

# Colonialism In Africa: A Dynamic Process Of Negotiations And Concessions By European Officials, African Elites And Subject Populations?

**Haruna Abdallah Imam**

Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana,  
Legon

**Salifu Alhassan**

Tamale Polytechnic

*Abstract: This paper discusses the assertion that colonialism was a dynamic process of negotiations and concessions between the European colonizers and their African counterparts; both the elites and subject populations. While this paper agrees to some extent with this assertion, it also tries to point out the fact that this was not entirely so for all parts of Africa during the entire period of colonial rule as the Europeans employed deceptive tricks on the Africans whiles sometimes they were able to colonize some parts only after military conquests.*

*Keywords: colonialism, negotiations, concession, African elites, collaborators, and resisters.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

European colonization of Africa though dates back to the second half of the fifteenth-century, it officially begun from the 1880s and ended by the second half of the twentieth century. Colonization was the process by which the European powers carved out Spheres of influence in Africa. This has been said to have taken a dynamic process involving negotiations and concessions among the European colonial authorities, African elites and the subject populations. One will have to recapture vividly the various processes and stages involved right from the inception of colonial rule in Africa in the light of the three people highlighted in the question to either affirm or disprove this assertion.

## II. THE EUROPEAN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE AFRICAN ELITES

To begin with, the colonization of Africa was a complex process involving negotiations and the granting of concessions or compromises on the part of both the Europeans on the one hand, and the Africans; both the elites and subject populations on the other. Elitist authority in pre-colonial Africa might be

ascribed on the basis of lineage membership whiles at the same time some could be achieved. In some cases these men according to Smith sometimes belonged to royal or noble families. In this case we need to clarify the two kinds a little bit. Before the advent of the Europeans in Africa, it was members of the royalty who wielded so much influence among the centralized peoples. To this end, it was the chiefs who signed the treaties on behalf of their subjects with the Europeans. Conscientious treaty makers therefore used to make elaborate precautions in order to ensure that their treaties were undisputable. The proper procedure required African elites themselves to translate and explain the terms of the treaties.

Other Africans also achieved their elite status by learning the language of the Europeans through the education offered by the missionaries. These African literate elites gained a lot of influence as a result of the emergence of diplomatic relations with the Europeans. An example of such men was Pierre Tamata, the powerful French-educated Hausa who was secretary to the King of Porto Novo in the late eighteenth century, described by a French sea captain as having "the malice of a monkey, greater cunning than the fox, and the greed of an eagle" - he was an illustration, Labarth [the French captain] thought, of the danger of sending Negroes to college in

France. Another example of such men in the Gold Coast colony was one Joseph Martin whom King Aggrey of Cape Coast appointed as magistrate when he sought to assert his independent jurisdiction outside the walls of the fort. After the late fifteenth-century initial Portuguese contact, the first European settlements in Africa were by traders. Some of these settlements were; Saint-Louis in Senegal, Bathurst (Banjul) in the present-day Gambia, and the forts at Cape Coast in the then Gold Coast and Elmina (present-day Ghana). The relationship between the traders and their African hosts was regulated by treaties, and as the years wore on, the Europeans like the Muslim traders before them in the western Sudan, began to exert some measures of cultural influence on the African peoples. This was the prelude to European colonization in Africa in the late nineteenth-century. Until colonialism, Africa was Europe's trading partner, not its economic appendage. The colonial economic institution was designed to change all that. The first step was to wrestle the control of trade from African middlemen like the Swahili traders of the east African coast, and powerful magnates, like King Ja Ja of Opobo in the Niger Delta in present-day Nigeria.

The most surprising aspects of colonialism according to Adu Boahen (1987) were its suddenness and its unpredictability, for as late as 1880, there were no real signs or indications of this phenomenal and catastrophic event. It is obvious that European colonization of Africa begun much earlier in different parts of Africa before the 1880s. However, by 1880, as observed by Adu Boahen (ibid):

“Old Africa appeared to be in its dying throes and a new and modern Africa was emerging.”

The successful suppression of the obnoxious trans-Atlantic Slave Trade by the British naval squadron by 1880, ushered into the annals of Africa, what became known in Eurocentric terms as the ‘legitimate trade’ which was concerned with the trading in goods other than slaves. This eventually triggered a mad rush for claims in Africa by the European powers otherwise known as the scramble for Africa. This was so keenly contested by the major European powers that a major European War over Africa was anticipated. To avert this, the famous Berlin Conference was held in 1884/5 to define spheres of influence for the major European players.

Again Adu Boahen identifies three major stages in the scramble and partition of Africa. The first according to him was the signing of treaties between African rulers and the European imperial powers which created protectorates; an agreement between the Dutch and the people of Asebu in 1656; a military agreement with the Fante in 1624; and similar agreements with the people of Accra, Axim, and Komenda in or about 1624 (Smith, 1976). There was also a commercial agreement with the people of Benin and the Dutch West India Company in 1715; they also concluded another one with King Agaja of Whydah which allowed them to concentrate their trade activities there in return for recognizing him as the King of Whydah in around the same period. The Fante states also signed treaties with the British at Cape Coast in 1753 which prohibited French settlement in their territories. In 1844, Captain George Maclean, the British Governor of the European merchant community of the Gold Coast colony negotiated a number of “bonds” empowering the British to participate in the administration of justice in the Fante states.

Bowditch and Dupuis also signed treaties with the Ashantis on behalf of the English and the Dutch respectively. Barth, the British emissary, signed treaties with the King of Bornu and the emir of Sokoto in 1852 and 1853, and Sokoto and Gwandu in their treaties with the National African Company in 1885. Adu Boahen states that a very few African rulers rejected the European treaties of trade, friendship and protection. These treaties were to later settle disputes emanating from territorial claims at the inception of official European colonization after the Berlin Conference in 1884/5.

The second was the conclusion of bilateral treaties between the European powers based on the earlier treaties entered with the African rulers. In central Africa, a four European nation's scramble for the Congo basin emerged. This involved Belgium, France, Britain, and Portugal. While the Belgians and the French established posts at opposite sides of the banks of the Congo River, Britain and Portugal struck a pact in 1884 to reassert the latter's historic claim to the mouth of the river. Meanwhile Otto von Bismarck of Prussia had joined the race for a place in Africa by claiming territories in eastern Africa, southwestern Africa, Togo and Cameroun. The Anglo-German Treaty of 1890 recognized Britain's claims to the Zanzibar, Kenya, Uganda, Northern Rhodesia, Bechuanaland and eastern Nigeria. The English again signed a bilateral treaty with the French which recognized the British defined western boundaries of Nigeria while recognizing French claims to Madagascar. There were also Franco-Portuguese Treaty of 1886, and the German-Portuguese Treaty of 1891 which allowed the Portuguese to occupy Angola and Mozambique reduced Britain's sphere in Central Africa. These bilateral treaties among the European powers did not include African rulers in the negotiations notwithstanding its effects on the African peoples. Existing ethnic boundaries were not regarded in the drawing up of boundaries. This was to have its enduring legacies today even after several decades of independence when one ethnic group would be divided into two or even three different countries like the Ewes in Ghana, Togo and Benin. Several examples could be cited elsewhere in Africa.

### III. THE SUBJECT POPULATIONS IN PRE - COLONIAL AFRICA

The final stage according to Adu Boahen (ibid) was the successful European conquest and occupation of the territories which was, although described in Eurocentric terms as a *process of pacification* was rather the bloodiest and most brutal in Afrocentric view point. A greater majority of Africans were enjoying their sovereignty with their chiefs having full autonomy and indeed had witnessed several revolutions within the first eight decades which by 1880 was in a mood to make a major breakthrough on all fronts. The question then is how were the Europeans able to impose and maintain their rule with so few troops and so little administrative staff? The answer definitely rests in the several roles played by Africans right from the inception of European colonial rule in Africa. Until much recently, some present-day African nationalists and some European scholars considered Africans as passive victims of the scramble for, and partition

of Africa. The question again is whether the Africans were really passive or they were able to influence the outcome by being involved in the process of colonization?

African converts to Christianity favoured European colonization of Africa, as to them, this meant salvation for the Africans. Christianity and western education were most important cultural components of European colonialism in Africa. Though neither evangelization nor the spread of education per se was the preoccupation of the colonial authorities, the prevalence of European authority nonetheless precipitated the expansion of Christianity after an initial resistance from the Africans. The education of Africans by the Christian missionaries nurtured a new class of Africans; Christian ministers, teachers, and clerks, who sought accommodation with colonial rule. Although, it was from this same people that the struggles to overthrow the colonial regimes in Africa later emerge in the twentieth-century, some of its members, especially Christian ministers, believed that Europe was executing a divine mission to free the African continent from 'paganism' and 'darkness'. In the French, Belgian, and Portuguese colonies, ambitious educated Africans pursued the qualifications laid down for "assimilation", while their counterparts in the British colonies celebrated Empire Day on every 24<sup>th</sup> May by singing Rule, Britannia.

Hargreaves (1960) throws more light on the Afro-European relations during the immediate pre-colonial Africa. He says as the final decisions on the settlement of disputed territories and the demarcation of borders were always made by Europeans, one may be tempted to speculate whether Africans had an influence in such decisions. To this end, the generalization as regards the role played by Africans needs to be qualified.

#### A. THE ERA OF TREATIES

To examine the question on the role played by Africans is to look at some of the treaties concluded between the representatives of the African chiefs and those of the European colonial powers during the scramble for Africa (Touval, 1966). According to Touval, European motives for entering into these treaties or some form of partnerships with African rulers were manifold. Prominent among these reasons was that the treaties could be used to support claims for recognition by rival European powers to territories during negotiations. For Britain, the legal position of all British colonial dependent areas was clearly established by the Foreign Jurisdiction Act of 1890. Wieschhoff (1994) quotes the provision of the Act thus:

"This Act contains the declaration that, however the powers of the Crown might have been acquired, whether by treaty, grant, usage, or other lawful means, its jurisdiction is as ample as if it had been derived from cession or conquest of territory".

Similar acts were established by most colonial powers, thus securing for themselves a clear title to their colonial possessions. Wieschhoff (1944) opines that though such actions were justified according to the philosophy of those days imperialism was in its heyday; today we should be inclined to frown upon such unilateral actions which

completely disregarded treaties signed with African chiefs. One could not agree with him more considering the legacies of the imposition of colonial rule in Africa even today.

What did these treaties then mean to the Africans? Considering the fact that these treaties often ceded away territories and accepted European 'protection', and that they were translated and explained to the Africans, one can only ask why the African elites (African rulers) agreed to these treaties. There was the occasional gunboat to subdue rebellious African rulers. This went along sides the conclusion of treaties of "commerce and friendship", sometimes with extraterritorial clauses, which became common from the 1820s. Even some treaties contained signatures of dubious characters purported by the European powers to have been the representatives of the people. After the successful abolition of the Slave Trade by the British naval squadron, the British followed by the other imperial powers stationed as consuls at strategic places along the coasts of Africa. In places such as Zanzibar, the Bight of Benin and Biafra, commercial interests or political considerations dictated such a course. The "informal empire" of the trader was therefore secured by the influence of the consul backed by military force. This combination saw the British depose King Kosoko of Lagos in 1851.

On the part of African rulers, many of them entered into these treaties with the European powers for different reasons. Adu Boahen says some African rulers were very friendly to the Europeans and some even invited them into their states. Prempeh I King of Asante was undoubtedly friendly to the British because the British envoys and negotiators treated him respectfully with decorum as they initially regarded him as an equal. Many African peoples also needed European protection either against other European powers or against other powerful African chiefs. King Mbandzeni of the Swazi, for instance, asked the British to offer him protection against the Boers in South Africa. The emir of Nupe similarly invited the French to form an alliance with him against the British Royal Niger Company. These African Kings also had in mind the European trading activities in the coast. The internal political struggles between the largely powerful centralized states and non-centralized states also fed into the decision of a state deciding which side of the divide to belong; whether to 'collaborate' with the Europeans or to attempt to 'resist' them no matter how futile such an attempt may be. The centralized people often raided into the territories of the non-centralized peoples for slaves to feed into the trans-Atlantic slave markets as well as for domestic purposes. The latter on their part according to Goody (2007), also frequently attacked the caravans that passed through their territories not adequately protected. It was against this background of pre-European struggles for domination, either the conquest of a state against another, or the perpetual raiding of the 'acephalus' peoples that we must see this. Goody (ibid) therefore concedes that the intrusion of the British into [northern Ghana] was therefore not altogether unwelcomed by some elements and peoples in both states as it puts an end to this insecurity.

It must be conceded however that, conditions in other parts of the African continent were not as catastrophic as could be seen in most parts of colonial Africa where it was sheer economic exploitation to the European's parochial

benefit. Among other things, the merits of colonial rule included greater availability of trade goods, opportunities to earn money through cash-crop farming, promotion of western education through the missionaries, opening up of roads and communications made more generally. There was also a new class of businessmen with some basic education who became agents of the commercial companies owned by Europeans. The DC was partly being used as a tool in dynastic struggles as in the case of colonial Gonjaland in northern Gold Coast. The interpreter of the DC was a member of an opposing segment of the Gonja ruling dynasty. On April 17<sup>th</sup>, 1917 the DC at Bole was threatened with an armed rebellion involving a number of gunmen from several of the surrounding villages mobilized at the Shrine of *Senyon*, under the command of the *Yagbumwura*. The divisional chief of Bole, who was in conflict with the *Yagbumwura*, and who came from a different gate of the dynasty remained 'loyal' to the British and assisted in keeping contact with the Regional Headquarters and in providing information about local developments. These internal political rivalries were not absent among the people and as a result, most people used the Europeans to achieve a goal.

Another breed of these elites emerged in the colonies, which were qualified by dint of their literacy and specialist training to occupy positions not accessible to the older elites. For by the 1930s, colonialism had achieved a measure of stability except for occasional insurrections against official abuses. Africans had come to accept colonial rule as a fact of life, such that the early nationalist leaders initially sought to be offered a role within the colonial administration. At a point these elites during the struggle against colonialism would come into conflict with chiefs for the latter's role as stooges of the colonial authorities. However, Mair (1971) asserts that it would be a gross oversimplification to describe the elites purely in terms of opposition to the traditional elites, for at certain times they were united in the pursuit of common aims. They did not seek to displace the latter from the offices they occupied, no doubt in part because in most countries the most important activities of the new elites lie outside the scope of this authority. They see themselves, along with or instead of the traditional elites, as spokesmen for the population in general vis-à-vis the colonial authorities, but they did not necessarily find this incompatible with the maintenance of the colonial regime, of which they are the beneficiaries (Mair, 1971: 170-171). A few of these elites according to Mair (ibid), although not holding legal qualifications that would be recognized in Britain, were licensed as 'attorneys' from 1864.

A first person of a wholly African descent to qualify as a lawyer was in 1887. Mair (1971) asserts that within a few years the elites were earning the highest incomes in the country, partly for their services in drawing up concession agreements during the 'gold rush' of the 1890s. The educated elites in the Gold Coast allied with the chiefs to form the Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ARPS) in 1897 to send a deputation to London to protest against the intended Lands Bill which sought to transfer all unoccupied lands in the Gold Coast to the colonial authorities for re-allocation. Mair (ibid) asserts that during the next few years' colonial governors wavered between refusing to discuss petitions from the society

and consulting them on proposed bills and on details of native action.

To many Africanist scholars, these people were 'collaborators' of the colonial powers. There is a difficulty though in categorizing the various roles played by Africans who were on the side of the colonial authorities as collaborators, colluders or saboteurs. Obviously, the colonial authorities could not have been successful without some level of collaboration by some Africans. Isaacman and Isaacman (1977) argue that collaboration merely emphasizes the variety of responses which reflected the different ethnic, religious and a growing class interests. They further argue that without these collaborators, the Europeans could not have been able to impose their rule so thoroughly and at such a minimal cost in manpower. For instance, more than 90 percent of the Portuguese armies which pacified the strategic Zambezi valley consisted of African levies. The success of Harry Johnson's policy of 'divide and rule' is apparent from the large number of Africans who participated in the British occupation of Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia. In South Africa the authors cite the defection of the Mfengu as an important factor in the defeat of the Xhosa and half of the force which conquered the Zulu was African recruits.

Both collaborators and mercenaries were deemed instrumental in sustaining colonial rule in Africa. In Angola were the *Guerra pretas*, the Mozambican *sepias*, the *levies* of Nyasaland and the African police in Rhodesia and Southern Africa all intimidated and exploited the subject populations. These collaborators were later to be transformed into astute modernizers and innovators. The question posed by Isaacman and Isaacman (ibid) is, why, and under what circumstances did Africans sell their services to the repressive regimes? They agree that the problem is more complicated as in many cases, collaboration just like resistance, was situational. They quote Ranger who says that;

"A historian has indeed a difficult task in deciding whether a specific society should be described as resistant or as collaborative over any given period of time. Virtually all African states made some attempts to find a basis on which to collaborate with the Europeans, virtually all of them had some interests or values which they were prepared to defend if necessary, by hopeless resistance or revolt."

The authors concede that there is a tendency in the literature to assume that particular societies always acted homogeneously, reinforcing the tendency to define them exclusively as collaborators or resisters. The colonial regime depended on substantial compliance to be effective. By harnessing African ambitions for wealth, social status, political power, or greater understanding and control over the forces of nature and by appealing to their values and institutions, the colonial authorities sought to engage people in a joint enterprise, whether exploitative or developmentally oriented (Spear, 2003).

One cannot agree more with the authors on their assertion that 'collaboration' just like 'resistance' was situational. People always decided which side of the divide to join in order to further their interests. During the British conquest of the Fulani emirate in Bida in 1897, Idrees (1989) says the subject peoples who collaborated with the British imperial forces organized by the British Royal Niger Company were doing so

merely reacting to the circumstances of the time. The Sokoto emirate of northern Nigeria annexed the Nupeland, Kyadya, and northeastern Yorubaland by the middle of the nineteenth century. In this state of affairs, not only did the subject populations lose their sovereignty to the Fulani ruling dynasty, but they also lost certain economic interests as well as having to pay annual tributes to the emir in Sokoto. The Kyadya who mounted the stiffest resistance were riverine people who plied the rivers Niger and Kaduna with their boats sharing any of the benefits therein. People who had to cross from the hinterlands had to pay them to be ferried across. All these were forcefully taken over by the Fulani overlords. As a result, all these subject populations pitched camp with the British during the invasion. Idrees (1989) states that while the members of the Fulani ruling dynasty of Bida organized a strong force to repel the invading British to maintain their political and economic interests, some of the subject people threw both their material and physical support behind the British for the same reason for which the Fulani were resisting the British conquests. Idrees (ibid) emphasizes that the subject peoples such as the Kyadya, the northeastern Yoruba, and the Yissazhi all supported the British for the sole aim of overthrowing the Bida domination of their territory. Later events however questions whether the British merited the support given them by these indigenous peoples for their independence was only short lived from 1897 to 1901. Lugard had to return them under the same Bida oppression in the reconquest of Bida for the purpose of the Indirect Rule policy. Commenting on the loyalty with which many of the African riflemen serving within the British expeditionary force that subdued the overlords of many parts in Africa, Willcocks, who was an officer of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, had this to say about them:

“if I had my choice once more, nowhere will I sooner serve than with my faithful Hausas and Yoruba, whom I learned to admire, and whose reputation is very precious to me” (Perham, 1960: 682).

This shows the level of participation of the African recruits in the colonial forces during the infamous European pacification. Overzealous personnel would even go an extra step to try to impress their white masters by being ruthless and *barbaric* in executing fellow Africans. Osbourn relates a story of an African soldier, or *tirailleur*, who earned praise from his French superior for, “the liveliness with which he opened huts and shot the inhabitants found inside” during his 6 years of service. These are examples of the different levels of participation to which Africans served the colonial authorities.

In spite of the fact that some African rulers themselves invited the colonial authorities into their territories for the purpose of protection against powerful neighbours, it is worth noting that some of them were tricked into ceding their sovereignty away by signing misinterpreted treaties, for the inducement offered in soliciting treaties varied. Sometimes sovereignty was ceded in return for goods or money, or in return for political and military assistance. Lobengula, king of Matabeleland in southern Africa granted the Rudd Concession in return for a monthly payment of £100, one thousand breech-loading guns and an armed steam-boat on the river Zambezi. The British Royal Niger Company apparently obtained many of its treaties among the non-Muslim ethnic groups of northern Nigeria through the combined inducement of lucrative

compensation and a promise of protection from their much powerful Fulani conquerors. Many of these pledges were never honoured by the Europeans.

Adu Boahen (1987) says Lugard, though himself an overenthusiastic British imperialist agent admitted to the misinterpretation of the treaties to the Africans. This was when the latter looked at the treaty which ceded Buganda to the British by the Kabaka who was tricked into believing that he would be aided by the British East African Company against his enemies in war. Perhaps one of the most outstanding opposition to the deceptive European colonial manoeuvres was the Ethiopian emperor Menelik's treaty with the Italians which included ceding his territory to Italy. He got infuriated when later it was translated correctly to him after the Berlin Conference when Italy was granted the right of occupation of his empire. This was however reversed in the great battle of Adowa in 1895 during which the Ethiopians defeated and completely annihilated the Italians and gained back their sovereignty (Boahen, 1987: 38). This was the first time an African army had successfully defeated the army of a colonizing European power. Here it is obvious that the Ethiopian debacle had its genesis in a negotiation which later turned sour upon the realization that the Italians tricked them into ceding away their territory.

Great Britain appeared among all colonial powers in Africa to be the only colonial power which honoured at least some of the original treaties signed between African rulers and the various British representatives. Most of these “protectorate treaties” were completely ignored by the colonial powers agreeing to honour them, most international lawyers found reasons (within European centred laws) to prove that these agreements were really void, or no treaties at all in the international meaning of the word. Wieschhoff thus concludes that, *de jure* as well as *de facto*, most of the colonial protectorates ceased to exist. France, Italy, Portugal and the Congo Free State (later Belgian Congo and today the D. R. Congo) always regarded and treated their dependent areas as colonies only, meaning, as territories owned without any qualifications and reservations.

Notwithstanding the assertion that the process of colonization in Africa involved a dynamic process of negotiations, in a great number of cases according to Touval (1996), treaties were concluded under duress. European armies obtained their treaties through the combined effect of coercion and inducement. This can be viewed in terms of the implied threat of punishment in the event of refusal to assent to a treaty. This has been amply described vividly by Touval (ibid) in terms of a carrot and a stick. Here the punishment she says was preponderant. The carrot represented the treaty offered while the stick is symbolic of the punishment of whoever declines the treaty. This was the condition under which most treaties were signed between the African rulers and the European powers. This is exemplified in the story of a northern Nigerian King by name Kiama. King Kiama had earlier concluded a treaty with the British for protection. The French arrived at the heels of the British later to compel him to sign another treaty with them. He later wrote a letter to Lord Lugard which reads thus:

“From King Kiama to his friend, ...to the man whom God has sent to him salutations” and then told Lugard that “the

French came to me three times after your visit... I told them to leave and they refused, ... and they left me in anger”.

When he heard that the British were returning to his village after the French had planted their flag, he fled to the bush with his wives as he was convinced of British punishment for his ‘betrayal’. This gave the French Senegalese recruits an opportunity to loot the village before leaving. The King later reappeared before the British forces commander Willcocks to find out about whom amongst them will stay in the village. The latter reassured him and calmed him down. However, the next day upon seeing the French at the camp of the British forces, the King fled again believing that the two powers were combining their forces to punish him for betraying them. When finally he reappeared to beg forgiveness on his knees from the British commander, the latter reports thus;

“I raised him and offered him a seat and from that hour his kingly dignity returned and we became very good friends”.

The colonial authorities made certain concessions in order to legitimize the fledgling colonial state. Spear (2003) asserts that the colonial authorities were thus forced to accept the discourse of witchcraft if they were to avoid being seen as attacking the upholders of the moral order and defending criminals. The dilemma of achieving hegemony caught up with the colonial authorities as they lacked both the financial and human resources to run the colonial establishment. As a result these compromises had to be reached with traditional authorities in centralized states to govern the territories. Marshall Clough in Spear (2003) portrays chiefs as ‘men in the middle, trying to balance the demands of the D.C. and the wishes of the people’. The colonial administration expected the chiefs to collect taxes, administer justice and recruit labour whereas the local people expected their chiefs to protect their interests against white rule.

However, on the issue of ‘concessions’ it had more to do with European interests in the colonies than the indigenous populations in the colonies. In his article on the concessions policy of the French, Cookey (1966) states that whenever the colonial authorities talk of making any concessions, it was often tailored to protect the interests of European trading companies in the colonies. A case in point was the French concessions in the Congo-Brazzaville which granted trading concessions to French companies to the detriment of British companies in the rubber industry. This saw Agents of Verges and Lindeboom Company confiscate rubber products belonging to John Holt at N’yeng and Malaga, and that of Hatton and Cookson at Nyanga and Mayumba. These were British companies. Public opinions in Europe always exerted pressure on home governments to protect the interests of European trading companies in the colonies. The British Ambassador in Paris took it up on behalf of the companies whose products were seized to pressurize the French Colonial Ministry to seek for a redress of this problem by seeing to compensating them. The Director of African Affairs at the French Colonial Ministry in Paris, Binger, informed the British embassy that he had been instructed to draft a proposal to the British traders, and even invited their representatives to Paris. The British companies were then offered the concessions of the *Societe du Bas Ogone* as well as those of the *Fernan Vas* and *Sette Cama* companies who were either

bankrupt or about to be. The developments in the Congo-Brazzaville brought Britain and France together to negotiate the Entete of 8<sup>th</sup> April, 1904. Another notable negotiation between the two colonial powers was that which involved British firms and the French in the Congo-Brazzaville. London and Paris then again negotiated the claims of French shareholders in the Netherlands South African Railway Company. These according to Cookey (ibid), were in regard to His Majesty’s Government’s desire to remove all sources of friction between the two governments. He concedes that though some humanitarian groups in England such as the Aborigines Protection Society campaigned vigorously for the protection of the rights of Africans.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, one could see obviously that the European colonization of Africa which officially took effect after the 1880s, involved some negotiations and concessions, but it would be an oversimplification to stop at that description as there were clear instances where it was rather through deception and military conquests. Africans sometimes put up resistance until they were overwhelmed by the superior firepower and tactics of the European colonial authorities, except for Menelik II of the Ancient Empire of Ethiopia who was able to repulse the Italian colonial authorities from his territory in 1895 in a battle at Adowa.

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