Colonial Africa and Its Emerging Cultures

By

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Introduction

The period between 1870s and 1900s was a period of profound and revolutionary changes in the history of Africa. It was a period that Africa faced European imperialist aggression, diplomatic pressures, military invasions, and eventual conquest and colonization. Most African societies fought fiercely and bravely to retain control over their countries and societies however, by the early twentieth century, much of Africa, except Ethiopia and Liberia, had been colonized by seven European powers—Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, and Italy (Ekechi, 2002).

The colonization of African societies marked the demise of old African kingdoms and empires and their reconfiguration into different political entities. The political geography of Africa was reconstructed and new African societies were founded on alien ideological and social premises, thus marking the beginning of imposition of new culture over African traditional values. The forced acceleration of the black populations into the new world represented the sustained assimilation of western culture by Africans (Moti, 2011).

While it is an indisputable fact that colonialism has a monumental implication for the contemporary Africa, some people are of the view that colonialism has now become history and that Africans should allow it to remain so (Ayanwu, 2001). This is because there is no need bemoaning the colonial past as some countries that were also colonized did not allow their colonial past to cause setback for them as they are already making appreciable progress. On the contrary however, some scholars have a different view. This is why decades after the end of colonization the intellectual debate over the positive and negative impacts of colonization is still very much alive (Lange, 2009). This is the crux of this chapter, to contribute to the debate on the impact of colonialism on Africa from cultural perspective. For analytical purposes, this chapter is scaled down into four sections. This section is the introduction while the next section focuses on conceptual discourse on colonialism and culture. Section three analyzes colonialism and its cultural Legacy in contemporary Africa and the last section (four) concludes the discourse.