

# Africa's Underdevelopment Discourse: A Perspective on Its Source of Persistence and Possible Solutions

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## Abstract

Since independence the underdevelopment discourse in relation to Africa has been a persistent debate. Efforts at overcoming such a challenge tended to have defied conventional wisdom, and since we cannot stop except a solution is found, greater energies are required to solving the riddle. Consequent upon the above, this study shall examine Africa's underdevelopment discourse with focus on its sources of persistence and possible solutions. The study adopted the historical approach and applied the institutional theory as basis for analysis of secondarily sourced materials. The study found that Africa's underdevelopment goes beyond slavery, colonialism, imperialism and corruption as earlier studies by afro-centric/Marxist scholars and recent studies will suggest. This study rather found that the root of the persistence of Africa's underdevelopment lies in the spate of civil wars/ethnic cleansing ravaging the land; the domination approach of one ethnic group over the other, the dysfunctional political structure/weak institutional framework and failure to adopt hook, line and sinker, a workable development model. The study therefore recommends the building of strong institutional framework that entrenches the supremacy of the law, the restructuring of the political system to ensure that regions develop at their own pace and the adoption of a development model that emphasizes the development of the coastal region as the gateway for economic development, huge investments in research and development coupled with efficient monitoring and management system.

**Keywords:** Development, Underdevelopment, Institutions, ethnic cleansing, civil war and political structure/management system

## 1. Introduction

Earlier scholarly works on the underdevelopment of Africa are Euro-centric, afro-centric and Marxist in nature. First, the earlier Afro-centric and Marxist stance locate the source of Africa's underdevelopment on slavery, colonialism and imperialism. For instance, Walter Rodney claimed that the underdevelopment of Africa was as a result of exploitation of the continent by the European power through colonialism, capitalism and imperialism (Rodney 1982)<sup>[1]</sup> On the other hand Ake C. (1981)<sup>[2]</sup> noted that the colonial economy was structured in 'imperfections and monopolies' associated with the capitalist system which act as an important link between 'colonialism and underdevelopment'. In other word he sees the capitalist system as a tool with which the colonial overlords underdeveloped Africa. Kema R. (2005),<sup>[3]</sup> further observed that the loss of power which is the 'ultimate determinant in human society', facilitated the loss of Africa's capacity to develop. These views are rooted in the so-called dependency theory as the source of Africa's underdevelopment. While the above views contain some merits, this study argues that it only served the era of slavery, colonialism and imperialism with limited impact in contemporary times.

Having said that, it must be pointed out that African scholars are beginning to come to terms with the role Africans themselves played and are still playing in the underdevelopment of Africa. Consequently, great scholarly works have emerged regarding 'How Africans Underdeveloped Africa'(Stanley I.C., 2010; Agbo J., 2010; Jeffrey E.I.E 2013)<sup>[4,5&6]</sup>. These recent studies, stressed the role of corruption, brain drain, foreign loans, weak institution, civil wars and ethnicity entrenched by African leaders played in the underdevelopment of Africa. While acknowledging the veracity of these claims, the study argues that the question of foreign loan and brain drain are debatable. It further contends that the above studies placed so much emphasis on the sources of African underdevelopment with less stress on its possible solutions. While this study does not pretend to offer a one stop shop approach to Africa's underdevelopment, the problem it set out to address relates to the sources of the persistence of Africa's underdevelopment and its possible solutions. This study aimed at adding to the body of literature on the role of Africans in the underdevelopment of Africa but with emphasis on its persistence and the way forward. The questions the study hope to address are what is development and underdevelopment? What are the sources of Africa's underdevelopment beyond slavery, colonialism and imperialism? And what possible solutions could be offered to unravel Africa's underdevelopment challenges? In addressing the above questions, the study adopted the historical design with the use of institutional theory as tool for analysis of unobtrusively sourced secondary material. Though this approach is weakened by bias in the choice of document and its inability to uncover the processes that produced the document it relied upon, but the fact that they are multiple made comparison possible to overcome the problem of bias thereby ensuring objectivity of the study. Having said that, the study shall proceed to address the questions, with the clarifications of the concepts of development

and underdevelopment as a starting point.

### **2.1. The Concepts of Development and Underdevelopment**

In attempting to clarify the concept of underdevelopment, we find solace in clarifying the concept of development first in order to ensure that by their contrast one can better comprehend the challenges confronting African countries. The above concepts have engaged the effort of scholars from different backgrounds in the social sciences especially from economics, international relations, political science and development studies. While development is seen as ‘increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self discipline, responsibility and material wellbeing’. Rodney, (1972).<sup>[7]</sup> Okoli and Onah (2002)<sup>[8]</sup> see development to encompass ‘progression, movement and advancement towards something better’. Moreover, Nnoli (1981)<sup>[9]</sup> sees development as a phenomenon associated with changes in man’s humanity and creative energies... it is a process of actualizing man’s inherent capacity to do things, greater freedom, responsibility and material wellbeing’. While the above perspectives are instructive, the study argues that it captures mainly the individual aspect of development; it ignores the collective or organized approach to development.

Consequently, the study shall conceive of development as an organized mental, socio-political and economic process involving interplay between the ingenuity of the human element of national power and other material capabilities at the disposal of a particular nation. The combination of such human factor and other capabilities are geared towards the welfare and progress of the individual and the collective or group it belongs to. It is organized because it goes beyond the individual and it is a process because it is unending. And it touches every stratum of the human person and the society he belongs, ranging from the health/educational improvement of the human capital of the nation to the infrastructural/technological improvement cum the health of the nation’s economy. The above explains why even the advanced nations continue to strive for ways to improve their welfare and progress thereby justifying their huge investment in research and development. This contrasted sharply to the concept of underdevelopment but help one to understand it better and prompting some scholars to conclude that the two concepts are two sides of the same coin.

### **2.2 Underdevelopment**

In the academic and development circles, underdevelopment is seen as a state of being at low ebb in terms of progress in human capital, economic, technological or industrial development of a sovereign nation. In other words, underdevelopment does not mean absence of development, rather it refers to a form of stagnation in the progress and welfare of a people. Consequently, nations that fall within the above frame of description are either referred to as third world, developing, less developed or underdeveloped countries. And according to World Development Report (2017)<sup>[10]</sup> the attributes of underdevelopment includes low income per capita, stagnated per capital growth, high unemployment rate leading to high rate of poverty, low calorie intake, inequality in living standard, high population growth rate, low life expectancy, high illiteracy rate, dependent on poorly managed natural resource and low volume of foreign trade.

The views of afro-centric and Marxist scholars sharply contrasted to the mainstream western perspective as they place the blame of Africa’s underdevelopment on the west, the above explains why in trying to conceptualize underdevelopment, Kema R. (2005)<sup>[11]</sup> noted that “when one society finds itself forced to relinquish power entirely to another society, that in itself is a form of underdevelopment” Ake (1981)<sup>[12]</sup> asserted that colonial economy was characterised by market imperfections and monopolies. This characteristic of colonial capitalism is an important element in the link between colonization and underdevelopment. Consequent upon the above, underdevelopment theorist in the likes of Offiong (1981)<sup>[13]</sup> Nnoli (1981),<sup>[14]</sup> Ake (1981)<sup>[15]</sup> and Rodney (1972)<sup>[16]</sup> among others, concluded that African underdevelopment is as a result of the nature of relations between Africa and the advanced capitalist West, distinguished by exploitation and marginalization in all ramifications and that the only way by which Africa can attain meaningful progress is to “break away” or “delink” from the capitalist circle.

### **3.1. The Persistent Sources of Africa’s Underdevelopment**

Although dependency and Marxist theorists place the sources of Africa’s underdevelopment at the feet of European slave trade, colonialism and imperialism, the claims are no longer tenable since Africans themselves are refuting such claims based on the empirical realities confronting the continent (Stanley I.C, 2010; Agbo J. 2010)<sup>[17 & 18]</sup>. While we acknowledge the role slavery, colonialism and imperialism played in slowing down progress in Africa; we contend that Africa is not the only continent that suffer the humiliation of slavery, colonialism and imperialism. If other continents that suffer the same fate with Africa albeit at different level could develop after the exit of their overlords why can’t Africa?

Attempt at addressing the above question have engaged scholars of Western and African extraction. While the Western scholars situate the underdevelopment of Africa within the context of failure to adopt the western tailored model of ‘Washington Consensus’ in the form of Structural Adjustment program; their African

counterparts are situating it within the context of Corruption, brain drain, civil war, weak institutional framework, and foreign debt (Charles E.O., 2015; Agbo 2010; Stanley 2010)<sup>[19,20&21]</sup>. While the study agrees with them on the role of corruption, civil wars and weak institutions, it disagrees on the role of foreign debt and brain drain in the underdevelopment of Africa. First, Africa is not the continent harbouring the highest debt burden, yet development seems impossible. But countries like the US, China, Germany, France, India and a host of others with the highest debt burden are making great strides in developmental terms. Figures from the Economist's Intelligential Unit (2018),<sup>[22]</sup> put the debt burden of the US, China, France, Germany and India at a staggering total of USD\$26.58 trillion far exceeding those of Africa's highest indebted nations like Egypt, South Africa, Algeria, Nigeria and Sudan at USD\$772.87 billion. The above figure prompted Chukwuyem, (2018)<sup>[23]</sup> to tag the rich industrialized countries as 'highly indebted rich countries'.

Second, the question of brain drain in the underdevelopment of Africa is debatable when compared with other continents of the world. For instance, African Development Bank (ADB) and African Development Fund (ADF) documents on the role of Diasporas in the development of their countries is instructive. It stated thus:-

China, Korea, and India are among countries which have shown that Diaspora contributions can significantly help to transform economies. The approaches adopted by these Asian nations point to country-driven initiatives that are built on shared development objectives between the government and the Diaspora, and underlined by comprehensive policies, administrative structures and incentives to foster an enabling environment for mobilizing Diaspora resources (expertise, investments, entrepreneurship and corporate affiliations) around critical growth pillars.<sup>[24]</sup>

Other studies reinforced the above view, stressing that Chinese Diasporas accumulated wealth in 2006 amounted to 'USD\$1.1 trillion' and remitted about 'USD\$32.83 billion' in 2007. On the other hand Indians in Diaspora generated an annual income of 35 percent of the nations GDP totalling USD\$1.16 trillion and remitted 'USD\$35.26 billion'. These figures have aided in no small measure the transformation ongoing in Asia. For Africa, 'World Bank/International Monetary Fund's Balance of Payments Statistics 2008 revealed remittances inflows to SSA countries as \$18.69 billion, \$21.32 billion, \$20.74 billion and \$21.5 billion for 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010, respectively'(UNDP Human Development Report 2009; Ratha, et al., 2010).<sup>[25&26]</sup> And Anyanwu et al., (2010)<sup>[27]</sup> noted that 'evidence shows that a 10 % increase in official international remittances as a share of gross domestic product (GDP) leads to a 2.9 % decline in the poverty headcount'. Unfortunately, the shares of Africans in Diaspora remittances have only aided individual development at the expense of national development. The questions therefore are if development is possible in the midst of such high volume of debt among the advanced/advancing nations why is it impossible for Africa to develop with her relatively low debt burden compare to the industrialized world? And why are remittances not aiding national development in Africa as it has aided elsewhere? The answers to the above questions expose the flaws in the political/ management system and that of conceptualizing development based on individual improvement. In other words, the source of Africa's underdevelopment is the lack of an organized approach to development. The above is evidence in the dysfunctional political system, weak institutional framework, corruption and unmitigated ethnic cleansing/civil wars failure to adopt hook line and sinker, a workable development model.

### **3.2.Dysfunctional Political System.**

Democracy is a form of government that is targeted at creating an enabling environment where members of society in which it is practiced would enjoy the evidence of life. The basic tenets of democracy include majority rule, the rule of law, popular participation and recognition of the equality of the citizens, their freedom and other civil liberties, participatory political culture, security for all citizens and democratic peace among others. All these are expected to facilitate economic and national development. Above analysis examines the interface between democratic practice and the disproportionate level of human poverty and inequality in Africa. Odojin adds that: *democracy is a means of creating political infrastructure through which diverse interests are represented in government, and the institutionalization of mechanism to hold rulers accountable to the public will and providing the means for the removal of government from power without rolling out military tanks* (Odojin, 2005:96)<sup>[28]</sup>

Without failure, Africans must sensibly assess those who vie for political positions in their societies, least mediocre and thugs would emerge as opposed to strong visionary political leaders. Ake (1996:7),<sup>[29]</sup> stated that much of what is uniquely negative about politics in Africa arises from the character of the state, particularly its lack of autonomy, the immensity of its power, its proneness to abuse and lack of immunity against it. The character of the state rules out a politics of moderation and mandates a politics of lawlessness and extremism for the single reason that the nature of the state makes the capture of state power irresistibly attractive. The winners in the competition for power win everything, the losers, lose everything. Nothing can be worse than losing, and nothing better than winning. Thus, everyone seeks power by every means, legal or otherwise and those who

already control state power try to keep it by every means. What emerges from this, is a politics which does not know legitimacy or legality, only expediency. This kind of politics is not conducive to political stability, rule of law or democracy because it is constituted as warfare, and therefore cannot guarantee political stability and human rights development in the polity.

Kofi Annan, Former Secretary General of the United Nations posits that the greatest gain made by Africa is the steady rejection of indifference and nonchalance that have come to characterize old order and leadership. There is an emerging and flickering sense of responsibility that is gradually springing up, but there are still quite number of leaders that have refused to change but erect a bulwark against wind of change. The old order of greed and life time presidency must give way to the emerging democratic dispensations to make Africa progress sustainably.

In Africa, political power is being passed down through families with dynasties increasingly becoming the new instrument to acquire wealth and influence government affairs. Leaders in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Angola, Equatorial Guinea and Liberia are in the spotlight. Their relatives hold senior positions in government or use the proximity of the incumbent to wield influence over government affairs. In Angola for example, Isabel Dos Santos Africa's richest woman and daughter of the immediate past president Jose Eduardo dos Santos, was appointed head of the national oil company, Sonangol two years ago. Her younger brother, Jose Filoneno de Sousa dos Santos, has headed the country's 5bn dollars sovereign wealth fund, (Fundo Soberano de Angola) since 2012 as appointed by the father (McGroarty)<sup>[30]</sup>.

In Equatorial Guinea, President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo also set up his sons for high office and wealth. Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, commonly known as Teodorin is vice president. Teodorin leads a lavish lifestyle and had more than 30 million dollars in assets allegedly purchased with embezzled funds, some of which was seized by US authorities in 2014. In Liberia, the continent's first female president and Nobel peace prize winner Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has also played dynasty politics. Her son Charles Sirleaf was appointed interim governor of the central bank in 2016. Another son, Robert Sirleaf, was appointed to head the National Oil Company of Liberia. However, he was forced to resign in 2013 after heavy criticism from Liberian citizens and in 2014, he lost his bid for a seat in the senate.

In some countries, it appears that a leadership position in politics is the birth right; a single family dominates the political landscape until the family name becomes synonymous with the country. In Kenya, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Togo, Gabon and Mauritius have all had father-and-son rule. These are just few examples of dysfunctional political system in Africa.

Political leadership is one of the greatest challenges facing Africa. It is very fundamental for the betterment of man and sustainable development of Africa continent. African leaders should depart from leadership that is based in greed and selfishness and embrace committed and principled leadership that has vision, leadership that has convictions of transforming Africa to bring real positive change, the kind of leadership that would enable them use the enormous resources in the continent to build a coherent, internally consistent self-sustaining economy for the benefit of the citizens.

From the above, it could be deduced that the problem of Africa underdevelopment is leadership, mismanagement and corruption. Most African leadership is characterised by such negative as lack of direction coupled with neglect of their people they governed. It is no secret that the people of Africa are languishing in abject poverty, hunger, squalor and disease as most African leaders are busy working out strategies on how to enrich and perpetrates themselves in office. Today, the image of the continent is shattered and battered by corruption, nepotism, gossips, undermining and killings of political opponents.

### 3.3. Weak Institutional Framework

Institutions can be defined as rules and procedures that structure social interaction by shaping and constraining actors' behaviour (Helmke and Levitsky, (2004).<sup>[31]</sup> A distinction is generally made between formal and informal institutions. Informal institutions are socially shared rules, usually unwritten. They are created, communicated and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels. By contrast, Formal institutions are written rules and procedures that are created, communicated and enforced through channels widely accepted as official. These include constitutions, laws, regulations, etc. Formal institutions are states enforced rules (Ibid). North posit that informal institutions in the form of norms, routines and political processes tend to be more persistent than formal rules (North, 1990:45).<sup>[32]</sup>

Institutions structure behaviour and promote social order and trust, which in turn facilitate cooperation for social and economic progress. Before the European colonization, political and social life in Africa was underpinned by a diversity of institutional systems that reflected the different circumstances and political philosophies of Africa's many socio-cultural groups. Despite certain imperfections, political institutions in traditional African societies were functional and resilient enough to engender peace, social cohesions and economic development. This was mainly because they were rooted in the indigenous value and social condition of respective politics. Also checks and balances were embodied on the exercise of political authority. However,

the birth of post-colonial states has introduced a crisis of institutions in Africa. Most African states are today characterized by weak and dysfunctional institutions which had given room for corruption, mismanagement and underdevelopment in Africa.

Weak institutional performance in Africa cannot be solely explained on the basis of the authoritarian outlook of the political systems in contemporary African states. The dysfunctional or weak state of Africans institutions can be attributed to three major factors-

- 1/ Lack of sufficient capacity to implement and enforce rules
- 2/ Weak incentives structures to encourage compliance with institutions and
- 3/ The poor quality of leadership on the continent, put differently, the shortage of institutional champions or entrepreneurs (Weingarth & Wiederer, 2011:183).[33]

Dysfunctional state of African institutions suggests possible interventions for effective and more resilient institutions at the national, regional and continental levels. Institutional failures in Africa can be diagnosed at the conceptual and operational level. Conceptually, most African institutions are largely western imports that do not reflect the socio-economic and cultural realities of modern African states. This mismatch not only results in institutional subversion by powerful interests but also accounts for the tension between formal state institutions on one hand, and informal and traditional institutions, on the other hand. At the operational level, the dysfunctionality and weak institutional framework can be explained by the dearth of responsible and ethical leadership on the continent, growing political alienation on the part of the African citizenry, inadequate state capacity to enforce rules, and limited economic opportunities, which encourages individuals and groups to subvert state institutions for rent seeking and the illegal accumulation of wealth.

In the process of enriching themselves, by using the power and resources of state, politicians and civil servants end up corrupting and subverting the same institutions that they are charged with enforcing. Nigeria perhaps provides the best expression of this practice and its destructive effects on institutional development in Africa. Addressing a seminal on the rise and fall of the second republic in Nigeria, Joseph coined the concept of *prebendal* politics to describe the dominant political culture in Nigeria, whereby holding public office provides officials with access to state resources. According to Joseph, this system which has reproduced itself over the years and remains deeply entrenched at all levels of Nigerian polity, has resulted in dysfunctional governance in all facets of life in Nigeria (Joseph, 2013).[34]

Throughout Africa continent, leaders have presided over the emasculation of the institutions of governance of their respective countries through unrestrained acts of corruption and political manoeuvring. A major manifestation of this toxic leadership is the current trend whereby African leaders have sought to cling to power by manipulating their constitutions in order to bypass presidential term limits. Between 2000 and 2015, 15 African presidents have tried to remain in power by changing their country's constitutions to remove presidential limits, with 11 of these attempts succeeding in countries such as Chad, Cameroon, Uganda (Fabricius, 2015).[35] This practice has not only strengthened dictatorship and undermined constitutional democracy in many African countries but has also posed a challenge to the emerging continental security and governance regimes. Although both the Constitutive Act of the AU and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance prohibit unconstitutional changes of government, African leaders often fail to act decisively against those of their peers engaging in this unconstitutional practice.

Dr Fritz Nganje, a post doctorate research fellow with the South African Research Chair in Africa Diplomacy and Foreign Policy at the University of Johannesburg, stated that, "addressing the institutional malaise on the continent requires efforts to engender a new generation of African leadership that is not only skilled in the mechanics of modern democratic governance but also ethical and transformational". Safeguarding the integrity of Africa's political institutions will also benefit from engaging greater civic engagement, harnessing the power and influence of civil society in its role as a watchdog and ethical guardian of society (Fritz, 2015).[36]

Weingarth and Wiederer have identified four capacities that a state should possess to be able to design, implement and enforce quality institutions. The first is a regulative capacity, which entails the ability of the state to establish, codify and enforce rules, second, an administrative skill to manage state's resources, both human and material, in the interest of an effective, transparent and rules-based public service, third, Strong state capacity to assumes that the state possesses the knowledge and expertise to evaluate technical problems and proffers solutions, and fourth, a strong extractive abilities to generate public revenues to finance its activities. They argue that African states are generally found wanting in most if not all of these indicators of state capacity, blaming this deficiency on the pervasiveness of the neo-patrimonial system on the continent, the shortage of qualified human capacity in the public service, and the effects of the civil service reforms imposed on the continent by foreign donors in the 1980s and 1990s (Weingarth et al. 2011:190).[37]

For Africa to build a resilient institution, Botswana example comes to mind. An African country that has been able to defy the odds to develop relatively strong institutions. Botswana's success in institution building can best be likened to what Acemoglu *et al.* have described as political security of the ruling elite, which made them

put in place good institutions of governance without fear of losing their grip on power (Acemoglu et al. 2003).<sup>[38]</sup> The fear of losing power to other interests has been a major impediment to effective institutional reform on the part of ruling elites in many African countries. Although historical and other structural factors played a significant role in determining Botswana's institutional trajectory, the legacy of its political leadership can not be overlooked. Acemoglu *et al.* contends that the commitment and visionary choices of post-independence Political actors, including Seretse Khama, Quete Masire and Festus Mogae were critical in putting Botswana on a sound institutional path. For example, Khama transferred the property rights over sub-soil minerals away from his own tribe to government, also the decision to reduce the political powers of tribal chiefs shortly after independence, helped in no small measure to undermine tribal cleavages in Botswana even as tribal conflict over access to diamond wealth were averted. Also, when the political power of the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) was threatened in the 1970s and 1990s, Botswana's leadership responded by changing their policies in a bid to strengthen their popularity instead of uttering the country's institutions to stay in power as has become a culture in other African countries (Acemoglu et al. 2003:106-107).<sup>[40]</sup>

Above all, it must be noted that Botswana's relative success in institutional advancement draws a lot from peculiar historical circumstances coupled with strong socio-political dynamics that may be difficult to replicate in other African states. According to Taylor, Botswana's democracy has been elitist and there are growing trends of continuing authoritarianism in Botswana's politics which may underscore its relative institutional success (Taylor, 2005).<sup>[39]</sup>

The experience mentioned above amplified pertinent preconditions for effective institution building in wider African context. Therefore, strengthening the institutions of governance in Africa requires strong political capacity that bind the economic interests of different groups in a given polity to the institution-building project. Finally, for Africa to benefit from a strong institutional framework, some ethical and visionary leaders who are ready to serve as institutional entrepreneurs to champion the creation and implementation of good institutions are required.

### 3.4. Corruption

Although, there is no comprehensive and universally accepted definition of corruption. The origin of the word is from the Latin *corruptus* (spoiled) and *corrumpere* (to ruin; to break into pieces). The working definitions presently in vogue are variations of "the misuse of a public or private position for direct or indirect personal gain" (www.ustreasury.hu)

Corruption has been identified as the bane of most political and economic problems in societies (Lawal et al. 2001).<sup>[41]</sup> It is the perversion of integrity or state of affairs through bribery, favour or moral depravity. It takes place when at least two parties have interacted to change the structure or process of society or the behaviour of functionaries in order to produce dishonest, unfaithful or defiled situations (Otite, 2000).<sup>[42]</sup> In other words, corruption is a systematic vice in an individual, society or a nation which reflects favouritism, nepotism, tribalism, sectionalism, undue enrichment, amassing wealth, abuse of office, power/position for derivation of undue gains and benefits. Corruption also includes bribery, smuggling, fraud, illegal payments, money laundering, drug trafficking, falsifications of documents and records, false declaration, window dressing, underpayments, evasion, deceit, concealment, forgery, aiding and abetting of any kind to the detriment of another person, community, society or nation (Ojaide, 2000).<sup>[43]</sup>

Awojobi (2014)<sup>[44]</sup> a professor at Berlin school of Economics and Law Berlin, Germany, Writing on International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management United Kingdom argue that.

.... African States ought to have changed for better after many years of political independence.

For example, Nigeria has been facing development crisis for more than half a century. The major reason behind this is the high level of corruption in the country. New political thinkers in Africa have blamed corruption by African leaders for the underdevelopment of the continent. He stated that huge sum of money that would have been used to provide infrastructural facilities are stolen by African leaders and send to Western countries for safe keeping at the expense of African development. It was evaluated that the sum of 30 billion dollars aid to Africa ended up in overseas bank accounts (Celarier, 1996). This statement was also corroborated by the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU) who stressed that an estimated sum of 148 billion dollars is embezzled in Africa yearly by political leaders, business executives and civil servants with the aid of financial institutions the Europe and North America (Adusei, 2009) (pg. 6 para 2).

Awojobi (2013)<sup>[45]</sup> on International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management stressed that

...Corruption in Africa slows down development. One of the mostly discussed consequences of corruption is the distortion of African government

expenditure. This he said often results in public money being wasted on white elephant projects, rather than people-oriented programmes such as health and education. As a result, more opportunities are presented for corrupt use or diversion of funds. ...CORRUPTION remains the main cause of underdevelopment in Africa as this can be attested by the massive looting of public funds by African leaders, political appointees and civil servants (para.7, pg. 6).

In Nigeria for example, Transparency International Annual Perception Index (2017),<sup>[46]</sup> saw Nigeria placing 148<sup>th</sup> position out of 180 countries surveyed. The report noted that while the rest of the world has improved in the perception of corruption, Nigeria slips further down as a fight against corruption stagnates. On the African continent, Nigeria ranks 32<sup>nd</sup> position in Africa out of 52 assessed countries in 2017, while Botswana leads the continent with the record of competent and largely corruption-free public administration. In West Africa, Nigeria is the second worst country out of 17 countries, leaving Guinea Bissau behind. The level of corruption in Nigeria has eaten deep fabric of the Nigerian society and that has been responsible for the crises of development in the country. Another way of stealing in Nigeria is through the self-increment of salaries by the members of National Assembly without recourse to the constitutional body that is responsible for fixing the salaries of elected public officers. According to Awolabi (2014),<sup>[47]</sup> “the law makers have perfected a system of increasing their own salaries, which make them earn more than their foreign counterparts”. The annual basic salaries of Nigerian lawmakers and their counterparts in some rich nations as displayed below.

**Table 2.1: Annual Basic Salaries of Nigeria Lawmaker Compared with some Advanced Countries**

S/N	Countries	Basic Salaries
1	Nigeria	189,500 USD
2	United States	174,000 USD
3	Canada	154,000 USD
4	Japan	149,700 USD
5	Germany	115,500 USD

Source: Daily Post (2012).<sup>[48]</sup>

From the point of argument, one can perceive “how Africans underdeveloped Africa.” Today, Africa whizzes, the so called educated elites, with several expertise in various areas have been named in many probe reports for facilitating deceitful foreign investors and other local traders to invade tax, counterfeiting land title deeds and extending operational licences. Moreover, signing of bogus contracts, corruption among public leaders, embezzlement of public funds and nepotism have been common practices within African governments.

Furthermore, Awojobi, (2014)<sup>[49]</sup> noted that Africans brothers and sisters have been arraigned after committing corruption related crimes, embezzling of public funds and illegal exploitation of natural resources. Others dare to devalue farmer’s crops and mismanage their money through cooperative unions; these are fellow Africans who are expected to support each other. Stressing that one of the main causes of resistance wars between African societies and colonialists was land alienation, few decades after colonialism, Africa is experiencing land alienation and unequal distribution of natural resources. And this time, it is among Africans themselves. The question here is, do we still have integrity to debate on how Europe underdeveloped Africa? We witness fellow Africans siding with foreign investors to sign contracts of the like! Who is slowing down African development? Apart from siding with exploitative companies in some public organizations, fellow Africans have turned themselves to ‘black kings’, bureaucracies and several procedures that end up forcing the poor citizens to offer something and brown envelopes are there to stay! In this case, Africa fail Africa (Pg.5 para 8).

Corrupt practices span a wide spectrum, and once corruption entrenched, its negative effects multiply. It induces cynicism, because people begin to regard it as the norm. It undermines social values because people find it easier and more lucrative to engage in corruption than to seek legitimate services. It erodes governmental legitimacy because it hampers the effective delivery of public goods and services. It limits economic growth because it reduces the amount of public resources, discourages private investment and saving and impedes the efficient use of government revenue and development assistance fund (Lawal, 2001).<sup>[50]</sup>

From the above descriptions, it is clear to us that there is a linkage between corruption and development. In other words, there is a direct reaction of the devices of corruption on development. If, for instance, development is conceived to include the capacity of a government or system to manage resources effectively to improve the wellbeing of the citizens and then corruption can be thus regarded as one of the main obstacles to good governance and development. In Africa, therefore, the system lacks the capacity to manage its resources effectively and efficiently to improve the quality of life of the African people because corruption has become significantly a major threat to good governance and expected development.

Corruption in Africa is costing the continent so much and restricting development. The consequences and effects are also on the increasing side. Yagboyaju, (2011),<sup>[51]</sup> highlighted the ripple effects of weak governance caused by corruption as: lack of security architecture, armed robbery, abduction, kidnapping, unemployment and

total collapse of manufacturing and technological sectors of African economy, to mention but few. Consequently, there is a total denial of development. In a bid to improve Africa's image and reputation and ensure an environment conducive to rapid economic and political development, Africa must be prepared to look inward at tackling the flaws that is besetting the continent. Again, there is urgent need for African countries to develop and put in place strong institutions such as the civil service, parliament and judiciary etc, which in turns will create an interlocking system of oversight. All of these institutions must be free of corruption themselves and be active player in the fight against corruption. Court rulings have to be protected from political interference while judicial independence must be assured, A functional and professional legal system, access to justice, rule of law and adherence to formal rules of behaviour.

### 3.5. Unmitigated Ethnic cleansing/Civil War

The role civil wars and other ethno-religious crises have played in the underdevelopment of Africa is better comprehended with an insight into a comparative analysis of the statistics of the casualties of the slave trade era and the casualties of the post independent era civil wars and ethno-religious crisis. And the table below provides an instructive view on how Africans have underdeveloped Africa.

**Table 2.2: Trans-Atlantic Slave Export By region and Post-independent Casualties of Civil Wars and Ethnic conflict in Africa.**

Region	No. of Slaves	Years
Senegambia	2,000,000	1500-1800
Winder Coast	250,000	1500-1800
Ivory Coast	250,000	1500-1800
Gold Coast	1,500,000	1500-1800
Slave Coast (bight of Benin)	2,000,000	1500-1800
Bight of Biafra	2,000,000	1500-1800
Cameroon	250,000	1500-1800
West central (Loango, Congo and Angola)	3,700,000	1500-1800
Mozambique & Madagascar	1,000,000	1500=1800
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,000,000</b>	-
<b>Post-independent Casualties of Civil Wars and Ethnic conflict in Africa.</b>		
Nigeria	6,000,000	1967-1971
Rwanda	1,000,000	100 Days
Angola	1,500,000	1975-2002
Congo	4,500,000	1998-2009
Liberia	250,000	1989-1996
Sudan	1,900,000	1985-2005
Burundi	300,000	1993-2003
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,450,000</b>	-

Sources: Thomas 1997; Human Security Report 2009; World Peace Foundation 2015, Mass atrocities Ending. <sup>[52,53,&54]</sup>

The above statistics indicated that while 32,500 African, were lost yearly for 400 years to slave trade and other related activities; 321,875 Africans from the above listed countries were lost yearly for 48 years for the period 1957 to 2005 to civil wars and ethno-religious crisis. Note that the above figures for post independent Africa is exclusive of the displaced persons and the physically incapacitated by the wars. Note also that the above figure is also exclusive of the ongoing Boko-haram onslaught and the Killer herdsmen rampaging activities in Nigeria. It is also exclusive of the Libyan, Malian, South Sudanese and other civil wars ravaging the African continent. It is very clear from the above table that the number of Africans lost to the Atlantic Slave Trade is less than the casualties arising from the civil and ethno-religious crisis Africans have inflicted on themselves.

It has been argued that the implements of war with which Africa inflicted unmitigated damage on herself were supplied by the West and international collaborators in a bid to continue to divide and rule Africa. The movie titled 'Hotel Rwanda', give credence to the role of international collaborators in the exacerbation of wars in Africa, but the choice to go for these weapons were made by Africans themselves. There is the saying in African Parlance that 'the rat at home is always the one that informs the bush rat that there are fishes in the home' so they can feast together. And the Holy scripture also reinforce the above, declaring that 'man's enemy are members of his household'.

Consequently, there is a consensus that Africa has lagged behind other regions of the world in implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and will not end absolute poverty during the post 2015 development agenda, partly because of endemic civil wars and conflicts. African Union in its Constitutive



Act of 2000, recognized the damaging impact of conflicts on the continent's economic, social development and environmental protection. It has, as a result stressed the importance of creating a stable society through inter-linkages between peace and development. Without peace there is no development and without development there is no peace and without both there is no respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (Erick, 2013).<sup>[55]</sup>

Conflicts and civil wars kill people, destroy infrastructures and institutions, create refugees and displace survivals and consequently, undermine efforts for development, job creation, poverty reduction that in turn, contribute to further conflicts and civil wars. Conflicts divert funds from productive sectors to non-productive expenditures; they also shift investments out of countries experiencing wars. "Bad governance" continues to be the lens through which the Washington Consensus interprets the failure of economic development in Africa. But, according to an investment banker and ex-World Bank official, Percy Mistry, noted that the annual USD50 Billion capital flight from Africa is evidence that Africa is failing to develop not because of shortage of money, rather, it suffers from chronic inadequacy of human, social and institutional capital. Without such human, social and institutional capital (which is not the same as capacity building), development in Africa will not occur, no matter how much aid is thrown at it...The absorptive capacity does not exist to handle it (Mistry, 2005:2,11-12).<sup>[56]</sup>

#### 4.1. Pathway to Solving Africa's Underdevelopment Challenges

In considering effective pathway to solving Africa's underdevelopment challenges, the need to build a better organized political system with high degree of autonomy for each federating unit is key. Opportunity should be given for outright independence for units that are not willing to be part of the whole. This would no doubt facilitate regional and grassroots development as each federating unit would be in dare competition to develop their domains. Moreover, the various units will have the opportunity to negotiate their future in relation to their neighboring regions. The recent African Free Trade Agreement signed among 44 African Countries is a step further to a more organized approach to development in Africa. Unfortunately Nigeria-the largest country in terms of demography in Africa is yet to sign up; that again point to the fact that development can only come by the willingness of Africans themselves. In other words, African countries must be willing to submit themselves to an organized, rule base integrated approach to the development of the continent.

The success story of the Amazon's platform strategy- is a testament to the success that await as many as are willing to follow the strategy accordingly. Church, (2017)<sup>[57]</sup> noted that in the platform strategy 'participation is interdependent with the choices of other users'. In other words no one is an island, everyone need the others and everyone's need must be factored in for any development model to succeed in Africa; and it takes a well organized structure like the Amazonian for such to happen. Ndu, (2002)<sup>[58]</sup> observed that 'all flourishing political system and indeed all social organizations depend for their stability on discipline'. Stating further that it is both 'internal and external'. In other words, it will take both internal-self discipline and external- application of coercion and sanction on those that lack self-discipline among African leaders and followers to guarantee an organized system that can assure development in Africa. Absence of that means the sustenance of anarchy in Africa; and until an organized approach is adopted by all in the spirit of progress development in Africa will continue to be a mirage.

Development of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) along coastal areas is crucial for Africa's development. The above will energize the manufacturing and processing sectors of the African economies thereby ensuring what the study will prefer to call quasi-self-sufficiency for a start and the ability to look outward for market as they progress. Also the EEZ concept attempts to secure for the coastal states, the resources of the sea, seabed and subsoil, irrespective of variations in geographic and economic or ecological circumstances. Africa's coastal states face many ocean-management problems. Increasing demand for food is resulting in greater exploitation. Most coastal African nations are poor and lack the expertise, resources and infrastructure to institute effective ocean management and development programs. Lack of research capability in marine sciences, inadequate attention and low priority given to environmental concerns, difficulties in training and retaining people skilled in ocean management and inadequate infrastructures. In order to foster economic growth and ensure Africa's development, an integrated ocean management and development is crucial, coastal development and management, non-living resources management, marine transportation and efficient port management and of course, marine environmental conservation. All these are in line with the United Nations strategy for ocean management and development (UN )

**Capital flows and Growth in Africa.** Economic theory and literature has emphasized the importance of capital flows to developing countries. Capital flows, in combination with trade flows, are seen as prerequisites for sustainable growth and development. Standard explanatory variable such as investment, and especially foreign direct investment is very crucial in African growth regressions, non-traditional explanatory variables like official development assistance and debt restructuring are also increasingly becoming more important in explaining the growth pattern on the continent. A situation where by the much needed fund for development in Africa is

starched away to rich industrialized countries in the name of Sovereign Wealth Fund and External Reserves must be reappraised with a bid to striking a balance on where the funds are needed most. This is not in any way suggesting that savings culture be disregarded rather it seek to setting Africa' priorities right. Therefore, it is important African states take a closer look at the composition and trends in these capital flows variables including the underlying factors that could make them more productive so as to promote and ensure a sustainable growth pattern for Africa.

Awojobi (2014)<sup>[59]</sup> stressed that raising ethical standards of governance, he said can lead to many benefits especially for economic, political and social development of a country. Fighting corruption and promoting good governance in Africa is therefore crucial to developing the environment that facilitates the social, political and economic development of African people. Also, Muhammad (2016),<sup>[60]</sup> stated that African countries should focus their political, economic and intellectual resources in rethinking new strategies and implementation plans for sustainable and equitable economic and social development, stressing that Africa has the potential to stand on its own feet to initiate its industrial and economic development agenda.

Based on the above postulations, Africa is urgently in need of committed and principled leadership, leadership that has vision and convictions of transforming Africa to bring about positive changes for the Africa continent. Our leaders must be morally sound by showing good examples. This is lacking in present realities; our leaders ascend to power most of the times because they are wealthy economically not morally. Immanuel Kant, posits that an effort to be immoral is an effort to be irrational (Kant,1974:113).<sup>[61]</sup>

In a bid to improve Africa's image and reputation and ensure an environment conducive to rapid economic and political development, Africa must be prepared to look inward at tackling the flaws that is besetting the continent. Again, there is urgent need for African countries to develop and put in place strong institutions such as the civil service, parliament and judiciary etc, which in turns will create an interlocking system of oversight. All of these institutions must be free of corruption themselves and be active player in the fight against corruption. Court rulings have to be protected from political interference while judicial independence must be assured, A functional and professional legal system, access to justice, rule of law and adherence to formal rules of behaviour. The rule of law must take the centre stage and the concept of plea-bargaining should be abolished from legal diction, while corrupt officials should serve life imprisonments to act as deterrence.

## Conclusions

In view of the above narrative, the study concludes that Africa's underdevelopment have many facets. While the era of slavery, colonialism, and imperialism represented different phases in a continuum, the era of era of civil wars/ethnic cleansing, corruption, lack of organized political structure, weak institutions represents another. But the study stressed that the role Africans have played through lack of organised political structure or uncivilized approach to governance, corruption, lack of rule of law and the unmitigated civil and ethnic rivalries have contributed greater to Africa's underdevelopment than the impact of Slavery, colonialism and imperialism. It concluded further that the pathway to Africa's development lies in strong institutional framework, organised political structure, supremacy of law and a development model that prioritise the development of the coastal areas into exclusive economic zones and development of port facilities as gateway to the outside world.

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