Reducing the socioeconomic effects of colonialism and imperialism in post-colonial States

GA4

Issue Description:

Years ago European countries colonized all over the globe. They firstly colonized the Americas. Then the scramble for Africa followed, and soon after Southeast Asia. European countries left a permanent mark on those territories. Economic and social effects are dramatic, broken economies, the eradication of the native culture and corruption now persist in these countries.

Why has this issue not been resolved?

The complication to restore balance in these colonies has never been accomplished. The reason why some former colonies such as Australia and parts of North America are living in a state of welfare, and other colonies, as the likes of many African countries are still battling with economic and social problems, is because of a discovery that led to a Nobel Prize in Economic Science in 2024. The discovery is as follows:

The difference lies in the purpose of colonialism. In some areas, the colonists wanted to exploit the indigenous population and extract natural resources, while in other areas, the colonists settled there themselves.

An important factor that influenced this was population density. The larger the indigenous population, the greater the resistance against the colonists. However, once the indigenous population had been defeated, it also offered lucrative opportunities for cheap labor. As a result, fewer European settlers moved to these already densely populated areas. Less densely populated areas offered less resistance and fewer workers to exploit, making them more suitable for European settlers to move to and build a new life.

In the areas where the colonizing country only wanted a fast-paced resource focused colony, they eventually decided the territory was not fit for European habitation and left most of their machinery behind. New African elites use these companies and machinery to create a divided income in their country. The working-class of these countries is in desperate need for economic assistance.

The stances on this issue can be divided into 2 groups:

Affected Post-Colonial States:

Jamaica: As a leading voice in the CARICOM (Caribbean Community) Reparations Commission, Jamaica is at the absolute forefront of demanding formal financial compensation and official apologies from European powers for the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

India: As the "Jewel in the Crown" of the British Empire, India frequently highlights the massive economic drain it suffered under colonial rule. Today, it leverages this history to champion the interests of the Global South taking a leading role in UN debates when it comes to this subject, demanding fairer international trade laws and the return of high-profile cultural artifacts (like the Koh-i-Noor diamond).

Delegations of the West African states also play a large role in this issue. Think about Mali, or Burkina Faso for example. They have reached a very anti-European view on the matter, desiring to break all ties of economic liability they have with European states.

Major Former Colonial powers:

UK: Known for being the largest empire in history and being the primary target for global reparation claims. The UK's stance on the matter is that the UK is focused on looking forward instead of to the past, which is seen by most as avoiding any legal liabilities. There have been estimations that financial apologies could sum up to multi-billion-dollar fees.

France: Still has ongoing influence in former colonies in Africa. Although there have been efforts to relocate the French treasury to its rightful owners, France protects their own economic interests in Africa. Think of French companies having ties with their former colonies, oil, uranium, and the CFA Franc.

Belgium & the Netherlands: Both countries have been making public apologies for the atrocities in Indonesia, Surinam and the Congo, though financial reparations are still being debated.

What organizations are currently involved (or have been involved) and what have they achieved?

There are multiple organizations actively fighting the problem, both national and international. A regional example is the African Union, the AU. The AU focuses on economic decolonization and breaking financial dependence on external powers. An international cooperation which helps countries who have been colonized is the World Trade Organization, the WTO. The World Trade Organization establishes rules and guidelines for international

trade in area's such as: services, agriculture, intellectual property and investment-related measures. However, Developing and less developed countries want more exceptions and differential treatment.

Sources

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Good luck with your research reports delegates!

Joshua Bes & Riccardo Scotta'