

Short Communication

Article review on: Diana Cammack (2007), The Logic of African Neopatrimonialism: What Role for Donors?

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to review the work of Diana Cammack on The Logic of African Neopatrimonialism: What Role for Donors? At the very beginning the author stated that African countries are displaying as they are modern and democratic with having elections, parliament, judiciary, political parties, police forces and the like. While they failed to be as democratic as they claim, this by definition is pseudo democracy. Bearing this in mind, she mentioned that states in the Sun-Saharan Africa (SSA) are undemocratic and low performing in the economy that lacks developmental nature to boost their economy, which indicates that they are in need of funds from private or public donors.

Cammack argues, Africa's neopatrimonial states have a network of patron-client relations from top to down administrative factions. She commented that decisions are made by informal institutions in which the formal institutions have no real power, but they are made by what she calls 'big men' which is linked by the informal networks outside the formal one, who prioritized particularistic interest than public interests. She also added that governments in these states tend to control the civil societies and private media which they think they are threatening their power.

For this reason, her main argument falls on what should donors do in these countries in Africa? She argued that donors' interest is for the sake of public good at large which aimed at fostering economic development in the states who are installing transition towards democracy with a particular focus on how donors should act in this time, since states who receive the funds are those of behaving as democratic while they are not. Theoretically,

she mentioned realist's perspective which advocates donors can do little to enforce change in the state that they are funding for. She also added donors should consider tackling the deep rooted, structural and systematic problems in these economically weak countries. At last, she suggested that donors' intervention is aimed at promoting the developmental characteristics of the states in Africa.

However, keeping the above arguments in mind, we would like to inject our views which can best fill the gaps which did not explained by the author, though fund by itself is not a problem, looking into the donors' intension is very fundamental. For this purpose, among others, we came up with the following important critics, such as; the donors' action may rise the question of sovereignty of the receiving countries and the interests of the funders themselves.

Firstly, regarding to the states' sovereignty it seems that she advised foreign donors to step in, in the affairs of one's state to promote civil society and make states accountable for international norms. She also argued donors' intervention will let governments to write developmental plans they never intend to implement in order not to lose the funds. This by definition diminishes the status of sovereignty of states due to the fact that donors may use the funds for diverting the governments' action which is questionable when it comes to states' sovereignty.

The second critic is on the interests of the donors as it is stated by the author as for the wellbeing of the public interest, but we doubt whether all funders are donating heartily for nothing without having their own interests in the receiving states. In this case we would argue that donating states or organizations, private or public might

have their own hidden missions to attain in Africa in general and SSA countries in particular. In this case, religious donors may not consider whatever the governments' action is rather spreading their religion through provision of donors for the poor in terms of establishing schools, for example.

Thirdly, as the author stated the donors should involve in establishing active civic organizations in the receiving countries. She further recommended that donors should also support civil society organizations to take part in governments' decision making beyond consultations. It is very critical whether these newly established NGOs would be free from the influence of the donors. Do they really run the interests of the public at all costs or the interests of the funders? Very possible to guess they may serve as an instrument for the implementation of policies for the funders, once they have their own agendas to maintain their involvement in the donor receiving states.

Fourth, she also argued African candidates warn the voters as they will not get goods and services unless they give them vote. Here, we would like to rise the question whether the leaders really provide the services after assuming power or is it an appeasement for winning election? And if they fail to provide services, what would be then the public feedback for the promise they were given by politicians during elections? Because we believe that it's the people who determine the continuity of governments in power, though the writer undermines the role of the public in Africa, through time people might be desperate on the existing government and go for the change in government or urge to make reforms towards democracy.

Finally, the author did not clearly state the research methods employed for conducting the article, and how data were gathered and analyzed which would make the study more convincing. In terms of scope, she did not clearly mention which states were the centers of the study rather simply stating SSA countries in the wider Africa's neopatrimonial states, which we doubt it lacks concrete instances unlike the case of Malawi. Theoretically she did not state well which theory best suits the study, though she simply mentions realism. But unlike realism, would not it be more convincing using liberalism theory? Because if she argues the aim of donors as a positive action to promote economic development through a cooperative manner which strengthens the interdependence of donors and receiving countries, it would be better explained in the perspective of liberalism theory.

REFERENCES

Diana Cammack (2007), *The Logic of African Neopatrimonialism: What Role for Donors?* Blackwell Publishing, Oxford OX42DQ, UK and 350 MainStreet, Malden, MA02148, USA.