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Coloniality in International Trade Relations and Underdevelopment in Sub-Saharan Africa

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines how coloniality continues to shape international trade procedures and processes, thereby contributing to persistent underdevelopment in countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Although formal colonial rule has ended, the paper argues that its underlying power structures remain embedded in global economic systems. These manifest in countries of sub-Saharan Africa through unequal terms of trade, dependence on primary commodity exports, and externally driven development agendas. Drawing from dependency theory and Schumpeter's notion of creative destruction, the paper specifically analyzes how historical patterns of exploitation and knowledge hierarchies are reproduced through contemporary trade agreements, financial institutions, and global value chains. The paper highlights how structural constraints of limited industrialization, vulnerability to price fluctuations, and asymmetrical bargaining power perpetuate economic dependency and destabilize social productive forces in countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Consequently, creative talents to create new products and technologies to transform societies in sub-Saharan Africa are befuddled and crumpled. The paper concludes that addressing underdevelopment in sub-Saharan Africa requires confronting the colonial logics embedded in global trade structures and advancing alternative models grounded in economic sovereignty, regional integration, and equitable global governance. Thus, there is a need for the formation of capital for competitive innovation to support indigenous businesses in countries of sub-Saharan Africa. This is necessary because innovation tends not to occur in a free market; instead, in-

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novation is deeply shaped by choices and investments made by the State in industrial policy (subsidies), research and development (R&D) funding, infrastructure, education, and human capital development.

Keywords: Coloniality; Capital Formation; Economic Sovereignty; Innovation; Eurocentrism; Free Market

1. Introduction

The contemporary political economy of sub-Saharan Africa cannot be fully explained and understood without interrogating the enduring legacies of colonialism. In many ways, the legacies of colonialism have an imprint on international trade procedures and processes in the region. Even though formal colonial rule ended in the mid-twentieth century, the structural asymmetries it produced persist in coloniality. Coloniality represents the continuation of hierarchical power relations, epistemologies, and economic arrangements that favour countries of the Global North while constraining development trajectories of countries of the Global South. International trade has been recognized as one of the most visible domains in which these structural asymmetries are reproduced^[1]. These trade patterns established during the colonial era, characterized by the extraction of raw materials, dependence on external markets, and the marginalization of local industry, continue to shape the economies of countries of the Global South, especially countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

Despite political independence, economies of countries in sub-Saharan Africa have remained heavily reliant on primary commodity exports and vulnerable to global price fluctuations, terms of trade deterioration, and restrictive trade regimes. More disturbing is the fact that multilateral institutions, bilateral agreements, and global value chains reinforce dependency rather than create space for innovation and autonomous development in societies of sub-Saharan Africa. This phenomenon is compounded by dominant neoliberal policy prescriptions, which emphasize liberalization and openness without addressing underlying structural inequalities^[2]. This arrangement has reproduced a colonial division of labour in which countries of sub-Saharan Africa remained positioned as suppliers of unprocessed resources and consumers of manufactured goods from industrialized countries of the Global North. Although international trade has been conceived as a vital tool for combating poverty and underdevelopment in developing countries, evidence

abounds to show how global economic governance, through institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and World Bank, reinforces colonial-era trade configurations^[3]. This may largely explain why most developing countries, especially countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, have remained trapped in poverty and underdevelopment. While debates remain regarding the role of international trade in the development of societies of the Global South, the consensus across critical scholarship is that international trade holds potential to improve physical infrastructure and enhance the quality of life in developing countries^[4-6]. This explains why governments of developing countries are doubling efforts to increase their volume of trade, especially with industrialized countries of the Global North. Even though international trade has shown potential in boosting economic and social development in developing countries, there are arguments that suggest that the practical benefits of international trade have remained debatable. This is because prevailing evidence in countries of sub-Saharan Africa tends to portray international trade procedures and processes as being designed to reinforce Eurocentric dependency rather than lifting developing countries, especially countries in sub-Saharan Africa, out of poverty and underdevelopment. Accordingly, international trade is being perceived as stifling auto-centric development and perpetuating structural deficiencies in countries of sub-Saharan Africa^[7].

In an attempt to explain the structural dynamic nature of international trade, this paper draws from notions of creative destruction to describe nuances that characterize international trade as representations of the individualistic self which are protected by capitalism. The paper provides linkages that explain liberalization and populism as effects of international trade in countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Characteristically, the paper espoused that procedures and processes of international trade have emerged out of particular histories and social contexts. Thus, international trade procedures and processes are not one-off transactions. Rather, they are procedures and processes that have ensconced coloniality.

The paper concludes that international trade procedures and processes are gain-seeking and are more or less focused on relations between quantities of imports and exports rather than seeking to improve living conditions in countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Consequently, international trade procedures and processes fortify coloniality and underdevelopment in countries of sub-Saharan Africa.

The paper is divided into four different sections. The first section is the introduction section, which provides background information and situates issues that the paper discusses within existing knowledge. The second section is the materials and methods section, which explains the methodological approach through which data for the paper were obtained. The section also discussed the theoretical framework that guided analyses in the paper. The third section of the paper is the results section. This section consists of relevant themes conveying the study's findings. This section of the paper discussed the coloniality of international trade not only as a political and epistemological influence, but also as a way of thinking, knowing, and doing. Discussions in this section culminate in upholding that there are no deliberate efforts to strengthen the international trade-development nexus in countries of sub-Saharan Africa. The last section of the paper is the conclusion section that reiterates the structural imbalances of international trade which persistently put countries of sub-Saharan Africa in a disadvantaged position. The paper's conclusion highlights how historical power relations, institutional arrangements, and global economic norms converge to limit the ability of countries in sub-Saharan Africa to define their own development paths. The paper commends that examining coloniality within international trade relations provides not only a diagnostic framework. But also a basis for envisioning equitable and mutually beneficial forms of global economic engagements that allow for the formation of capital for competitive innovation to support indigenous businesses in countries of sub-Saharan Africa.

2. Materials and Methods

The methodological approach for this study is the historical-structural approach rooted in decolonial theory and critical political economy. This approach involved a systematic search which was conducted for English-language publications regarding impact of international trade agreements,

financial institutions, and global value chains on societies of sub-Saharan Africa across multiple databases, including Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar, PubMed, African Journals Online, and arXiv, employing controlled vocabulary: "coloniality" OR "colonialism" OR free market AND "Sub-Saharan Africa" OR SSA OR [country names] AND trade relations OR "underdevelopment" OR Ubuntu OR community OR cultural OR eurocentrism OR economic sovereignty. This approach captured historical continuities, present-day power asymmetries, and lived experiences of actors within the international trade system. The approach is suitable for this study because it recognizes that coloniality is not only historical but embedded in present institutions, knowledge systems, and trade structures. The approach enabled the tracing of continuities between colonial trade structures and contemporary trade regimes. The analytical techniques involve discourse analysis of colonial rhetoric about African economies, and path-dependency analysis. The theoretical framework that guided analyses in the study hinged on notions of creative destruction and assumptions of dependency theory. By engaging the principle of internal homogeneity, analyses provided theoretical linkages to explain shades around international trade, cascading evidence that showcased international trade procedures and processes as representatives of the individualistic-self (I-It) interaction. This sort of interaction is marked by a disconnection from 'Ubuntu', a worldview which forms the organizing cultural frame of reference for development in traditional societies of sub-Saharan Africa. 'Ubuntu' represents shared values, communalism and interconnectedness^[8].

In its analytic tray, Schumpeter's theory of creative destruction helped to explain how creative talents with vision could create new products and technologies to change the way people in sub-Saharan Africa live their lives. To Schumpeter, what leads to economic and social development in a given society is the change that is generated by an entrepreneur's desire and leadership. Without this change, Schumpeter argues that human society is doomed. Practically, the Schumpeterian theory provided a sharp diagnosis of the economic health of economies in countries of sub-Saharan Africa. The theory recognized the importance of both creation (start-ups, investment, new skills, and innovation) and destruction (firm closures, skill obsolescence, and stranded assets) in the process of structural change and eco-

conomic development^[9]. This analytical framework provided opportunities to excavate evidence that improves understanding of how procedures and processes of international trade reinforce coloniality in countries of sub-Saharan Africa. With coloniality in these countries, endogenous and auto-centric development is undermined in a manner that creation does not emerge from destruction in these countries.

3. Results

3.1. Manifestations of Coloniality in Postcolonial International Trade Relations

A critical pattern emerged from the study's findings to show that countries in sub-Saharan Africa are geographies of poverty. These are countries located entirely or partially south of the Sahara Desert. Over the years, it has been shown that countries of the Global North, especially countries in Europe and the United States of America, have displayed reluctance in tapping into the histories, experiences and knowledge systems of societies of sub-Saharan Africa. On the contrary, countries of the Global North impose their histories, experiences and knowledge systems on societies of sub-Saharan Africa. This has entrenched coloniality in countries of sub-Saharan Africa. The concept of coloniality had been developed by scholars such as Mignolo^[10], and Maldonado-Torres^[11], to refer to the persistence of colonial power structures in the economic, political, and epistemic systems of the postcolonial world. Quijano's 'coloniality of power' argues that racial hierarchies, labour systems, and knowledge regimes created during colonialism continue to shape global inequalities long after formal decolonization. Mignolo expands this idea through the 'colonial matrix of power' to illustrate how modern institutions such as global trade, development models, and academic epistemologies do reproduce colonial hierarchies. Maldonado-Torres emphasizes 'coloniality of being' by showing how dehumanization and ontological domination remain embedded in contemporary social and political relations.

A narrative came out clearly in the study that asserts an acknowledgment by countries of sub-Saharan Africa that they tend to have bigger trade challenges than countries of the global North. Also, there was an acknowledgment that affirms that increasing trade relations internally only among countries of sub-Saharan Africa do not hold potential in ad-

ressing the poverty and underdevelopment challenges of the sub-Saharan region. Instead, for trade to benefit the region and boost its socio-economic development, there are transitions that countries of sub-Saharan Africa must experience which incontestably involve increased trade relations with countries of the global North. International trade was conceived in the study as any trade that involves the exchange of goods, services and capital across national borders. Basically, international trade is believed to be guided by agreements and it is intended to promote economic growth, job creation and strengthen cultural, political and economic relationships between nations.

Primarily, identified transitions that countries of sub-Saharan Africa have to experience are expected to pay attention to investments which must be complemented with infusion. This means that the first transition should focus on ensuring that countries of sub-Saharan Africa imitate and diffuse modern technologies from countries of the global North^[12]. The second transition insists on innovation as an addition to existing investments so that countries of sub-Saharan Africa can pay more attention to building domestic capabilities that add value to global technologies so that they can become innovators themselves^[13]. In the 2024 World Development Report, it was shown that if countries of sub-Saharan Africa are to develop; these countries have to redesign their economic and social development policies to focus on investment, infusion, and innovation^[14]. The report stressed that it seems impossible for countries in sub-Saharan Africa to leap all at once from investment-driven development to innovation-driven development. Consequently, for these countries to develop; first of all, there is a need for accelerating investments in innovations from countries of the global North. It is only after this is achieved that innovations from countries of the global North can be infused and diffused across the different segments of society in countries of sub-Saharan Africa^[15].

Although these recommended transitions as specified by the 2024 World Development Report have been criticized for being predatory in character. This is based on arguments that innovations and knowledge systems of the global North are part of the problem that has plunged countries of sub-Saharan Africa into poverty and underdevelopment. Hence, since these innovations and knowledge systems of the global North are part of the problem, they cannot at the same time

be solutions to take countries of sub-Saharan Africa out of poverty and underdevelopment. Discourses here swiftly followed Francis Fukuyama's^[16] description of the stationary bandits to articulate magnitudes of coloniality in countries of sub-Saharan Africa. According to one of the arguments, coloniality has created legitimate title rule within countries of sub-Saharan Africa with motives similar to nomadic bandits. Consequently, this explains why businesses in countries of sub-Saharan Africa are often hard-pressed with no option but to import state-of-the-art technology, knowledge of market potential, and business practices from countries of the global North. These businesses do this in order to remain in business. Hence, businesses in countries of sub-Saharan Africa are constrained to accelerate the diffusion of imported innovations at home. This is because governments of sub-Saharan African countries show a preference to support home businesses that incorporate innovations and technologies from countries of the global North into production rather than businesses that rely on indigenous technologies^[17].

With this, it is clear that countries of sub-Saharan Africa are poised to continually rely on imports for their overall economic and social development. Drawing examples from the 2024 Development Report, the study's findings used Korea to demonstrate how coloniality can be undermined in order for a country to develop. Accounts abound to show that in the 1960s, Korea was regarded as being among the least developed countries of the world. However, by 2023 the country experienced a high income per capita and it is being celebrated as one of the advanced countries of the world. Potentially, the study's findings highlighted identifiable structural and historical processes that led to Korea's economic and social transformations. These were processes that ensured that the Koreans did not solely rely on ideas from outside. Instead, the Koreans pushed their own ideas and frontiers of innovation-technology outward. The 2024 Development Report enunciates and reinvigorates that the Korean success story explains that in order for countries of sub-Saharan Africa to achieve sustainable economic and social development, they must be determined to accelerate investments in their own ideas and then augment these investments with innovations from outside^[18].

Although the 2024 Development Report recognized the need for countries in sub-Saharan Africa to have the needed skilled workers to kick-start and sustain economic growth

and social development; nevertheless, the study's findings emphasized that the needed skills must be rooted in indigenous and homegrown ideas. The study's findings identified the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) to be a deliberate effort by governments in the African continent to devise their own ideas for the development of their respective countries. CESA is believed to meet the common African position (CAP) on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and draws lessons from previous continental plans and strategies, especially as it relates to the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063. CESA primarily focuses on providing education stakeholders in the African continent with the opportunity to make their contributions to the continent's development^[19]. It is believed that CESA complements AU's Agenda 2063. AU's Agenda 2063 serves as a blueprint for the development of a peaceful African continent, that is integrated, prosperous and people-oriented^[20]. In line with the Common African Position's (CAP) aspirations, the AU's Agenda 2063 has defined strategic steps that countries of sub-Saharan Africa need to follow if they are to attain economic and social development in the shortest possible time. These steps were found to be based on the following: structural economic transformation and inclusive growth; science, technology and innovation; people-oriented development. Others include: environmental sustainability; natural resource, risk and disaster management; peace and security; funding and partnerships.

In this paper, the Schumpeterian creative destruction framework provided a fitting diagnostic analysis that explains the coloniality of international trade in countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Characteristically, the framework drew from the microeconomic foundations of growth in its analyses. The framework highlights three basic sets of forces that determine a country's economic growth and social development. These forces include: creation, preservation, and destruction^[21]. According to this framework, for there to be economic growth and social development in a country, these three forces have to be domesticated in that country. However, in order for a country to develop and make technological progress, the force of creation needs to be amplified; while the force of preservation weakened; and the force of destruction managed. To promote the force of creation, governments of countries in sub-Saharan Africa need to understand and safeguard the forces of creation by inventing social,

economic and political structures that allow incumbents and entrants to compete favourably by creating economic and social values. More specifically, governments of these countries need to strengthen the forces of creation by encouraging openness in the exchange of capital, goods, services, and ideas among their citizens.

The study's findings affirm that the forces of preservation are dominant in countries of sub-Saharan Africa. So, the forces of preservation, which are rooted in coloniality rely on powerful incumbents to prevent creation. With weak social institutions; incumbents in sub-Saharan Africa have captured social, political and economic structures to preserve the status quo. The study findings recognized that the forces of destruction have not been adequately appropriated to weaken the forces of preservation in countries of sub-Saharan Africa. This is because there are no sufficient evidences to show how the forces of destruction have placed pressure on the governments of countries in sub-Saharan Africa to act quickly to invent new arrangements in capital, labour, and markets.

3.2. Coloniality in the Industrial Structure of Economies in Sub-Saharan Africa

The study's findings align to agree that economies expand organically through innovation brought by new entrants. This reiterates the crucial role that new entrants play in stimulating economic growth and social development. New entrants are known for primarily displacing incumbents. This is because new entrants with their innovation have the capacity to shorten the duration of monopoly for incumbents. Findings in this study coalesce to reveal the preservative interests of governments of sub-Saharan countries which are reluctant to invest in research and development, because this may result in creating too many new entrants who could display incumbents who are cronies of government officials.

Characteristically, the study's findings confirmed that industrial structures and policies in countries of sub-Saharan Africa predominantly focused on encouraging incumbents and keeping them in business rather than encouraging new entrants. Consequently, creative destruction is undermined in countries of sub-Saharan Africa. This is because most innovations introduced by incumbents in countries of sub-Saharan Africa do not result in creative destruction. This means these innovations do not dismantle incumbents. Evidence prevails to show that most often, dominant incumbents

in countries of sub-Saharan Africa do use their incumbency advantage to block new entry and resist innovation. These dominant incumbents usually do this by conspiring with significant players where they set prices to their advantage in order to kick out smaller competitors. Sadly, this type of collaboration has not yielded economic growth and social development in countries of sub-Saharan Africa. This is because this type of collaboration is not fueled by innovation but by suppressing competition. Evidence showed that dominant incumbents in countries of sub-Saharan Africa do not respond to competition by upgrading technologies and business practices. Typically, they resist competition by enacting barriers to new entrants. This was identified in the study as one of the primary barriers that have stalled infusion, innovation and prevented development in countries of sub-Saharan Africa.

Also, the study's findings revealed how invisible secondary market innovations are in countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Innovations such as patent resale and licensing are not treated as important innovations in countries of sub-Saharan Africa. On the contrary, secondary market innovations have played significant roles in the development of countries of the global North. For instance, between 1870 and 1910, United States inventors increasingly sought the services of the more than 500 specialized registered patent agents to navigate the intricacies of patent-related transactions. Likewise, Europe designated the Schengen area which represents the European Union's efforts to bring European countries together to expand the creation of innovation^[22].

The study findings assert that with the dawn of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) group, the attention of innovation for countries in sub-Saharan Africa is shifting outside of Europe and the United States of America. The BRIC organization was formed in 2006 when the foreign ministers of Brazil, Russia, India, and China (BRIC) met in New York City. The first formal summit was held in Yekaterinburg, Russia in 2009. South Africa joined the organization in 2011, changing the acronym to BRICS. The goals of the BRICS organization include: challenging the Western-dominated world; improving the global economic situation. Other goals include: reforming financial institutions; increasing the involvement of developing countries in global affairs; and giving emerging economies more influence in international politics^[23].

The study's findings further affirmed cynicism about the idea of the BRICS group. There were dominant arguments that upheld that the idea of the BRICS group is a fairytale as long as China and India are divided and refuse to cooperate on trade and innovation^[24]. Also, other arguments jostle that it is not possible to truly solve global development issues without the participation of the United States of America and Europe which are obviously not part of the BRICS group. The study's findings acknowledged the rise of foreign direct investment (FDI) from BRIC countries into sub-Saharan Africa in recent years. However, statistics to confirm this rise of FDI from BRIC countries in sub-Saharan Africa and intra-African trade appear scanty^[25]. Nonetheless, the study analyzed Africa-to-Africa trade relations. It was evident that South African firms are investing in countries such as Mauritius, Mozambique, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. Also, South African multinationals such as MTN, SABMiller, Standard Bank, Telkom, Dimensions Data, Massmart, Nampak and Shoprite have a presence in most African countries. Likewise, Nigerian firms such as Dangote Group and UBA Group do have their presence in most African countries. Mali-based Bank of Africa has operations in most countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Togo-based Ecobank has established a significant presence in about 33 African countries^[26].

The study's findings showed that Africa's multinational businesses are influenced by different factors in their investment decisions. Pointedly, it is confirmed that one of the major constraints to the international expansion of African businesses is the scarcity of firm-level resources^[27]. Evidently, businesses from Africa's largest economies in South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya are seen to lead the way in terms of trade and investments on the continent. The success story of these businesses is found to not only depend on the availability of market opportunities, but on developing capabilities to manage various constraints and liabilities. That is: liability of smallness/newness; liability of country of origin; and liability of Africanness^[28].

The study's findings align with Magbonde et al.^[26]; Afolabi^[4] works to show how international trade, especially in the form of foreign direct investment (FDI) has contributed to complicating the growth of economies of countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The major theme that emerged in this analysis highlights the fact that FDI has crowded out domestic investments in countries of sub-Saharan Africa^[29]. This

finding corroborates Onaji-Benson's study on the empirical analysis of the effects of FDI on domestic investment in thirty-four (34) sub-Saharan African countries. In this study, it was revealed that FDI has led to a reduction in local and domestic investments in countries of sub-Saharan Africa^[30]. In sum, the study's findings culminate to show that the inability of sub-Saharan African countries to manage the complex interplay of factors needed for local knowledge spillovers to emerge has resulted in little or no benefits from foreign direct investments. This is so because knowledge spillover is not taking place in countries of sub-Saharan Africa in spite of increased rates of foreign direct investment. Similarly, efforts of knowledge transfer are hampered by an overreliance on expatriates rather than indigenous knowledge systems.

Ghana's cocoa sector reveals how global commodity chains continue to marginalize African producers. Despite the fact that Ghana is among the world's top cocoa exporters, the country captures only a small share of the final value, while multinational corporations based in Europe dominate processing and branding^[31-34]. Structural dynamics such as the dominance of multinational trading companies, price-setting power which still resides in European commodity exchanges, and limited domestic processing capacity make Ghana to remain at the lowest-value segment of the industry^[35]. While Ghana farmers bear the risks of climate variability, fluctuating world prices, and rising production costs, international chocolate manufacturers secure disproportionately high profits through branding, processing, and retailing. Trade agreements and quality standards further entrench these asymmetries by locking Ghana into raw-bean exports, limiting its bargaining power and opportunities for industrial upgrading. As a result, the Ghana's cocoa sector illustrates how colonial patterns of extraction persist in contemporary trade governance, reproducing dependency and restricting Ghana's ability to transform its agricultural wealth into broader economic development.

4. Discussions

This study aligns to construe coloniality not only as a political and epistemological influence, but also as a way of thinking, knowing, and doing. In broad terms, coloniality is a persistent influence that originates in slave trade, imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, international trade

and underdevelopment^[36]. As an epistemological influence, coloniality is rooted in the hegemonic Eurocentric North-American intellectual thought and social theories. As a political influence, coloniality has served as an effective tool that consistently provides surveillance for global imperial designs and neo-colonial matrices of power. All across the literature, coloniality was portrayed as Euro-North American-centric modernity and trade relations^[37]. Advocacy of decoloniality among scholars in the global South pushes the position that Euro-North American-centric modernity and trade relations have created problems for societies of the global South with no valid solutions and knowledge to solve these problems.

Using Martin Buber's notion of 'I-It', international trade is discussed in this paper as possessing a dehumanizing character that reduces trade relations with countries of sub-Saharan Africa as objects devoid of any intrinsic value and dignity. In this 'I-It' trade relation, the global North does not recognize the unique contributions of exports from countries of sub-Saharan Africa to global development. Instead, countries of sub-Saharan Africa are treated as objects to be used to meet the needs of countries of the global North. In this way, countries of sub-Saharan Africa are pitched as entities that can be traded and discarded at will^[38-40]. They are not treated as partners to be traded with or related with.

Altogether, evidence that emerged in this study prompts advocacy that stress for the rearrangement of international trade relations in countries of sub-Saharan Africa. These push for the rethinking of international trade relations that go beyond numerical representation of trade volumes to fundamental social reforms and transformations. This means that there will be no way that countries in sub-Saharan Africa will favourably benefit from international trade without first and foremost paying attention to structural transformation and reprioritization of Eurocentric trade interests. Evidently, the study's findings bolstered the fact that prevailing international trade policies in countries of sub-Saharan Africa have been skewed to focus on changing societies of sub-Saharan countries rather than focusing on structurally transforming these societies. In this way, it is reiterated here that international trade relations between the global North and countries of sub-Saharan Africa can best be understood within broader contexts of nationalism and social structures and not otherwise.

Descriptively, international trade within countries of

sub-Saharan Africa is inundated in subservience, wretchedness and subordination. Borrowing from Frantz Fanon^[18], it is worthy to note that countries of sub-Saharan Africa are more inclined in being subordinate mirror image of their colonial masters. Drawing also from Mazrui's thoughts^[27], this study identified six consequences of colonialism and coloniality on countries of sub-Saharan Africa. First, colonialism and coloniality have forcibly incorporated economies of countries of sub-Saharan Africa into the world economy which began with the slave trade. Second, Africa, especially countries of sub-Saharan Africa, was excluded from the post-1648 Westphalian sovereign state system where Africa was physically partitioned after the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 and later fragmented. Third, societies of sub-Saharan Africa were incorporated into a Eurocentric world culture and European languages. Fourth, countries of sub-Saharan Africa were incorporated into a heavily Eurocentric world of international law and trade. Fifth, as a consequence of colonialism and coloniality, countries of sub-Saharan Africa were incorporated into the modern technological age and they are swallowed up by the global system of dissemination of information. Finally, countries of sub-Saharan Africa were dragged into a Eurocentric moral order.

Succinctly, this is to say that what countries of sub-Saharan Africa know about themselves has been profoundly influenced by the global North. This is as colonialism and coloniality are now entangled with local histories of societies of sub-Saharan Africa. In all descriptions, the study's findings insist that global coloniality cannot be separated from Eurocentric modernity. Since coloniality is immersed in local histories of sub-Saharan societies; consequently, trade decisions in these societies are likewise influenced by immaterial and extraneous information. Hence, clarity has become a necessary empowerment for countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Manifestly, the study's findings established that it has become increasingly hard for countries in sub-Saharan Africa to maintain a clear vision of their desired terms of trade that bring about socio-economic development.

This is as coloniality tends not to be just satisfied with holding countries of sub-Saharan Africa in its grip and undermining their value. Through a kind of perverse logic, coloniality has distorted, disfigured and destroyed the past of societies of sub-Saharan African countries. Through modernity, modernization, democracy and international trade, colo-

niality offers a package trip to development for countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Yet, when the peoples of sub-Saharan Africa refuse to buy the package willingly or have other ideas on how economy and society should be organized, the people are compelled to become subject to all kinds of direct and indirect suppression. Hence, crooked rhetoric that promotes best universal procedures and processes of international trade are framed to constantly reproduce coloniality in countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Drawing from Fanon's works, affirmations arose in the study that strove for the decolonization of international trade^[18, 27, 41, 42]. This means that there is a need for the re-construction and the restitution of international trade procedures and processes.

In all portrayals, the study's findings reminisced that the legacy of colonial conquest was supposed to be dealt with by United Nations' supervised processes of decolonization through which colonized peoples are to craft their preferred solutions to their social, political and economic challenges. Regrettably, the study's findings established that UN supervised decolonization processes through international trade have further succeeded over the years to strip countries of sub-Saharan Africa of their sovereignty. This is because international trade processes and policies have only empowered representatives of Western, European conquerors to maintain sovereignty over countries of sub-Saharan Africa.

A dominant narrative emerged in the study to show that with increasing impacts of globalization in sub-Saharan Africa, there are no deliberate efforts to strengthen the international trade-development nexus in countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Countries in the region have always focused on development policies to reduce poverty and enhance national development without integrating international trade as a formidable tool for poverty reduction and national development^[42]. The study's findings recognized sole proprietorship and family-owned businesses as being reliable to play important roles in bringing development to the region through international trade.

So far, one critical point that emerged from the study is the fact that the international trade-development nexus does not happen on its own accord. This depends on innovations with the vision and motivation to create, adapt and preserve products that add value and improve living standards. This therefore demands that owners of businesses in sub-Saharan Africa have the creative, technical and peoples'

skills to transform ideas into products that can be exchanged. Generally, the primary aim of trade is to reduce poverty and increase prosperity. For international trade, the study's findings stressed that businesses in countries of sub-Saharan Africa are confronted with external risks within a social landscape of global inequality. One striking revelation was the absence of bridging social capital among business owners in countries of sub-Saharan Africa. This absence was found to reduce resilience to recover and survive shocks associated with international trade.

The study's findings culminate to emphasize that if countries of sub-Saharan Africa are to successfully benefit from international trade; they need to improve their indigenous productive capacities. That is, these countries need to pay attention to learn theoretical and epistemological underpinnings of their indigenous knowledge systems. Drawing from assumptions of the dependency theory, the study findings iterate the importance of traditional ideas as the centre-piece of production for international trade in countries of sub-Saharan Africa. However, a common theme emerged in the study to highlight the paradoxical and contradictory orientations around the conception of traditional ideas. On one plane, the conception of traditional ideas accentuates symbolic as against purely structural aspects of social life. On the other plane, traditional ideas connote persistence and continuity of various aspects of social or cultural life which focus on problems of dynamics and change. The first plane stressed traditional ideas as connotations for activity and creativity. While the second plane sees traditional ideas as adherence to customs, habits, and the lack of innovation.

Analyses in this study converged to show how international trade procedures and processes are socially or culturally constructed. According to the study's findings, international trade procedures and processes are deliberately framed to identify the basic needs of humans; provide possible organizational answers that meet these human needs; and to organize various institutional and symbolic structures for the implementation of different types of solutions to meet human needs.

In attempts to provide the historical origins of international trade, the study's findings indicated that the rise of the centralized sovereign state in countries of the global North was accompanied by the rise of new social groups who acquired some powers which had been monopolized by landed

entrepreneurs. The new social groups often supported monarchs, and were linked to a common loyalty. With trade which involved the exchange of goods and services, horizontal links among societies grew strong, in addition to vertical links between governments and citizens. Themes that emerged in this study speak to growing complexities of international trade procedures and processes. These procedure and processes are believed to have put countries of sub-Saharan Africa in a disadvantaged position. Even though throughout sub-Saharan Africa, campaigns for increased international trade are believed to have also yielded some gains, especially in terms of employment. But the gains so far achieved are being curtailed by persistence of coloniality in countries of sub-Saharan Africa.

5. Conclusions

This paper reasserts that international trade is more than just about exchange of goods and services among nations. It is a vital tool for combating poverty and underdevelopment. But for countries of sub-Saharan Africa, international trade has historically resulted in imbalances of social, political and economic well-beings. This reiterates the structural imbalances of international trade whose procedures and processes are gain-seeking and are focused on relations between quantities of import and exports rather than seeking to improve living conditions in countries of sub-Saharan Africa. The paper concludes that industrial structures and policies in countries of sub-Saharan Africa favour incumbents and keep them in business. That is, businesses in countries of sub-Saharan Africa prefer to import goods, services and state-of-the-art technology. These have fortified coloniality in countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Thus, understanding the coloniality of international trade is essential for countries of sub-Saharan Africa if they are to appropriate the benefits of international trade. Consequently, governments of sub-Saharan Africa need to prioritize development policy on human capital and indigenous knowledge by reforming education curricula to integrate local knowledge systems, African history, indigenous technologies, and problem-solving skills. Also, there is need for governments of sub-Saharan Africa to promote local industrialization and value addition by adopting local content policies in agriculture, mining, energy, and infrastructure. This will empower indigenous businesses to overcome

hegemonic procedures and processes of international trade which complicate socio-economic development in countries of sub-Saharan Africa.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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