



## Public treasury looting for global North banking, public welfare denial, migration and sex-slave trafficking of Nigerians after colonialism

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**Abstract.** Enslaving and victimising the poor by criminals within and outside governments of underdeveloped countries is gaining attention of academics in the social sciences. This article clarifies inter-relationships among modern slavery and trafficking in girls/women for sexual exploitation. It also shows how vulnerability of people victimised by the crime has been increased by policies deriving from neo-liberalism. To facilitate explication of the variables/issues, the study was based on the theoretical/doctrinal and political aspects of neo-liberalism, coinciding with scenarios of declining welfare, increasing susceptibility/vulnerability of Nigeria's poor (non-elite) and massive unemployed youth to out-migration and traffickers in persons. The explicated issues include modern slavery (generally and trafficking in Nigerian girls/women for sexual exploitation abroad) as well as the relationships among treasury looting and stashing of the loot in the banks of the global North. It is explained how declining welfare (i.e. multiple-dimensional adversities e.g. unemployment) provokes desires in the unemployed to out-migrate and increases their susceptibility to trafficking in persons. Finally, the article is concluded.

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## 1. Modern slavery: an introduction

In 2013 about 30 million people worldwide were trapped in modern slavery without a chance to regain freedom due to the use of violence to hold them in dehumanising conditions of hard labour. Different forms of slavery include what is conventionally known as slavery as well as other practices that closely resemble it. The latter include debt bondage, forced marriage, sale or exploitation of children, trafficking in persons and forced labour (Walk Free Foundation, 2013; CNN, <http://edition.cnn.com/>). This indicates that the size of modern slavery worldwide increased from about 2.4 million people in the mid 2000s to nearly 30 million. The United Nations' International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) define human trafficking as the use of threat, coercion, fraud, deceit, abuse of positions of influence, exploitation of vulnerability of persons, including inappropriate means to recruit, transport, transfer, hide, harbour and trade in persons, or exercise exploitative control

over vulnerable or weak persons (International Labour Organisation [ILO], 2005; UNESCO, 2006). Of the global total slaves (29,800,695 in 2013) the number of Nigerians affected by this phenomenon was 701,032, representing a substantial proportion of the country's total population estimated for that year at 168,833,776 (Walk Free Foundation, 2013a, b). Recent reports suggest that trafficking in persons contributes enormously towards swelling the population of modern slaves worldwide.

## 2. Emerging human/sex trafficking geography and structure: inter-linkages of crime within national economic disequilibria between poor and rich countries and gender

Recent reports have revealed characteristics of the socio-spatial networks created by global human trafficking through returning to the recent mapping

of Nigeria's supply of modern slaves as a way of examining parts of the interim network depicting human trafficking flows from the Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta to various rich countries. It was reported that the city of Benin, Edo state, in the Nigeria's Niger Delta was one of the traditional transit points of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, whose institutions have been revived in the modern slave trade. In modern slavery, women and girls from across Nigeria have reportedly been trafficked to the developed world or global North through several foreign destinations, especially Western Europe (Spain, Italy and France) and North America. Within the African region, the route for transporting women and girls goes through the northern Kano city, also one of Nigeria's 36 states, and through other West African and North African countries, e.g. Libya, before they are taken to various Western European countries (Osiki, 2010; Ingwe et al., 2012). Along the travel chain there are many actors, including information and service agencies involved in grand deception of vulnerable girls and women, mediators, inn-keepers, informal prison cells, where those at the entry level of victimisation are held captive and put through the spectrum of dream worlds of anticipation of the foreign world full of non-existing 'greener pastures'. Others involved include staff of immigration agencies and foreign countries' embassies/consulates engaged in either facilitating visas frequently bearing aliases or false names and passage of people-in-transit from country to country; escorts – both males and females with responsibilities for make-believing that the expected 'greener pastures' are even greener than it was told earlier and sometimes voodoo specialists responsible for applying evil spiritual afflictions on victims of slavery.

Worried by a recent reported that '(S)ix of ten trafficked persons (world-wide) are Nigerian' (This-Day, 2013; September 18) and M. Rees' thesis that the 'life-cycle (from start to finish of human trafficking process is gendered presents characteristics of bias towards one of two genders: afflicts females more than males (Rees, 2012), I decided to ask – and attempt responses to – the following questions: Why would a large proportion of Nigeria's population be affected by modern slavery and poverty underlying it despite the country's natural and human resource wealth? What might be the proportion or magnitude of Nigerian girls and women, trafficked for sexual exploitation abroad, in the total population of

the country's citizens affected by modern slavery? To what extent is the violence inflicted by neo-liberalism and policies associated with it a contributory factor in increasing the susceptibility of Nigerian citizens to migrate abroad generally and get trafficked for sexual exploitation? What role is played by the poor welfare arising from the deprivation stimulated by the Nigeria's elite treasury looting in increasing the vulnerability of Nigerians to modern slavery?

### 3. Objectives and organisation

The objective of this article is to contribute towards understanding of the inter-relationships of the vulnerability of Nigerians to modern slavery. In the rest of the article, relevant materials will be presented to answer the foregoing specific questions as well as achieve specific objectives arising from the research questions. I shall frame this study on neo-liberalism. As a way of providing some contextual factors concerning the study area (Nigeria), I present the rather ubiquitous spread of Nigerian slaves around the world as a foundation for highlighting the paradoxical scenario characterised by human and natural resource abundance coexisting with opulent living of the elite, who criminally and corruptly perpetrate treasury looting (1) thereby inflicting mass poverty and deprivation from improved living on the poor. In doing so, I provide evidence through reports on the repatriation of the Abacha (2) loot by the Swiss government to illustrate the size of other Nigeria's loot still being held in the global North's banks. Then I proceed to clarify the inter-relationships between modern slavery generally and trafficking in girls/women for prostitution, as well as how they have been promoted by policies embedded in neo-liberalism. I draw from the literature to distinguish and explicate three aspects of neo-liberalism: theoretical, doctrinal and political, that is the key components of the way public treasury looting by Nigeria's elite leads to declining welfare and the susceptibility/vulnerability of the non-elite to out-migration and traffickers in persons. I shall also show how the method of discourse is suitable for this study of the way policies deriving from neoliberal-capitalism promote susceptibility of Nigerians to out-migration/modern slavery. Building on the

latter, I shall explicate the general nature of modern slavery as well as the rationale for concentrating on trafficking in Nigerian girls/women for sexual exploitation abroad. Then, I shall relate modern slavery of Nigerians to looted funds stashed-away in banks in Europe/West. In doing this, I shall elaborate inter-relationships among declining welfare (including multiple-dimensional adversities e.g. unemployment) arising from treasury looting by Nigeria's elite and how this provokes decisions/wishes of a considerable proportion of about 40 million unemployed youth to out-migrate, thereby increasing their susceptibility to traffickers in persons. Finally, I shall conclude the article.

#### **4. Framing modern enslavement: theoretic-conceptual background ideas**

##### **4.1. Theoretical, doctrinal and political perspectives of neo-liberalism**

Neo-liberalism has been discussed variously: as a theory, as a doctrine and as a policy. For each of these forms, it is suitable for framing the present discourse on modern slavery for specific reasons that would be briefly cited here. The origin of neo-liberalism has been credited to the reworking of classical economic ideas propounded by A. Smith and D. Ricardo. The latter specifically include Smith's suggestion that the free market possesses the capability of self-regulation and through this guarantees a greater prosperity to the society compared to mercantilism (Smith, 1976 [1776]). Ricardo's major proposal concentrated on advocating the application of principles embedded in the comparative advantage and minimal tariff barriers to achieve trade specialisation as a means of gaining greater prosperity (Ricardo, 1992 [1817]) of the society. These classical economic ideas were reworked by neo-liberals (Austrian economist, F. von Hayek, and his colleague M. Friedmann) spreading the mission through the Mont Pelerin Society within and outside universities (Hayek, 1981: 1944; Friedman, 2002: 1992). Detailed accounts of the growth and evolution of neo-liberalism have been profusely documented elsewhere (e.g. Brand, Sekler, 2009; Ingwe et al., 2009, to list only a few), it is reasona-

ble to shift the present contribution towards more cogent aspects of the policy variety, believed to have spurned from a body of ideas that have simultaneously taken various and self-contradictory hues exhibiting greater doctrinal content than the theoretical (Bayer, 2009).

##### **4.2. Neo-liberalism as a theory and doctrine**

Contribution of the socio-economic geographers to the theoretically-cantered discussion on neo-liberalism has gained ascendance since the early to mid 2000s and thereafter. After pointing out the profuse evidences of the dismal and ubiquitous failure of neo-liberalism-based policies in many developing countries around the world, development economist K. Bayer argues strongly that neo-liberalism is a doctrine rather than theoretical potency that its promoters touted it to be (Bayer, 2009). Although geographer J. Glassman reports that his fellow socio-economic geographer D. Harvey credits neo-liberalism as providing the theoretical bases on policies adopted by governments described as the New Right (Harvey, 2005: 19–31), the use of the term 'theory' in this connection is simply how the promoters of the doctrine presented it, rather than fulfilling conditions expected of any scientific theory. That is, instead of using the term 'doctrine' to describe neo-liberalism-based policies, some contributors tended to adopt the term 'theory' until the turnaround after the global financial melt-down was rapidly followed by the global economic depression in the late 2000s and several years afterwards. Another dent in the theoretical strength of neo-liberalism is indicated by the way Glassman points towards the increasing endorsement of Keynesianism principles/policies by G8 governments to suggest that the potency and popularity of neo-liberalism has dwindled after the recent global economic recession. Interestingly, he uses both 'doctrine' and 'theory' almost inter-changeably and simultaneously in one paper (Glassman, 2009: 497–498).

##### **4.3. Neo-liberalism as a policy**

Geographers have also contributed to the policy aspect of neo-liberalism. The concern in this con-

nection has been on highlighting the way this side of the divide (policy or practice-related aspects of neo-liberalism) differs from or contradicts the other side (doctrinal/theoretical). The latter advertises advantages derivable from the application of the neo-liberalistic principles (non-interventionism of the state) as the 'order' for sustaining the unfounded proposal or claim of 'self-regulation' capability of the unfettered market in the formulation of its policies. Actual neo-liberalistic policies (a.k.a. practices) have been replete with the perpetual characterisation by the state's 'visible hand' (represented by interventionist policies). This is the grand contradiction that human geographers (Peck, Tickell, 2002; Harvey, 2005) and other social scientists (political scientists and economists) have been concerned with, i.e. neo-liberalism and/or its related harbingers e.g. globalisation (Adams, 1991; Khor, 2000). Profuse evidences confirming this feature of neo-liberalistic policies have been cited. The structural adjustment programme (SAP)-based policies, whose experimentation was facilitated by the Pinochet dictatorship in Argentina in the 1980s before it was propagated through violence in many developing countries (DCs), has been frequently cited. The double standards of this practice, including 'round-tripping', involved in rather easy granting of 'loans' to DCs by the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), thereby leading to the infamous indebtedness of DCs, has been acknowledged. Common features of SAP include considerable cut-backs in public welfare (mainly spending on the social development of education, health and related sectors, promotion of trade liberalisation, capital mobility across national boundaries as well as disdain for employment and environment) (Altvater, 2009). Use of violence, extremism, impunity, conspicuous treasury looting and conversion of state assets to private individual ownership in the implementation of SAP in some DCs, e.g. Nigeria (Ingwe et al., 2009) and Cambodia (Springer, 2011), has been cited as the rationale for replacing the doctrine with the violence-free anarchism (Springer, 2010, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c). The foregoing theoretical framework (contrasted to the potency or otherwise of it) is suitable for this study because of the way it cuts across the aspects relevant to the study. Apart from explicating theoretical and doctrinal challenges of neo-liberalism, the framework also covers policies

focusing on promoting neo-liberalism (e.g. SAP of the 1980s) and the unemployment spurred by them. Geographers have documented many adversities that arise from the implementation of policies related to neo-liberalism. These include relentlessness in the marginalisation of the poor, transformation of the socio-economic circumstances of the poor into an increasingly violent experiences, such as being plunged into labour markets characterised by uncertainty (transient duration of work, work casualisation), i.e. offer of scarce jobs of non-permanent forms that are, among other adversities, devoid of pension benefits and underpaid (Peck, Tickell, 2002). Drawing from the literature, geographer S. Springer argues that the local population or non-elite or non-capitalists who are not actively involved in foisting and implementing neoliberal-capitalist policies have mostly been those who have always borne the brunt of frequent failures associated with violent processes of neo-liberalism and neo-liberalisation, a variety of the former that is restrictively contrived by the local elite within specific nations or regions (Springer, 2011).

#### **4.4. Capital valorisation in neo-liberalism, complicity of the global North's banks and the looting of African treasuries**

Another form of contrapuntal geography and reading is presented by the images of developed countries, their wealth amassing strategies and complicity with the thieving elite of underdeveloped countries in the very 'underdevelopment' processes. In the contrapuntal geography of ubiquitous 'everywhere war' and global blood-letting eloquently described in some of its content by D. Gregory (2011) represents the elaboration of the global military architecture supporting the USA-led capitalism that underlies what was earlier described by A.E. Ceceña (2009) as 'mercenary capitalism', the use of unacceptable military means to gain access to scarce resources sovereign countries far-flung from the USA and its allies that has become the hallmark of the contemporary globalisation of neoliberal capitalism. This same USA preoccupation is similarly described by RETORT as 'military neo-liberalism', as 'the true globalisation of our time' (RETORT, 2005: 103; Gregory, 2009: 238). How aspects of similar practices

have been applied to funds stolen from public treasuries of developing countries by the global North's banks, including those of the USA, has much earlier been documented in the post-colonial literature of underdevelopment (e.g. Adams, 1991). In the mid 2000s it was estimated that about US\$ 107 billion of Nigeria's public funds was stashed away in private bank accounts of the thieving elite abroad, mostly in the Western European countries (Afiekhe-*na*, 2005: 15). Here, we strategically restrict our discourse to what Swiss government and its financial institutions, like those of other global North countries, have so far done with the S. Abacha loot as it illustrates what has been happening as long as the looting of Africa by its despots for stashing away in the global North's banks is concerned. Following the case made by President Obasanjo about the dire need for funds to tackle manifold development challenges at the inauguration of Nigeria's Fourth Republic in 1999, the Swiss government accepted to repatriate the loot in instalments.

However, after repatriating the first instalment, the Swiss government reportedly became hesitant in repatriating the remainder, citing the Obasanjo administration's failure to conform to agreements established earlier by the governments of Switzerland and Nigeria on the need for spending the funds on social development programs (Millennium Development Goals). Civil society organisations of both countries and the World Bank responsible for monitoring social development projects funded by the loot alluded to that failure (World Bank, Nigeria/Federal Ministry of Finance, 2006). Ingwe et al. (2010) refer to earlier reports of the use of the oil-rich Middle East deposits for capital valorisation by the global North's banks, which has been cited as some of the greatest factors in the promotion of neo-liberalism. P. Adams (1991) reviews the stashing away in the global North's banks huge sums stolen by Congo's former despot, Mobutu Sese Seko, who publicly expressed his displeasure about his being insulted by the USA journal (*Forbes*), which was unable to correctly report the more 'respectable' size of his 'wealth' compared to this reported by his peers for a particular year. The United Nations Human Development Reports (various years since inception) are replete with poverty indicators regarding infrastructure and services across sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) as the global North's banks apply huge funds looted from Africa's public treasuries in

capital valorisation. There is a need to consider the economic growth outcomes of the investment of each of the multiplicity of huge amounts of money stolen by the elite of underdeveloped countries to stash away in the global North's banks in the post-colonial era. In doing this, there is a need to bear in mind that the cases of stealing public funds cited in the foregoing are only a few since the space constraints forbid a more exhaustive cataloguing of all known cases. This is one of the points that really supports the issue of underdevelopment or development in underdevelopment discourse. There is a need to undertake a bit of the contrapuntal geography and reading espoused by Said and his intellectual following, especially pertaining to highlighting some local characteristics of the areas and challenges at issue.

## 5. Methods and data

We applied discourse, a special aspect of the hypothetic-deductive scientific methodology. As used here, it involves analysing modern slavery associated with trafficking in persons who are vulnerable and excluded – in socioeconomic and psychological terms – from underdeveloped countries to the developed ones. B. Ashcroft and P. Ahluwalia (2001: 1999) define discourse as a way of knowing the world or bringing the world into being through statements. M. Foucault used the term in a sense different from 'speech' to refer to a 'firmly bounded area of social knowledge'. In the context of the construction of subjectivity, discourse enables various people to gain greater understanding among those involved in interaction (i.e. as people making speeches, members of the audience, writers, readers). The way social experiences and identities are categorised as determined by the social existence and social reproduction is organised by the complex signs and practices involved in discourse (Ashcroft, Ahluwalia, 2001 [1999]: 14). We gathered the data from the secondary sources, mostly through desk research. Issues in the nexus of modern slavery and underdevelopment have been profusely debated in the literature from which we systematically extracted data/information relevant for the present discourse. Henceforth, we apply two perspectives of contrapuntal geography in the discourse of as-

pects of the affliction of modern slavery on Nigeria's contemporary society; complicity of the global North's banks in the globalisation of neo-liberalism associated with connivance with looters of public treasuries of underdeveloped countries, e.g. Nigeria, Congo, etc; and ubiquity of modern slaves from Nigeria for being exploited, also sexually, in European and global North countries.

## **6. Ubiquity of Nigerian slaves around the world: the paradox of resource abundance, corruption and mass poverty**

From over 70 million of Nigerians recorded as poor, unable to earn/spend up to US\$ 1 a day in the mid 1990s, the population of Nigeria's poor rose to 100 million in 2012 (Nigeria/National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2010). Overwhelmed by the mass poor, Nigeria's borders are let loose for the inevitable quest for the proverbial 'greener pastures'; the poor's judgment of promises by criminals, pre-occupied with tricking them into modern slavery, are weakened by their declining faith in the government whose elite (1% of the population) live in opulence thereby subjecting them (masses) to acute lack of resources. Nigeria's political and economic history fits into the paradoxical persisting poverty-induced enslavement amid resource abundance, corruption and mediocrity. Nigeria is one of Africa's largest countries: with a landmass of 923,798 km<sup>2</sup>, nearly equivalent to nearly four of Western Europe's big advanced economies/countries. It has often been described as possessing potentials to become one of the most developed in the world due to its enormous endowments of resources, both human and natural. As has been elaborated elsewhere, apart from possessing commercial deposits of fossil fuels (crude oil and natural gas), the latter having been erroneously re-constituted as the earner of a disproportionately large percentage of the country's revenue since its discovery in the late 1950s, Nigeria also has large deposits of other solid minerals. This means the relegation of agriculture, as well as other minerals, to the background. In the mid 2000s, proven fossil fuel deposits, established mostly in the Niger Delta, included 4,635 million met-

ric tons of oil equivalent (*mtoe*) of oil; 4,497 *mtoe* of natural gas, among other energy resources (World Resources Institute [WRI] et al., 2005: 201, Adekeye, 2008: 18–23). The extraction of crude oil for export to earn an average of US\$ 20 billion annually since the 1970s (Adams, 1991) and much more thereafter, has stimulated a petro-economy and petro-capitalism (Gregory et al., 2009). Unfortunately, in Nigeria's version of the petro-capitalism, like in Iranian counterpart under its perverse ruler, Shah, a disproportionately large proportion of those earnings – about 80% – over decades, has been stolen by the elite (constituting less than 1% of the total population (WRI et al., 2003; Omojola, 2007; Adekeye, 2008; Ribadu, 2009). Yet, most of Nigeria's population that was recently projected at 167 million has been subjected to acute and prolonged poverty (African Development Bank, [ADB], 2013: 2). The same human resources perceived as forming potentials for development have been systematically frittered away by successive administrations since independence in 1960. No report exists of any of Nigeria's post-independent administrations that has seriously addressed the challenge of unemployment, which became considerable in the late 1960s, until the Jonathan administration was forced by the unrelenting riots following his removal of spurious subsidy on crude oil on the new year's day: (January 2012), to fabricate the so called subsidy reinvestment program (as popularly known by Nigeria's government propaganda acronym; SURE-P) – an ongoing measure designed to address high unemployment (Ingwe, 2012). That is all through over half-a-century of Nigeria's post-independent history; Nigeria's youth, among other non-elite, have been left to their own devices: most of these have been emigration abroad to various countries: from Equatorial Guinea (Panya) in the same 1960s to Western Europe, especially Italy, and the rest of the global North in the 1980s and thereafter.

## **7. Nigeria's public treasury looting, poor welfare and out-migration/human trafficking**

Public treasury looting and corruption by Nigeria's elite poses diverse adversities on the society and

economy. The main point in relation to treasury looting is that it represents lost opportunities (resources) for financing public welfare-raising infrastructure development or employment programs/projects. The bases for relating treasury looting and corruption perpetrated by the elite to public welfare is founded on the way the former manifests through deprivation, subordination and thwarting of the needs and interest of the majority of the population. Two pillars of this relationship deserve mentioning. The first one is the way corruption by Nigeria's elite is accompanied by exhibition of impunity and violation of human rights of the poor majority and vulnerable people (Alatas, 1968: 12). The second one is the elite's tendency to perpetually and selfishly promote and push their interest over and above those of the majority or the non-elite strata of the society. The latter is especially true in the societies presenting the dominance of the parasitic elite (Harvey, 1973).

One of the most direct repercussions of treasury looting and corruption is the way they provoke frustration of those deprived of their public entitlement, frequently culminating in their decision to out-migrate in search for the proverbial 'greener pastures' elsewhere in the world. While massive out-migration of Nigerians has reportedly been a complex and nebulous process that renders some of those victims available for exploitation as forced labourers, this article concentrates on how people capitalise on the frustrating circumstances contrived by the Nigeria's thieving elite to profit through criminal trafficking in persons. In this study, I argue that both out-migration and trafficking in persons have, by and large, been spurred by the phenomenal looting of the public treasury by the Nigeria's elite. It is profitable to make interrelationships between and/or among the foregoing aspects, as previously documented by scholars concerned with debates on this subject-matter, as well as the implementation of policies associated with neo-liberalism and the accomplishment of sustainable development goals/objectives in sub-Saharan Africa (Ingwe et al., 2010). Public treasury looting has been viewed as an aspect of multiple-dimensional violence associated with neo-liberalism – and its cousin, neo-liberalisation that features in several developing countries, including Nigeria (Springer, 2012). Stealing of funds meant for the public good, i.e. for financing public

welfare improvement programs, leads to deprivation and poverty as members of the society are denied community services (socio-physical infrastructure) capable of increasing their capacity to produce and achieve higher living standards. Nigeria is reputed for its notoriety in presenting some of the most serious inadequacies in socio-physical infrastructure in the world. To cite a few of the manifold inadequacies, electric power supply and transportation are easily the most debilitating in terms of stifling productivity. The total electricity generated has been grossly inadequate for the rapidly increasing population, currently projected at 161 million (Business Day, 2011a). Dominated by the state-owned enterprise, the Power Holding Company of Niger, previously known as NEPA (the popular derogatory description of the latter acronym is 'Never Expect Power Always') is attributed to corruption and mediocrity. The total power generated rose from 3,500 megawatts (Mw) in 2004 to 5,000 Mw after more generating stations were opened. Therefore, Nigeria's poor majority is regarded as the least net power consumers worldwide (Babawale, Awosanya, 2014). To circumvent and simultaneously promote this challenge, Nigeria's parasitic (non-productive) elite resort to using imported independent (grid-supplementing) power generating sets for residential non-productive purposes.

Another important aspect of inadequate infrastructure prompted by treasury looting is the poor development of transport facilities. The entire length of paved roads, unevenly distributed over Nigeria's 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja, is barely 41,945.71 kilometres (Nigeria, 2006; Ingwe, 2014). Although inadequacies of other infrastructure also exist, the combined inadequacies of electric power and transportation facilities have effectively caused the collapse of the formal sector of the economy, thereby reducing employability. The government recently acknowledged that about 40 million of the country's youth were unemployed (Nigerian Tribune, 2009). The huge unemployed youth population forms a pool of people prone to migrating abroad and susceptible to trafficking for slave-related exploitation. Preoccupied with treasury looting, dictators neither cared about providing infrastructure nor prepared budgets covering it. The Fourth Republic (1999-2014) has been marked by stealing of funds budgeted for providing infrastructure.



Apart from being pauperised, a large proportion of Nigeria's poor are subjected to systematic deprivation that could be viewed as manifold socio-economic and political exclusion or declining public welfare. Similar to the crime of trafficking in persons, obtaining evidence on the perpetration of corruption by Nigeria's elite is difficult as their actions are mostly shrouded in secrecy. Perhaps the strongest evidence of treasury looting in Nigeria is the recent disclosure by the United Nations' Office of Drugs and Crime's Executive Director, Antonio Maria Costa, at an event organised by Nigeria's Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), that about US\$ 400 billion had been stolen from Nigeria's treasury between 1960 and 1999 (Omojola, 2007: 20–39; *The Punch*, 14/11/2007: 2). The World Bank sources have put the loot between 1970 and 2006 at US\$ 300 billion (*The Punch*, 2006).

The direct relationship between public treasury looting and declining public welfare has been described by many, including the former Chairman of Nigeria's anti-corruption agency (Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC), N. Ribadu. He subscribed to and collaborated with the United Nations' Corruption and Drugs Organisation to disclose that of over US\$ 600 billion earned by Nigeria from the crude oil export since the 1960s about 80% was stolen by the Nigerian elite. The most affected stratum of the Nigeria's population, through deprivation of public welfare services, is the non-elite constituting 99% of the population. Although individuals who stole various amounts of money have been poorly documented, as this is the nature of this crime, the data and information on Nigeria's treasury looting is emerging. Corruption – including treasury looting and bribery among other variants – have been blamed for depriving Nigerians of productive capital, causing enormous adversity comprising poverty, deteriorating wellbeing, disease, ignorance and insecurity (Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria [CCBN], 1998; Conference of Nigeria's Political Parties [CNPP], 2007; Agbibo, 2010, 2012, 2013). In the 2000s Nigeria's government acknowledged that about 40 million of the country's youth were unemployed, with approx. 70 to 80% of them unemployable. Sadly, official action to tackle this problem was never taken, until the rebellion against removal of the crude oil subsidy by the Jonathan administration in early Janu-

ary of 2012 forced the government to undertake the Subsidy Reinvestment Programme, SURE-P (Nigerian Tribune, 2009), whose effective implementation seems to be failing.

Gross inadequacy of services for Nigerians has been attributed to findings that a large proportion of about US\$ 1.6 trillion earned by Nigeria's successive post-independent governments from crude oil export, since its commercial quantities were discovered in Oloibiri in 1956, has been stolen by the elite (Commission for Africa, 2005: 106). The estimated US\$ 107 billion of Nigeria's stolen funds held in foreign bank accounts (Afiekhena, 2005: 15) has to be drastically and frequently revised as more recent findings emerge. The Abacha loot alone, perpetrated between 1993 and 1998, surpasses the foregoing estimate. As if corroborating a grapevine boast by one of the late dictator's sons that the family would mourn if it becomes as poor as Africa's richest man, Aliko Dangote, the recent estimates of illicit funds held by the Abacha family and its collaborators in foreign banks put same at between US\$ 2 billion and US\$ 210 billion<sup>3</sup>. Initially, over US\$ 1.3 billion was identified as having been put into banks in the UK while other varying amounts that were traced – to some 150 financial institutions that connived with the family to launder Nigeria's stolen funds around the world (Eurodad, undated). Later, however, it was disclosed that 'the (Federal Government of Nigeria) uncovered fresh =N=(aira) 3.2 trillion (4) Abacha loot'. The latter report excludes another US\$ 1 billion (of the US\$ 1.1 billion traced then) voluntarily returned by the Abacha family to the Nigeria's federal government during the Obasanjo administration (1999-2007).

Most of the foreign accounts holding the hitherto undiscovered Abacha loot include Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Switzerland, the UK and the USA (Bribe Nigeria.com, no date/year). Although some of the Abacha loot were repatriated from the Swiss banks, the slow pace of legal prosecution process has been cited to explain 'why Abacha, others still in Swiss banks' (*The Guardian mobile*) and elsewhere (Bribe.Nigeria.com, undated). The recent Swiss government's declaration that '(w)e have returned Abacha's loot...' revealed that of the US\$ 1.7 billion of 'illicit funds' belonging to various countries that were put in Swiss banks by their elite, US\$ 700 million traced to General Abacha had been repatriated

by the Swiss government to its Nigerian counterpart. Following the awareness of Nigeria's partners about the poor level of social development in the country, the Swiss envoy also disclosed that the governments of Switzerland and Nigeria had agreed to cooperate with the World Bank to review the application of the repatriated funds for social development purposes (The Punch, 2013). The foregoing revises an earlier report by the former EFCC Chairman, N. Ribadu, estimating stolen funds held by the Abacha family at between US\$ 5 billion and US\$ 50 billion (Ribadu, 2009: 50).

During the heydays of the military dictatorship in Nigeria, evidence on corruption was frequently cited as reasons for implementing several coups that aimed at toppling most of Nigeria's administrations, including military regimes from the First Republic (1960-1967), which was terminated by the coup carried out by the Four Majors led by Chukwuma K. Nzeogu. Others include the dictatorship of General Yakubu Gowon (1967-1975) and the more recent administrations, both military dictatorships and electoral democracies (Kirstin, 1996, Omoigui, undated). Profuse comments about allegations of corruption of the administrations of Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo (a retired general) and President Goodluck Jonathan, and their cohorts (ministers and members of their 'kitchen cabinets') have been documented. However, the reasons broadcast for ousting the dictatorship led by Generals Mohammedu Buhari and Tunde Idiagbon (1983-1985) by General IB Babangida (retired) focused on the junta's extremism or human rights abuses associated with the Buhari-Idigbon junta's stringency in punishing criminals rather than stealing or corruption. Direct and indirect linkages have been made between the socio-economic and political challenges arising from phenomenal perpetration of criminal corruption that has adversely affected a large proportion of Nigeria's population (>170 million) to the extent that between 71 and 90% of the population have recently been earning less than US\$ 1 per day and living on US\$ 1 per day (WRI, UNDP, UNEP, and World Bank, 2005).

Some specialists point to the evidence that Nigeria has been earning as much as an average of US\$ 20 billion from crude oil export since the 1970s to argue that a higher level of development could have been achieved than this in fact obtained (Adams, 1991).

That argument can be extended to cover higher level of public welfare. Nigeria has earned more than that and lost commensurately large proportions thereafter (1991). Notable among such is the stealing of (or failure to account for) about US\$ 12.6 billion, being Nigeria's earnings (a.k.a. 'windfall'), earned from the first Gulf War of the early 1990s, under General IB Babangida's dictatorship (1985-1993). Although after his coup that ousted Buhari-Idiagbon, Babangida claimed that he needed to stop corruption and human rights abuses, his dictatorship was reputed with the notoriety of raising the same crimes to highest levels in Nigeria's history. Glimpses of the 1994 Panel Report by the economist, Pius Okigbo, on misappropriation corruptly of windfall (profits) earned by Nigeria during the first Gulf War (early 1990s) was explicated in gruesome details. The Report was delayed for 11 years, and was never officially published. Citing the Okigbo Report, eminent lawyer and human rights activist, Femi Falana, shed light on the evil genius adopted in embezzling much of the US\$ 12.6 billion Gulf oil windfall by the Babangida dictatorship. Projects of doubtful nature but on which huge funds were allocated include: TV/video purchase for his Presidency (US\$ 18.30 million), a documentary film on Nigeria (US\$ 9.92 million), the Presidency staff's welfare (US\$ 23.98 million), his and first lady's travels abroad (US\$ 99 million) and his personal security (US\$ 59.72 million). Others are Nigeria's diplomatic missions (London, Riyadh, Tehran, Niamey, Pakistan, Israel, gifts for Ghana and Liberia, equipment of ABU. Claiming that funds were required for financing priority projects (iron/steel and hydro-electric power development), dictator Babangida 'dedicated' earnings from 65,000 barrels of oil/day to special accounts named "Stabilisation". These rapidly expanded into parallel accounts to regular ones managed by the same Federal Government, held and treated them like foreign reserves but were never expended as earlier dedicated (Ogbeidi, 2012: 13–4, saharareporters.com, 2010 citing 'This Day, 2010). Publicly known to be multimillionaire neither involved in any kind of private business capable of yielding such accomplishment nor having wealthy parents capable of bequeathing him such considerable inheritance, Babangida is reputed for possessing a wide network of wealthy Nigerians loyal to him. Such loyalists are believed to have served as fronts for his corporate interests

during his dictatorship and afterwards. Babangida's failure to win preliminaries to presidential primary elections of the ruling Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), leading in 2011 to his withdrawal from the presidential race, indicates the potency of protests by Nigerians against the devastation of the country by dictatorships (saharareporters.com, 2010).

The Nigeria's elite, a minority of less than 1% of the total population, has been reprimanded and discredited for stealing and stashing away in foreign banks of about US\$ 300 billion of public funds earned through crude oil (and recently natural gas) export over the past 40 years. It is for this notoriety that the anthropologist, D.J. Smith (2007) writes of a 'culture of corruption' that seems to be 'consuming' Nigeria. In subscribing to the 'culture of corruption', the history of public treasury looting in Nigeria can be traced back to 1978 to the stealing of US\$ 1 billion by leaders of the dictatorship who ruled from the mid to late 1970s before handing over the political power to the quasi-election democracy of the 'Second Republic' (1979-1983). In implementing the latter under very controversial circumstances, marked by the public debate about what qualifies a presidential candidate to fulfil the stipulated 'two-third majority' of votes required for winning presidential elections, the thieving dictators extracted a promise of political immunity from the public probe, prosecution and penalty from their political successors (Adams, 1991). Using the global corruption perception index, Nigeria has been ranked by the Transparency International (TI), an anti-corruption organisation, as one of the world's most corrupt countries.

## 8. Linking migration and human trafficking to corruption embedded in neo-liberalism

The frustration resulting from stressors caused by failures of African governments to provide public infrastructure has previously been adversely linked to the implementation of neoliberal policies that are associated with violence. The violence has not been restricted to the process of its coercive implementation generally. Apart from occurring seriously as

a consequence of the institutionalisation of the neo-liberal dogma in Africa, examples have been cited of the undemocratic rule in the region, which receives support from countries controlling major international financial institutions (IFIs) of the global North, which have engaged in massive stealing and flight of sub-Saharan Africa's precious capital to be stashed away in advanced nation's banks. The latter has brought in the collapse of the formal sector employment and the resulting misery has also compelled massive flight of Africa's virile youth as socio-economic refugees to advanced countries to seek asylum and 'greener pastures' in the global North countries. In the 2000s, the global refugee population of about 20 million was accounted for in large part by migrants from Africa (Ingwe et al., 2010).

Nigeria presents one of the notable examples of public treasury looting in SSA. These include dictators stealing of US\$ 1 billion in 1978 and thereafter (between US\$ 5 and US\$ 50 billion by the late General Abacha and his cohorts) between 1993 and 1997, among others. Nigeria has been notorious for the perpetration of the seriously devastating corruption form called over-invoicing. Other examples in SSA include Zaire's former dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, who got so rich from stealing from the public treasury that he openly complained that the American journals were 'unfair' to him when they failed to recognise him as the world's seventh richest person (Adams, 1991). These adversities caused by corruption impede transformation of Nigeria's vast natural and human resource endowments into development or welfare improvement. Instead of applying their industriousness to local development needs, most Nigerians frequently resort to seeking the proverbial 'greener pastures' abroad. Most of these Nigerian migrants undertake dangerous trips heading for European countries through deserts of North Africa. Documentaries reveal that most of these migrants frequently die *en masse* through two major hazards. Some drown in overloaded vessels attempting to illegally cross the sea separating Africa from Europe, while others die of dehydration during the arduous long trek across the desert. Exploitation of migrants through sexual means has also been reported. For example, tragedy struck recently When the hull of a capsized boat carrying a crowd of African migrants sank off Lampedusa island recently. Afterwards, Italian divers have been 'unpack(ing) a wall of people'

from that tragedy. 'Lampedusa death toll climbs to 232' The death toll from the (Lampedusa) incident had climbed to '232' (Associated Press (AP), 2013/7 October; BBC (UK), 2013; The Guardian, 2004/10 February; Smith, 2007; Bakre, 2008; AP, 2013).

## 9. Enslavement chain spurned by public treasury looting/welfare denial: out-migration/sex-slave trafficking of Nigerians

### 9.1. Trafficking and exploitation of Nigeria's girls/women through prostitution

There are many reasons why weak people have been trafficked around the world by their enslavers. Most people trafficked globally have frequently been forced to undertake hard (enslaving) labour that they would not have agreed to engage in under normal circumstances, such as when the victimised people were exercising their freedom of choosing a job. However, due to certain reasons, this article focuses on one aspect of human trafficking, namely movement of a group of Nigerians comprising of girls and women to Europe and elsewhere in the West for sexual exploitation. The evidence is provided on shipment of large population of girls and women from Nigeria to various parts of Europe and elsewhere in the West. Accurate data/information of trafficked women from Nigeria is difficult to collect due to the clandestine nature of the crime. The Secretary of Nigeria's anti-trafficking agency (NAPTIP), Beatrice Goddy-Jeddy Agba, estimates that 'six of ten trafficked persons are Nigerian' (ThisDay, 2013/September 18). The number of Nigerian females comprising of twelve-year old girls and older, plying their sex trade in the desperate hope for financial gain in night clubs, pubs, joints, bars and on the streets across European countries, has been put at about 100,000 prostitutes (Alarming Europe, 2014). Recently (10 November, 2013), the BBC reported: 'Spanish police arrest 25 in "Nigeria sex-trafficking ring" formed in Nigerian universities some 20 years ago (BBC, 2013/November 10). Other facts that further highlight the challenge of trafficking Nigerian girls and women for prostitution in Norway follow. 'Prostitutes from Nigeria have been a

dominant group in the street prostitution market in Norway since the summer of 2004. According to the Fafo report *Afrikanske drømmer på europeiske gater* ('African dreams on European streets'), the Nigerian women often enter Italy and Spain with a Schengen visa and travel from those countries to other states in Europe. In 2011, 274 persons of 52 nationalities were followed as potential victims of human trafficking in Norway. Of these, 108 were from Nigeria. Moreover, the '(L)ife in Nigeria after' for the prostitutes rescued from 'selling sex in Europe' is a return to poverty (Kliden, undated, (<http://eng.kilden.for-skningsradet.no/c52778/nyhet/vis.html?tid=85201>)). Nigerian girls, women and children constitute between 60 and 70% of the total number arriving in Italy annually (Akor, 2011). While some of the prostitutes operate within Nigeria, most of them consider a career abroad as the most lucrative. Therefore, large numbers of girls and women are part of migrants moving thanks to very difficult means along various routes, including deserts of North African countries, finally packed into congested vessels that frequently capsize thereby drowning migrants in the Mediterranean Sea (Vienna Institute for International Dialogue and Cooperation/Weiner Institute fur Internationalen Dialog und Zusammenarbeit [VIDC], 2011, <http://www.vidc.org/?id=1567>).

### 9.2. Losses arising from trafficking in girls/women for prostitution

Being one of many African countries that lost millions of their youth to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and also being one of the former areas of European (British) colonisation, Nigeria has been challenged by escalation of human trafficking since its independence in 1960. This represents a topic capable of attracting academic interest. It poses questions bordering on the extent of inclusion (or otherwise) of its citizens in public welfare programs. Also significant is the belief that Nigerian women and girls constitute some of the largest proportion of the developing world's females trafficked to Europe, Asia and America (Naijafeed, 2009; Rees, 2012). The phenomenon has been attributed to successive post-independent governments' failure to implement a virile employment program. The promotion of poverty, unemployment and un-

deremployment by the government (Ingwe, 2009) is likely to create a frustrating situation for the unemployed who would, in turn, become easily exploitable by human traffickers, who have deceived the former, including girls/women and males, that 'greener pastures' exist bountifully in the West (Ingwe et al., 2012). The history of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade also makes the escalating human trafficking a subject of contemporary interest. Some public policy responses to escalating human trafficking in Nigeria since the economic depression of the 1980s and thereafter have been observed. This includes the establishment of the 'National Agency for Prohibition of Traffic In Persons and Other Related Matters (NAPTIP)', a public department charged with responsibilities for monitoring the nature and magnitude of this crime as well as advising the government on strategies capable of curbing the operation of the traffickers (NAPTIP, undated). Researchers concerned with the challenge have, among others, examined transnational criminal activities involving human trafficking and human rights violation in the Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta (Ingwe et al., 2012). Following the Palermo Protocols, and pioneering Africa's anti-trafficking law promulgation of 2003, Nigeria's government established shelters in the country's six geopolitical regions/zones to facilitate reintegrating victims of sex-trafficking. Intergovernmental and international organisations (e.g. United Nations agencies) as well as foreign embassies and governments, such as UNODC, IOM, the USA, the Netherlands, Italy and Sweden, have been providing tremendous assistance to the government to manage the escalating challenge. Moreover, bilateral agreements with destination countries in Europe, such as Italy, the UK, Spain, the Republic of Benin and South Africa, have been reached (Vienna Institute for International Dialogue and Cooperation/Veiner Institute fur Internationalen Dialog und Zusammenarbeit [VIDC], 2011).

### **10. Relating modern slavery of Nigerians to looted funds stashed-away in banks in Europe/West**

Scholars recently referred to high unemployment of Nigerian graduates (estimated at about 40 mil-

lion youth) in the discourse of transnational crime involving trafficking of Nigerian girls and women for prostitution in the West (Ingwe et al., 2012; Nigerian Tribune, 2009). High unemployment is one of many challenges associated with the poor public welfare that former chief executive of Nigeria's Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) attributes to treasury looting and stashing away of huge public funds in foreign banks by Nigeria's elite. The difference in economic conditions between two regions: Nigeria (representing Africa) and Europe, whose countries have been receiving trafficked girls and women from the former, beckons for further examination. Moreover, ancient Benin city, which played a key role in providing slaves for the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, has returned to play the same or similar function in the ongoing modern slavery (Osiki, 2010). Numerous reports in many subjects, such as economic history and social sciences, show that the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade contributed immensely to the economic growth of the West (Tracy, 1990; Wallerstein, 1974); Rodney, 1972). Therefore, there is a need to examine other linkages between modern slavery in Nigeria as well as Europe and the West. When examining modern slavery it would be naive to ignore bearings that historical experiences of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade have on both Nigeria/Africa and Europe/West. Different ideas cited in the literature of Europe/West regarding poor socio-economic conditions of Nigeria are similar to some issues interpreted by contrapuntal geography.

Factors driving increasing vulnerability of victims of modern slavery (trafficked persons) usually include poverty, unemployment/underemployment and inequality, especially in the countries with poor records of management of resources, both human and natural. Other factors include ignorance in terms of the conditions of the destination countries in the West and difficulties experienced during adolescence in large families (Akor, 2011). Extreme cases of poverty evoke in some peoples' increasing feelings of failure to achieve the feats of 'success' as much as their peers (especially those who get into highly rewarding/paying occupations, such as the world of glamour and affluence, e.g. movies or major football and other sports leagues). For others, the reason for submitting to the lure of seeking 'greener pastures' abroad or far flung places is the sheer inadequacy of opportunities for survival

in their countries of origin and/or usual residence. Such a situation was recently reported of a Kenyan woman who in her search for means for paying the health-care bills of her ill child ended up being trafficked into slavery in Saudi Arabia through the intermediation of an insidious agency, which claimed to be involved in finding jobs for unsuspecting clients (Ingwe, 2013).

Similar cases of victims of pauperisation by successive post-independent administrations/governments have led indigenes of developing countries, after over half a century of the post-independent national life, to have been trafficked abroad or within the country, such as the case of poor women and girls in e.g. Nigeria. The transnational character of this crime was recently analysed (Ingwe et al., 2012). Indicators of indifference and insensitivity of the post-colonial Nigeria's administrators became evident at the end of the 30-month long Biafra versus Nigeria civil war (1967-1970), when after examining the data on human resource waste through high unemployment in the country's development management system in the 1960s, a foreign economist, W.F. Stolper wondered why Nigeria's development planners/managers would fail to ensure that Nigerian citizens adequate education for given jobs. Stolper stated this as a response to a paper in which one of Nigeria's foremost economists and national economic planners related 'The Development Process' to the country's early post-independence, the 1960s, to the situation that had started the present unemployment (Stolper, 1971, Aboyade, 1971). In the mid 1990s, some 70 million citizens of Nigeria were poor in absolute terms and calls were being made for measures to move such masses from below the poverty line (earning and spending less than US\$ 1 a day) to higher socio-economic levels that would enable them to meet their basic needs (Gregory et al., 2009). Other projections of Nigeria's poor have been higher: the surveys of the 1990s and 2000s put the proportion of Nigerians earning/spending less than US\$ 2 a day and US\$ 2 a day at 90 and 70.8%, respectively. Considering that in the mid 1990s Nigeria's population was projected at about 140 million, and this figure was confirmed by the 2006 census, the proportion of the poor might have been higher than 70 million (WRI et al., 2005). Although some of the trafficked persons end up in other countries, most of them –

for obvious reasons – are usually taken to enslavement dungeons in developed countries, commonly former powers which colonised many of the presently underdeveloped countries. Whatever the political histories of countries that are the originators or receivers of trafficked people or modern slaves, the common denominator is that poor countries send out slaves received by the rich countries. Thus, we are witnessing a replay of the olden days' slavery perpetrated by the same kind of criminals who previously were engaged in uprooting the youth from their homeland into foreign countries of monstrous hostility with government agencies on both sides of the divide facilitating for fees and pretending not to know the things being done inhumanly.

The reason why we prefer to apply the term 'underdeveloped countries (UC)' for describing the places of origin of most of the modern slaves trafficked to developed countries will become more explicit after presenting theoretical and conceptual frameworks of contrapuntal geography further in this article. Meantime, it deserves immediate clarification that applying the term 'underdeveloped' is justified here because one of its major meanings is the unnecessary delay in achieving levels of economic growth and socio-economic stability required to guarantee optimism concerning progress in countries that could qualify, due to their resource endowment but failing to translate same for the social benefit, for the description 'developing country' (Rodney, 1972). As will be elaborated later, the insistence of Western economists and/or development economists on the adoption of the term 'developing' instead of 'underdeveloped' to describe countries that are characterised by extreme reluctance to achieve growth, necessitates our return to the 'underdeveloped' here. We view this form of scholarship and activism as the intellectual component of the manifold intrigues associated with the new imperialism that necessitates contrapuntal geography and reading of Western imperial literature.

Human trafficking presents an enormous challenge that dents the claim by humanity of having advanced their civilisation beyond those of other animals (considered as lower beings or creatures and inferior to human beings in social terms. Recently, R. Ingwe and co-authors (2013) drew from the foregoing definition of human trafficking by an United Nations agency as the use of abnormal and

unacceptable means (including threat, coercion, fraud, deceit, abuse of positions of influence, exploitation of vulnerability of persons, among other inappropriate means) to recruit, transport, transfer, hide, harbour and trade in persons, exercise exploitative control over weak individuals (UNESCO, 2006). As usual, the enormity of the challenge of modern slavery forced stakeholders worldwide to create the ‘Global Alliance against Forced Labour’, as an initiative of the Geneva-based International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2005). Although the Alliance is essentially aimed towards campaigning against human trafficking and offering broad-based assistance to the UN member states, experience shows that without serious cooperation of the affected countries (Nigeria) with the global initiative, or taking the problem as a socioeconomic development priority – as indicated by its severity – the outcomes could remain as dismal as the country’s political and economic history has been in the post-independent era.

### **11. Extant discussion of treasury looting and corruption**

There exist P. Adams’ (1991) anecdotal reports of pervasive corruption of the 1970s and thereafter on scandalous levels of perpetration in the Fourth Republic, when most of the executives of the Obasanjo administration were indicted *en mass*. In confirmation of the blight described as ‘Culture of Corruption’ by anthropologist D.J. Smith (2007) in depicting the Babangida dictatorship, among others, space constraints permit only a few cases of executive mass perpetration of corruption in the Obasanjo administration. Two examples of federal ministers who were prosecuted are Fabian Osuji and Sunday Awoniyi. Nigeria’s legislators demonstrated their skills in corrupt enrichment: from the first female speaker of the lower federal parliament to many presidents of the Senate (upper federal parliament), corrupt practices overwhelmed the country’s capacity to improve the welfare of citizens. Most of other financial and economic crimes that space constraints cannot permit to be included here were earlier introduced by former chairman of one of Nigeria’s two anti-corruption agencies, the Eco-

nomics and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, N. Ribadu, (2009; Ingwe, 2012). B. Omojola reported that about 80% of Nigeria’s official earnings from crude oil export for decades was stolen by the country’s elite who form only 1% of the total population (Omojola, 2007: 20–35, Ribadu, 2009).

### **12. Post-colonial legacy/culture informing the contemporary: indigenous administrators’ habitual enslavement of Nigerian non-elite citizens**

The linkage between previous colonial culture feeding the contemporary counterparts, as espoused by the neo-Said scholars, e.g. Gregory (2004), could be illustrated in Nigeria’s successive post-independent administrations’ indifference to the citizens’ welfare improvement. Habits persisting in indigenous rulers (administrators, contrasted to leaders) of underdeveloped countries are those perpetuating injustice, inequality and indifference to challenges faced by the majority of population. Some aspects of these habits include simple replacement of colonialists and by extension enslavers of the past in terms of colonial positions, functions and attitudes as well as perception of ordination and subordination relationships with non-elite citizens following the racial standards set by the colonisers-enslavers. The shift from colonial to indigenous rule was rarely accompanied by fundamental changes involving redefinition of the foregoing inter-relationships. This explains why the elites in Nigeria get healthcare, self and offspring education and tourism, among other social-economic services, especially banking, in their former colonisers’ countries or similar territories. The failure to alter the existing socio-economic and psychological relations associated with the colonialists and natives of colonies in the time of political independence has left legacy of the former in the habits of the post-colonial rulers thereafter.

The British colonialists established railways and roads in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to transport minerals and agricultural produce, among other raw materials required by the British Empire. Nigeria’s indigenous post-colonial soldiers and their civil rulers not only

allowed those and other infrastructure to collapse. They (post-colonial indigenous rulers) further looted Nigeria's public funds that could have filled the public treasury and empowered the government to implement just public administration capable of ensuring acceptable welfare. Instead, in the old ways of the British colonialists, they stashed their loot in the banks of the UK and other global North countries. This indicates that Nigeria's indigenous post-colonial rulers hearken to some enthralling scripts of colonial domination of mental faculties of Nigerian elite that surpass rampage of natural resources and materials.

### 13. Conclusion

A discourse on modern slavery involving conscription and trafficking of girls and women, among others, from African countries to the global North, especially Western Europe, has been undertaken in this study. Being the former coloniser of much of Africa, Western Europe, and the rest of the global North that shares most of the features of Western Europe, presents suitable opportunities for applying contrapuntal geography and contrapuntal reading of modern slavery, which resembles the older Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Contrapuntal geography facilitates our examination of various dimensions of the modern slavery: connivance of the global North in the thievery of public financial resources of African countries for resuscitating capital stocks of the developed countries while their African counterparts remain stuck in the underdevelopment quagmire. It is concluded that without addressing current widening gap between the post-colonial rulers and the ruled, thus indicating the scope for calibrating those interrelationships among rulers and the ruled in underdeveloped countries; previous/current challenges of underdevelopment, namely inequality, injustice, unemployment, to name a few, are likely to remain as bad as they are or can even worse. In terms of policy, the implication of the findings of this study includes considering a strong contribution made by indigenous rulers to post-colonial and imperialistic texts and practice. This is similar to what happened in neoliberal geography, where for long it was thought that forces which pose neoliberal impacts

arose only from foreign countries. By appreciating a huge contribution of local destabilisation forces to complement those from abroad, it was considered necessary to found neo-liberalisation as a distinct but related branch of neo-liberalism (Springer, 2011). Knowledge developed along the directions proposed here promise to more effectively address the challenges, especially the deficits in underdeveloped countries like Nigeria. Through this interim report scholars of contrapuntal geography are invited to join the debate on how to examine the contribution of indigenous post-colonialists to the discourse and how such might be described and taken forward. There is ample scope for information and knowledge regarding deprivation of Nigerians arising from treasury looting. I say this because, Canadian leaders argue that the lot of African masses would turn-around should half of the \$148 billion stolen by its rulers (not leaders!) since independence were invested within its states. Curiously, the Canadians obtained information on this plunder of Africa from Nigeria's former dictator (1976-79); president (1999-2007), Olusegun Obasanjo (Evidence for 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament of Canada, 10 May 2005 by G. Ayittey, professor of Economics at American University, Washington, D.C. (USA); Parliament of Canada, 2007). Corruption has, on the average, been costing Africa \$148 billion yearly (Parliament of Canada (2007). As I have shown in this article, we are yet to know adequately about treasury looting in Nigeria, like the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, this article only represents an interim report on what I might describe as the last, but key, sub-Saharan Africa's development questions: theft and corruption. How global North's banks connive in the perpetration of these crimes constitutes issues of extensions of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, neo-colonialism, imperialism, and neo-liberalism.

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## Notes

- (1) Treasury looting describes the abuse of political power through illegal removal of huge sums meant for public welfare provision for private expenditure for the benefit of the thief and cohorts.
- (2) Abacha (full name: Sani Abacha), was a dictator and general in the Nigerian Army. Together with his 'kitchen cabinet' he ruled Nigeria between 1993 and his sudden death on 08/06/1998 (Africa Confidential, no year). His demise paved the way for wide reportage of his (Abacha) loot. This is unlike the cases of other members of the Nigerian thieving elite who were Abacha's contemporaries.
- (3) Variation in aggregated size of the Nigeria's looted funds (such as this particular one and those following) arises from differences in sources, interval of time (i.e. number of years) over which the earnings were computed.
- (4) The Naira, denoted by the symbol '=N=' is Nigeria's currency. The exchange rate changed from about =N= 160.00 to one US dollar in February 2014 to the about =N= 173.00 to one US dollar.

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