

Dependency Theory and Africa's Underdevelopment: a Paradigm Shift from Pseudo-Intellectualism: the Nigerian Perspective

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Abstract

Over the years, African political and development scholars, writers and commentators have blamed the Europeans for the underdevelopment of African. This has necessitated the evocation of Dependency theory in explaining Africa's cum Nigeria's underdevelopment situation, hence Africa's underdevelopment has been linked to two categories of factors: internal and external. The internal factors, Nnadozie said, fan the ember of the external factors and therefore require and deserve more attention hence the connivance of African elites with the Europeans elites to impoverish the continent. Recently, there has been a clarion to a paradigm shift from the Pseudo-Intellectualism of the dependency theorist made manifest in the Walter Rodney's 'How Europe underdeveloped African' to Igwe' and Ghanaian Chronicle's 'How Africa underdeveloped Africa' and finally, Ope-Agbe's 'How Nigeria underdeveloped Nigeria'. This paradigm shift is the thrust of this paper.

Keywords: Development, Underdevelopment, Dependency, Bad Leadership and Governance.

1. Introduction

Dependency theory holds that "the condition of underdevelopment is precisely the result of the incorporation of the Third World economies into the capitalist world system which is dominated by the West and North America" (Randall and Theobald 1998, 120), hence in development studies, dependency implies a situation in which a particular country or region relies on another for support, "survival" and growth.

The third world countries are the economically underdeveloped countries of Asia, Africa, Oceania, and Latin America, considered as an entity with common characteristics, such as poverty, high birthrates, and economic dependence on the advanced countries. The term therefore implies that the third world is exploited, and that its destiny is a revolutionary one.

Distinctively, the underdevelopment of the third world is marked by a number of common traits; distorted and highly dependent economies devoted to producing primary products for the developed world and to provide markets for their finished goods; traditional, rural social structures; high population growth; and widespread poverty. Despite the widespread poverty of the countryside and the urban shantytowns, the ruling elites of most third world countries are outrageously wealthy (Woldu, 2000).

The wind of change of the late 50s and 60s had liberated all the third worlds, Africa and Nigeria, thus rendering whatever differences in the rate of development a peculiarity to the specific country concerned.

In the Nigerian perspective, to answer correctly the question- is it environment; or is it in our nature; that we failed or refused to develop, is necessary as it has been rendered impossible by the current climate of pseudo-intellectualism fueled by some kind of pseudo-anti-colonialism; now turned into anti-imperialism, which forecloses all discussions by insisting that "we are our own". This posturing had not only dissuaded us to ask this basic question but had indeed put thick blinkers into our eyes that we cannot see reality, even though we are living in the thick of our unpalatable reality- underdevelopment (Kyari, 2008).

This paper hinges deep-seatedly on Chinua Achebe's "the trouble with Nigeria" (1983); George Ayittey's 'Africa in chaos' (1979) and Kyari Tijani's 'Metaphors of Underdevelopment; a reflection from Nigeria' (2008) as these three (3) legendary masterpieces lay bare the role of African leaders in ensuring and maintaining underdevelopment in Africa. This obvious fact this paper seeks to reiterate just as Kyari Tijani, only that this time, I am not only insisting that Nigeria is gruesomely underdeveloped as caused by her leaders; but that political and development scholars should stop blaming the whites; by implication dependency theory for Nigeria's underdevelopment. Instead of apportioning blame, we should fix our problems.

Unfortunately, Nigerian leaders hide behind these pseudo-intellectualisms to exploit Nigerians and have the whites blamed for our woes since independence in 1960. Since independence in 1960, the level of exploitation of the Nigerian people and their land and resources had been remorseless and horrendous and it has gone on for too long and it was leadership in particular that was responsible. The people turn deaf ear because of their false consciousness engendered by tradition and culture, poverty, ignorance and illiteracy as it was said by Karl Max that man's economic status determines his consciousness- consciousness determined by abject poverty.

2. Conceptual Perspective

In the context of a nation's development, the conceptualization of development becomes difficult if not

impossible unless discussed in tandem with the concept of underdevelopment. In fact, many scholars have argued that the understanding of these concepts is enhanced when it is hinged on a theory. For the purpose of our topic, such theory that suffices here is dependency theory. Therefore, the concept of development; underdevelopment and dependency theory are x-rayed, chronologically.

The concept of development has been variously discussed in literature especially in the social sciences such that its definition has negated a single generally accepted definition. Development in human society is a many-sided process. At the level of the individual, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material wellbeing (Rodney, 1972). Okoli and Onah (2002) had asserted that development involves progression, movement and advancement towards something better. Hence it is improvement on the material and non-material aspects of life involving actions, reactions and motions. They also observed that development goes beyond economic and social indicators to include the improvement of human resources and positive changes in their behaviour. For us, development includes increase in citizens' access to: food, water and shelter; information and means of communication; healthcare delivery; good motorable road; good education, and justice. Whenever these are obtainable, there will be increase in the individual's dignity, happiness and patriotic values and quality of life.

This is probably why Todaro (1982) defined development as a "multi-dimensional process involving the re-organization and re-orientation of the entire economic and social system. This involves in addition to improvement of income and output, radical changes in institutional, social and administrative structures as well as in popular attitudes, customs and beliefs". The main contention according to Ujo (1994) is that development is both a physical process and a state of mind. The transformation of institution is just one aspect. The other aspect is that the thinking of the people must change. Hence according to Emezi (1979), the actions, reactions and interactions which qualify for inclusion as elements of development' are products of rational thinking, conscious planning, and genuine citizens' involvement. They are not chance events or chance phenomena, as observed by Okoli and Onah. They relate first and foremost, to the economic system because they seek to raise living standards, widen extensively the scope of productive work; create and strengthen the necessary foundational infrastructure for higher, larger and more beneficial changes in the economy. Secondly, they relate to the social system because they affect education, health, housing, social ethic and justice and these are matters of both the body and the mind which jointly facilitate individual growths and development in the society. Thirdly, they relate to the political system because they seek to create better patterns of legitimacy patterns that create conditions which enable all or the most significant groups in the population to participate in the political process of making decisions and allocating scarce resources and values of their communities. According to Onah (2007), the most fundamental feature of what we may, for want of better term, call the 'new' concepts of development, is their concern with mankind as development is conceived as a state of human wellbeing rather than as the state of national economy (Eme & Emeh, 2012).

The conceptualization of development in the aspect of the state of national economy is referred to as the economic development but when it is mixed with another like socio-economic, it definitely should be looking at the totality of the well being of man hence the social or societal progression of man alongside his economic well-being completely defined a developed man. This concern was expressed in a statement known as the Cocoyoc Declaration, which was adopted by participants at a seminar organized by the United Nations Council on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Cocoyoc, Mexico, in 1974. The declaration states:

Our first concern is to redefine the whole purpose of development. This should not be to develop things but to develop man. Human beings have basic needs: food, shelter, clothing, health, education. Any process of growth that does not lead to their fulfillment-or even worse, disrupt them is a travesty of the idea of development.

In line with the above declaration, Dudley seers (1969), wrote:

The question to ask about a country's development is therefore; what has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these have declined from high levels, then, beyond doubt, this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result "development" even if per capita income doubled (Eme & Emeh, 2012).

Dudley Seers' definition has been so regarded because he is one of the first economists in the developed world to emphasize this aspect of development. One would assume that he was following Walter Rodney's assertion that development is universal because conditions leading to economic expansion were universal; hence everywhere, man was faced with the onerous task of survival by meeting some fundamental material needs; and better tools for production. These tools are materials for the exploitation of man's environment hence the Marxian notion of development is conceived as:

the ability of the people to exploit, manipulate and control their physical environment, as well as themselves and other individuals outside of themselves and other individuals outside of themselves for the betterment of everybody and that of humanity.

As Nnadozie (2004) posited, Man is viewed as both the subject and object of development hence development is taken as the ability and capacity of man to adequately interact with his physical environment and other individuals to constantly improve himself and humanity. This idea was succinctly captured by Nnoli (1981) when he wrote:

Development, first and foremost is a phenomenon associated with changes in mans humanity and creative energies, not in the capacity of the individual and society to control and manipulate the other individuals ad societies for their own benefits and that of humanity at large. It is a process of actualizing man's inherent capacity to do things, greater freedom, responsibility and material wellbeing.

The above definition of development is all encompassing. Against the Marxist backdrop, it warned against the exploitation and manipulation of man by man and at the same time heed to the Cocoyoc declaration of new concept of development.

Again, according to Nnadozie, development is also conceived by Marxist perspective as a dialectical process in which the contradictions between a society's productive forces and relations of production are resolved in a dynamic manner, this contradictions in a society are regarded as the driving forces of development in that society. Obviously, underdevelopment is not the absence of development because from the societal point of view, every people have developed in one way or another and to a greater or lesser extent. However, underdevelopment makes sense only as a means of comparative analysis of societal development. This is very much tied to the fact that human social development has been uneven and from a strictly economic view-point, some human groups have advanced further by producing more and becoming more wealthy (Rodney, 1972).

Underdevelopment is a term often used to refer to economic underdevelopment, symptoms of which include lack of access to job opportunities, health care, drinkable water, food, education and housing. It takes place when resources are not used to their full socio-economic potential, with the result that local or regional development is slower in most cases than it should be. Furthermore, it results from the complex interplay of internal and external factors that allow less developed countries only a lop-sided development progression, hence underdeveloped nations are characterized by a wide disparity between their rich and poor populations, and an unhealthy balance of trade.

Consequently, Rodney upheld that at all times, one of the ideas behind underdevelopment is a comparative one as it is possible to compare the economic conditions at two different periods for the same country and determine whether or not it had developed. Again, a second and even more indispensable component of modern underdevelopment is that it expresses a particular relationship of exploitation: namely, the exploitation of one country by another. All of the countries named as 'underdeveloped' in the world are exploited by others; and the underdevelopment with which the world is now preoccupied is a product of capitalist, imperialist, and colonialist exploitation.

Since the end of World War II, we have been experiencing a worldwide struggle for the improvement of living conditions in the so-called developing countries. At the beginning, there was little query as to the causes of underdevelopment; the newly independent countries as well as United Nations bodies and industrialized countries tried to promote development by applying measures like the introduction of know-how through the assignment of experts, the expansion of education, the development of infrastructure, etc., i.e., they followed the example of the industrialized countries. In the course of time it became obvious that this was more or less a treatment of symptoms instead of causes, and the gap gradually widened between the developed and less developed countries of this world. During the early period of these development efforts there was little discussion on the historical causes and the real nature of underdevelopment (Kuhnen, 1987).

To explain the reason for the underdevelopment of these nations, W.W. Rostow in 1960 developed his Modernization theory which conceived underdevelopment as an "original state," something characteristic of a "traditional society", something that has internal origin. In response to this theory, Andre Gunder Frank in 1966 propounded his "dependency theory which saw the world's nations as divided into a core of wealthy nations which dominate the poor nations whose main function in the system is to provide cheap labour and raw materials to the core. It held also that the benefits of this system of relationship accrue almost entirely to the rich nations, which become progressively richer and more developed, while the poor nations, which continually have their surpluses drained away to the core do not advance, rather they are impoverished.

Dependency has been defined as an explanation of the economic development of a state in terms of the external influences (political, economic, and cultural) on national development policies (Sunkel, 1969). Theotonio Dos Santos emphasizes the historical dimension of the dependency relationships in his definition when he wrote:

Dependency is...an historical condition which shapes a certain structure of the world economy such that it favours some countries to the detriment of others and limits the development possibilities of the subordinate economies...a situation in which the economy of a certain group of countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy, to which their own is subjected (Dos Santos, 1971).

There are three common features to these definitions which most dependency theorists share.

First, dependency characterizes the international system as comprised of two sets of states, variously described as dominant/dependent, center/periphery or metropolitan/satellite. The dominant states are the advanced industrial nations in the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The dependent states are those states of Latin America, Asia, and Africa which have low per capita GNPs and which rely heavily on the export of a single commodity for foreign exchange earnings, and the importation of variety of goods from the western developed dominant states.

Second, both definitions have in common the assumption that external forces are of singular importance to the economic activities within the dependent states. These external forces include multinational corporations, international commodity markets, foreign assistance, communications, and any other means by which the advanced industrialized countries can represent their economic interests abroad.

Third, the definitions of dependency all indicate that the relations between dominant and dependent states are dynamic because the interactions between the two sets of states tend to not only reinforce but also intensify the unequal patterns.

Simply put, dependency theory attempts to explain the present underdeveloped state of many nations in the world by examining the patterns of interactions among nations and by arguing that inequality among nations is an intrinsic part of those interactions.

The concept of dependency as an explanation for economic underdevelopment has been developed most prominently by Frank (1966, 1979) and Samir Amin (1974). For Frank, the concepts of development and underdevelopment have meaning only when applied to nations within the capitalist world-economy. Frank envisions this world-economy as being divided into two major components, metropolis and satellite. These concepts are basically equivalent to Wallerstein's (1974) concepts of core and periphery. The flow of economic surplus in the world-economy is from the satellite (or periphery) to the metropolis (or core), and the world-economy is organized to make this happen.

The underdeveloped nations therefore have become and remain underdeveloped because they are economically dominated by developed capitalist nations that have continually been extracting wealth from them. Frank (1966) has called this process the development of underdevelopment. In this view, the development of the rich nations and the underdevelopment of the poor ones are but two sides of the same coin as underdevelopment of some nations has made development for other nations possible and the development of other nations made the underdevelopment of other nations possible. The primary victims of this process are the vast majority of peasants and urban workers of the underdeveloped world itself.

While the members of the developed nations do benefit from this, since, their standard of living is raised substantially, the greatest benefits go to capitalists in the metropolitan countries, as well as to the agricultural and industrial elites of the satellite countries, hence the latter have close economic and political ties to the metropolitan elite and play a crucial role in retaining, maintaining and sustaining the situation of economic dependency of their states. They are blind-folded to the stark reality of the lopsidedness in their relationship with the metropolitan capitalists leading to Samir Amin's (1974) articulated and disarticulated economies. According to him, the developed nations have highly articulated economies, or ones whose multiple sectors closely interrelate such that development in any one sector stimulates development in the other sectors. Underdeveloped societies, by contrast, have disarticulated economies. These are economies whose various sectors do not closely interrelate. As a result, development in any one sector is commonly unable to stimulate development in the other sectors. This is the case of Nigeria whose economy is primarily involved in the production of raw materials for export to the developed countries.

The concept of dependency can be understood more thoroughly by examining its various forms. Theotonio Dos Santos (1970) has suggested three historical forms of dependency through which the now-underdeveloped nations have passed.

The first of these he calls colonial dependency. Under this form of dependency, which began as early as the sixteenth century in some parts of the world, European capitalist powers colonized pre-capitalist regions and established a monopoly over land, mines, and labor. Surplus wealth was extracted from these regions by means of European control over trade relations. The economic character of these colonized regions was powerfully shaped by their subordination to European nations.

A second is financial-industrial dependency. This form of dependence began in the late nineteenth century. It was characterized by the expansion of European industrial capital (as opposed to the earlier merchant capital) into the backward regions of the world. This form of dependency was part and parcel of the monopoly phase of

capitalist development. Financial-industrial dependency involved heavy investment of big capitalists in the world's backward regions mainly for the purpose of producing raw materials to be exported back to the core nations.

The most recent form of dependency is termed by Dos Santos the new dependency. This kind of dependency is a post-World War II phenomenon and involves the emergence of transnational corporations that engage in extensive economic investment in Third World countries.

In addition to this concern about the forms of dependency, there is the question of how economic dependency creates and sustains underdevelopment. Dependency theorists often disagree with respect to the particular mechanisms whereby this occurs. Several different mechanisms through which dependency induces underdevelopment have been proposed by various theorists, and more than one is sometimes proposed even by the same theorist. Four possible dependency mechanisms are most frequently suggested in the current dependency literature (Chase-Dunn, 1975; Delacroix and Ragin, 1981; Barrett and Whyte, 1982) Exploitation through Repatriation; Elite Complicity; Structural Distortion; and Market vulnerability.

In the final analysis, Walter Rodney averred that the question as to who and what is responsible for African underdevelopment can be answered at two levels. Firstly, the answer is that the operation of the imperialist system bears major responsibility from African Economic retardation by draining African wealth and by making it impossible to develop more rapidly the resources of the continent. Secondly, one has to deal with those who manipulate the system and those who are either agents or unwitting accomplices of the said system. The capitalist of Western Europe were the ones who actively extended their exploitation from inside Europe to cover the whole of Africa.

In recent times, they were joined and to some extent replaced by capitalists from the United States; and for many years now even the workers of those metropolitan countries have benefited from the exploitation and underdevelopment of Africa. None of these remarks are intended to remove the ultimate responsibility for development from the shoulder of Africans. Not only are they accomplices inside the imperialist system, but every Africa has a responsibility to understand the system and work for its overthrow (Rodney, 1972).

3. Theoretical Perspective

To drive home the point that the underdevelopment of Africa, nay Nigeria is caused primarily by the leaders of these states, a theory becomes fundamental for its analysis. Such theories include the elite theory, the power elite theory, the state theory and conspiracy theory; all four theories aptly apply.

Man in the state of nature does not need the political contraption called the state. But it is idle to talk of man remaining in "the state of nature" if only because of man's very advanced biological complexity as a vertebrate, which decreed for it higher degree of need and ultimately a higher standard of living. The ensuing struggle among this very species to enable each to attain "a higher standard of living" inevitably inaugurated a "war of all against all", and without intervention, life would certainly be "short; nasty and brutish", as Hobbes had put. Despite its entire burden on man, the state is therefore a necessity, if only to help man save himself from himself (Kyari, 2008). The state according to Cohen creates inequality and has repressive presence and functioning, yet man has to tolerate it.

It is the state that brought about these leaders in Africa that have vowed to devour the resources of the continent and render its inhabitants impoverished. It was also the state that led to the incursion of the whites in Africa that led to the issue of underdevelopment in the first instance but as Cohen had observed, "*what compelled man to prefer self-preservation rather than self-destruction, are what propelled man towards the state, hence man chose not to remain an animal.*"

The emergence of the state led to class struggle and inequalities. This struggle actually was of who will control the state; who will be the leader. This quest however led to the emergence of the elite class; the elite are those that rule the state directly and indirectly.

Explicatively, elite is a small group of people who control disproportionate amount of wealth or power. They have tremendous influence and affluence. This is why the elite theory seeks to describe and explain the power relationships in contemporary society; positing that a small minority, consisting of members of the economic elite and policy-planning networks, holds the most power and that this power is independent of a state's democratic elections process. Through positions in corporations or on corporate boards, and influence over the policy-planning networks through financial support of foundations or positions with think tanks or policy-discussion groups, members of the "elite" are able to exert significant power over the policy decisions of corporations and governments.

The Aristocratic version of this theory is the Classic Elite Theory which is based on two ideas: Power lies in position of authority in key economic and political institutions; The psychological difference that sets Elites apart is that they have personal resources, for instance intelligence and skills, and a vested interest in the government; while the rest are incompetent and do not have the capabilities of governing themselves, the elite are resourceful and will strive to make the government work to their interest.

This interest led to the power elite theory by Thomas Dye. Thomas Dye in his book 'Top Down Policymaking', argues that U.S. public policy does not result from the "demands of the people," but rather from Elite consensus found in Washington, D.C. based non-profit foundations, think tanks, special-interest groups, and prominent lobbyists and law firms.

The power elite theory claims that single elite, not a multiplicity of competing groups, decides the life-and-death issues for the nation as a whole, leaving relatively minor matters for the middle level and almost nothing for the common person. It thus paints a dark picture. According to C. Wright Mills, among the best known power-elite theorists, the governing elite in the United States draws its members from three areas: (1) the highest political leaders including the president and a handful of key cabinet members and close advisers; (2) major corporate owners and directors; and (3) high-ranking military officers.

One dares ask -from where does its strength comes?. Basically it comes from control of the highest positions in the political and business hierarchy. In the first place, the elite occupy what Mills terms the top command posts of society. These positions give their holders enormous authority over not just governmental, but financial, educational, social, civic, and cultural institutions as well. A small group is able to take fundamental actions that touch everyone. Decisions made in the boardrooms of large corporations and banks affect the rates of inflation and employment. The influence of the chief executive officers of the IBM and DuPont corporations often rivals that of the secretary of commerce. In addition, the needs of industry greatly determine the priorities and policies of educational and research organizations, not to mention the chief economic agencies of government. The power of the elite has also been enhanced by the close collaboration of political, industrial, and military organizations.

In Africa, the highest political office, the military and the multinational corporations is where the powers of the elites are derived from. This is why politics in Africa has become a do-or-die affair; the ex-military generals have refused to leave the corridor of power. Olusegun Obasanjo, Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, Muhammadu Buhari to mention but few have vowed not to leave the highest political post of the country. In the states of the federation, retired soldiers are seen returning to power as Governor. The ruling political party in Nigeria: People's Democratic Party (PDP) is also another major source of power to the elites.

This has led to severe struggle between the regions or states as to who will produce the president, Vice President, Senate President, House of Representative Speaker, Chief Judge of the federation, Accountant General of the federation, Secretary General of the federation and the likes. The fatality of the struggle is evidenced in the conspiracy that goes in the system; Conspiracy to unseat a seated public and political office holder; conspiracy to devour the nation's treasury and the conspiracy to enrich themselves at the expense of the masses.

This act of self-aggrandizement at the detriment of the people led to the vulgar underdeveloped state of the African states; Nigeria inclusive, necessitating the conspiracy theory for analysis hence Conspiracy theories exist in the realm of myth, where imaginations run wild, fears trump facts, and evidence is ignored.

A conspiracy theory explains an event as being the result of an alleged plot by a covert group or organization or, more broadly, the idea that important political, social or economic events are the products of secret plots that are largely unknown to the general public. The term is frequently used by scholars and in popular culture to identify secret military, banking, or political actions aimed at "stealing" power, money, or freedom, from "the people". Conspiracy theories are based on the notion that complex plots are put into motion by powerful hidden forces (Barkun, 2003).

The conspiracy in Africa is that the leaders are looting our treasury and casting the blame on the whites who officially left us some 52-55 years ago on our request. To see the state of African state as decided by the conspiring elites, the next section suffices.

4. Dependency Theory and African Underdevelopment; A Paradigm Shift

The May 13-19 issue of the Economist, the influential London news magazine has Africa on the cover. The magazine also has a sketch of Africa on an inside page. It depicts Africa lying prostrate while a bloodied black hand drills a knife into her very heart: Africa's problems are self-inflicted! It used to be fashionable to blame the ills of Africa on others: Colonialism; Neo-colonialists; Imperialists; etc. Political Scientists describe this phenomenon of the blame game as Dependency Theory, a symptom of a symbiotic relationship between the rich and the poor where the poor is dealt the weak hand, deliberately. Late Walter Rodney wrote a book about that titled, "How Europe Under-Developed Africa." This is no longer absolutely tenable. The reality of the matter is that the major culprits of the destruction of Africa today, are Africans themselves. To wit: our corrupt leaders and their bands of sycophant, president does-no-wrong minions.

Major corruption in African officialdom continues to cause degenerative under-development on the continent. African countries have become the personal estates of official criminal gangs whose avowed aim is not the development of their countries, but rather the siphoning off of national resources into foreign banks. Officials in the tiny European principality of Luxembourg frizzed eight bank accounts totaling 600 million U.S. dollars, belonging to the late super corrupt Sani Abacha of Nigeria. This is one example of how our African leaders contribute to the under-development of Africa!

Official corruption siphoning of money intended for the development of Africa is contemptible. Apart from making a lot of profit on the interest on investments accruing from Africa's stolen money, Europeans turn around and loan such money to Africa at exorbitant rates. Thus, in nearly all African countries today, we spend more money to pay the interest on such loans (not on the debt itself) than we do on Health and Education!

In effect, African countries are played like a football. Whoever has the ball kicks it until it is near deflation! It is then pumped up by some foreign loans, and the process continues. Such has been our lot since independence. Africa suffers from chronic intermittent growth, and perpetual deflation (*Ghanaian Chronicle, 2000*).

Little wonder Nnadozie declared that the economic future of Africa is very bleak; and that of the five continents in the world, none is facing as many debilitating problems as the African continent. These problems include those of poverty, hunger, war, environmental/ecological degradation, religious and ethnic conflicts, political instability, leadership inertia, illiteracy and bad governance, among others (Nnadozie, 2010)".

Taking poverty as a basic measure of underdevelopment, poverty would appear to be an indelible part of African peoples and states and has over the past decades continued an unrelenting ravage of the continent. Indeed, poverty has become one easy and most empirical evidence of underdevelopment and backwardness of Africa.

Although poverty is today accepted as a major global problem as more than one-fifth of humanity is languishing in abject penury, Africa, especially its sub-Saharan region would appear to be worst hit. Despite its enormous human and material resources, poverty has not only widened but has also deepened and become ramified, engulfing overwhelming majority of African people and states. And in spite of huge investment of resources and several policies and programmes expended on tackling poverty- cum underdevelopment in the continent, it has persisted and appears to defy every solution.

The critical question therefore is why has poverty cum underdevelopment become perennial in Africa despite all efforts at curbing the menace? Why is it that in spite of the huge human and material resources which Africa is endowed with, poverty cum underdevelopment has remained endemic leading to the current preposterous situation where Africa is dependent on foreign aid and humanitarian assistances to feed her teeming population? Is it the failure of governance, leadership or political inertia, or the inability to properly diagnose the problem and the consequent application of wrong and ineffectual policies and programmes towards tackling it? Has poverty cum underdevelopment become an incurable problem and a permanent feature of the continent a curse perhaps which Africans must live with and at best only manage?

The big question therefore, is what led to this appalling and ridiculous situation. A combination of factors has been identified as sustaining poverty and underdevelopment Africa (Nnadozie, 2010). In order to explicate these factors, they have been categorized into two major areas, namely internal and external factors. The internal factors include leadership inertia, bad governance, corruption, debt burden, political instability as well as ethnic and religious strife and civil war. Other issues within the internal factors include hostile physical environment and environmental degradation, high unemployment growth rate and disinvestment policies and unorthodox and hostile socio-economic practices and norms among many others. The external factors include foreign debt, external aid, dumping of toxic wastes on African soil and functionality of poverty itself (Nnadozie, 2010).

As a matter of fact, Sub-Saharan Africa's economies have deteriorated alarmingly since decolonization. Its proportion of the world's export products declined from more than 3 percent in 1950 to only 1 percent in 1990, and its external debt rose from just over 30 percent of GNP in 1980 to nearly 80 percent in 1994. The World Bank reported that, of the \$231 billion in foreign investment that went into the Third World in 1995, only 1 percent went to Africa. In 1991 there was only one telephone line for every 100 people in comparison to 2.3 lines for the Third World as a whole compared to 37.2 for the industrial countries. By the early to mid-1990s real income had declined by almost 15 percent from its level in 1965. Food production has declined markedly, to the point where many African countries cannot feed themselves. Taxes are high, inflation is rampant, and currencies are unstable. Technological infrastructure has decayed everywhere: roads have become paths and ruts, bridges are collapsing and do not get repaired, railways are in a state of decay, phones do not work, and universities have deteriorated. Hospitals are in such a poor state that patients often need to bring their own blankets and bandages (Ayittey, 1998).

In the last 20 years the continent has experienced severe ethnic hostilities, civil wars, political chaos, and massive government corruption. Ethnic groups engage in genocidal actions against each other, and governments often conspire in this. For example, in 1994 ethnic conflict in Burundi and Rwanda between Tutsis and Hutus resulted in some 700,000 Tutsis being killed, and hundreds of thousands of Hutus were slain as well. This genocidal civil war led to over a million Hutu refugees fleeing into neighboring Zaire. Many countries seem to have almost completely disintegrated. As Ayittey had commented, "For much of 1992 Somalia lay in ruins – effectively destroyed. It had no government, no police force, and no basic essential services. Armed thugs and bandits roamed the country, pillaging and plundering, and murderous warlords battled savagely for control of Mogadishu." Dependency and world-system theories blame exploitation by the core for Africa's current problems (Ayittey, 1998).

In the words of Andre Gunder Frank, "the lemon was squeezed dry and then discarded." But this is a very dubious conclusion because Ayittey places most of the blame on sub-Saharan Africa's internal problems, as does

Castells. Both traced Africa's massive problems to what they call the "predatory" or "vampire" state characteristic of so many African societies where dishonesty, thievery, embezzlement, and the likes thrive. Hence African political leaders can be compared to gangsters and crooks who have acquired political powers merely to advance their own interests. In fact, states as they were usually thought of really do not exist in Africa. The political institutions that are crucial parts of states – for example, the military, police forces, the civil service, parliaments, and judiciaries – have suffered a kind of debauchery. Parliaments either do not exist or are little but charades. Political dictators have staffed each of these institutions with their own tribesmen who will be completely at their beck and call. There is little or no professionalism and accountability in any of these institutions. However, Ayittey argues that, although Africa's problems are mostly of internal origin, the West has magnified them. Western leaders, he says, have been seduced by despots. They have often supported pro-capitalist African dictators and supplied them with economic and military aid. He also notes that American blacks have often praised African leaders and failed to realize the horrendous actions these leaders were engaged in. If the predatory state is the principal source of Africa's horrendous economic and social problems, then the obvious solution would be to destroy this type of state and replace it with a more democratic type. Just like Alfred Sauvy advocated when he wrote:

the third world is nothing, and it wants to be something hence it is exploited
and its destiny is a revolutionary one.

Supportively, Kyari Tijani (2008) averred

“to be frank, Nigeria is now left with only one option-*violence*-. Within this one option, we might pray for remission- organized violence; where a good leader would emerge to direct the violence, and lead it to a positive solution of our multi-various contradictions”.

But that is much more easily said than done, Ayittey pointed out, hence the commitment to reform has been weak in African countries. African despots have been extremely reluctant to give up power (just like Nigeria where, only until 2007, the military were in power both in Kaki or in Agbada) and would rather destroy their economies instead.

If anyone agrees that the African state is not the real source of the African problem, but simply another dimension of the problem, then the real question is why have such anomalies and underdevelopment persisted.

5. Dependency Theory and Nigeria's Underdevelopment

It should be pointed out here that the arrowhead factors nurturing underdevelopment in Nigeria is poor or bad governance and leadership inertia. In other words, it is on these two issues that other factors (both internal and external) are anchored. What this implies in the words of Nnadozie (2010) is that any attempt to address underdevelopment in Nigeria must be zeroed in on the problem of leadership inertia and bad governance. That Nigeria is overwhelmed by poverty and underdevelopment today can easily be attributed to poor, visionless, inept and selfish leadership' (Achebe, 1998 and Nnadozie, 2006). From the experiences of other continents, including America and Asia which passed through similar historical experiences as Africa such as colonialism and foreign domination, it is evident that their ability to jerk off the yoke of external domination and exploitation and leap into first and middle class industrialized societies never occurred until their leaders rejected foreign domination by taking concrete steps through their visionary, resilient, selfless and charismatic leadership.

Indeed, the central factor sustaining underdevelopment in Nigeria is squarely a failure of leadership that is, the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the occasion in their responsibility and the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of the true leadership. Nigeria has been less than fortunate in their leadership; and a fundamental element of this misfortune is the seminal as absence of intellectual rigour in the political thought of many of the founding fathers of the country; a proclivity “to pious materialistic wooliness and self-oriented pedestrianism” (Achebe, 1998).

The ways by which the Nigerian leaders have sustained the underdevelopment of the country are as follows: one is the manner Nigerian leaders have been mismanaging the enormous and God-given resources of the country. They waste the wealth of the nation by purchasing foreign and exotic goods and services for themselves, friends and cronies. Secondly, a large junk of that wealth was simply stolen through inflated contracts, frauds and other dubious methods. Apart from direct stealing of public fund, there is also the adoption of corrupted concept of development and development projects and programmes by governments in Nigeria, hence investments and public fund are for pecuniary reasons directed by our leaders at white elephant projects and programmes that do not yield dividends or create employment for the people as private interests override public interests. Colossal sums of public money has been lost in is manner.

Nigerian leaders who loot their state treasuries often take the monies to foreign banks mostly in Europe and America, thereby depriving the country even the benefits of reaping from investing the stolen money in the country; as a large chunk of state resources should have been channeled into productive sectors of the economy to strengthen social services, especially in the areas of health, education, infrastructural facilities and energy is

lost through various forms of corrupt practices. The money all end up in the pockets of few privileged state/government officials and the people are worst off for it (Nnadozie, 2010).

Eranga (2009) wrote that Nigeria is besieged with huge debt burden and unequal foreign exchanged and that her economy is in a state of near-collapse. Despite the debt cancellation by the Paris Club, Nigeria still owes huge debts, as the nation's total debt stock as at end of 2010 stood at \$4.7 billion for external debt and #4.5 trillion for domestic debt (Babajide, 2011). Inflation is on the increase day in and day out, reaching to its peak when it was rated at 10.5 percent in October 2011. Unemployment, statistically given at 4.9 percent in 2007 by Index Mundi (2011) has ravaged the economy to the extent that it has been said that about 64 million Nigerian graduates are unemployed as evidenced by the teeming millions of Nigeria youths roaming the street in utmost despair; Majority of them joining crime and other social vices to make ends meet as they must feed, clothe have a shelter over their head and fend for their immediate families. These factors are clear indicators of severe underdevelopment in Nigeria when compared to most developing countries of Africa and when consideration is paid to the amount of loot that goes in the higher and highest echelon of our public and political realms.

Such categorization has led to the assertion that Nigerian economy presently is characterized by galloping inflation, unequal foreign exchange rate exasperated by devalued currency and persistent dependence on importation, widespread unemployment, dilapidated infrastructures exemplified in the nature of the Nigeria roads and death conservative nature of Nigerian hospitals, epileptic power supply that has helped crippled all aspect of the societal survival possibility, near death state of the educational sector leading to a unavoidable brain drain. Entrepreneurship has died as corruption in the system has left nothing to desire in hard work and labour as youths are now concerned with money-making irrespective of how it comes and who gets hurt in the process. This is why diligence and honesty has been dethroned while dishonesty and greed has been enthroned. This also explains why merit has died in Nigeria making way for mediocrity (Eme and Emeh, 2012).

6. Methodological Perspective

Since this is not an expeditory effort stretching out to obtain new data and expand the frontiers of knowledge therewith, if anything, it is explanatory and confirmatory, this paper relied heavily on known data especially those on the internet, articles, newspapers and textbooks.

For the purpose of this paper, the United States, China, and Nigeria was used for comparisons and also placed Ghana, a sister African country on the same pedestals. The aforementioned countries belong to the first, second and third worlds respectively. Ghana, obviously is a member of the third world, but when compared with Nigeria, it becomes glaring that we cannot continue to hide under the cloak of belonging to the third world to explain where we are. Mention was also made of other African Counties like Niger.

China has the largest population in the world: 1.3 billion people. The United States is third with 310 million people while Nigeria is eighth with 152 million citizens. Ghana comes 47th with 24 million people.

Nigeria's population grew at a rate of 1.97 percent by 2010 estimates. That of the US grew at 0.97percent, China's rate was 0.49 percent and Ghana's grew at 1.86 percent. It is clear that of the four countries, we have the largest growth rate. Various organizations including United Nations organs have predicted that Nigeria's population will reach 300 million in the next three decades. By the way, Niger republic has the highest growth rate in the world, with 3.66 percent. Six of the top ten in the world are in Africa, while the world average is only 1.13 percent.

When it comes to birth rate per 1000 people, Nigeria comes 29th with a rate of 36.07. Ghana has a rate of 28.09, in 48th position. Those of the US and China are 13.83 and 12.17 respectively. Niger republic again comes first with 51.08 while the world average is 19.86. All the top ten countries are in Africa.

The death rate for Nigeria is 16.31 per 1000 people, placing us at an unenviable 6th position in the whole world. Ghana has a respectable rate at 8.93, in 76th position. The US places 91st with a rate of 8.38 and China does very well with a rate of 6.89, in 142nd position. Haiti comes ahead of everyone in this grim category with a 32.31. This accounts for its negative growth rate, as its death rate is greater than its birth rate. Surprisingly, South Africa comes in at 5th position with 16.99. The world average is 8.37. Again, six of the top ten are to be found in Africa.

Our infant mortality rate per 1000 live births stands at 92.99. This puts us in the 10th position. Ghana has a rate of 49.89, qualifying for 52nd position while China is in the 114th position with 16.51 and the US comes 178th with a rate of 6.14. Of the top ten countries in this category, nine of them are African. Only Afghanistan is unfortunate to be in this group, outside non-African countries. The world average is 44.13.

Our life expectancy at birth follows the same sad trend. Nigerians are expected to live 47.24 years on the average. This puts us in the 220th position, out of 224 countries. Ghanaians are expected to live 60.55 years, for 187th position. The Chinese have a life expectancy of 74.51 years, placing them in the 94th position and the US is at 49th place with a life expectancy of 78.24 years. The world average is 66.12 years. Monaco is first with 89.78 years while Haiti comes in dead last, all puns intended, with a life expectancy of 29.93 years. Out of the bottom 43 countries, 41 are African countries, with Haiti and Afghanistan as the only outsiders.

The world average for total fertility rate i.e. the number of children born per woman, according to 2010 estimates is 2.56. That of Nigeria is 4.82 for 29th position. Our sister African country, Ghana has a rate of 3.57 for 46th position. The rate for Americans is 2.06, placing them at 125th position and China has a rate of 1.54 for 183rd position. Niger republic comes first with 7.68 and the top 12 countries are all African.

HIV/AIDS adult prevalence rate by 2007 estimates is 3.10 percent for Nigeria for a 23rd placing. Ghana's rate is 1.90 for 33rd place and China has a rate of 0.10 for 115th position. The US has a rate of 0.60 for 70th position. All the top 23 countries are in Africa and the world average is 0.80.

When it comes to people living with HIV/AIDS however, our large population puts us in a very unenviable 3rd position with 2.6 million people. Ghana has exactly one tenth of Nigeria's number, with 260,000 people, China has 700,000 and the US has 1.2 million affected people.

Take for instance the literacy level. Only 68 percent of Nigerians are literate. We occupy the 171st position. This is one of the few instances where we fare better than Ghana. She has a literacy rate of 57.9 percent for 186th place. The US comes 37th with a rate of 99 percent while China's rate is 91.60 percent for 114th position in the world. Andorra and seven other countries have a literacy rate of 100 percent. The last thirteen countries are in Africa, except for Afghanistan. Burkina Fasso brings up the dumb rear with a rate of 21.80.

Closely linked to literacy rate is the expenditure on education, as a percentage of the GDP. It is a shame and a disaster that we spend 0.90 percent of our GDP on education. This puts us in the 183rd position. Ghana, without the same resources that we have, spends 5.40 percent and is in the 52nd place. China spends 1.90 percent for 172nd position and the US places 46th with 5.50 percent of GDP spent on education. This is one of the areas where the effect of embezzlement of public funds really manifests.

70 percent of Nigerians live below the poverty line, for 8th position in the world. By comparison, only 28.50 percent of Ghanaians live below the poverty line, for 74th in the world. Twelve percent of Americans live below the poverty line and that puts the US in 130th position. China occupies the 151st place with only 2.80 of the population living below poverty line. Zambia is first in this dubious category with a whopping 86 percent of her citizens qualified to be called poor. 7 of the top 10 and 13 of the top 20 are African countries.

There is a curious category in which it appears that Nigeria does well. This is in the category of Mobile cellular phone users. There are almost 63 million cell phones in use in Nigeria. This ordinarily puts us in a very enviable 16th position. However, if one considers the fact that an average person in Nigeria has two to three cell phones; the actual number of users is in the region of 20 million. By sheer force of numbers, the Chinese use 747 million cell phones. The US comes in third at 270 million cell phone users.

As for land lines, Nigeria lag behind in 68th position with 1.3 million lines. China again comes in first with 313 million lines and the US comes second with 150 million lines. Ghana is 117th with 267,400 lines. Had we been made of more serious stuff, we could have taken the opportunity provided by the reduction in demand for land lines, with the advent of mobile GSM lines, to expand land lines to places that were under served before. Land lines are needed for facsimile (fax), Internet connections and other uses.

In the category of Internet hosts, we have 1,378 hosts for 164th place. Ghana has 41,082 hosts for 94th place. China has 15.2 million for 6th position and the US has an unbelievable number of 439 million hosts for first place. Relatively poorer African countries like Gambia, Burkina Fasso, Swaziland, Botswana, Congo, Angola, Cote d'Ivoire, Libya, Zambia, Uganda and Mozambique all have many more than we have.

Finally, let us look at airports. The US has 15,079 airports. The nearest is Brazil with 4072 airports. China comes in a poor 15th with 502. This is one of the sound reasons why China will for now, belong to the second world. Nigeria has 54 airports to place 86th in the world and Ghana has 11 for 155th place. The number of airports should normally correlate with a country's population and land mass. It is therefore not surprising that large countries like the US, Brazil, Mexico and Canada come in tops.

One common trend to these indices of underdevelopment is that Nigeria occupy top places in those bad categories like infant mortality rate, death rate, HIV/AIDS prevalence, percentage living below the poverty line, while we are in the bottom of the ladder in good ones like literacy rate, life expectancy rate, expenditure on education, number of airports, number of Internet hosts, number of telephones.

7. Recommendations

This paper recommends that

1. African political and economic scholars should stop fixing blame; instead, they should fix the problem. For instance, they should bring to fore that fact that African leaders have connived within themselves and conspired to squeeze dry the orange and then discard it. Maybe that is why they save their monies abroad; have their investments over there too. Even though it is obvious that the whites (Europeans) exploited Africa, some would say that they are still exploiting us; this paper revealed that the exploitation of Africa by Africans for the past 50 year plus is what has kept Africa down. They have blamed the whites enough and allowing our leaders to hide behind this misleads to keep exploiting us

- and at the same time miseducated the masses. Let us fix our problems instead of fixing blame because the colonial masters have left officially and the blame and glory is ours now alone to share.
2. In fixing our problems, African leaders should invest in their home countries. This is necessary because without investment, unemployment thrives; poverty, hunger and starvation looms large and most importantly, underdevelopment soars higher than the eagles. The Billions of Dollars stashed away in foreign banks are what suppose to established companies; recruit people; services their payment; provide essential amenities that will make life worth living. Without these monies in the African soil, Africa can never development. Therefore, if Africa most develops, they most develop themselves by investing all their monies in their land. This is the only way to achieve the internal growth policy that Andre Gunder Frank proposed. Therefore, African/Nigerian leaders should repatriate those monies lodged in foreign Bank accounts and use them to develop their land by investing their lands under their names. As a matter of policy, the stolen monies of the African leaders if traced anywhere oversea should be confiscated by the authorities of that country. This point was what Rodney was decrying about when he lamented 'captives were shipped outside, instead of being utilized within any given Africa community for creating wealth from nature; hence to achieve economic development, one essential condition is to make the maximum use of the country's labour and natural resources. The shipping of slaves outside Africa he talked about aptly represents the lodging of their loots in foreign accounts, instead of using them to develop Africa.
 3. A total revamp of Africa's political landscape advocated as tremendous changes in the politics and leadership of Africa/Nigeria is needed such that mediocrity will give way for meritocracy as democratic good governance will ensure economic prosperity for all and at the same time ensure a peaceful, strong and virile economy based on harmonious co-existence where tolerance will be the watch word. Such will put an end to this perennial religious violence, political and ethic strives, alongside the fatalistically exalted political trend- corruption. .
 4. An intellectual revolution; not violence should be advocated for as even organized violence as Kyari recommended will not work in the interest of the poor and exploited masses. This is because revolution will still consume the lives of the masses and the elites will be saved abroad where they would have gone to hide their children and themselves. They will come back after the revolution to rule again hence their wealth stored in foreign accounts will be save and subsequently deployed to ensure that they continue their domination over the masses. This paper's idea of intellectual revolution is based on the assertion that educated and enlightened people are the easiest to rule but the hardest to manipulate. Such will only occur if and when we embrace a paradigm shift from pseudo-intellectualism as it concerns dependency theory and teach the truth- the reality of African/Nigerian underdevelopment: causes and then proffer solutions.

8. Conclusion

Nigeria, with its oil wealth, is different from many other neo-colonial countries as the majority of the ruling elite do not really care about developing the manufacturing or agricultural sectors of the economy as the only sure source of wealth in Nigeria is the daily inflow of \$30m petrodollars into the regime's off-shore bank accounts. This now makes up at least 85% of total government revenue and is the 'pot of gold' over which the elite fight. Corruption and financial swindles are the easiest way to make money in Nigeria, certainly better than the unpredictable fluctuations of industrial production or 'normal' trade (Salimu, 1998). The London Times reported one estimate that, since the early 1970s, Nigerian leaders have amassed personal fortunes totaling \$217bn in foreign, mainly Swiss and Lebanese, banks. The Times estimated that Abacha himself accumulated \$5.8bn during his nearly five years in power (London Times, 2002).

The one that is brewing currently is Jonathan Administration's involvement in a #155bn oil scandal which the federal government has refused to comment on. This is quite different from the fuel subsidy fraud whose report has been handed over the EFCC for arrest and prosecution. Even the EFCC was said to be involved; this is the nation's anti-graft agency. On this issue, a forum called the congress for progressive change in Nigeria said that Jonathan administration is more concerned with looting than governance when their spokesman, Rotimi Fasakin asserted "after the death of Abacha, much noise was made on the tens of billions of naira that later became known as Abacha loot, little did we know that successive PDP governments would dwarf his records in mindless rapaciousness and kleptomaniac imprudence. But in these sleazy records, Jonathan Administration beats them all. No inspiring governance, only looting"

The campaign for democracy president, Joe Okei-Odumakin, said that with the money laundry allegation, the Jonathan government had taken corruption to a new height, hence it is now one day one scandal yet no one has resigned in all the mind boggling corruption scandals under Jonathan Administration shows that he is friendly with corruption and that is very sad because in Italy, Umberto Bossi, the firebrand leader of Italy's opposition Northern League Party reigned on Thursday after allegation that taxpayers' money was used to pay for renovations at this villa and holidays for his children

Confirming our theme- How Nigerian underdeveloped Nigeria, Alhaji Balarabe Musa, simply noted that he was not surprised that Jonathan could be named in such act. According to him, it was impossible for anybody in Nigeria to become president or governor without pilfering the nation's treasury. He said that he had always maintained that all Nigerian leaders are **thieves**.

The Nigeria's perennial backwardness and underdevelopment had been blamed on bad leadership, greed and corruption. On the solution, Former Lagos Deputy Governor, Mr. Femi Pedro, said only drastic actions can save the nation from corruption. He further suggested the China option to arrest graft in the nation. In addendum, he explained, "Today in China, it is "steal be caught and be executed". Interestingly no one wants to die so corruption has been dealt with in that country. "China today has risen from a poverty stricken nation that dwelt on rice alone to the second largest industrial market in the world".

Olumide Akande, called for reduction of cost of governance and operational expenses. According to him, "Most of the people who today are in government have no agenda more than to lick the honey and drink the milk at the centre. Let Nigeria make the centre less financially attractive and we shall see a great change, (Oguntola, 2012). This call was made considering the payment of Nigerian legislators.

Truthfully, African/Nigerian underdevelopment is caused by the incessant corruption imbedded in bad leadership that had bedeviled African states since independence. This is why this paper calls for a paradigm shift in the study of Africa's underdevelopment. Instead of looking outside, we simply have to look inward and see our problems steering at us, and then we can handle them head long.

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