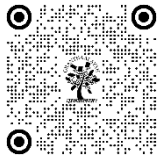


RESOURCE RAIDS AND RECKLESS RAVAGES: NEOCOLONIAL EXPLOITATION, ENVIRONMENTAL EROSION, AND ECONOMIC ENSLAVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Many previously colonized countries' socioeconomic and environmental landscapes have been shaped by the extraction of natural resources, which has been a distinguishing characteristic of colonial and postcolonial economies. Multinational firms are largely responsible for maintaining ecological degradation and economic inequality in the twenty-first century, while resource conflicts and neocolonial extractivism continue to worsen environmental catastrophes. The political economics of mining and oil in postcolonial Africa is examined in this essay, along with who gains and loses from these extractive sectors. The research reveals the exploitative mechanisms of neocolonial extraction by examining the legacy of colonial resource exploitation, the strategic goals of multinational businesses, and the enduring disparities in resource governance. The study also looks at the negative effects of unrestrained resource exploitation on the environment, such as pollution, deforestation, and the uprooting of indigenous populations. According to the report, resource wealth often leads to environmental damage, corruption, and sociopolitical instability, even if it theoretically has the potential to spur economic growth. In order to lessen the negative consequences of neocolonial extractivism, the research ends by emphasizing the necessity of more robust regulatory frameworks, indigenous resource sovereignty, and alternative forms of sustainable development.

Keywords: Resource Wars, Neocolonial Extractivism, Environmental Degradation, Multinational Corporations, Postcolonial Economies, Africa's Resource Crisis

1. INTRODUCTION

Historically, colonial power and imperial expansion have been largely dependent on the management and exploitation of natural resources. Although direct colonial rule came to an end with the formal political independence of African countries in the middle of the 20th century, colonialism's economic and environmental effects may still be seen in resource extraction today. Multinational firms and foreign governments continue to control Africa's enormous resource riches, perpetuating exploitative extraction practices through neocolonial processes in the twenty-first century. This essay examines the ways in which the mining and oil sectors function as tools of neocolonial control, posing concerns about who gains from these sectors and who is most affected by their effects.

1.1. HISTORICAL CONTEXT: COLONIAL RESOURCE EXPLOITATION

In order to support industrialization and economic expansion in their own nations, European powers methodically exploited Africa's natural resources throughout the colonial era. Resource depletion and environmental deterioration resulted from colonial governments' preference for extractive economies over native economic systems. Imperial interests fueled the extraction of gold, diamonds, and oil, frequently at the expense of local inhabitants who were evicted and compelled to work. The postcolonial era's ongoing economic reliance and environmental abuse were made possible by this resource-based economic paradigm.

1.2. NEOCOLONIAL EXTRACTIVISM IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Many African countries are still engaged in a web of neocolonial economic arrangements even after gaining political independence. Africa's resource sector is still dominated by multinational businesses, frequently supported by foreign governments, who take enormous amounts of gold, diamonds, oil, and other minerals with little to no investments in local economies. Three main facets of neocolonial extractivism are examined in this section

1.3. THE ROLE OF MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS

The mining and oil sectors in Africa are heavily dominated by multinational corporations (MNCs) including Shell, TotalEnergies, and Glencore. These businesses are able to maximize revenues while limiting their commitments to host governments because to intricate legal and financial structures. The fact is that income created by resource exploitation is disproportionately concentrated among foreign investors and local elites, aggravating economic inequality, despite their frequent promises of infrastructure investment, job creation, and economic progress.

2. ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE AND THE RESOURCE CURSE

The term "resource curse" refers to the tendency for resource-rich nations to face political unrest, corruption, and economic stagnation as opposed to economic growth. Two notable instances of how elite corruption, war, and underdevelopment have been exacerbated by oil and mineral riches are Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Reliance on resource exports has left these economies in a constant state of economic instability by making them susceptible to changes in global prices rather than encouraging economic diversification and modernization.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

Natural resource exploitation gone uncontrolled has had detrimental effects on the environment and society. The ecological destruction brought about by extractive industries is shown by the Niger Delta oil spill, Zambia's toxic mining waste, and the Congo Basin's deforestation as a result of mineral extraction. As a direct result of neocolonial extraction, vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected by the loss of biodiversity, the displacement of indigenous communities, and the contamination of water supplies.

3.1. THE SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA'S RESOURCES: A NEOCOLONIAL ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS

With new players like China, the US, and the EU fighting for dominance, the 21st-century race for Africa's resources is similar to the colonial rush for raw commodities. Large-scale resource extraction projects throughout Africa have resulted from China's Belt and Road Initiative, frequently accompanied by environmental harm and abusive labour practices. In a similar vein, Western countries still have sway over local political systems through economic accords that prioritize multinational firms. The ongoing rivalry for Africa's resources erodes postcolonial governments' sovereignty and prolongs environmental deterioration.

3.2. WHO BENEFITS AND WHO SUFFERS?

Multinational firms, foreign governments, and domestic elites who profit from extractive contracts are the main benefactors of resource extraction. Local populations suffer from sociopolitical instability, loss of livelihoods, and environmental degradation in the meanwhile. These inequalities are made worse by the absence of strict environmental laws and corporate responsibility, which permits extractive businesses to function without consequence.

4. TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE GOVERNANCE

A paradigm change in resource governance is necessary to address the problems posed by neocolonial extractivism. To guarantee that resource prosperity serves local communities while reducing environmental impact, a number of actions may be taken:

- 1) Strengthening Regulatory Frameworks: To hold companies responsible for their effects, governments must enact stringent labour and environmental regulations.
- 2) Encouraging Resource Sovereignty: Indigenous and local people ought to have more influence over the governance and decision-making procedures pertaining to resources.
- 3) Diversifying Economies: Investing in the industrialization and technology sectors helps economies become less reliant on resource exports.
- 4) Putting Transparency Initiatives into Practice: Pressing businesses and governments to follow anti-corruption and transparency guidelines.

5. CONCLUSION

Neocolonial extractivism's ongoing exploitation of Africa's resources feeds social inequity, environmental degradation, and economic reliance. Local communities and ecosystems suffer while global firms and foreign investors prosper. Resource-rich countries must regain control over their natural resources through community-driven policies, economic diversification, and sustainable governance in order to escape this cycle. Then, instead of being used as another instrument of imperial control, the promise of resource richness may be realized in a way that benefits both the environment and the people.

6. DISCUSSION

The study's conclusions point to a recurring trend of neocolonial extractivism that still influences postcolonial countries' political and economic environments. Theoretically, resource riches should promote social and economic advancement, but in reality, it has exacerbated inequality, corruption, and environmental damage. Understanding the unequal power dynamics at work in the global resource economy still depends on answering the fundamental issue of who gains and who loses.

6.1. THE ECONOMIC PARADOX OF RESOURCE WEALTH

The "resource curse," which runs counter to the notion that resource-rich countries inherently succeed, is a recurrent issue in this research. Rather, nations like Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo serve as examples of how mineral and oil riches has fuelled economic stasis as opposed to progress. Multinational firms' dominance and lax governance have made it easier to siphon off money from regional economies with little return on investment for the advancement of the country. This contradiction emphasizes how urgently institutional changes that give local ownership and fair resource revenue sharing first priority are needed.

6.2. THE ROLE OF GLOBAL POWER STRUCTURES

Neocolonial dependence are further solidified by the geopolitical objectives of strong states and companies. The emergence of a contemporary "scramble for Africa" suggests that both Western and non-Western global powers see

Africa's resources as strategic assets rather than as chances for long-term alliances. For example, China's growing influence is frequently presented as an alternative to Western dominance, yet data indicates that its extractive tactics frequently mimic the exploitative tendencies of past colonial encounters. The limited ability of postcolonial governments to exert sovereignty over their resources is highlighted by the ongoing domination of international entities.

6.3. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND INDIGENOUS RESISTANCE

Marginalized populations are disproportionately affected by the environmental effects of extractive industries, which result in extensive ecological degradation. Deforestation in the Congo Basin, mining contamination throughout Southern Africa, and oil spills in the Niger Delta serve as examples of the long-term ecological harm caused by uncontrolled exploitation. Indigenous groups, who are frequently the most impacted, have been instrumental in the fight against environmental injustices. The unbridled power of multinational companies is contested by movements calling for more accountability and resource sovereignty and environmental justice. A larger demand for ethical and sustainable resource governance that puts people and ecosystems before profit is reflected in this rising pushback.

6.4. MOVING TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVES

There are options that might change the course of resource governance, even though the current extractivist paradigm seems to be firmly established. Reducing dependence on extractive industries may be achieved via investing in economic diversification, strengthening environmental legislation, and ensuring corporate responsibility. Furthermore, frameworks like the African Mining Vision (AMV) promote a rights-based strategy that guarantees that local communities, not outside parties, profit from resource riches.

7. CONCLUSION

The debate draws attention to the paradoxes of postcolonial resource economies, in which the extraction of resources enriches a small number of people while sustaining structural injustices and environmental disasters. Neocolonial extractivism is still a strong factor that threatens sovereignty and strengthens economic reliance. Change is feasible, nevertheless, as seen by the expanding opposition movements and initiatives for policy reform. Redefining the role of natural resources in postcolonial economies to ensure that they promote development rather than prolong cycles of exploitation might be achieved through a move towards equitable and sustainable resource governance frameworks.

8. LITERATURE REVIEW

Postcolonial economic criticisms and environmental justice research are fundamental to the conversation around resource conflicts and neocolonial extractivism. With an emphasis on the economic, political, and ecological ramifications of resource extraction in historically colonized countries, this section highlights significant contributions by a range of academics.

1) The Legacy of Colonial Resource Exploitation

A fundamental insight of how colonial powers used Africa's resources for their own industrialization while methodically under developing indigenous economies may be found in Walter Rodney's landmark 1972 book *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. According to Rodney, colonial extraction left African countries fundamentally reliant on the global capitalist system by prioritizing European economic expansion above native livelihoods. In a similar vein, Samir Amin (1976) emphasizes how colonial economies were built to rely on resources, a paradigm that is being used in many postcolonial nations. The historical background for comprehending modern neocolonial extractivism is provided by these key studies.

2) The Resource Curse and Economic Dependence

According to Richard Auty's (1993) "resource curse" concept, resource-rich nations face social instability, poor governance, and economic stagnation rather than success. This argument is furthered by Michael Ross (2012), who shows how oil riches in nations like Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo has exacerbated poverty among local communities while fostering corruption and elite gain. The way that multinational firms and international financial

institutions take advantage of Africa's resource richness through debt reliance and unjust trade agreements is further criticized in Patrick Bond's (2006) book.

3) Neocolonialism and Corporate Exploitation

Multinational businesses' role in upholding neocolonial control over Africa's resources is criticized in James Ferguson's 2006 book *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*. He contends that by stealing money and without reinvesting it in local communities, these corporations—which sometimes operate under the pretense of development—reinforce global economic structures. Cyril Obi (2010) also looks at how oil companies, especially in the Niger Delta, work with governmental actors and local elites to stifle opposition movements, resulting in human rights violations and environmental damage.

4) Environmental and Social Consequences of Extractivism

The social and environmental effects of extractive industries are examined by Anthony Bebbington et al. (2008), who concentrate on how mining and oil extraction result in pollution, biodiversity loss, and land dispossession. Similar to this, Michael Watts (2004) contends that corporate-led oil production has wreaked havoc on ecosystems, especially in Nigeria, where gas flaring and spills have left large swaths of land unusable. Ike Okonta and Oronto Douglas (2001) highlight the importance of activism in opposing neocolonial exploitation by documenting the ongoing battles of local people against corporate environmental carelessness.

5) The New Scramble for Africa's Resources

The "scramble for Africa" in the twenty-first century, in which emerging global powers—most notably the US, China, and the EU—compete for control of African resources, is covered by Pádraig Carmody (2011). China's Belt and Road Initiative has accelerated extractive activities, frequently evading local governing institutions and worsening environmental degradation, according to Xiaojun Zhang (2020). Instead of encouraging sustainable industrialization, Ian Taylor (2014) criticizes the BRICS countries for strengthening Africa's reliance on the export of raw materials.

6) Toward Sustainable Resource Governance

Scholars like Watts (2004) and Nicholas Shaxson (2007) provide solutions to counteract neocolonial extractivism, even if the majority of the literature emphasizes how exploitative resource extraction is. They stress the necessity of more local involvement in resource management, more robust governance structures, and laws that put environmental sustainability ahead of immediate financial benefit. Additionally mentioned as possible tools for lowering corruption and guaranteeing a more equitable distribution of resource wealth are transparency programs like the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).

9. CONCLUSION

The literature emphasizes how neocolonial extractivism upholds social inequality, environmental damage, and economic reliance. It is still difficult to move the balance of power away from foreign governments and multinational businesses and toward more sustainable and equitable resource management methods, even if some academics support stricter regulations and indigenous resource sovereignty.

10. METHODOLOGY

In order to investigate the role of neocolonial extractivism in resource conflicts, this study uses a qualitative research methodology that combines historical analysis, political economy critique, and environmental effect assessment. The following essential elements form the framework of the methodology:

1) Examining the past

This study examines the history of colonial resource exploitation in Africa in order to comprehend the continued prevalence of exploitative extraction methods. To identify the similarities between colonial and modern resource administration, primary sources—such as colonial economic policies and archival records—as well as secondary sources—such as Rodney's (1972) and Amin's (1976) writings—are examined. This method offers a starting point for comprehending how colonial economic systems influenced extractive economies in the modern era.

2) Critique of Political Economy

The role that foreign governments and multinational companies (MNCs) play in maintaining Africa's reliance on foreign resources is examined from the standpoint of political economy. In order to investigate how global financial arrangements permit the disproportionate accumulation of resource wealth by foreign organizations, an analysis of economic policies, trade agreements, and corporate reports is conducted (Ferguson, 2006; Bond, 2006). To ascertain the degree of corporate accountability and governance issues, reports from institutions like the World Bank and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) are also evaluated.

3) Case Study Analysis

Case studies of resource-rich African countries are incorporated into the article, such as:

- Nigeria's Oil Industry: Analyzing Shell and TotalEnergies' Contributions to Environmental Degradation and Sociopolitical Unrest in the Niger Delta (Obi, 2010; Watts, 2004).
- Mining in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC): Examining how local people are affected by corporate control over the exploitation of cobalt and coltan (Ross, 2012).
- China's Belt and Road Initiative in Africa: An assessment of China's expanding sway over African resource sectors and its effects on governance and local economy (Zhang, 2020).

These case studies offer factual proof of how environmental degradation and economic dependence are made worse by neocolonial exploitation.

4) Environmental Impact Assessment

The research examines academic literature, NGO publications, and environmental reports to evaluate the ecological effects of resource exploitation. Particular focus is placed on:

- The effects of gas flaring and oil spills on water resources and biodiversity.
- How local ecosystems are impacted by mining waste and deforestation.
- The uprooting of native populations as a result of resource extraction

5) Policy and Governance Analysis

The efficacy of current strategies in reducing extractivist exploitation is assessed through an assessment of national and international regulatory frameworks. An examination of the African Union's resource management policy is part of this.

- MNCs' corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs.
- Measures to combat corruption and promote transparency in the extractive industry.

6) Information Gathering and Sources

Scholarly books and journal articles on postcolonial economies and environmental degradation are among the secondary data sources used in this study.

- Reports on extractive industries from institutions including the World Bank, the United Nations, and non-governmental groups.
- Legal papers pertaining to resource contracts and corporate financial reports.
- Investigative journalism and media coverage of disputes involving resources.

11. CONCLUSION

This analytical approach offers a thorough knowledge of how neocolonial extractivism sustains inequality and environmental degradation by combining historical, economic, environmental, and policy considerations. The results are intended to contribute to discussions about alternative economic models and sustainable resource governance for postcolonial governments with abundant natural resources.

12. SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Although this study sheds insight on the processes of neocolonial extractivism and its effects on postcolonial economies, there are still a number of topics that need investigation:

By integrating historical, economic, environmental, and policy analyses, this methodological approach provides a comprehensive understanding of how neocolonial extractivism perpetuates inequality and environmental harm. The findings aim to inform debates on sustainable resource governance and alternative economic models for resource-rich postcolonial states.

13. SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study highlights the ongoing dynamics of neocolonial extractivism and its impact on postcolonial economies, but several areas remain open for further exploration:

1) Cross-Continental Comparative Analysis

Future studies might look at the similarities and differences between resource exploitation in Africa and Southeast Asia and Latin America. This would offer a more comprehensive comprehension of the ways in which neocolonial economic systems function in various geopolitical environments.

2) Movements for Indigenous Knowledge and Resistance

Although resource sovereignty is mentioned in this study, more research should look at how indigenous people fight against exploitative extraction through activism, court cases, and alternative economic models.

3) The Part Emerging Powers Play in Resource Abuse

Further research is necessary to fully understand China's expanding impact in Africa's resource sector. Future research can examine how Chinese investment compares to Western neocolonial practices in terms of its long-term effects on the economy and environment.

4) Sustainable Resource Management and Technological Advancements

There is still much to learn about how to combine sustainable mining methods with green technology in resource-rich nations. Research may concentrate on the ways that technology might prevent environmental damage while still providing financial advantages to nearby populations.

5) Laws and Corporate Accountability Systems

The efficiency of global regulatory agencies and corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs in holding multinational firms responsible for economic and environmental injustices might be evaluated by more study.

6) The Extraction of Resources and Climate Change

More research is needed on the relationship between extractive industries and climate change, especially in areas that are susceptible to both resource depletion and relocation brought on by climate change.

Future studies can further a more sophisticated knowledge of postcolonial development, resource governance, and sustainable alternatives to neocolonial extractivism by tackling these topics.

14. TRANSITIONS FOR KEY SECTIONS

14.1. FROM INTRODUCTION TO HISTORICAL CONTEXT

"It is crucial to look at the historical foundations of neocolonial extractivism in order to comprehend its current reality. Examining the legacy of colonial exploitation is essential since the colonial past created economic mechanisms that still influence postcolonial resource governance."

14.2. FROM HISTORICAL CONTEXT TO NEOCOLONIAL EXTRACTIVISM

"The systems of resource control developed during this time continue in new forms even when official colonial rule may have ceased. Under the pretense of economic progress, international firms and foreign governments still embezzle riches from Africa in the twenty-first century."

14.3. FROM NEOCOLONIAL EXTRACTIVISM TO THE SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA'S RESOURCES

"Multinational firms' hegemony in Africa's resource sector is not a unique occurrence. Rather, it is a component of a wider worldwide struggle for dominance of natural resources—a contemporary "Scramble for Africa" with significant geopolitical and environmental ramifications."

14.4. FROM THE SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA'S RESOURCES TO WHO BENEFITS AND WHO SUFFERS

"It is important to consider who actually gains from these extractive sectors as businesses and foreign nations continue to compete for Africa's resources. The glaring disparities ingrained in this system become evident when one looks at the distribution of income and the effects of resource extraction."

14.5. FROM WHO BENEFITS AND WHO SUFFERS TO TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE GOVERNANCE

"It is essential to investigate alternative governance models in light of the economic and environmental injustices caused by neocolonial extractivism. A more sustainable and fair future requires enforcing stricter laws, encouraging resource sovereignty, and maintaining openness."

14.6. FROM TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE GOVERNANCE TO CONCLUSION

"Although these actions give hope for change, long-term political determination and international collaboration are necessary for significant change. The management of resources must fundamentally change to put people and the environment above profit in order to escape neocolonial extractivism."

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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