

RE-ALIGNING THE DIS-ARTICULATION CLAIM: HOW DIS-ARTICULATED ARE THE COLONIAL AND THE POST-COLONIAL AFRICAN ECONOMIES

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Abstract

No doubt, the fact that colonialism etched a decisive mark in the economic history of Africa cannot be wished away. However, a balanced understanding of the nature and extent of this impact is necessary. A foggy understanding of the true nature of the colonial economy has retarded the economy of many African countries as they have wasted productive time doing the unproductive - blaming the Europeans for their economic woes. It has been claimed by Claude Ake, a professor of political economy, and indeed by many scholars, that the colonial African economy, was dis-articulated, disoriented and incoherent. The belief that political independence did not guarantee any serious economic change also led to the conclusion that the Post-Colonial African economies inherited that character of dis articulation. This paper examines these claims. Drawing mainly from secondary sources of information and utilizing the descriptive and interpretive methods of analysis, it argues that the dis-articulation claim is only a myth in the colonial economy context once the structure of the colonial economy is properly understood as an appendage of the British metropolitan economy. While conceding that the post-colonial Africa is dis-articulated, the paper rejects the Inherited Dis articulation theory. It is shown to the contrary that the African post-colonial economies are victims of internally caused dis-articulation. It concludes with a charge to contemporary African leaders to borrow leaf from the colonial economy managers who ran an economy that was in articulation with the interest of their people, and restructure the economy to favour the African masses.

Keywords: Dis-articulation, Colonial, Post-colonial, African, Economy

Introduction

Understanding the cause of Africa's underdevelopment has reasonably engaged the attention of African scholars for a long time. Fundamentalists among them have linked it to colonial experience, and so have written a lot to discredit the western economic system. Sometimes, however, they have tended to contradict themselves and thereby have subjected themselves to the ridicules of the European scholars. British economist, Michael Barrat Brown indirectly made jest of African scholars. Having read Basil Davidson's book, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation's State*, claimed that the book had given him a clue into the explanation of Africa's development problem.ⁱ According to him, "African society was [sic] different and apparently immune to economic rationality which is the basic assumption of European political economy."ⁱⁱ In the same vein he quoted another African scholar, Hassan Zaoual, as saying, "The African model exists and is alive but it is not a model of economic rationality."ⁱⁱⁱ To Barrat, this way of reasoning by African scholars is the real explanation for Africa's development problem. It is very hard to see how economic irrationality can result in development in this material world. But this only gives us an insight into the way some African scholars make contestable and contradictory arguments which sometimes are self-defeating and costly for the pride of African scholarship. It is then wise for African scholars to always put their arguments in the right perspective to avoid sounding contradictory and self-defeating; and so that they can avoid playing into the hands of the Eurocentric writers.

Closely related to the cause of Africa's underdevelopment is the question of the true nature of the colonial economy. In the early 80's, Claude Ake, a renowned professor of political economy, came up with the claim that "the colonial economy was characterized by dis-articulation or incoherence.^{iv} He also went ahead to define a dis-articulated economy as one "whose parts or sectors are not complementary."^v He also later described it as one ridden with 'contradictions.'^{vi} Some other scholars have even gone further to say what Ake stopped short of saying – that the colonial economy was not planned.^{vii} Ake also argued that since independence did not necessarily bring economic decolonization (that is, the destruction of colonial structures), the post-colonial economy naturally acquired the dis-articulation features.

The disarticulation claim left some salient questions unanswered. Is it right to limit the geographical scope of the colonial economy to the shores of Africa? In other words, what was the structure of the colonial economy like? Again, was the colonial economy the creation and property of Africans or the colonial government? If it was that of the colonial officers, was it designed and well planned to meet the interests of African or those of the colonial government and their agents? If it was planned to meet colonial interest, how then does it merit to be characterized as dis-articulated?

Logically speaking, if the dis-articulation claim is anything to go by, then one of these two possibilities must be true: The colonialists (and the post-independence African leaders) are either guilty of ineptitude or bad attitude. This means that they made the economies of Africa dis-articulated either by ignorance (unconsciously) or deliberately (consciously). One major implication of the argument in favour of the *plan-lessness* or incoherence of the colonial economy based on ineptitude or ignorance is that it will quickly absolve the colonialists of the blame that they deliberately impoverished Africa. They can well be forgiven for they knew not what they did. But would it be right to regard the colonialists (both official and unofficial) as men who had no specific goals, principles, agenda or intentions in Africa and merely allowed events slip out of their hands? Available historical evidence does not support that. If they were conscious of all their actions, and deliberately made the economies "dis-articulated," then they had a plan behind the seeming incoherence or dis-articulation. In effect the colonial economy was not plan-less viewed from another perspective, it was a well-articulated and organized system designed to enrich the imperial lords. This brings us to an important factor that will influence the course of this paper i.e. the interest factor. The present writer is of the opinion that dis-articulation should be studied in the context of interest. When it is understood that the colonial economy is well planned, but not for the interest of Africans, then the dis-articulation claim in the way Claude makes it, will be seen to require adjustment. It is then relevant to find out the extent to which the dis-articulation claim can be upheld. Also, the real structural (sectoral) components of the colonial economy have to be identified, as it would help to rightly appraise the dis-articulation claim and put it in the right perspective.

Literature Review

A brief review of works on dis-articulation is necessary for a work of this nature and is hereunder embarked upon. Ake was neither the first nor the last to write on the subject of dis-articulation. Amin Samir, in 1996, theoretically laid the foundation for the study of the concept of dis-articulation in relation to the analysis of underdevelopment in poor countries. He was the first to originate the term and to inculcate it into studying the economics of development and underdevelopment especially in the developing countries. Dis-articulation plays a central role in Amin's theory of *peripheral capitalism* and underdevelopment.

According to him underdevelopment results in the periphery when surplus value is extracted from there and accumulated at the 'core' and deployed into sectors unrelated to the sectors from which the surplus values is gotten in the colonies (or at the periphery). According to him, the repatriation of surplus values from the periphery for accumulation and re-mobilization as capital at the core (which is itself a manifest character of dis-articulation) is at the heart of underdevelopment at the peripheral economics.^{viii} Amin thus showed a specific form of dis-articulation in the colonies – i.e. the dis-articulation between capital and other factors of production, and how it leads to underdevelopment.

Also apart from shedding more light on how dis-articulation can lead to underdevelopment than Ake did, Amin's analysis of dis-articulation as can be seen from the analysis above, is not just focused on the African territory, but on relation involving more than one country. This cross-national outlook on dis-articulation will be very helpful for analysis in this paper. Thus dis-articulation can be better understood in the context of relation of resource distribution within a specific geographical location, or between two or more geographical locations. Amin's ground breaking works on dis-articulation have influenced other scholars to write on the subject matter. Evans and Timberlake in 1980 empirically studied the impact of foreign investment on the over expansion of the service sector in relation to the other sectors of the economy.^{ix} The over-expansion of the service sector in relation to the other sectors in a given economy is a special form of dis-articulation i.e extroversion. They discovered that foreign investments have often led to the over-expansion or 'hypertrophy' of the service sector and to the relative neglect of other important sectors. The hypertrophy of the service sector also makes African economics outward looking.

Also based on Amin's analysis, Stokes and Anderson studied the impact of dis-articulation on social welfare.^x It was found out that dis-articulation (especially structural dis-articulation) leads to a situation where the social welfare of the people are neglected even when economic growth is very remarkable. It is a situation where there is lack of correspondence between economic growth and social progress. The dis-articulation between the economic life of people and their social life leads to underdevelopment because real development is people-centred, and is concerned about their general happiness. Also remarkable about the contribution of Stokes and Anderson is that unlike Ake, they believed that dis-articulation can be in degrees. They thus went ahead to attempt the measurement of structural dis-articulation. They defined dis-articulation as the "juxtaposition of economic sectors with radically different levels of development and productivity." They measured it by the summation of the absolute difference between the percentage of distribution in the labour force and the percentage of distribution of national income over seven sectors.

This approach of measurement has been however questioned and discredited by Jien Huang, on the ground that it does not reflect the meaning of development embedded in the definition of dis-articulation.^{xi} Jien has therefore gone further to make his own contribution to the study of dis-articulation. Jien's major contribution to the study of dis-articulation is the determining of the impact of structural dis-articulation on human development in the developing countries. He posited in his work, "Structural Dis-articulation and Human Development in the Third world countries," that structural dis-articulation has a powerful negative impact on Third world human development.^{xii} He also went ahead to measure dis-articulation, not following Stokes and Anderson's approach. He measured it in terms of unevenness of various economic sectors by the summation of deviations of productivity per worker of each

economic sector from average productivity per worker in the overall economy. His focus however, was not on the colonial economy. Moreover, Jien pinned down his study to structural dis-articulation, neglecting other shades and types of dis-articulation.

From the short review, it is clear, judging from Amin's contribution alone that the discussion of dis-articulation has to be pinned down to a specific geographical location(s), whether domestic (internal), regional, continental, intercontinental or even global. This is very important because being specific helps to draw a line for the extent to which the dis-articulation claim can be made. For example, will it be true to claim that the current global economy is dis-articulated? This necessity to limit or domesticate the dis-articulation claim is one thing Claude Ake hardly paid attention to. Even within a specific geographically or politically delineated area, it would not be correct to talk of dis-articulation in absolute terms without specifying the areas or types of dis-articulation being referred to or even the degree of dis-articulation.

Dis-articulation can be sectoral or structural, extroverted or cross national (extroverted). A close analysis and observation of the economy of any politically delineated area will still reveal some emblems of articulation even when dis-articulation is obvious and dominant; but again, Ake overlooked this important consideration and took an absolutist view to the subject of dis-articulation. The point is that, the extent to which an economy can be said to be dis-articulated has to be pointed out if a dis-articulation claim is to be adjudged reliable. The worry of the present writer over the neglect of the measurement of dis-articulation by Ake has been justified by the fact that newer researches on dis-articulation now try to device means to measure dis-articulation,^{xiii} although there are misgivings about the use of figures.

Also, one shortfall of the works so far done on the subject of dis-articulation by both Ake and the other scholars earlier referred to is the lack of willingness to study it against the backdrop of interest, and this has led to some questionable conclusions. Interest is a very dominant factor that influences any dispassionate relation whether international relations, internal or group relations. Also, the orientation of any economy is a function of the interest of a particular dominant group. The dominant (ruling) group in any nation, make the basic economic decisions like what to produce, how to produce, where to produce etc. And these decisions determine the orientation of an economy.

Therefore, this paper will show that the orientation of any economy can be best studied in the context of interest. Also, the claim of the dis-articulation of any economy has to be made in the context of interest. If the interest of a particular group is best served by an economic system, then to that group the economy is not dis-articulated. To determine whether an economy is dis-articulated therefore, we must first verify the group whose interest was meant to be served by the economy, or who the economy was designed for. If the colonial economy for example was designed and organized to serve the interest of the colonialists, the economy cannot be adjudged dis-articulated if that purpose was served. It can only make sense to say that the economy was dis-articulated in relation to majority of Africans who were not allies of the colonial officers. However, a conclusion that the colonial economy was dis-articulated is one that flies in the face of historical facts.

The rest of the paper is basically divided into four major parts. In the first part, the basic assumptions and underpinning of the dis-articulation claim as spelt out by Ake are highlighted and shed light on. In the second part of the paper, the structure of the colonial economy and its dis-articulation status are considered. In the third part of the paper, Ake's

post-colonial dis-articulation claims are xrayed. The fourth part of the paper contains the summary and conclusions.

Basic Assumptions and Underpinnings of Ake's Dis-articulation Claims

In explaining what he meant by dis-articulation, Ake wrote that, "a dis-articulated economy is one whose parts or sectors are not complementary."^{xiv} He explained that in a coherent or articulated economy, "there is regional and or sectoral complementarity and reciprocity."^{xv} What this means is that in an articulated economy, one region/sector feeds the other, so that rather than have competing sectors, we have them complementing each other. For example, while one region specializes in agriculture, the other supplies the agricultural sector with manufactured goods. Such healthy give-and-take relationship is said to be lacking in a dis-articulated economy epitomized by the African colonial economy.

An articulated economy, apart from having sectoral or regional reciprocity has other features. First, it has forward and backward linkages in production, a situation which exists when the demand for certain mineral resources leads to the exploitation of known reserves of such mineral resources in a region or sector of the economy. This linkage results in complementarities and reciprocity. According to Ake, "the colonial economy generally lacked these linkages, complementarity and reciprocity". Thus, what Ake saw as a dis-articulated economy is one that has its sectors de-linked and diametrically opposed to each other. It is an irrationally arranged economy which has the emblem of plan-lessness. Lacking complementarities, the sectors remain competitive in an unhealthy manner. The absence of reciprocity ensures that the sectors remain individually stagnant, not giving out and not receiving, providing not even a leeway for progress and development. A dis-articulated economy is far from being virile, rather, it is a dead one because there is no circulation of blood (resources) to the veins and arteries (various sectors) to ensure mutual continuity of existence.

Ake went further to specify typical features of dis-articulation in the colonial economy and some colonial policies associated with it. He noted that the colonial administrators in terms of investing for development invested only where they were sure of maximum benefits and thus did not evenly spread development-enabling infrastructures. For example, they invested in places which were convenient collecting centres for commodities, such as Kano; places from where the commodities could be easily shipped overseas, such as Lagos, Mombasa and Dar es Salaam; places where the climate favoured European settlement were used as administrative headquarters, such as Nairobi. The result is that these places gradually became different in terms of development from other surrounding places. These 'enclaves' with better amenities in contrast to other places around them is said to have made the colonial economy more incoherent or dis-articulated.^{xvi}

Taking the transport system as an example, Ake tries to convince us that the haphazard manner in which the transport infrastructure were distributed did not constitute a coherent system of communications and thus contributed to the disarticulation of the economy. Accordingly, Michael Crowder noted that "the railways were all directed to the coast, with no links between them, of different gauges, so that a rationalization of the railway system of West Africa today is impossible."^{xvii} The disproportionate size of export commodities to subsistence or food commodities is also seen by Ake as an emblem of dis-articulation. The concentration on and the encouragement of the cultivation of certain preferred export commodities by the colonial masters led to the dis-articulation of the agricultural sector.

According to Ake, colonial policies compounded the “natural tendencies of subsistence agriculture towards dis-articulation”^{xviii} The negligible presence of manufacturing, use of imported inputs, multiplicity of decision centres are all recognized as the causes and manifestations of dis-articulation of the colonial economy.^{xix} However, it is important to note at this juncture, that there was no multiplicity of decision centres in the colonial economy, decision flowed from the core/centre, and the policies of the resident governor-generals were still subject to the final approval of that centre.

The study will now go further to examine Ake’s position concerning the post-colonial economy. He claimed that the post-colonial economy is dis-articulated. According to him, the expression ‘post-colonial’ could be misleading. It does not mean a de-colonized economy, an economy free from dis-articulation.^{xx} According to him, the term ‘post-colonial’ conveys only a periodization implicit, and as such, nothing has really changed about the colonial economy in the post-colonial era, the old wine of dis-articulation was only served in a new bottle. The two, according to him, are the same, and are thus both dis-articulated. It is easy to see that his reason for characterizing the colonial and the post-colonial economies as dis-articulated are essentially the same - colonialism and Neo-colonialism. As far as he is concerned, the post-colonial economy had been conditioned to dis-articulation from the colonial era.^{xxi} The dis-articulation of the post-colonial economy therefore to him, is an inherited or acquired one. He went further to point out some of the features of the post-colonial economy that demonstrates its dis-articulation.

According to Ake, enclave development continued as development continued to concentrate in a few urban centres even after independence. For example, the government of Houphouët-Boigny, which came to power after independence continued to consolidate dis-articulation by concentrating industries in Abidjan throughout the 1960s and 70s.^{xxii} Apart from geographical dis-articulation, the bulk of the export earnings of African countries come from a limited range of economic activities, mostly agriculture, and a few products for that matter. This also is seen as a manifestation of dis-articulation because the linkages from these economic activities are more of external, their domestic consumption being very minimal. Also, he argues that the meager share of manufacturing in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) indicates that African economies are still enmeshed in dis-articulation. The rigidity of the international division of labour consigned African economies to the role of primary producers, it is argued. As a result of these, Ake has argued that the panacea for dis-articulation is promotion of industrialization. Lack of industrialization will lead to the perpetuation of dependence, and in so far as there is dependence, the argument goes, there is necessarily a considerable degree of dis-articulation.^{xxiii}

Furthermore, the monopolistic tendencies of multinational corporations, which distort and have debilitating impact on the development of indigenous capital, massive nationalization which results in giving overwhelming powers to state-owned or controlled firms over existing ones as well as non-diversification of the economy are all seen as causes as well as manifestations of dis-articulation. The non-diversified state of the post-colonial economy for instance, has manifested in the narrow resource base of the economies. The structure of any given economy i.e. its constituent parts is also germane to the proper appreciation of its orientation to dis-articulation or otherwise. Most of the value added to the manufacturing sector comes from light industries and other low-level technology-based manufacturing industries.^{xxiv} This, according to Ake is a sign of dis-articulation. According to him, when production is concentrated in a particular sector, accelerator effects on the general performance of the economy tend to be negligible.^{xxv}

The Structure of the Colonial Economy and its Dis-articulation Status

Understanding the structure of any economy is very important before one can regard that economy as being dis-articulated, because dis-articulation has a lot to do with structure. In this part of the paper, the relationship between dependency and dis-articulation in the colonial economy will also be examined since Ake has largely drawn his reasons for tagging the colonial economy as dis-articulated from the 'dependent' nature of the economy. For clarity, an attempt at the definition of the term 'structure of an economy' is necessary. The structure of an economy can be seen as the patterns of the production and distribution of resources in any given economy at a given time. It has also been defined as "the basic organs and processes of reaching decisions as to how production and distribution in the economy can be undertaken."^{xxvi} It also incorporates norms, values and frameworks guiding the ownership and distribution of resources in an economy, and the network pattern of the economic institutions and organs present in the economy.^{xxvii} Therefore, a scholar has defined it as "the organizational, institutional, and social framework of any economic system including the nature of resource ownership and control."^{xxviii} It is therefore essentially, the control pattern of the flow of resources in an economy.

Rodney has noted that by definition, the colonial economy was an extension of that of the colonizing power.^{xxix} The colonial economy was therefore an economic system designed and controlled by and for the colonial powers. Many have hastily restricted the meaning of the term 'colonial economy' to its periodic implicit. They see it casually as the economic system in place during the colonial era. This is a narrow and deceptive interpretation of the word. The colonial economy can rightly be perceived as the economic system of the colonial government, they wove it by modifying pre-existing African economic systems in some places or by introducing ones that subdued the African ones in other places.^{xxx} It was an economy structured to serve the interest of the Europeans.

The colonial economy was the making of colonialism and was thus a colonial 'property.' During the colonial period, African economies were subordinated and integrated into that of the colonizing powers and Africans had to satisfy their economic needs within that economic system.^{xxxi} Extensive research has shown that the period 1880-1935 was a period when the foundation of the colonial economy was laid; during that period, African everyday economic activities were not directly controlled by aliens, but from 1935, things were not the same any more.^{xxxii} As a result, to understand the nature or orientation of the colonial economic system, one must analyze the economic structures of the colony as part of the global capitalist economy.^{xxxiii} Failure to do so has led recent African economists and historians to posit that colonialism produced economic lopsidedness or dis-articulation.^{xxxiv}

Two needs were uppermost on the minds of the colonialists- the need to provide raw materials to feed their fledging industrial goods. These two needs became the logical basis upon which the idea of dividing the whole colonial empire or economy or possession(as they called it) into two related and well-articulated economic sectors- the colonies (or agricultural sector) and the metropolis/core (industrial/manufacturing sector). The colonies were to provide the raw materials; the metropole would turn them into usable industrial goods and receive payment for them from the colonies. The division of labor was thus implemented, and the colonial economy was woven or integrated into, and became part of the colonial empire. In the words of Adu, "the colonialists believed that all public property belonged not to the

people but rather to the white colonial rulers and could and should therefore be taken advantage of at the least opportunity.”^{xxxv}

The governor or resident-general was ultimately responsible to his national government, though frequently he enjoyed the powers of a sovereign.^{xxxvi} He was assisted by some form of consultative council or commercial interests. European merchants had representatives in the legislative councils and by that means influenced public policy on commercial and economic matters.^{xxxvii} Their principals in the metropolis, who were top-ranking men, also pulled the strings from there.^{xxxviii}

In British possessions, as their colonies were called (and they meant it), the draft of such government policies that affected the interest of the merchants was forwarded by the colonial office to the Liverpool, London and Manchester Chambers of commerce for their observation, and this continued for a long time.^{xxxix} Evidence abound to show that many of such government drafts were adjusted by the Chambers.^{xl} Such was the level of the influence that the owners of finance wielded. It was the interest of the colonizers, not that of the colonized, that dictated government policies. The legislative councils in the colonies of which Africans were members and all other localized institutions had no more than advisory or “errand” powers exercised to further colonial interest, first and foremost.

The colonial economy was therefore a well-planned, structured and organized economy. It is therefore totally out of place to paint the colonial economy as a *plan-less*, unorganized and incoherent economy. It was a well regulated economy, operated by principles. In the words of M.H.Y Kaniki, “the colonial practice was conditioned by economic laws.”^{xli} Their interest was the law that conditioned the orientation of the colonial economy. They did all that was possible to keep their interest triumphant including manipulating the means of production to raise the supply of any desired commodity like forcing the Africans to be involved in planting specific crops; and could beat down the supply of an unwanted commodity by, for example, resisting African cultivation in the guise of arresting soil deterioration in the colonial reserves.^{xlii} They could also raise the tariff on unwanted goods. For example, Britain raised tariff on non-British goods in 1934 to discourage the then dominant Japanese goods (textiles) in Tanganyika.^{xliii} This action was in line with the British Imperial preference introduced into all her colonies in 1932.^{xliv}

Thus, the colonial economy was a well-articulated economy that was designed to serve the interest of the colonizers and not that of the colonized; and it fulfilled the purpose of its formation and the interest of its makers. It is therefore obvious that any claim of its dis-articulation especially in an absolute term as Ake did is refutable and should be refuted. The colonial economy was a highly articulated and organized economy.

The Post-Colonial Economy and the Examination of Ake’s Inherited Dis-articulation Theory

Ake is of the view that independence did not bring about any significant de-colonization of the post-colonial economy; and since he saw a de-colonized economy as one free from dis-articulation, he concluded that the post-colonial economy was dis-articulated.^{xlv} As far as Ake is concerned, a dependent economy is necessarily a dis-articulated one.^{xlvi} It has already been shown in the last section, that this is true, at least to a reasonable extent, as an articulated economy is to a large degree free from dependence. But he also believes that the major cause of the dependence and dis-articulation of the post-colonial economy is colonial heritage. The dis-articulation and dependence of post-colonial African economies is thus seen as an inherited one. This is where the present writer disagrees with the professor Ake.

Ake's belief that the dis-articulation of African post-colonial economy is an imposed or inherited one is contestable. As a matter of fact, it has already been shown in the previous sections of this paper that the colonial economy was not dis-articulated, and it would be logically unreasonable to believe that out of an articulated economy came a dis-articulated economy. The law of inheritance demands that one inherits only traits possessed by the progenitor except there are mutational exigencies. It is then necessary for the present writer to show how the dis-articulation of the post-colonial economy came about, the political and economic gene-mutating factors responsible for the change. But the weaknesses of the argument that contemporary African economy's dis-articulation is inherited must first be shown, in order to prove that the theory is not reliable.

Inherited dis-articulation theory summarily believes that the dis-articulated nature of the economies of contemporary African countries was inherited from the colonial economy. The theory first assumes that the colonial economy was dis-articulated, and that that dis-articulated nature was passed down to the post-colonial economy, without the consent of the later. This theory holds that Africa's economy is pre-destined to dis-articulation. Let Ake, who is a staunch believer of this theory speak for himself:

“By the time political independence came, the colonial economy had, so to speak, matured; its structure was firmly set and could not easily be changed. The new government no longer enjoyed the freedom of fabricating an economy from the start. The fully formed economy that it inherited imposed a certain logic and rigidity on the course of future development, and this logic was essentially one that favoured the persistence and even the reinforcement of the syndrome of dis-articulation.”^{xlvi}

Swallowing this theory without caution is very dangerous, and has spelt doom for Africa. It makes Africans to think that nothing really can be done about the economic situation of the continent, and leave their destiny in the hands of the West. It will not take Africa anywhere. It also tends to absolve corrupt African leaders, who have been in the helms of affair since the colonial officers left, of culpability, and says nothing about the many internal factors militating against the stability and development of the economy. This theory, like other neo-colonial/dependency theories, tends to press home the belief that Africans are not responsible for the dis-articulation of African economies, and are not capable to do so. A scholar puts it better this way: “The neo-colonial – dependency argument tends to deprive the peripheral state of any independent power or will.”^{xlviii}

This belief, that Africa is in the receiving end of dis-articulation, and cannot therefore be responsible for it, is definitely misleading and obviously uncalled-for. Even Ake, whether deliberately or unconsciously hinted at the truth, and obviously contradicted himself when he argued that the post-colonial African leaders have in “the drive for economic development followed the line of least resistance to the established orders laid down by the colonialists.”^{xlix} (emphasis mine) This obviously suggests that Africans surely play a decisive role in the continuous dis-articulation of their economies. They can decide, it is up to them, not to follow the line of ‘least resistance’ to the colonial economic order. It is therefore the intention of the present writer to show in this section, how African leaders have been responsible for the dis-articulation of African economies.

If there is any dependence at all, and we believe there is to an extent, we must study and find out its nature and not just see it like that of the colonial economy. In the post-colonial economy, the dependence that exists is one deliberately entered into in order to collect 'rents' and even loans; the dependence is not imposed or necessary, rather, it is one chosen by African leaders. True,

“there is nothing intrinsically necessary about Nigeria’s or Africa’s dependency; the growth of the state, its appropriation of an increasing share of capital surplus and its stronger role in the international system endow it with the pre-requisites for a strategy of autocentric or basic-human-needs development. Rather, the state ‘chooses’ to take the line of least resistance towards economic development.”^l

This is the real source of the post-colonial African economy’s dis-articulation internally, and its external orientedness. The structure of the post-colonial economy further substantiates and corroborates this claim. Scholars have identified some of the major elements or indices that give insight into the structure of any economy as (1) the demographic pattern and degree of development of human capital in terms of number and skill, (2) the nature of production and extent of diversification, (3) physical and natural resource endowments and management, (4) the degree of external dependence, etc.^{li}

Using demographic parameter, one of the ways of understanding the structure of an economy, is to look at the proportion of the dependent group and the productive group who are being depended on. In Nigeria for example, the proportion of the dependent group (young people of less than 15 years) were 44.8 and 47% in 1963 and 1991 respectively.^{lii} Combined with the 3% aged 65 years and above, the overall dependent group was 50% for the 1991 census.^{liii} Nigeria therefore has a high dependency ratio of 1:1 as against 1:3 or less in advanced countries. The productive groups are supposed to be more than the dependent group. The cause of this imbalance may be deemed to be natural, but only very observant people will discover that bad governance has hand in it. The high mortality rate of the productive group which could be reduced by better health care services and better work conditions are not seriously looked into.

Another dimension to the problem is that out of the 50% productive group, only few have good employment to be able to take care of those depending on them. Out of the few employable people, how many have good employments? Has government created more job opportunities for them? Out of the younger depending group, how many have access to good skill-based and affordable education to prepare them to play a good role when they join the productive group? These are salient issues in contemporary Africa’s dis-articulated economies.

Income distribution is another issue. The bulk of wealth in most African states is concentrated in the hands of a few privileged entrepreneurs/contractors. This is the cause of the incessant workers’ strikes and pressure by trade unions for wage increases. The concentration of workers and trade unions at the urban areas has led to urban-rural income dichotomy. The trend in income distribution across African states has indicated increasing inequalities in inter-personal income and the widening of the yawning gap between urban and rural income. And one of the major causes of this is the government’s concentration on few or a particular export commodity; this is peculiar to most oil-producing African countries like Gabon, Angola, Cameroon and Congo. Analysis of income distribution over the years in Nigeria for example, has shown that both inter-personal and urban-rural inequalities were at

their peak during the oil boom.^{liv}The situation is not different in most of the other African countries.

The social/institutional structures e.g. education and health, in African countries, reflect the wholesale adoption of British colonial educational models. Forgetting that the colonial economy is different from the post-colonial economy, at least in the sense that the former was designed and run to favour the interest of Britain, unlike the latter, many scholars make the mistake of calling the British colonial education model, the 'British' model or system. But that is wrong, because in Britain and in most of the other developed countries, that was not, and is still not the kind of educational system that they run. The model used at the peripheries during the colonial period was used as an instrument of subjugation and exploitation of Africans which achieved the ultimate goal of realizing British interest. African leaders wholesale adoption of an instrument used to exploit Africans was not an imposed decision. African leaders are accountable.

Another aspect of dis-articulation in most contemporary African countries is the dis-articulation between the resources endowed on each of the states and their impact on the lives of the people in those states. Oil for example, rather than being used to further the development of the economies, has been used to suffocate it. Corruption has found a way to multiply its force and strength in the continent since the discovery of oil and some other resources.

The predominance of the agricultural sector in the economy and the under-developed state of the industrial sector is also a signal of dis-articulation. The solution is not really the abandonment or d-emphasis of the agricultural sector, as most people would suggest, but the development of the agricultural sector to become more effective, for it still holds the key to any auto-centric development in Africa. Lagging agricultural output is dangerous for any economy as aptly demonstrated by the Indian food grain crisis of the late 1950s.^{lv}The agricultural sector needs to be diversified.

Also worrisome is the fact that the geographical distribution of these sectors is skewed. Take Nigeria's industrial sector for example; there is a heavy concentration of activities in the south-western and eastern regions of the country, with lesser proportion in the North.^{lvi}In the overall, the traditional or agricultural sector dominates African economies, and yet it is very weak and inefficient. Apart from this, its focus is on few export crops, thus export or foreign earnings are lopsided, almost more than 50% earned by one or few commodities. lagging agricultural output is dangerous for any economy as aptly demonstrated by the Indian food grain crisis of the late 1950s.^{lvii}

Environmentally, Africa is faced by a number of problems such as soil degradation, pollution and lack of proper conservation plan. All these have implications for the sustainability of the environment for human existence. The issue of environmental pollution and degradation is a marked emblem of a dis-articulated economy. The dis-articulation is in the fact that the populations of contemporary African countries are relatively on the increase while the environments in which these teeming masses would live and survive are generally on the decrease. Also, environmental degradation and pollution threaten human existence by leading, not only to the decline of the environmental space for survival, but also to the reduction of life expectancy. Water and air pollution, through oil exploration and gas flaring tacitly permitted by African governments for one gain or the other, have serious deleterious

implications for both the survival of animals (including edible ones) and humans. And so is deforestation and other assaults on the environment. If Africa continues to run after having bigger gross domestic product (GDP) and neglect the fixing of this environmental issue Gradually Destroying the People (GDP), what shall it profit her?

It is therefore important to emphasize that the attention of dis-articulation scholars should come to focus on the issues affecting the people directly, for the chief end of restructuring any economy is to engender people-centred development which involves changes “in line with the diverse basic needs and desires of individuals and social groups within the system.”^{lviii} There is need for a rethink about the use of the classical model of dis-articulation i.e. Structural dis-articulation. In most literature on dis-articulation, emphasis is laid on structural dis-articulation; dis-articulation is seen from the viewpoint of structure. This has made structural dis-articulation a classical way of looking at dis-articulation. This approach places focus on theoretical issues of ‘sectoral reciprocity’, ‘linkage’, ‘complementarity’, ‘backward and forward linkages’ and others. All these have little meaning for the poor masses. All these can be in place in an economy, and real dis-articulation will still be present. For example, if all these are in place, corruption and maladministration can still be present, and in an economy like that, we cannot argue that the economy is not dis-articulated. The greatest effect of dis-articulation is the subjection of the people to poverty and very low standard and hope of living, while a few maintain ostentatious lifestyle. For example, in the colonial economy, there was articulation to a reasonable degree, at least structurally speaking, yet many of the people were poor and led miserable social and emotional lives.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that the colonial economy was designed and tailored to fit into the interest of the colonizers, and every policy that helped to achieve that interest was in articulation, not in dis-articulation with the colonizers’ goal. It must be understood that the colonial economy comprised of the periphery (the agricultural sector) and the metropole (the industrial/manufacturing sector located in Britain), and that the colonial economy cannot be properly studied by isolating any of these sectors which are its constituent parts. In this light, the colonial economy cannot be said to be dis-articulated. It was well planned to favour British interest and it lived up to that expectation.

Internally, i.e. within the agricultural sector (the periphery), the author acknowledges the fact that there was a reasonable measure of dis-articulation. But even at that, it was not dis-articulated in the absolute. The issue of absolute dis-articulation in the colonial economy context has to be questioned judging from the analysis of available evidence; the internal sector had a measure of articulation. In Nigeria for example, the southern protectorate was not made to conflict with the colony of Lagos at least economically. The concept of ‘divide and rule’ did not seriously play out in the area of economic management. For example, the Lagos colony and protectorate was amalgamated with the protectorate of southern Nigeria in May 1906 for economic purpose. The reason for the amalgamation as noted by Tamuno was “to use the better financial position of the protectorate of southern Nigeria to cover the costs of administration and development in the financially weak colony and protectorate of Lagos.”^{lix} We cannot talk about dis-articulation in absolute terms, and the proper understanding of the structure of the colonial economy will reveal that what many scholars see as dis-articulation is actually articulation.

The eventual amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates in 1914 was a policy that favoured articulation. The reason for the policy was again economic. The goal was to overcome the serious financial difficulties which the Northern protectorate faced.

Amalgamation made it possible for the abundant wealth of the south to be used to develop the financially handicapped north.^{lx} To understand that the only thread that held the north and south together was economic and nothing more, and that the union was artificial rather than organic, one only needs to observe that the two protectorates retained their different administrative styles and structures while a manager (governor-general) acted as the head for both of them.^{lxi}

Again, it is on record that the colonial government conducted extensive research to find out the suitability or possibility of planting specific crops in specific places. And the result of such researches determined the kinds of crops planted in different parts of the colonies. Thus, it is obvious to see that the export crops encouraged were not in dis-articulation with the geography and climate of Africa. Even in the area of transport, colonial economic policies sought to create an articulate system that favoured the interest of the colonizers. For example Lugard in October 1912 merged the Lagos and the Northern railways and renamed the line, 'Nigerian Railway'^{lxii} Thus intra-modally, colonial economic policies sought to operate an articulated, rather than a dis-articulated system. Looking at it inter-modally, that is, between modes of transport, the colonial managers sought to avoid competition between modes. A good example is the relationship between road and rail transport. Road-rail competition was deliberately avoided; where it occurred, it was frowned against. The roads were constructed to serve as link to those areas not covered by either water or rail.^{lxiii} Even Crowder stated it more explicitly. He wrote, "The road system was usually seen as adjuncts, not competitors of the railways"^{lxiv} When two modes or sectors are competitive to each other, they are dis-articulated or incoherent, but that is not the situation here.

As for the post-colonial economy, the present writer agrees with Professor Ake that it is dis-articulated. However, the point of disagreement is that whereas the former believes that the post-colonial government inherited its dis-articulation from the colonial economy, the present writer believes otherwise. The dis-articulation of the post-colonial economy is caused by the African leadership. The earlier African scholars need to stop pointing fingers at the erstwhile colonial leaders for the economic woes of the continent and start holding African leaders responsible.

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