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Cabral and the SPLM Revolutionary Dilemma: Toward Theoretical and Conceptual Reflections

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Abstract	Review Article

Post-colonial African political trajectories have always been defined by resistance and liberation praxis. However, such initiatives have failed in the process of reaching political settlements and actively engaged in post-independence governance. Recently, South Sudan declared its independence at the time when the country was experiencing a depression accompanied by economic slump. This work is, therefore, an attempt to recount these failures and assess the manner in which the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) responded to national issues and challenges upon assuming political power. On the other hand, this work is prompted by the desire of understanding how and why many national liberation movements fail as governments in responding to the challenges of liberation once in power. It is argued here that, the leadership failure had negative effects in post conflict reconstruction, thus generating a senseless civil war. The study recommends a holistic model of national reconstruction, informed by the historical aspirations of the masses as opposed to personal and ethnic whims.
Keywords: SPLM, economic slump, political power, historical aspirations.

INTRODUCTION

After the end of the Second World War (1939-1945), the developing countries worldwide and Africa in particular, fast-tracked the decolonization process through formation of national liberation movements or nationalist political parties to agitate for freedom and independence. The aim was to claim self-determination based on territorial integrity, political governance, economic powers, social elements and national ideologies. The nationalist movements and political parties understood the basic objectives of decolonization, notwithstanding the method employed. It was, however, the national liberation movements whose method of political communication was armed struggle, which involved great personal sacrifices, emphasized ultimate change of the colonial state, achieved the state power, having planned to conduct and run the public affairs [1, 2].

The idea of reconstructing the nation state became a precondition for nationhood and a way of resolving both the social issues and national challenges in Africa. Liberation movements such as the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), The

Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), The South West African Peoples Organization of Namibia (SWAPO), African National Congress (ANC), of South Africa, National Resistance Movement, (NRM), of Uganda and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, (SPLM), were once liberation movements that seized state power after years of armed struggle. South Sudan is of scholarly interest because SPLM in the most recent example of armed movement to capture power and struggle with challenges of post conflict reconstruction and nation-building.

The history of conquest and occupation of South Sudan intertwined with that of Sudan. Sudan and South Sudan had special mention in imperial history of occupation and colonization. Since 1805, Turkey under Khedive Ismail extended its sphere of influence and occupation to Egypt and Sudan due to geo-strategic interests and raw materials prevalent in the Equatorial and along the Nile Valley. Turkey, Egypt, and the condominium administration took control of Sudan and South Sudan before the Mahdi revolt that ultimately defeated the British and Egyptians, stamping their authority in the Sudan.

The imperial domination and resistance planted the strong seeds of Sudanese nationalism that was slowly beginning to take shape since the beginning of world war one. The question of Sudanese nationalism and South Sudan's self-determination was raised even before independence could be granted, as southern soldiers in Torit and elsewhere mutinied in support of self-determination [3]. This resistance, otherwise associated with the Anyanya (I) was largely based on the Equatorial and marked the first phase of South Sudanese resistance for self-determination. Save for the 1972 Addis Ababa agreement, the question of the independence of South Sudan remained controversial until its determination was concluded through the comprehensive peace agreement in 2005 and subsequent political independence in 2011 [4, 5].

This study focuses on the role of the SPLM as a movement and political party in addressing the social issues and national challenges upon South Sudan's attainment of political independence in July 2011. It is important to understand that liberation movements have a culture of their own, hopes, fears and aspirations that have historical genesis, emanating from the nature of the struggle. Furthermore, there are both internal and external factors that prevent liberation movements from accomplishing their goals especially when they come to power. This study will investigate into these factors with reference to the SPLM.

THE PROBLEM

No idea and uprising that has captured and inspired the imaginations of the African people as the SPLM revolutionary advances. It is a force that came to embody the collective aspirations and hopes of the masses. However, the transitional period was however marked by corruption, poor governance and increased power struggle within SPLM that culminated to a civil war in 2013, a year after the end of the multi-donor trust reconstruction fund. Insecurity increased and service delivery declined significantly. This reduced the effectiveness of the SPLM to address developmental issues associated with both the social and national issues that all liberation movements seek to answer. In addition, there seems to have been no clear objectives of the struggle to implement liberation dividends to the citizenry. Indeed, research after the formation of Government of Southern Sudan in 2005 is limited in scope and quantity. There are studies that examined the relationship between National Congress Party and Sudan People's Liberation Movement, SPLM, but not in the context of what the movement sought to achieve. Moreover, the resurgence of a civil war shortly after independence and the failure to resolve the social and national challenges in South Sudan are matters that warrant deeper investigation and analysis that is yet to be undertaken.

LIBERATION PRAXIS AND CABRAL IMAGINATIONS

The national armed liberation struggle against European colonial rule in Africa took place in the context of nationalism and cold war. Many of the struggles were financed and supported by the former Soviet Union and Peoples Republic of China. Both incorporated Marxist-Leninist. Secondly, there was greater emphasis on the centrality of the state in development and social transformation [6, 7].

It was and is believed that after capturing state power, they could bring about radical transformation. What is more, they were popular movements inspired by high levels of popular participation, discipline and obedience to the national liberation movement. Popular participation and legitimacy are therefore assumed to be an integral part of the struggle against oppressive colonial regimes and not conferred through an election. Finally, all national liberation movements considered socialism as the likely acceptable outcome of the struggle. The latter assumes that there were certain entitlements and policies expected to be pursued by the national liberation movements once in power. Such policies were aimed at socializing gains of the struggle and advance public good. It is the promise of public good and socialism that made the national liberation movements popular and appealing to the hearts and minds of the people [7].

Cabral hypothesizes that national liberation struggle is conducted in two phases. The first phase seeks to take state power while the second phase is where the real issues about national liberation are raised and confronted. The social question is answered in the second phase that is defined by class struggle and struggle against imperialism or neo-colonial conspiracies. Cabral notes the economic weakness of the middle class and petty bourgeoisie together with its administrative inexperience in public management.

This creates multiple dependencies but most importantly economic dependency on the former colonial masters. His theory of national liberation shoulders struggles against neo-colonialism. Such theory cannot fully explain the nature of SPLM struggle in totality as SPLM never fought against neocolonialism neither has the class struggle been an important variable in political mobilization. The theory is still relevant in explaining the nature of the national liberation struggle and post-colonial societies that emerge thereafter [8, 7].

Cabral was a political theorist and practitioner whose ideas liberated a number of former Portuguese colonies in Africa-Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, Mozambique and Angola. Other national liberation movements in Southern Africa with diverse outcomes borrowed his ideas. According to Cabral, national liberation struggle is undertaken in two phases. The first phase places the actual conduct of the armed struggle against colonial rule while the second phase is the answer social and national question that have triggered the struggle in the first place.

Cabral was part of a trend in the worldwide anti-colonial movement that, drawing inspiration from the Chinese and Vietnamese examples, argued for the supremacy of the urban and rural masses in national liberation struggles. Cabral believed revolutionary socialism was the only genuine solution for colonized peoples: "In our present historical condition, there are only two possible paths for an independent nation, to return to imperialist domination (neo-colonialism, capitalism, state capitalism), or to take the road of socialism

Cabral divided history into three epochs related directly to the development of the means of production: society before classes (of which he called for more study), class society, and a future communist society in which private property and class divisions would be eliminated. Guinean pre-class society had already given way to class divisions prior to Portuguese colonialism, but the latter had stunted the colonies' economic and cultural development. The objective for Cabral was to seize the national productive forces, further develop them and utilize them for the common good. He argued that only mass, popular resistance—not just negotiation conducted by a small stratum of intellectuals—could ever be successful in truly completing these tasks.

Guinea, as a super-exploited colony, had a small urban working class and Cabral looked to the peasantry as the social force capable of defeating the Portuguese. He emphasized the unreliable nature of the native bourgeoisie, which developed as a service class for colonialism. He warned that they would seek to inherit the state apparatus and continue to siphon off the wealth of the nation to imperialism as long as they received their share. "If we accept the principle that the liberation struggle is a revolution and that it does not finish at the moment when the national flag is raised and the national anthem played."

Instead, "we are fighting so that insults may no longer rule our countries, martyred and scorned for centuries, so that our peoples may never more be exploited by imperialists not only by people with white skin, because we do not confuse exploitation or exploiters with the color of men's skins; we do not want any exploitation in our countries, not even by black people."

Cabral directly addressed intellectuals and called on them to abandon their loyalty to other class interests and the agents of imperialism. Instead, the role of the revolutionary intellectual was to march shoulder-to-shoulder with the most oppressed sectors of society. The latter were the only social force truly capable of carrying out a social revolution [9]. In the process of struggle, guerrilla leaders would undergo "a reafricanization of the spirit." In short, this meant that picking up arms against the colonial rulers would puncture the mythology of the latter's "greatness and invincibility" and restore African people's identity, dignity and self-determination.

In his famous "The Weapon of Theory" address at the 1966 Tricontinental Congress in Havana, Cabral expressed the desire and determination to emulate the Cuban people's example of overthrowing all forms of exploitation through armed struggle. Like Che Guevara, Cabral emphasized the human dimension of the liberation struggle, hoping that out of the struggle for a new society, a new man and new woman would develop elevated beyond egotism and self-interest.

The latter is the most important phase as it determines the success or failure of the national liberation movement based on the questions paused and answered. Although national liberation movements hoped to win militarily against the imperial rule and oppression, negotiations were not ruled out as the last option or in case of stalemate. Central to Cabral's theory of national liberation is the assumption that social transformation and centrality of politics over military forms the basis of a successful national liberation movement. The second phase is where the real questions of national liberation movements are posed and answered. Such questions revolve around economic, political and social transformation but in a manner that radically and fundamentally changes or alters the status quo [7].

An understanding of Cabral's theory of national liberation presupposes an understanding of his theoretical orientations and praxis that cuts across Marxism, realism, humanism, existentialism, pragmatism and materialism. The holistic understanding of his political thought would lead to his proper grasp of his theory of national liberation. According to Cabral, national liberation is defined as representing a reality that goes beyond independence and liquidates imperialism. As we have noted above, Cabral espoused Marxism but departed from it on the assumption that class struggle is not the base of historical existence of a society but rather the mode of production. He was however categorical on agents of impoverishing third world countries as colonialism, neo colonialism and

imperialism but emphatic that the principal target of national liberation movements was imperialism.

Cabral was also pragmatic. The latter is a movement in philosophy intellectually associated with Charles Sanders Peirce, William James and John Dewey and assumes that a theory is true if it can work in practice. That is to say ideas are useful only if they solve human problems. Humanism rejects all forms of supernatural and authoritarian beliefs by emphasizing rational and scientific inquiry. Furthermore, humanists assume responsibility of one's own lives and actions. What is more, individual freedom, cooperation and tolerance is highly valued. Cabral placed emphasis on people themselves but not the impulse of the supernatural beings as far as national liberation is concerned.

Relying on the political ideas and thought of Amilcar Cabral as drawn from his revolutionary, economic, political, cultural and anti-imperialist theories. By focusing on the basic or primary aspects of decolonization, he deals with independence as a material question where lives of ordinary people must change for the better. Nzongola Ntalaja for example argues that Cabrals ideas can be achieved or realized provided the post-colonial state implements the nationalist project of democracy and development through political self-determination, pan African solidarity and economic self-reliance. The primary focus, he adds is to focus on three inter related topics namely democratic governance, reconstruction and development, and Pan African solidarity. South Sudan achieved political independence in 2011 and entered the reconstruction and development phase.

The latter could not take off as fresh civil war started in December 2013. Thus, the theory of Cabral comes in handy in explaining diverse aspects of the liberation struggle, the reconstruction challenges and the importance of Pan African solidarity in answering the social and national question that he paused and answered in the abstract and practice as a leader of a liberation movement.

It is a continuation of the struggle for independence. It is a project that began before countries of the global south got their independence and then in the era of globalization, it appeared to have died a sudden death and now needs to be revived [10]. Wamba [11] refers to the national question and project as "how global form of social existence characterizing the internal multiplicity and relations of society to its environment is historically arrived".

Building common consciousness out of people of racial, ethnic, class, gender, religious and generational differences (nation building), observes Hippler [12]. The agenda of nation building is therefore according to Mkandawire [13] articulated as national question or a way of forging nationhood. Ntalaja [14] adds that national question is about economic, democracy, and social issues. National project therefore sought to achieve multiple factors such as decolonization, nation building, democracy and regional integration [15].

CABRAL AND THE SPLM NOSTALGIA

Like many liberation struggles, the first responsibility of the SPLM government was to eradicate poverty, ignorance and disease and promote economic development through redistribution of national resources. Reclaiming the nation and resolving the national question in the context of neoliberal globalization required capacity building and security provision including human security being emphasized. The SPLM is not a monolithic actor but a cluster of military units lacking clear centralized command, formal hierarchy that is undermined by tribal loyalties and legacy of militia structure and thus could not inspire confidence as a national force that can protect people and their property regardless of their political persuasions and beliefs. The SPLM equally could not address the basic challenges of governance as argued earlier suggests that the movement has presided over a predatory and rent seeking state that is a burden to its populace.

In her policy brief, Roque [16] observes that since the formation of the SPLM in 1983, the movement moved from one crisis to another over vision, leadership and power struggle. From 1983 to 1991, she notes that this period was marked by polarization, factionalism and civil war. The 1991 Riek Machar and Lam Akol who accused John Garang of personal, authoritarian and autocratic rule led splintering. The point pointed out that the SPLM/A high command had failed to establish an effective and democratic governance system. Finally, the two argued that New Sudan that. John Garang was fighting for was untenable as opposed to independence that many South Sudanese preferred. Although the party vision was refined and government programs defined and party structures created, many important issues were not addressed. In fact, General Salva Kiir shared with Riek Machar a list of 52 grievances similar to Nassir declaration of 1991.

The political leadership in South Sudan after series of sustained crises has been defined by corruption, non-delivery of services, tribal tendencies and slow development of infrastructure. The elites in Juba who are powerful within SPLM have fallen into the gravy train with fat administrative expenditures on salaries, allowances and emoluments, overseas travel, expensive luxury cars, that when measured against prevailing poverty suggests pitfalls of national consciousness and a betrayal of national liberation struggle. The studies by London School of Economics in collaboration with the University of Juba, center for

Peace and Development Studies concluded that "individuals appeared to act without reference to established conventions of social constrain, openly taking resources for personal gain, acting in ways that violated ideas about moral probity or in ways that were simply criminal or unconstitutional." The political question and crises within the SPLM stands as the major obstacle towards answering both the social and national question in South Sudan.

The Rumbek emergency meeting of 2004 was called over power struggle between General Salva Kiir and John Garang. The purpose of the meeting was to conduct an honest and frank assessment of SPLM amid the accusations that John Garang was treating the movement as his personal property. He was accused of tribalism, nepotism and favoritism. He was also accused of eliminating those whom he was opposed to within the movement. Finally, John Garang was accused of privileging violence and war over political persuasion and education.

The leadership, the critics pointed out that had no concern and interest of the welfare of the forces of national liberation, including the combatants. The movement was facing internal crises associated with the loss of Ethiopian support after the collapse of Mengistu regime in Ethiopia, opportunistic attempts by the Khartoum regime to weaken the SPLM from within, the split of SPLM in 1991 and high civilian casualties. In 2010, Roque further notes that there was candidate nomination difficulties and dissent by powerful military leaders. The cumulative effect of these crises was the eruption of the civil war in 2013 and has persisted to date. Divisions for vision and ideology of SPLM have always been cemented in different camps through ethnic manipulation and neo-patrimonial networks.

From Rogues [17] observation of the sustained crises since 1983 to 2016, one can argue that SPLM does not have a unified political program and unity of purpose to answer to both the social and national question. The fact that more resources are directed towards the military and security sector at the expense of development suggests that expectations at independence in 2011 will remain wishful thinking and a dream. Finally, the SPLM will be least placed to address security challenges as these leadership crises have peaked with prevailing civil war since 2013.

The question of policy choices at the economic front is what has betrayed the movement. Neoliberal globalization involves cutting of social safety nets, deregulation, privatization, elimination of the concept of pubic good, and minimization of social spending in areas such as health, education and welfare. The state is deprived of economic policy autonomy as in the process undermine democracy and state capacity to play its traditional role.

CONCLUSION

When the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in 2005 marking the end of the civil war and the beginning of the transitional period, the SPLM assumed responsibility for governance. The CPA had a provision for a ceasefire between Khartoum and SPLM. Furthermore, power and wealth sharing protocols were included with a 50% sharing of oil. There was to be political independence in six years after a referendum on the same. The transitional period was aimed at allowing the SPLM to establish systems, policies, processes and structures of governance. The legacy of war had ruined and devastated South Sudan causing underdevelopment, ubiquitous poverty and hopelessness among the people. As such, SPLM was supposed to establish and lay a foundation for a modern and viable state. On the contrary, SPLM hardly focused on building the necessary institutions, structures and policies of governance but were preoccupied with politics of the Belly (Bayart, 1993). What is more, the ruling elites engaged in worst forms of rent seeking and prebandal neo patrimonial politics where the line between public and private forms of accumulation was thin or indistinguishable.

The contestation for power and resources within the movement assumed violent proportions as elites jostled for political power. This was not a new trend within the movement rather part of a political culture that was started by John Garang in 1983. During his reign as the leader of the movement, it was plagued by authoritarianism and personal rule. In fact Garang summarily executed his political opponents. Furthermore, he was intolerant of constitutional norms, democracy to the extent that even Salva Kiir and Riek Machar fell out with him at the time he died in August 2005. Splits and factionalism was established tradition and political culture within the SPLM. The most serious political rifts occurred in 1991 and 2001 after the failure of the Khartoum Peace Agreement. In fact what kept together the movement was common dislike for the Khartoum regime and quest for political independence.

The preoccupation of the new masters of south Sudan with greed and corruption must seem to outsiders like an accidental obsession. For as long as the SPLM/A has existed in the picture war making and profiteering were the norm and not the exception. Part of the reason may be that the group had to deal with how southern society is organized and cannot resist the temptation to make the most of it. But in all fairness there is more to it than that. The role of leadership coupled with external influence had a heavy toll on the nature of the organization as well. Leadership theory might give us a clue to what it meant to be a liberation movement in Sudan within the context of the Horn of African region.

To the extent that a societal analysis is required the traditional and factional character of southern Sudanese society must be considered as well.

Equally informative would be the attempt to impose liberal formulas of state and peace building into a traditional and deeply illiberal society and social base. Once the theoretical assumptions and framework of analysis listed above and the origin and development of the SPLM/A are understood, one can begin to see the problems and complexities involved in state and peace building in south Sudan. Compounding this is the brief political history of south Sudan as an entity and the specific origins of the SPLM/A.

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