

European imperialism and colonialism in Africa: conceptual lessons for understanding the former Soviet Union and present day Russia

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ABSTRACT: This article claims that the legacy of European imperialism and colonialism in Africa can be conceptually compared to the legacy of Russian and Soviet imperialism and colonialism in the former USSR republics and the nations of Central and Eastern Europe that were under Soviet dominations. Despite the obvious fact that the historical conditions and paths of African nations that were colonized, repressed and ruled by the European empires differ significantly from the experience of the nations of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, that were conquered and colonized by the Russian Empire and later on were subjects to the Soviet rule, it is suggested in this article, that the conceptual lessons drawn from the vast literature dedicated to the studies of the aftermath of colonialism in Africa can enrich the scholarly efforts aimed at understanding the post-soviet spaces and different processes in it. What is meant by “conceptual lessons” is methodological opportunity for a different perspective or even a different lens through which the legacy of the Soviet rule and the current Russian neo-imperial foreign politics can be better understood. Much is written about the European imperialism and its colonial policies, however there is still some reluctance in applying the methodological framework of postcolonial studies to the former Soviet Union and present day Russia. Scholars all over the world studied the colonial legacies that African nations struggled to overcome and there are topics of particular relevance to the study of the post-soviet space: the processes of post-colonial nation building, the roles of new national elites, the ideological choices in foreign policies of newly independent nations, the aftermath of the policies of assimilation, the imperial “ideologies of superiority”, the economic consequences of colonialism, the role of churches and religious organizations in supporting colonial suppression – as conceptual topics, all of them can be studied critically, also in a comparative perspective, to have a much better understanding of the former soviet and current Russian foreign politics and policies.

KEYWORDS: African studies, postcolonial studies, Soviet imperialism, Russian foreign policy, post-soviet countries, research methodology, concepts’ studies

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Introduction

■ **Permanent Representative of Kenya to the U.N. Martin Kimani delivered a speech criticizing Russian actions during the Security Council meeting on Russian threats to Ukraine. Mr. Kimani called out Russia for acting toward Ukraine in a way that is all too familiar to many countries that were born out of colonialism, especially those on the African continent. Moreover, Mr. Kimani made a comparison between the birth of his country and the founding of Ukraine and the “ending of empire” that Kenyan and Ukrainian nations represented. It is also important to mention that, as MSNBC news report said: “Kimani’s sentiment was echoed by the ambassadors from Gabon and Ghana, the two other African countries currently serving on the Security Council. Given the usual comity between Moscow and the African Group at the U.N., this direct opposition from Kenya, Gabon and Ghana counts as a huge break against Russia” (Opinion, 2022).**

Martin Kimani’s speech was not only “echoed by” some other African nations but also criticized. In his article in “opinions” section for Aljazeera Patrick Gathara, a communications consultant, writer, and political cartoonist from Nairobi argued that “the Kenyan UN ambassador’s Ukraine speech does not deserve praise” mainly because “Martin Kimani was right to condemn Russia, he seemed to embrace the colonial legacy in Africa” (Gathara, 2022). Without going deeper into Gathara’s criticism of Kimani’s UNSC speech, we see from this debate that the African nations and their representative raised a very important issue on how the legacy of European imperialism and colonialism in African can be conceptually compared to the post-soviet space and the legacy of Russian and Soviet imperialism. It is obvious that the historical conditions and historical paths of African nations that were colonized, repressed and ruled by the European empires differ significantly from what the nations of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, that were conquered and colonized by the Russian Empire and later on were subjects to the Soviet rule, went through. However, Martin Kimani’s speech clearly demonstrates that the nations that broke away from the Soviet empire after its collapse can draw *conceptual lessons* from the history and experience of the African nations.

Therefore the **objective of this article** is to *identify conceptual lessons from the experience of African postcolonial conditions that are relevant to the studies of the post-soviet nations, the impact of Soviet imperialism and the current Russian neo-imperial politics and policies*. To reach this objective, there are several **tasks** we need to complete: 1) to develop a general methodological framework by explaining what is meant by *conceptual lessons* that will be drawn from the colonial past and postcolonial present of African nations; 2) to select conceptual topics that can be taken as case-studies for lesson drawing and structure the information, facts, and debates from them, in order to 3) finally comprise a list of conceptual lessons with reasoned explanations on how they can be relevant for the post-soviet countries.

Basis for the methodology of drawing conceptual lessons from colonial experience

When comparing different colonialisms we can, of course, speak of some similarities in our methodologies (Said, 1994) and we can develop common frames for comparing specific postcolonial phenomena (Yakovlyev, 2013). In order to draw conceptual lesson, we should first clarify, what we can do with a *conceptual comparison*. Conceptual comparison can be used in contrast to or in addition to empirical comparison, as in the study of alternative households cycles (Schaninger & Danko, 1993); educational approaches and “personal epistemologies” in elementary classrooms between countries can be conceptually compared (Haerle & Bendixen, 2008), conceptual comparison between discrete and continuous simulation can be conducted in order “to encourage the application of the hybrid simulation” (Brito, Trevisan & Botter, 2011); conceptual comparative framework can be developed for evaluation of different healthcare systems (Wendt et al., 2009); there can be a conceptual comparisons of Web services (Lara et al., 2004) etc.

When talking about conceptual comparison the key word *concept* comes to mind and a justified assumption can be that when conducting conceptual comparison a scholar is busy with comparing concepts as, for example, did C. Warren and B. Laslett (1977) by comparing the concepts of *privacy* and *secrecy* in their study. One can also compare different approaches to defining a certain concept,

as can be illustrated by the study of B. Hoffman (2012) who compared different approaches to defining the concept of *cognitive efficiency* and also compared the methodologies of how those can be studied thus the titles of his article says: “Cognitive efficiency: A conceptual and methodological comparison” (Hoffman, 2012). Eppler (2006) in his article compares Novak’s concept mapping technique “to three other types of visualization formats, namely mind maps, conceptual diagrams, and visual metaphors” (p. 202). Not only is Eppler (2006) comparing “types of visualization formats”, but he also draws conclusions on the advantages and disadvantages of “each format for learning and knowledge sharing” (p. 202). Here we have an extension in our understanding of the conceptual analysis since we see that the techniques that are being compared are not simply methods for visual data representation, but they have something in common on a more important level: they can facilitate learning and improve knowledge sharing.

Warren and Laslett (1977) introduced their comparison of the concepts of *privacy* and *secrecy* with the statements that “Privacy and secrecy both involve boundaries and the denial of access to others; however, they differ in the moral content of the behavior which is concealed. Privacy is consensual where secrecy is not” (p. 43). This example illustrates that two concepts are compared based on their common features (boundaries and the denial of access to others) but also delimited based on their differences in “moral content of the behavior which is concealed”. Both when comparing concept (as in this example of *privacy* and *secrecy*), and in the example of comparison of “data visualization” we see that bases for similarities and boundaries of differences can be found to analyze not only the specific concepts, but phenomena on a more general level that possess some *conceptual similarities*. This can lead us to the definition of *conceptual lessons* that the present article deals with, but before proceeding, we need to take a look at the meaning of the term *conceptual*. The Cambridge Dictionary of the English Language defines *conceptual* as “based on ideas or principles” (Conceptual, 2022a). The Collins Dictionary says that *conceptual* “means related to ideas and concepts formed in the mind” (Conceptual, 2022b) and, finally, Merriam-Webster’s definition of this word: “of, relating to, or consisting of concepts” (Conceptual, 2022c).

When speaking about *conceptual lessons* as a methodological framework we have in mind ideas and principles, “concepts formed in the mind”, and other theoretical and practical aspects of experience

of different African nations “of, relating to, or consisting of concepts” on different levels that can be applied to, compared or taken for further investigation for the studies into post-soviet countries. There is also a clear methodological limitation that a) African nations differ significantly in their (post)colonial experiences, b) our level of analysis is a general overview of potential conceptual lessons that should be further investigated in order to make a stronger case for *empirical* and *methodological similarities*. To carry it out in a more systematic way, we take the approach to the *conceptual analysis* suggested by Slovak academics, who suggested “as conceptual relationships are quite diverse, their analysis also takes various forms. We will focus on three forms of concept analysis, which will correspond to three partially different methods of conceptual analysis – it will be the method of *constructive*, the method of *detectional* and the method of *reductional* conceptual analysis.” (Zouhar et al., 2017, p. 130). Taking this methodology in general, we will look for *constructive* relations between different concept within the similar realm of colonial experience (Zouhar et al., 2017, p. 130–131), *detect* potential relations on a conceptual level by expanding the sphere of concepts under our study (Zouhar et al., 2017, p. 133–134), and, finally, provide a necessary *reduction* within the “conceptual system” to take away what doesn’t fit into our model (Zouhar et al., 2017, p. 136–137) in order to provide a preliminary set of conceptual lessons that can be relevant both for the African and post-soviet countries.

Looking at the Soviet imperialism in a comparative perspective

Comparing imperialisms is a different task, particularly if we take into account the Soviet and post-soviet or contemporary Russia as cases in question. There are scholars, notably A. J. Motyl from Rutgers University (2001), who argued that the aftermaths of the collapse of the Soviet Union could be studied as a collapse of an empire, which makes such a comparison possible. There is also literature from the Cold War period by Western scholars who published their studies on the Soviet imperialisms back then (e.g. Schoenfeld, 1948). However, it can be noted that there are also contemporary studies in Russian state building, Russian foreign policies and Russian nationalism that are clearly dealing with the notions of imperialism, colonialism and post-colonial conditions that are not mentioning

the terms and concepts of imperialisms directly. For example, in his study of the Russian war in Georgia and the role Russian nationalism played in it, L. March (2007) states that: “civilizational nationalism did directly matter in foreign policy, because foreign policy and domestic discourse became blended to an unprecedented degree, and the terms of debate were largely set by the civilizationists. This was not a sudden phenomenon; in the Putin’s era, the domestic mobilization of civilizational nationalism increased so that it became the “politically correct” domestic discourse” (p. 13). However, the way “civilizational nationalism” is analyzed in his article clearly indicates that there is a blend between the unnamed imperialist perception of the former colonized states that are part of some sort of “Russian civilization” and that concept, in term, can be seen as a new Russian imperialism. There seems to be very little (if no at all) differences in the concepts of *Russian civilizationists* and *Russian neo-imperialists*. Russian foreign relations in the contemporary world can and should be studied from the neo-imperialist perspective, as did, for example, T. Kuzio in his book titled “*Ukraine: Democratization, Corruption, and the New Russian Imperialism*” (Kuzio, 2015). Of course, there are differences in Russian and other European empires, for which A. J. Motyl suggested a conceptual distinction as between *continuous* and *discontinuous empires* (Motyl, p. 4), but his definition of *empire* can be applied to all of them: “I define empire as a hierarchically organized political system with a hublike structure—a rimless wheel—within which a core elite and state dominate peripheral elites and societies by serving as intermediaries for their significant interactions and by channeling resource flows from the periphery to the core and back to the periphery” (Motyl, p. 4). In our attempt to draw conceptual lessons from the African nations for the post-soviet nations we shall take this definition of empire.

Nation-building in Africa, ideologies and national elites after gaining independence

Nation-building is definitely among the most complicated processes that any country had to go through after it had gained independence from an empire. In many cases the independence was a result of resilient struggle and the leaders of the independence movement could form the core of the future national elite. The process

of nation-building is a multifaceted process with many components and processes, a complicated subject for an in-depth analysis in case of a single country, let alone a number of countries taken for a comparative study. Therefore we would limit our comparative analysis to specific questions of: 1) elites of the newly independent nations; 2) ideological choices and potential dilemmas made by those elites; 3) relations with the former imperial centers of power.

Let us begin with the case of Kenya. Jomo Kenyatta was the first Prime Minister of Kenya from 1963 to 1964 and then the first president of this country from 1964 to his death in 1978. He was an anti-colonial activist and became Kenya’s first indigenous head of government who played a crucial role in the transformation of Kenya from a British colony into an independent state. In his book “*The Anatomy of Neo-Colonialism in Kenya. British Imperialism and Kenyatta, 1963–1978*” (Maloba, 2017) W. O. Maloba presents an interesting account in Chapter 2, the title of which starts with the words “*The End of Radicalism*” (Maloba, 2017, p. 21). In this chapter the author shows the transformation of how Kenyatta was portrayed: from “*Soviet trained...terrorist*” who “*visited the Soviet Union several times*” and “*studied at Moscow University*” to the new image of him as a “*a wise anti-communist nationalist; a valued and even trusted friend of the West*” (Maloba, 2017, pp. 21–22). At a first glance it might seem that the comparison of the national elites of the African nations (on the example of how the anti-colonial leader of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta, was portrayed) cannot be compared to the processes of state-building that took place in the countries of the former Soviet Union and in the former socialist countries that were under soviet control. However, the differences in the post-soviet experience and, even more so, the post-soviet Russian perception of the national elites do resemble the post-imperial rhetoric of the former empires regarding the newly independent African nations. Today’s Russia labels the national politics and policies of Poland, Baltic states, Ukraine, Czech Republic and other post-socialist countries that condemn the atrocities of the Soviet Union against these nations as “*utterly Russophobic*”. Any country that suffered suppression by the Soviet regime and takes a critical stance towards the declared “*brotherly love*” by Russians is easily branded as “*(neo)nazist*” by the Kremlin. Compared to how the leaders of the national uprisings in many colonies of the European empires were portrayed by the colonizers as not only

“savage” but dangerous and even “murderous”, it is not surprising that we see similarities in the colonial rhetorics of different empires. However, Russia is willing to cooperate with those national elites in the post-soviet states that share a pro-Russian stance and even praise the common Soviet past as something positive and “good”, for which, again, some similarities in the positions of European empires to the national elites of the African nations that gained independence from them can be found.

The cited passage from the W. Maloba’s (2017) work also hints at another dimension in the relationship between the former empires and their former colonies – the dimension of ideology. As the British scholar P. Cullen (2017) from the University of Cambridge (at the moment her book was published, since 2020 she is Lecturer in International History at Loughborough University) writes on the Kenya-Britain relationships, back in the 1960s “Some British officials and politicians had made no secret of their preference for the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU)—the rival party which Kenyatta’s Kenya African National Union (KANU) had defeated” (p. 1). Even though the causes for such positions may be different, the general picture is all too familiar to everyone who witnessed how Russia openly opposed Mikheil Saakashvili in Georgia, demonstrated its dissatisfaction with Nikol Pashinyan in Armenia or openly supported Viktor Yanukovych in Ukraine. P. Cullen (2017) continues by saying that “A brief comparison with Kenya’s neighbours and former British colonies Tanganyika (later Tanzania) and Uganda makes clear how unusual Kenya’s relationship with Britain was” (p. 1). Tanganyika was first of Britain’s East African colonies to gain independence in 1961 under the leadership of Julius Nyerere “with whom the British expected to have a close relationship” but “over the following years he pursued relations with China, the Soviet Union and a variety of external partners over and above Britain” (p. 2). In case of Uganda, which became independent in 1962, “British officials came to dislike the first president, Milton Obote, and initially to welcome Idi Amin’s coup in 1971” (p. 2). P. Cullen (2017) sums up the introduction to the first chapter of her book by saying that “In Uganda and Tanzania, as was the case in Kenya, the choices of the post-colonial leaders were crucial. Their presidents looked to work with others rather than Britain, and took actions which were detrimental to British interests, as well as criticising Britain publicly” (p. 2). Of course, in comparing cooperation of former British colonies with the Soviet Union during the Cold

War we should be cautious in claiming that such cooperation can be compared to the cooperation of former soviet and socialist states with NATO and other Western countries – but it is exactly what Kremlin does by claiming that the “NATO expansion” threatens Russia’s interests whereas in reality the nations of Central and Eastern Europe joined NATO (or still aspire to join this alliance) because of the Russian threat and the war Russia started in Ukraine clearly demonstrates that Russia is capable of waging a war on the neighboring country, committing war crimes in it and killing thousands of civilians for the sake of its neo-imperial mania.

Economic legacies of colonial rule in Africa

The economics of colonial rule and its postcolonial consequences is also worth paying attention, especially because there are many publications that deal with this issue. Clearly some highly ideological publications look at the colonial and postcolonial cases by criticizing the very core of the capitalist “bourgeois” economy, as did, for example, J.-Ph. Rey (1971). It should be noted that despite a number of publications that praise the soviet economic system, this remains – both as practice and ideology – still rather marginal. However, another issue regarding the aftermath of the soviet economy and the modes of production can be compared to what happened to the African nations, particularly if taking a closer look on the postcolonial consequences of imperial rule. Acquisition of land by big international companies, as illustrated in the case of Daewoo in Madagascar in the study of the Italian scholar F. Roiatti (2010), can be seen as an example of “new colonialism”. One can debate whether this is a consequence of the globalized capitalist economy as such, but there is little doubt that economic domination is a form of colonial exercise of power. If Russian state-owned Gazprom acquires full control of gas companies and gas transit infrastructure in neighboring countries (like in Belarus) why cannot we pay attention to such actions and analyze them within the methodological framework of the new colonialism? If Russian officials oppose closer economic ties between post-soviet states and the European Union and, for example, pro-Russian politicians in Ukraine claim that many companies in Ukraine would go bankrupt because they will lose the Russian market as the only market open to them. Additionally, they would claim that Ukrainian manufacturers will be

unable to compete with European companies and thus they would have no other choice as to accept Russian conditions of trade – how is that different from postcolonial dependencies imposed on African producers by its former imperial owners? By answering these questions and digging deeper into the consequences of Soviet colonial rule and the economic manipulations Russia tries to do (including its constant use of gas supply as a political tool) one will also be able to take a deeper look on how colonialism impacts the social structure of society and has long-lasting negative effects – a good example of such study is a work by Brazilian scholar V. Zamparoni (2012) titled “From slave to cook. Colonialism and racism in Mozambique”, even though this study cannot be directly compared to the post-soviet countries but conceptual lessons can be drawn on how the legacy of the soviet economy affects societies after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Philosophy of European imperialism in Africa

Ideological dimension of colonialisms has already been mentioned. It is a vast and rather complicated field in which we can just outline some general topics from which conceptual lessons of the African continent, that are comparable to the post-soviet space, can be drawn. In his book “The Philosophy of Colonialism” Italian philosopher and writer N. Merker analyzed the components of the colonial philosophy that can be related to the politics and policies of the Russian Empire and later to those of the Soviet Union: religion, “ideologies of superiority” (Italian: *le ideologie della superiorità*), the doctrine of civilization (Italian: *la dottrina della civilizzazione*), the theory of assimilation, legacy of the colonizers, legacy of the colonized and other components (Marker, 2018). The philosophical bases of the politics and policies of assimilation are critically analyzed by many scholars, and, in comparison to them, we can observe a gap in the critical analysis of what makes Russian culture so imperial, how it legitimizes the sense of Russian superiority and justifies annihilation of indigenous cultures that were still seen as “inferior” to Russian. In an edited volume by a French-German scholar D. Tricoire we can read about the discussion of the role of *Enlightenment* in colonialism: “many postcolonial authors believe that the Enlightenment rationalism helped delegitimize non-European cultures” (Tricoire, 2017, p. 1), including its

role in the policies of assimilation and silencing of native African cultures. Not only the legacy of colonialism in Africa, but also its philosophy and its ideological basis can be incorporated and used in methodological frames for the study of Russian and Soviet colonialisms. In his brilliant study “The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939” T. Martin explores the Soviet management of the “nationalities question” and analyzes the political logic of Stalin’s policies in response to a perceived threat to Soviet unity in the 1930s when the Russians were “re-established” as the state’s leading nationality and numerous “enemy nations” were deported. As T. Martin (2001) writes “The new negative attitude toward ethnic proliferation was accompanied by a positive reevaluation of the role of Russian culture. [Soviet authorities] asserted the need for a better knowledge of Russian and questioned the value of minority-language schooling (p. 205). T. Martin conducted a comprehensive survey and interpretation, based on many archival sources, but what remains to be studied in more depth are the philosophical foundations of Russian and Soviet imperialism that regularly (even today) lead to the self-perception of Russian culture as superior, that produce the “ideologies of superiority” as N. Marker calls them. The plethora of studies on the philosophy of European colonialisms, with practical examples of how their ideas were implemented in the African nations during colonial rule, can be taken into consideration as methodological grounds for such studies.

The role of Christian missionaries in supporting colonial administrations

“Alongside hunting for riches, colonial expansion was also animated by the impulse to spread Christianity. The navigators and colonizers, in addition to the idea of being superior in civilization, race and technical knowledge, were convinced that they were propagating the ‘true religion’” (Marker, 2018, pp. 7–8). The role of the Christian missionaries in the colonization projects of the European empires has received a lot of attention by many international scholars. For example, N. Fernández writes that “the analysis of this [colonization] discourse reveals how the Catholic mission agency, especially on the island of Bioko [Equatorial Guinea], served the interests of the colonial administration and played a crucial role in the colonial project. It was

one of the keys to Spanish colonization. The analysis that I present also tries to show how this same colonial discourse is, precisely, the one that reveals that the colonized were not lacking in religion or knowledge (as the imaginary tries to show)" (Fernández, 2015, p. 62). Not only the Catholic missions were part of the colonial politics, but also the Protestant evangelist missionaries: "In the domain of formal political processes, of the concrete exercise of power, the effect of the nonconformist mission to the Tswana, as elsewhere in Africa, was inherently ambiguous. However, in the domain of implicit signs and practices, of the diffuse control over everyday meaning, it instilled the authoritative imprint of Western capitalist culture" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1986, p. 1). One might suggest that the spread of Christianity around the world also had its positive effects and promoted democracy, as, for example, R. D. Woodberry argued in his study that: "historically and statistically that conversionary Protestants (CPs) heavily influenced the rise and spread of stable democracy around the world" (Woodberry, 2012, p. 244). Firstly, such findings stirred debate among scientists, and some very recent critical empirical evaluation of Woodberry's study states that "while his historical analysis is exhaustive, the accompanying empirical evidence suffers from severe inconsistencies. This letter replicates Woodberry's analysis using twenty-six alternative democracy measures and extends the time period over which the democracy measures are averaged... We find no significant relationship between Protestant missions and the development of democracy, which raises concerns about the robustness and broader applicability of Woodberry's findings" (Nikolova & Polansky, 2020, p. 1723). Secondly, the spread of Christianity in its potential positive impact on the spread of liberal democratic values should be studied separately from the role different churches and their respective missions played in imposing colonial rule upon African nations. Methodologically speaking, these two questions should be studied using different approaches.

However, the findings from the exhaustive body of literature on the role of Christian mission in colonialism can be taken and further on applied to the studies of the role Russian Orthodox Church played and is still playing in Russian (neo) colonialism. As D. Dmitrii (2006) puts it in the introduction to his article: "Shortly after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, a Russian Orthodox monk nominated Russia as the 'Third Rome', or successor to the Roman and Byzantine empires. Some

analysts have seen Muscovite Third Romism (that allegedly persisted into the Bolshevik era of the Soviet Union) as the Russian equivalent of the USA's Manifest Destiny, and other concepts used to rationalise imperialism" (p. 317). The rationalizations of Russian imperialism in theory and in practice is what the highest church authorities of Russia have never hesitated to do – and there are studies that prove it. For example, the article by D. P. Payne (2010) explores the actions of the Russian Orthodox Church that in cooperation with the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs strengthens "the positions of our Fatherland in the world and enhancing the international prestige of Russia", as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia Sergey Lavrov put it (cited in: Payne, 2010, p. 712). All in all, there seems to be an obvious conceptual lesson then can be drawn from the studies of how Christian missions assisted in sustaining colonial domination over African nations in order to explore the role of the Russian Orthodox Church in rationalizing and supporting Russian (neo)colonialism.

Conclusions

The legacies of European imperialism and colonialism in African nations have been studied and analyzed by many international scholars. Their research methodologies and findings can contribute a lot for a better understanding of the legacy of Russian and Soviet imperialism and colonialism in the former USSR republics and the nations of Central and Eastern Europe that were under Soviet dominations. Their studies can also contribute to a better understanding of today's Russian neo-imperial politics and policies. The historical conditions and paths of African nations that were colonized, repressed and ruled by the European empires differ significantly from the experience of the nations of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, but what we can take from them are the *conceptual lessons* that provide a methodological opportunity for a different perspective or even a different lens through which the current Russian neo-imperial foreign politics can be better understood. Much is written about the European imperialism and its colonial policies, however there still seems to be some reluctance in applying the methodological framework of postcolonial studies to the former Soviet Union and present day Russia. Scholars all over the world studied the colonial legacies that African nations struggled to overcome and, as this article demonstrated, there are several topics (among many others)

that are of particular relevance to the study of the post-soviet space: the processes of post-colonial nation building, the roles of new national elites, the ideological choices in foreign policies of newly independent nations, the aftermath of the policies of assimilation, the imperial “ideologies of superiority”, the economic consequences of colonialism, the role of churches and religious organizations in supporting colonial suppression. Conceptual lessons can be drawn from these topics, all of which can be studied critically, also in a comparative perspective with the Soviet Union and today’s Russia, to have a much better understanding of another forms of imperialism and colonialism in Europe.

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