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From liberators to oppressors- How does political psychology analyses the effects of colonialism in post-independence Kenyan leadership – A case study of Kenya

Abstract

From liberators to oppressors chooses to open a new door by focusing on the psychological impact of Africa's history, employing political psychology as the arguing point with the example of Kenya. Using desktop techniques, we will try to answer the question: why former liberators became the new oppressors. Political psychology, a much under researched field, both employs political science and psychology in the attempt of understanding political behaviour , and, in doing so, it brings the individual back at the centre of study. When applied to Africa, political psychology theories will be heavily interrelated to colonialism. This thesis also focuses on depicting the continent political and social structure before colonialism, as well as the colonialism impact on society's long-term development. The whole spectrum of variables is discussed (economic, cultural, political, religious) along with psychological focus. We explore the decolonisation process as well as the post-independence era in Kenya, particularly through the study of the two first post-independent leaders, Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel Arap Moi. It aims to show that the psychological state left by colonisation has contributed to shaping the Kenyan political landscape. Indeed, as much as colonialism affected African society as a whole, we found out that the individual psyche was the most harmed in the long run. Colonialism created a psychological state that insured generational submission referred in the thesis as metacolonisation. The use of political psychology applied to the Kenyan decolonisation has shown us that the suppression of cognitive abilities indeed limits the decision making of the individual. The delve into political events that followed the independence has shown the psychological dimension of the political decision making as well as linked political psychology theories (imitation, Big man syndrome). Political psychology brings a non-negligible dimension in studying the state current of Africa. By placing the individual variable at the centre of the research, we manage to uncover an emotional, personal side to the current state of Africa. Whilst not exempting the leaders from their responsibilities, political psychology gives us a different hindsight into the African political world.