

Boycott the Boycottable: A Resurgence of “Nationalism Ideology” in Africa

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Abstract

The Nationalist movement gained traction toward renaissance due largely to “common interest” which basically was foreign domination. Their agitation was motivated by both remote and immediate factors. These factors include but not limited to; a desire to be independent and do things the African way, rather than follow a European system, racial discriminatory tendencies of the Europeans to blacks, blacks awareness over British exploitation, the neglect of traditional institutions, the influence of Christianity, UNO opposition to colonialism, the formation of political parties like NYM, NNDP, the stem criticism of colonialism by some prominent American Negroes like Du Bois, the introduction of elective principle in 1922. Be that as it may, the Nationalist, after intense pressure through various medium, achieved “independence”. Invariably, it will interest any national that the adage; anu buzo na-anwu mmiri oma (first animal to the stream, drinks the most settled), largely played out in the nationalist struggle. Hence, positions that were earlier reserved for the expatriates (foreign national) were automatically replaced by the nationalists and their allies. To a large extent, the Nationalist heaved a sigh of relief. Achebe convincingly opines that when two brothers fight, a stranger reaps the harvest. It was not long after independence than the Nationalists started scrambling over what was left by the colonial masters. The research adopts phenomenological and observation methodology in the course of data collection. Secondary data was equally collected from books, online materials and lecture note. The colonial masters knew that they had placed a burning flame that will consume their colony. What was left on the side of the colony was a rethink, having found themselves in the three world of; traditional African society, the colonized world and African emerging technology driven world.

Introduction

Rejection of colonialism and coloniality, is one of the reasons for the emergence of African renaissance. Other reasons include but not limited to; vision for a united and independent Africa, economic development and transformation, cultural and intellectual renewal, pan-africanism and unity, emphasis on ethical leadership, evaluation on the devastating impact of globalization on African identities and the way in which traditional cultures are being reinterpreted and celebrated in the changing modern world.

The African renaissance is a philosophical and political movement with the aim to end the violence, elitism, corruption, and poverty believed to plague the African continent, and to replace them with more just and equitable order. The emergence of African renaissance is also motivated by the obscene presentation of Africa by the European anthropologists and armed chair scholars. It is invariably, a call for a re-birth on the African continent. It advocates social cohesion, growth, development, promotion of values and ethics, and the establishment of Africa as a significant player in the global affairs.

The African traditional renaissance refers to a cultural and intellectual movement that seeks to revive and promote African traditional values, practices, knowledge system, and artistic expressions. This concept encompasses a broader reawakening of interest in the pre-colonial African culture, heritage and identity, and it strives to reconcile traditional African belief with modernity (hybrid African Traditional Religion) in a way that fosters social, political and economic development on the continent.

Invariably, the African traditional renaissance is not merely a nostalgic return to the past. It is an active process aimed at creating a future that respects and integrates the depth of African cultural heritage within a global context. The African traditional renaissance promotes pride in Africa history, language, cultures and tradition. It was in light of the preceding that Senghor in 1930 Negritude, rose to debunk the evil lenses the Europeans, perceived the black. Thus, it was invariably reverted as “black is beautiful” to promote the beauty and the pride of African heritage. The agitation gave birth to nationalism, pan-africanism, the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), the regional integration efforts like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Some musicians like Oliver d Coquer, Bright Chimezie, Ancy Kiamuangana feat Verckys Kiamuangana, et cetera promoted the beauty of Africa through music. Literary icons were not left out of the struggle; hence they preached anti-colonialism, literacy through poetic tradition, anti-racism and pan-africanism. Black theology which is equally known as liberation theology played its part toward African renaissance. Inevitably, the struggle continues today in any artistic expression that asserts black identity.

Traditional medicine and governance towards the quest for renaissance

The Igbo term *dibia* has been given various interpretations in English language (Okorie 1998:148). In many African countries, medicine man has been interpreted in various contexts as medicine man, diviner, native or traditional or witchdoctor, necromancer, magician or a priest. Even though there are similarities, the difference between a *dibia* in Igbo and a witchdoctor or magician or necromancer abounds.

According to Basden in Okories (1998:149) a *dibia* by the virtue of his initiation is believed to possess vested power whereby,...he can invoke spirit into any material object, hence into an *alusi*. As one of the drivers in the propagation of moral values and norms, the *dibia* remains the epicenter of societal transformation. According to Agbo (2021:83) “taboos are stipulated by the medicine man. It is in this way that the medicine man directs the moral affairs of the people. The do’s and don’ts that are associated with the prepared medicine contributes to the moral life of the Igbo people”. Invariably, through modernity, many traditional medicines/medicine men have been recognized by the government as a remedial to a specific dysfunctional health in the society. Some of the adopted traditional medicines are invariably scrutinized, through modern scientific processes. The multi-disciplinary scientific validation of indigenous drugs is of relevance to modern societies at large and helps to sustain local health care practices ([pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/article...](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/article...))

Agbo (2021:83) further adduces that “it is obvious human need is insatiable, and as a result of this quest, there is reoccurrence and frequent patronage to medicine both traditional and orthodox. It is innate in every Africans to unravel the cause of any misfortune. This is the reason why medicine, especially traditional medicine even in the 21st century still controls the mind of the Africans. According to Ugwu (2014:10) many ardent Christians on admission have medicine prepared in the traditional manner, stealthily brought to them because they believe it is more efficacious than European medicine which is without the touch of the divine healer.

Owing to the emergence of renaissance, the negritude popularly associated with Leopard Senghor of Senegal. The aspersion that the Europeans cast on the traditional medicine started to give way for more recognition by the nationalist movement. In Ghana, Kwamah Nkrumah reinstated libation art in national state functions. He further recommends that a libation manual be made, so as to encourage its practices by young ones in order to ensure its preservation for the current and future generation. While the nationalist movement promotes traditional knowledge in medicine, they equally served as a check on the activities of the traditional medicine practitioners through rigorous scrutiny and encouragement of best practices through modern sciences and technology, to eschew anachronism and stereotype in the knowledge of

traditional medicine. According to WHO (2004:10)... specifically, the guidelines for a national policy on traditional medicine will assist member states to formulate and implement their national traditional medicine strategies and plans to monitor key components of such policy within the context of an overall national health policy. Its goal should therefore be consistent with broader health system objectives, and its implementation should support those objectives. It should be meant to be used by governments to develop their own code of ethics in the context of their national health legislation.

In line with the preceding affirmation, Edoga, a priest of Nkwo (Atama Nkwo) in Agbo (Unpublished MA) observes that; The lyrics of the Priest – *dibia*, is now recorded either in multimedia form or penciled down. He further maintains that the recent proponents of Traditional Religion are becoming literate. Most modern priest can read and write. They even go to the extent of documenting their prayers. Inevitably, through governance, came the light of an umbrella that house traditional Health Practitioners. According to WHO (2004:10) the model legal framework is to assist member states to enact laws to govern the practitioners council; regulatory frameworks to ensure the efficacy, safety and quality of traditional health care services provided by traditional health practitioners (THP's); and control over the registration, training and practice of THPs. Its goals should be consistent with broader national health legislation objectives, and its implementations should support those objectives.

The Nigerian government inaugurated guild of Traditional Medicine Practitioners known as the National Association of Nigerian Traditional Medicine Practitioners (NANTMP) in the year 2006 by His Excellency Ex-President Chief Olusegun Aremu Obasanjo which is obligated of every genuine practitioner, whose practices are not repugnant to natural justice, equity and good conscience to identify with. The recent crusade against illicit practices by some traditional religious practitioners in Anambra state under the auspices of His Excellency, Prof. C.C. Soludo tells volume on the role traditional medicine and governance play on the quest for renaissance; hence via the raid, *Ajo dibia's* (bad medicine men) are discovered and gradually expunged from the system. Many of the bad medicine men, having been knowledgeable in traditional medicines, prepare protective charms and amulets for criminals and kidnappers alike, promote anti-social behaviours like "luck charm" to win betnaija, lotto, yahoo, yahoo+, yahoo++ et cetera, thereby scuttling the core values and norms of the African society. Invariably, the African view on wealth creation is in line with Templar (2007:120).

You have to think long term, both in your planning, and in your expectations of a return... if you expect a rapid and sudden catapult in prosperity... gaining wealth is a slow process and rightly so. If you get it all quickly you have no time to acquire experience and sense. Too quickly and it will be all spend, spend, spend. Edoga, a chief priest of Nkwo further affirms that, among the African Traditional Religious adherents, there are both good and bad ones. While some are benevolent, a large number of the traditional adherents' *ajo dibia*, who possess secret powers in magic, malevolently use these powers to cause chaos in the society. To a large extent, the joint task force which comprises of government force, the traditional practitioners task force, and community surveillance, play pivotal role to ensuring renaissance. The case of Anambra state, where the Nigerian Police Force, join force with Agunechemba Security Squad to fight against illicit practices in the traditional medicine should be extended to other states, and Africa at large.

Challenges confronting the continent of Africa in achieving renaissance

Attempts to usurping the menace of godfatherism/cabal have been resisted in many states of Africa, but intense effort is still required. Hence, the nationalist devised different avenue to achieving independence. The recent activism in Nigeria through the political autonomy of godson in Rivers state, although truncated through a state of emergency by the federal

government, is a step in the right direction. Music activism; Tell your Papa, Jaga Jaga by Eedris Abdulkareem, This is Nigeria by Falz, Beasts of No Nation by FelaKuti, collectively point towards the excruciating pains and suffering of the common Nigerian citizens (hoi poloi), whose hope is bereaved of succor and solace. Instead of addressing the salient problems that bedevil the nation, the Nigerian government has decided to use propagate through mass media to silence the voice of the masses.

Africa is bedeviled with problems that are rooted in governance, conflict and poverty. These problems pose as challenge in actualizing African Renaissance. To some of these challenges we turn:

Historical baggage

The legacy of colonialism including the partitioning of Africa in 1883-1885 Berlin Conference; colonial mentality; sometimes motivated by the Africans “small colonialist”, and suppression of indigenous knowledge systems, continue to hinder progress.

Internal problem

Corruption, lack of democracy or better put, lip-service democracy, tribalism, nepotism, and inter-African conflicts are major obstacles to stability and development in Africa.

Economic dependence

Dependence of foreign aids and exploitation of resources, as well as the global economic order, perpetuates a cycle of poverty and marginalization.

Governance issues

Poor governance, weak institutions, and a lack of accountability hinder sustainable development and citizen satisfaction.

Social challenges

Poverty, hunger, inequality and the HIV/AIDS pandemic remain significant challenges that require focused solutions.

Technological advancements

Africa faces the challenge of bridging the technological gap (digital divide) created by the advancement in the information-rich west.

Inferiority complex

Inferiority complex, amongst Africans is the twin brother of colonial mentality. The average African today sees himself or herself as inferior to people from all other parts of the world, but especially to Europeans and North Americans. Convincingly, since civilization left Africa (Egypt), it has become a strong weapon in the hands of the Europeans against other nations.

Lack of knowledge of Africa's past and civilization

There is a saying that those who do not know where they are coming from cannot know where they are going. All realistic projections into the future must first take stock of situations of the past. Generally, there is a serious lack of knowledge of Africa's past, not to speak of Africa's civilization. How can there be a tomorrow, without a yesterday?

Lack of African-centered education

Education is unquestionably the bedrock of human advancement, more so in modern time. Education is an all round development. It starts from cradle to grave hence man continues to learn within the society in which he finds himself. From the religious point of view, it is

irrefutable that Africans are incurably religious. Mbiti puts it thus “Africans are notoriously religious”. This is the reason why every teaching is anchored in the fear of God/gods and the pantheon of divinities that inhabit the sacred, eternal world of reality. The Igbo people are not severed from this stiffness to religion. God and the spiritual agents constitute formidable array of forces in the inculcation of moral values in African pre-colonial society.

Right educational policies and systems put societies on proper footing, which is why the clamour for mass education is a worldwide and ever increasing phenomenon.

An overwhelming percentage of the nations doing well in the contemporary world can attribute a high degree of their success to the right systems and stuff of education they inculcated in their people.

African elites assuming the personalities of imperialists

A new wonder creeping into the African continent and which is perhaps the gravest factor militating against African renaissance is that many Africans who are occupying sensitive and privileged positions in African government do not even see themselves as Africans and in their hearts owe allegiance to non African nations. These categories of people are referred to as the “small colonialist”. Some nationals working in their own fatherland are even paid in foreign currencies and stupidly prefer to be seen as expatriates.

African Union(AU) is undemocratic

The African Union (AU) that is the body that should model African renaissance is composed of officials who are not elected by any Pan African plebiscite. This cannot help the African renaissance.

Brain drain

The emigration of highly skilled professionals to other countries weakens African economies. It is the duty of the elites of every people to drive and lead their renaissances and that of Africans cannot be different. Unfortunately, over 25% of the highly skilled Africans live in and serve other countries and nations, while their own mother continent is in dire need of their services, skills and knowledge. This is a blow to the African renaissance and something imminent need dawn about it.

Terrorism

Undeniably, many African nations are under the frightening grip of terrorism. So far, no African nation has been able to prevail over this increasing menace. Terrorism, kidnapping, banditry are ravaging the African nations.

Lack of data

Owing to the age of data, the quantity of data in position by any person or nation, determines the superiority of the nation, over other nations. African nations are generally so poorly organized that they lack adequate data of their manpower in the various subsectors and of other economic and societal indices that are most useful, if not essential for cohesive and meaningful planning and administrative purpose.

Dry and abstract intellectualism

Africa intellectualism is not practical oriented. It is a mere academic/intellectual exercises that massages the ego of the ruling class. The contemporary academic should cease from colonial nationalist discourse and beam their light on the current small colonialism (African elites assuming the personalities of imperialists) that is ravaging the African continent, a brain child of European colonial ideology.

Decolonization, Democracy and Renaissance

The relationship between the three variables; decolonization, democracy and renaissance is complimentary. It is a chain reaction which connotes “intellectual spark”. Maazi Mbonu Ojike rightly avers in connection with decolonization during the nationalist struggle that Africans should “boycott the boycottable”. In essence, he affirms African authenticity. Convincingly, boycott the boycottable slogan is not a total alienation from anything foreign. It is rather a call on selective importation and imitation of cultures albeit inculturation and acculturation. Godfatherism and cabalism has eaten deep into the fabric of African Nations and invariably impinge African development. Vividly, if it is not dismantled, it will continue to keep Africa on a hold. The original purpose which is to serve as a conduit through which the wisdom of seasoned statesman is passed down to the next generation, begs for an answer. Hence, it is obvious that the purpose has been eroded.

Through this medium, Africa will become economically free and politically independent. To further accentuate the foregoing, it is pertinent to give brief attention to; decolonization, democracy and renaissance. To this we turn:

Decolonization

This refers to the process by which a colony gains independence from its colonizing country, encompassing political, cultural and economic changes aimed at dismantling colonial structures and legacies. Bizarrely, the aftermath of colonialism has continued rearing its ugly head on African Democracy and Renaissance; hence, the small colonialist (African elites assuming personalities of imperialist) has invariably become more endemic than the colonial masters. Arguably, two brothers now fight, and a stranger in reaping the harvest (Achebe 1986). According to Igbo and Anugwom (2002) every social change brings about a social problem. A solution to one social problem leads to another social problem.

During the colonial era, there were issues of marginalization from the acclaimed colonial Olympia superpower. Obviously, this smeared marginalization of Africa in all ramifications; political, cultural, economic, religious, et cetera. The rise of nationalism and subsequent independence that ushered in a democratic government, after many years of military dictatorship, has not been sustainable; owing to various indices like nepotism, tribalism, bribery and corruption, sectionalism, ethnic bigotry that bedevils Africa. To this, we turn to a brief definition of democracy.

Democracy

Democracy is a form of government in which the supreme power is held by the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation, typically through elected officials. Some key principles of democracy includes but not limited to; rule of law, free and fair elections, protection of rights, accountability et cetera.

Unfortunately, when Africans learn a thing, they inundate it. How these principles highlighted above reflect in African democratic governance is a question that seriously begs for an answer. Bizarrely, there is no supremacy of the law; election of leaders is by selection not election. According to Ike (2004:51) Africa’s rulers are appointed thousands of kilometers from far off coasts by powers who are not Africans, often by an international gang of those who “call the shots of world global power at Paris, London, Spain, Washington, Saudi Arabia”. African’s participation and the epicenter of Africa in selecting Democratic leaders in Africa is a sine qua non to African democracy. It is in this way that the Africa agitation for renaissance will be achieved. To this, we turn to renaissance;

Renaissance

Renaissance connotes prospect in the light of culture, politics, governance, religion et cetera. Some of these prospects include but not limited to; the renaissance of African economies, African unification, peace and lack of internal wars in Africa, African self sufficiency, restoration of African dignity in all ramifications, African Jurisprudence, Foreign debt eradication, African centered educational system, African high command, African supremacy in the world (African Global Supremacy), Mass participatory system in governance, gender harmony, pan-African data, inter-disciplinary, trans-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary dimensions.

Prospect of African renaissance and possible hindrances

Having expounded the concept of African renaissance, the research recommends some possible ways of achieving African renaissance as follows:

Restoration of African dignity in all ramifications

As the slogan of a Nigerian university purports “To restore the dignity of man”, so also would African’s self confidence should begin to gradually jumpstart. This gears toward the restoration of the dignity of Africans (personality cult) and Africa in all ramifications.

Peace and absence of internal wars in Africa

African renaissance is expected to usher in sustainable and long lasting peace and total absence of inter-African wars. This presupposes the putting in place of effective and efficient conflict resolution mechanism and the engendering of brotherly and filial affections among Africans. Through this measure, “outsiders will seize from reaping the harvest”. Invariably, this will promote self sufficiency, hence the material resources expended on war and its concomitants will be invested in African development.

Eradication of debts/loans

Imperialistic, colonist and capitalist nations of the world seeking perpetual allegiance and exploitation of African resources have ingeniously and pretentiously fund ways of crippling African nations with foreign debts portfolios.

These debts, most of which are odious are so crafted that to get out of one, African nations find themselves sinking and entrapped into another. It is like a vicious circle organized and supervised by Satan himself. Thus, he who goes a borrowing, goes a sorrowing.

African centered education system

It is rightly said that “hood doesn’t make the monk”. By implication, scholars in humanitarian field, and other related social sciences should be afro-centric in their theoretical postulations.

Conclusion

Factors that hinder Africa renaissance includes but not limited to; colonial mentality, inferiority complex, godfatherism, cabal, corruption, lack of democracy, tribalism and nepotism, plagiarism-intellectual theft, dry and abstract intellectualism, stultification of indigenous technology and knowledge systems, lack of African centered education, dearth of indigenous African languages, erroneous belief that African renaissance is idol worship, lack of knowledge of glorious African past and contributions to human civilization, inter African wars, unresponsive governance, wrong people in authority, square pegs in round holes, lack of data, terrorism et cetera.

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