two dominant players in Kenya's postcolonial politics – on the one hand are the neoliberal pragmatists led by Kenya's founding President Jomo Kenyatta who embraced a pro-Western vision of modernization, and on the other hand are the more critical Kenyans, radical intellectuals and the bulk of the Mau Mau liberation war veterans who held a critical view of the modernization philosophy of the postcolonial state leaders. In the early years of independence, the critique of the Kenya opposition forces seemed largely organized from the ideological standpoint of the dependency paradigm.

Precolonial Kenya

Indigenous African communities who migrated from various parts of the continent were the first to settle in Kenya. They were the Cushitic, Nilotic and Bantu groups. They were distinct groups with local knowledge of how to solve problems within their environment. They, for example, used indigenous knowledge to read and forecast the weather. They were also distinct with regard to how they pursued their livelihood in terms of being either fishermen, farmers, pastoralists or ironmen, and so on. Furthermore, these indigenous African communities exhibited what we call an African culture connoting a distinction of unity, communalism and shared purpose be it in construction, hunting among many other responsibilities. To this end, development and poverty-reduction strategies for the pre-colonial African communities can be considered to be informed and woven into the

African values like 'Ubuntu' in the case of South Africa, 'Ujamaa' in the case of Tanzania and 'Harambee' in the case of Kenya, among others (Matunhu 2011).

Colonial Politics in Kenya

David Livingstone, a Scottish missionary, arrived in Africa declaring his mission to be that of the three Cs: Civilization, Commerce and Christianity. These processes have subsequently initiated a major debate on whether Livingstone was an imperialist himself or someone who fought to end the slave trade in Africa and who concurrently ended up opening Africa for Civilization, Commerce and Christianity. Livingstone might not have been an imperialist but his framework of thinking was certainly borrowed and used by imperialists to pursue their agenda in Africa. Throughout the colonial period in Kenya, commerce was exclusively promoted for the benefit of a few white colonialists. Once the British declared Kenya a protectorate, they had to have their authority accepted by Kenyans, they had to establish a firm and efficient administrative system and they had to embark on the exploitation of the natural, human and economic resources. The aim of the British in Kenya was to enrich themselves and make profits for their mother country in their new-found colony. In accomplishing their difficult mission in Kenya, they needed a few reliable collaborative Africans who were willing to join in the exploitation.

The very reason the British came to Kenya was not, in fact, to settle in Kenya, but in order to reach the fabulous kingdom of Buganda, whose wealth was legendary (Ochieng 1985). To do this they planned to build a railway from Mombasa to Kampala, which obviously required crossing Kenya. The so-called 'lunatic' railway took five and a half years to build and cost the British taxpayers £5,500,000 by 1901 (ibid:102). The British set up the Imperial British East Africa Company that formed the core of their administration in Kenya. Indeed the first colonial provincial administration officers were employees of this company. At the beginning, their roles as provincial administrators were primarily to recruit and provide local labour for the construction of the railway (Ochieng 1985). Once the railway was completed in 1901 and traders and settlers moved into the interior of the country, the colonial administration's role expanded to that of providing security and many other administrative services to the settlers.

The governor at the time of the completion of the Mombasa-Kisumu railway, Sir Charles Eliot, perceived Kenya in his mind as an agricultural potential and called the Kenya highlands 'white man's country'. Sir Charles Eliot argued that the protectorate had to finance its own administration and that new sources of revenue had to be tapped into to generate revenue to meet the running costs of the railway. He recommended the introduction of a hut tax and the colonization of the rich Kenya highlands by the Europeans. It was also argued at the time that since the railway needed customers, Europeans should be allowed to settle in the highlands to encourage the Africans to develop their resources to the point of

making the railway viable (Ochieng 1985). Although Sir Eliot was openly contemptuous of Africans according to Ochieng (1985), it is important to note that he still believed in his civilization mission, targeting individuals rather than a community. Ochieng (1985: 104) quotes Sir Eliot's own words below:

> There can be no doubt that the Maasai and many other tribes must go under. It is a prospect that I view with equanimity and clear conscience. I wish to protect individual Maasais… but I have no desire to protect Maasaidom. It is a beastly, bloody system, founded on raiding and immorality, disastrous to both the Maasai and their neighbours.

Though the colonialist had some interest in educating and converting the 'primitive' individuals in the 'tribes' they had no interest whatsoever in understanding the African culture and indeed they carried out their civilization mission with an air of superiority over the cultures of the African 'tribes'. Read Sir Eliot's words as quoted by Ochieng (1985:105):

> The idea that the interests of an assortment of barbaric, idea-less and untutored tribesmen clothed in sheep's fat, caster oil or rancid butter-men who smelt out witches, drank blood warm from the throats of living cattle and believed that rainfall depended on the arrangement of a goat's intestine-should be exalted above those of the educated Europeans would have seemed to them fantastic.

According to Chiriyankandath (quoted in Burnell & Randall 2008:44), the colonial state was 'extractive, autocratic and coercive'. It used its thin administration, minority white population and local collaborators to maintain its authority. Its ultimate goal was to civilize the heathens and establish a new loyal white dominion which was secure and founded on the principles of the British tradition and Western civilization. Therefore, eventually, the presence of Africans in their country was ignored or forgotten. The new white settlements were henceforth created in a vacuum and a completely new society was established as if none had existed before. Kenya's administration was divided into a small number of provinces, districts, divisions and locations. All the provinces, districts and divisions were put under the jurisdiction of European officers and locations became the responsibility of African chiefs.

Although the institution of chief was originally African, it became a creation by colonial powers to serve as agents of local administration (Mamdani 1996). Africans were restricted in their rural areas or reserves under the jurisdiction of these chiefs. Above them was a legislative assembly composed of five officials: three of these were nominated European settler members (Ochieng 1985). There were so many settler groups by 1911 that such groups were federated into a number of associations. The policies of these associations were directed towards: keeping the highlands reserved for whites; organizing African labour for the benefit of settlers; developing an acceptable system of land tenure; and creating a legislative council of elected Europeans. The laws on which the authority of chiefs rested

were enacted in 1902 and 1912 to maintain public order (and the chiefs could be fined if there was disturbance in their areas); they were to keep the roads clear; and they could hear petty cases (Ochieng 1985).

In 1912, chiefs were allowed to employ persons to help them maintain order and assist them in tax collection. It was also the responsibility of a chief to call out any number of able-bodied persons to labour without pay on public works. In a nutshell, chiefs in Kenya, according to Ochieng (1985:106) were created to collect hut and poll taxes – an imposition of the colonial powers on the Kenyan people and to keep law and order, and also to provide cheap labour for the public and the settlers' (an exclusive white group in Kenya) requirements.

The colonial regime operated a 'policy of neglect' when it came to development, according to Lord Lugard (1965:617). 'European brains, capital, and energy have not been, and never will be, expended in developing the resources of Africa from motives of pure philanthropy'. This shows clearly that the white administration was only there for the interests of the white minority.

After the Second World War, Britain emerged with a shattered economy, its policies after 1945 laid emphasis on speeding up economic recovery, and in this the colonies were considered an important factor. One clear way of speeding up economic recovery was to direct government resources into colonial primary and industrial production; for example, coffee was produced in large-scale farms. The increase in colonial production was understood as a measure to meet immediate problems and a long-term contribution to European reconstruction.

Postcolonial Politics in Kenya

The struggle for Kenya's independence emanated from the oppressive and exclusive structures put in place by the colonial administration. Many Africans were disgruntled with the exclusive colonial administration that took away their land and gave it to white settlers, Africans were not happy about the creation of reserves and the restrictions that came with these creations, they were not happy with the imposition of hut and poll tax; and most of all Africans were not happy with the fact that the 'chiefs' rounded them up to provide cheap labour in the settler farms. Empowered with the Western education and with their understanding of the true meaning of Livingstone's 'three Cs:' Civilization, Christianity and Commerce (in reality a tool used by colonialist to access Africa's riches), and with the awareness created by their experiences in World War II, where Africans served under the whites in the King's African Rifles, and where they overcame their misperception of the invincibility of whites, Africans sought independence (Odinga 1967; Ochieng 1985; Mamdani 1996).

After the Second World War, a political conflict arose between the white settlers, the British colonial office and the African nationalists. During the Second World War, Britain had interpreted its duty in Kenya as that of protecting the interests of the Africans because it was within its own interest to do so as Africans

had been recruited to fight for the British against the Germans in the King's African Rifles. This view was incorrect because in reality, the British only changed tactic to continue pursuing their interests in Africa and many nationalists understood this very well. By the end of the Second World War India was clamouring for self-government and the peaceful struggle waged by Mahatma Gandhi was not wasted on Africa. After winning their battle against the colonialists, the Indians showed the way for many countries in Africa, and independence movements sprang up all over Africa.

It suffices to mention here that while the change of tactic in Africa was taking place, in the mentality of the British Colonial Office, white settlers still considered themselves to be the 'master-race'; they openly resented any interference with their social and political exclusiveness and continued to call for Kenya to be self-governed by the British white settlers. African nationalism also picked up pace at the same time with Francis Khamisi, the Kenya African Union (KAU) Secretary General declaring Kenya 'a black man's country'.

Britain eventually granted Kenya independence on the basis of a Westminster model constitution after lengthy consultations at Lancaster House, in London. In making this decision, Britain considered giving Kenya independence as an African state rather than what the settlers contemplated as a multi-racial state. A proper involvement of Africans in the administration was understood as crucial for peace to prevail in Kenya. A creation of an African bourgeoisie tied to the prevailing system of ownership of landed property was also considered. In order to protect the interests of the minority, the 1962 Lancaster House Conference agreed on a constitution with a strong central government with a federal provision for regional governments. Kenya eventually attained its self governance on 1 June 1963 with Kenyatta as Prime Minister and on 12 December 1963 Kenya became an independent African state.

However, despite this independence, it was later to be learnt by a few enlightened Kenyans that it was only an 'independence of the flag' as most of the colonial structures remained behind to be perpetuated by the new African elitist group on behalf of the colonial powers. This resilience of colonial influence is what Lugard referred to as 'indirect rule' (Lugard 1965).

To begin with, Kenya's first president Jomo Kenyatta began by demonstrating clearly his ability to continue with the colonialist values by assuring the white settlers in Nakuru not to fear because their farms would not be touched. Kenyatta's arguments are clearly captured by Wrong (2009) as follows: 'There is no society of angels, black, brown or white, if I have done a mistake to you; it is for you to forgive me. If you have done a mistake to me, it is for me to forgive you'.

Kenyatta stood for continuity and not change. A Kikuyu who had trained in London for 15 years, he understood both British and Kenyan (or at least Kikuyu) societies. He had long during the Lancaster House conferences entertained the

idea of the Kikuyu being settled in the Rift Valley. Kenyatta's political philosophy before independence had not changed according to Ochieng (1985:146) below:

> What we do demand in Kenya is a fundamental change in the present political, economic and social relationship between Europeans and Africans. Africans are not hostile to Western civilization; as such they would gladly learn its techniques and share in the intellectual and material benefits which it has the power to give.

Kenyatta at the same time called upon Kenyans to work together in nation-building. He argued that there was no 'room for those who wait for things to be given for nothing', and that 'there was no place for leaders who hope to build the nation on slogans' (Ochieng 1985). A policy of post-colonial multi-racial society (this was actually the perspective that was initially propounded by the white minority who called for white governance of Kenya) was pursued by Kenyatta to promote relations between races, at least as far as his interests and those of his close associates were concerned. Furthermore, within this Kenyatta regime's framework, a multi-racial approach to political, economic, educational and land problems was also encouraged (Ochieng 1985). The Kenyan society was elitist and comprised of white professionals such as doctors, lawyers, British farmers, architects as well as insurance agents. The Kenyatta government inherited and embraced the entire colonial economic system. By borrowing money from Kikuyu banks and Kikuyu businessmen, using Kikuyu lawyers, privileged Kikuyus rushed to buy land from the departing whites under a subsidized scheme. They settled in the white highlands in the Rift Valley in large numbers in complete disregard of the previously dispossessed Maasai and Kalenjin ethnic groups who thought they had been only temporarily displaced by the whites. The principle of 'willing buyer and willing seller' was so unfair to these poorer ethnic groups. This was the beginning of the Rift Valley land problems that Kenya is facing today. The Kikuyu who settled in the Rift Valley knew that what they were doing was unfair but their minds were clouded by the same superiority complex that had misled the white settlers in believing that 'Kenya was a white man's land'. The Kikuyu elite believe that they deserve the land in the Rift Valley because they had bought it, in the same way that the white settlers believed that they deserved this land in Kenya because they had bought it too. The Kikuyu elite also believe that they suffered, even though it is known that some of them were a privileged, collaborating home guard unit. They argue that it is their community that rose up against the oppression of white settlers. In fact, those Kikuyu who did, under the Mau Mau movement, were not from the home guard unit. They believed that because they were closest to the missionaries, they were better educated and politically aware and therefore were superior to other tribes in Kenya. They had led the way and of course in the process believed they should eventually lead Kenya, so they felt that they had the right to dominate politically, economically and socially. In short, Kenyatta's government struck the right note with the colonialist from the beginning. The

former home guards who had embraced the white man's ways formed part of Kenyatta's kitchen cabinet. This act clearly planted the seeds of the first Kenyan elitist group that had pro-Western values and that abandoned the struggle that bound them together with the rest of the oppressed Kenyans, as Fanon (1965) correctly observed:

> The European elite undertook to manufacture a native elite. They picked out promising adolescents; they branded them, as with a red-hot iron, with the principles of western culture; they stuffed their mouths full of high-sounding phrases, grand glutinous words that stuck to the teeth. After a short stay in the mother's country they were sent home, white-washed. These walking lies had nothing left to say to their brothers; they only echoed.

This African elitist group learnt and inherited the colonial government structures and education and continued to subjugate fellow Africans (Odinga 1967; Mamdani 1996). This elitist core of the periphery has continued its relationship with the former colonial powers through protection of the former colonial powers' continued presence and investments in the country. This link has been reciprocated by the colonial powers' institutions like the World Bank, IMF, and the EU in maintaining the flow of aid to these elitist regimes. Foreign aid, therefore, for a long time after independence represented an important source of finance in Kenya where it supplanted low savings, narrow export earnings and thin tax bases, especially during the Cold War era (Wrong 2009). Subsequent governments after Kenyatta's government, namely the Moi and Kibaki governments, have maintained the same kind of politics of exclusion that benefit themselves and trusted associates, mainly a selection of ethnic associates. This is a manifestation of the crises of postcoloniality that afflicts Kenya.

When Moi took over power from Kenyatta he declared his philosophy of following in the 'footsteps' of Kenyatta. He built his power around smaller ethnic groups and his Kalenjin ethnic group believed it was their turn to exploit the opportunities that come with political power. The Kikuyu elite continued to dominate in non-political spheres such as the transport business, hotel, real estate and so on. The Kikuyu elite blamed Moi for the economic problems in the coffee industry, tea factories and Kenya cooperative creameries in central province (Wrong 2009). They also blamed Moi's regime for the land clashes in the Rift Valley that mainly targeted Kikuyu as 'foreigners' in the region. Moi's Kalenjin ethnic group continued to prosper in education and in getting lucrative jobs in government; an airport and bullet factory were constructed in Moi's region. It is within this framework of ethnicity, greed and corruption that Kibaki's regime was ushered in during 2002. The Kikuyu elites once again celebrated Kibaki's regime as the Kikuyu elite's 'turn to eat' again, as Kibaki is from the Kikuyu ethnic group (Wrong 2009).

A Comparative Analysis of Precolonial, Colonial and Postcolonial Regimes in Kenya

The three regimes since the formation of the state of Kenya, namely, the colonial and postcolonial regimes led by Kenyatta Moi and Kibaki effectively used the colonial, political and economic exclusive strategies evident in the practices of postcoloniality to govern Kenya. At the core of the inherited colonial structure is the provincial administrative structure. Kibaki's regime has equally and effectively used these strategies to maintain himself in power to the extent that there has developed a Kenyan political culture of subliminal ethnicity and entrenched corruption. Michela Wrong (2009) ably captured this Kenya political culture in her book 'It's our turn to eat'. The provincial administration has been used as agents of these ethnic and corruption policies at the grassroots level to keep law and order among dissenting ethnic groups in the name of nation building. The colonial regime practiced politics of exclusion by favouring whites; the subsequent African regimes continue with the practice of exclusion by favouring their close ethnic associates. All the post-colonial regimes in Kenya have maintained strong ties with Britain, the US, the World Bank, IMF and EU especially on matters of aid, trade and security. Indeed the envoys or representatives of these countries and organizations have demonstrated enormous arrogance in reprimanding Kenyan government officials when the government moves away from what they consider as good democratic practices, their pet project in Africa after the collapse of the Cold War. In Kenya, foreign envoys from these powerful states and institutions behave like colonial governors (refer to Sir Eliot's attitude in the early 1900s, for example).

By relying heavily on the hierarchical administrative structure, the colonial administration's aim in Kenya was to maintain order in its exclusive system that would otherwise have disintegrated because it had no legitimate authority from the Kenyan people. It derived its legitimacy from the colonial office; therefore, it had to rely on the use of force to maintain order. The neo-colonial system has continued with these exclusive politics that favours the interests of its kleptocratic class, which has found it favourable to continue with the colonial administrative hierarchical structure to maintain law and order.

It is therefore in order to argue that Kenya's political institutions bear a heavy resemblance to British institutions. Kenya's independence constitution was drawn up at Lancaster House in Britain. The Kenyan judiciary, legislature and executive under the last constitution were in effect a carbon copy of the British institutions. Needless to argue that the current constitution has been well received and celebrated, even though its structures bear a semblance to the American constitution. The question is whether the Kenyan political culture is in tune with the new constitution? It is interesting to note how the Kenyan judiciary still wears wigs, a relic of British colonialism; the Kenya parliament would seem to value Western

suits as the only formal dressing allowed in parliament in complete disregard of African attire; not to mention the executives' heavy expenditures on fuel-guzzling vehicles, all after the borrowed Western protocol of projecting one's status through outward signs of wealth. This is again a manifestation of the crisis of postcoloniality in Kenya. It is therefore not surprising to hear Kenyan politicians proudly requesting the West for technical assistance on all matters, from the drafting of legal documents to referral of criminal cases to either the UK's Scotland Yard or the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The Kenyan leadership and Kenyans themselves, for that matter, have been convinced that anything from the former colonial masters is better than local ideas, further giving evidence to the postcolonial mindset. It is with this in mind that Kenyans have a misplaced belief in the capabilities of the International Criminal Court (ICC) process. The post-independence Africa that in Fanon's (1965:252) thinking does not imitate Europe remains an ideal only with the post-independence political culture in Kenya. Phillip Mitchell, a British governor in Kenya, observed in 1945 that between the choice of remaining a savage or adapting to European civilization, culture, religion and language, the African was quickly adapting to the latter (quoted in Burnell & Randall 2008).

The post-colonial African states therefore have found themselves operating within the Westphalian state system in order to remain in the international system constituted by sovereign states. However, adhering to the international principles has been problematic as the political culture of African countries, in particular Kenya, is different in terms of evolution and implementation. The political culture of any society refers to the political system as internalized in the (cognition) knowledge about the political system, (affective) feelings about the roles and the incumbents in these roles, and (evaluative) the choice through application of standards or values to cognitive or affective components (Almond *et al.* 2004). Liberal ideals presuppose governments to be instituted among men and women deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. The political culture in Kenya is a mixture of the parochial-subject-participant with a small percentage of a participating kleptocratic class. A higher percentage of the parochial-subject class in Kenya follow the neo-colonial system determined by the few in collaboration with their former colonial masters.

Immanuel Wallerstein (1974) referred to these relations in his world political system as the relationship between the core of the periphery and the core of the core. In this relationship the core of the periphery continues to serve the interests of the core by being a producer of raw materials and a consumer of the manufactured goods from the core. Kenya faces a major post-colonial crisis within this theoretical framework. Pre-colonial Kenya would be perceived by Westphalian framework and modernization theorists as a stateless society made up of many ethnic groups that were either pastoralists (roaming freely in search of pasture and occasionally raiding neighbouring 'tribes' for livestock) or agriculturalists that occasionally raided other ethnic groups for fertile land. African

Renaissance protagonists would think the contrary. According to African Renaissance, the argument that the British colonialist came to this land and drew boundaries, introduced political and economic systems and created a state called Kenya that was formless is not true. They instead argue that pre-colonial African communities had their own way of dealing with crime, deviance, conflict and so on. They, in reality, argue that the coming of modernity forced Africans to be apathetic about their abilities, knowledge and skills. In the process of modernizing Africa, the Africans lost their identity and development path. In essence, post-colonial Kenya is at a crossroads: does it revert to its traditional 'stateless society' (a modernist's perspective of these pre-colonial societies) or better put pre-colonial or 'traditional pillar'? Should it embrace Livingstone's Civilization, Commerce and Christianity? Should it embrace the Westphalian state system? Should it join Wallerstein's (1974) world system? Or should it de-link from that system and then join whichever system is not exploitative both at the core and periphery, nationally and internationally? Or better still, pursue the African renaissance spirit? The most practical way, it probably seems, is to accept that states operate in a global village in which states should maximize their potential within the rule of law without minimizing other's potential to do likewise.

Conclusion

How to come to terms with the survival of not just institutional forms (administrative, legal, educational, military, religious) and languages (English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch) but the mentality bequeathed in part by the colonial heritage has been a preoccupation of Third World intellectuals (James Chiriyankandath, quoted in Burnell & Randall 2008:37).

This chapter has examined three contending perspectives in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial debate. On the one hand Kenya has a neo-colonial ruling kleptocratic class and on the other hand a post-colonial intellectual mass tracing its inspiration from pre-colonial Kenya. The neo-colonialist hold the instruments of power and the post-colonialists (in this case perceived as critics of neo-colonialists) have the knowledge and awareness of the reality and the fact that the so-called independence of Kenya is artificial and has not been translated into real economic independence and freedoms. It is argued in the chapter that this neocolonialism is deeply entrenched in the cognitions, affective and evaluations of the kleptocratic class in Kenya. Indeed, it is demonstrated in the chapter that this culture is deeply embedded in the political structure and culture of Kenya.

In a nutshell, the debate is between the so-called former home guards (an educated, self-serving, kleptocratic class with a strong neocolonialist slant) and the postcolonial intellectuals (in sympathy or alliance with Mau Mau fighters). The postcolonial intellectuals and Mau Mau fighters believe that their cause to regain land previously taken by white settlers was stolen by the neocolonial home guards who unfairly took the instruments of power to continue perpetuating the interests

of former colonial powers. This boils down to a conflict of class that ultimately emanates from the disparity between owners of the means of production and the proletariat. Kenyatta created a Kikuyu bourgeois class following in the 'footsteps' of the British colonialists. He unfairly used his office to castigate Kenyans for wanting free things while he and his associates grabbed lands that had been forcibly expropriated from the Maasai, Kalenjin and many other communities in Kenya by the white settlers. Kenyatta's arguments captured by Ochieng (1985:149) below, says it all:

> There is no room for those who wait for things to be given for nothing. There is no place for leaders who hope to build a nation on slogans. For many years, I fought and sacrificed my active life so that this country could get rid of the yoke of colonialism and imperialism. Many sons and daughters of our land suffered and shed blood, so that our children might be free. You can therefore understand my personal feelings about the future. How can I tolerate anything that could jeopardize the promise to our children? Let me declare once more that, as Head of government, I shall combat with all my strength anyone that may be tempted to try to undermine our independence. This pledge holds true whether such forces operate inside Kenya or from without.

There is nothing wrong with the concept of 'willing seller' and 'willing buyer' basis but there is something terribly wrong with a willing seller who is selling what was wrongfully acquired. The normal procedure would be to return what is being sold to the rightful owner first (through subsidized sale if that is the mediated position) and allow that rightful owner to sell to whomsoever s/he chooses. Kenyatta started his presidency by being both an 'imperialist' and 'colonialist' over the people of the Rift Valley, and Kenyans for that matter. He abused the same freedoms he promised to protect when he took the instruments of power from the British. Why were the Maasai, Kalenjin and many other Kenyans, especially in the coast region not given the first opportunity to buy the subsidized land in the Rift Valley and others that were previously owned by the white settlers before opening it up to all Kenyans who could afford to do so after 40 years of independence when a number of Kenyans are deemed to be more enlightened and more economically empowered? Kenyatta used the same white settler misperceived grandeur of superiority in disregarding the interests of the Maasai, Kalenjin and other affected Kenyans the same way the white settlers disregarded the interests of the Kenyan ethnic groups. Fired by the ideals that other Kenyan ethnic groups were 'idea-less and untutored', Sir Eliot sought to grab African land as captured by Ochieng (1985:105) below:

> With the passing of Crown Land Ordinance of 1902, Eliot sent his chief of Customs, A. Marsden, to South Africa in 1903 to publicise settlement prospects. In 1901, there were only thirteen settlers, but already by 1904 some 220,000 acres of land had been taken by them. Seizure followed fast. Syndicates, speculators and aristocrats all took their slice.

A white colonialist in essence was replaced by a black colonialist in Kenya, further perpetuating the persistence of a crisis of postcoloniality. Kenyatta himself indeed acknowledged in his speech to the settlers in Nakuru that 'there is no society of angels, black, brown or white' (Ochieng 1985). It is apparent that to observe the rule of law, the independent postcolonial states should be bound by the sort of liberal ideals expressed in the famous American declaration of independence: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of happiness – that to secure these rights Governments are instituted among men deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed'.[1]

Note

1. See Thomas Jefferson's address in the *American Declaration of Independence* in http://www.usconstitution.net/declar.html#Intro, accessed on 5 March 2011.

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