

AN AFROCENTRIC CRITIQUE OF AFRICA'S UNDERDEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

As Philosophy of Economics investigates the foundational concepts and methods of economics: the rational choice, the appraisal of economic outcomes, institutions and processes, and the ontology of economic phenomena and the possibilities of acquiring knowledge of them, this research raises the question of why is there continuing economic underdevelopment in Africa? How to explain Africa, the world's second-largest continent, with 1.4 billion people in 54 countries and with plenty of human and natural resources, but still lacking in development over 60 years after its independence? By phenomenological and structural methods, the author critically evaluates the economic theories, particularly on the views of African scholars after Independence, that have been proposed for this continuing problem that affects the human condition of so many people. This study finds that among post-colonial African scholars, the path to African development has been debated between the Internalist and Externalist schools of development. While the Internalist tends to blame inside forces (local corruption, tyranny, bad governance), and with the view that Africa alone has the responsibility of bailing itself out of its present state of underdevelopment. The externalist school contends that Africa alone cannot attain any level

of development because of historical constraints, such as the slave trade, imperialism, colonialism, and the power structure of the modern world. The Integrationist school, which finds the polarizing African development experts ridiculous, as they blame both internal and external forces for the causes of Africa's underdevelopment, holds that Africa's underdevelopment is solved by the integration of forces both from within and outside Africa. However, and philosophically speaking, the author finds that Africa's development is possible only with an appreciation of what is original and authentically African, which is dependent on the culture and consciousness of African people.

Keywords: Africa's Underdevelopment, Internalists, Externalists, Integrationists, Culture and Consciousness.

Introduction

As Philosophy of Economics investigates the foundational concepts and methods of economics, and philosophers of history, not only ponder on the past and the future of Western civilization, they also reflect seriously upon the experiences of other societies in hopes of understanding the larger dynamics of world history;¹ the question of why is there continuing economic underdevelopment in Africa comes to mind.

How do we explain the fact that Africa, the world's second-largest continent, with 1.4 billion people in 54 countries and with plenty of human and natural resources, is still lacking development over 60 years after its independence? By lack of development, I mean a nation's inability to provide its citizens with food, clothing, shelter, education, decent health care, good road, and employment, while also attending to environmental sustainability.²

¹Jerry H. Bentley, *Shapes of World History in Twentieth Century Scholarship*, Washington DC: American Historical Association, 2003, 3.

²Jeffrey Sachs, *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities of Our Time*, London: Penguin Books, 2005, 23.

The more puzzling issue is that despite over 60 years of independence and after receiving 600 billion US dollars of external aid,³ Africa continues to be underdeveloped. The consensus is that the money has had a little long effect.⁴ It is more disturbing to see that the region's extreme poverty has increased during the reign of “globalization” in the 1990s when the modern world experienced great economic growth.

Moreover, as of January 2020, 91% of African countries had a GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of less than the net-worth of the World's richest person- Jeff Bezos (An American internet and aerospace entrepreneur, media proprietor, and investor). Only South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt, Angola, Sudan, and Algeria have a GDP of above US\$115 billion.⁵

Why such continuing underdevelopment after a lot might have been put in place? Could poverty and underdevelopment be the destiny or lot of a people? What is the cause of persistent poverty in African land? Could this persistent underdevelopment and poverty be socially constructed or the design of the Maker of the world? Where is this curse of underdevelopment and poverty upon Africa coming from?

However, to philosophically enquire into this existential issue, a multi-dimensional approach has to be employed. Such as a phenomenological, structural, and historical method may enable us do the evaluation analysis. First, we will briefly glance over the Western theories proposed to explain the lack of development in Africa. Secondly, we will critique the views of African experts on the issue. Lastly, we will propose that sustainable development in Africa

³Cornelius P. Cacho, "Confronting the Main Causes of African Underdevelopment" in *Foreign Policy Association* (Resource Library, 2008). Adam Lerrick, "Aid to Africa at Risk: Covering Up Corruption" in *International Economics Report*, December 2005.

<http://www.house.gov/jec/publications/109/12-09-05galliotcorruption.pdf>.

⁴James A. Robinson and Daron Acemoglu, "Why Foreign aid fails- and how to really help Africa" in *the Spectator*, 2017. Retrieved Jan 30, 2020, from <https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2017/04/9824422>.

⁵Shephard Dube, "Jeff Bezos richer than 130 countries" in Shepharddube.com, retrieved Jan 30, 2020.

must be based on the culture and consciousness of the African people.

Highlighting Theories of Underdevelopment in Africa

Going through the available data, we can see that questions continue to arise as to why the situation of Africa's development continues to deteriorate? Attempting a solution, three main Western theories tend to explain why the continent is still lacking in development half a century after its independence. They are Modernization theory, Dependency theory, and World System theory.

During the 1950s, some Western economists tied the idea of development to the idea of **modernization**. In searching for a model of development for Third World nations, including Africa, modernization analysts studied the political, social, economic, and cultural history of Western nations to identify policies that led to their material prosperity. Among some prominent economic modernization analysts include Walter Whitman Rostow (1916-2003), W. Arthur Lewis (1915-1990), and Cyril E. Black (1916-1989). "They assumed that underdeveloped Africa could adopt similar policies and follow the same path to prosperity."⁶

Walt W. Rostow, an American economic historian, for instance, described the development of the First World as the result of five sequential stages: traditional society, preconditions of development, industrial take-off, full industrialization, and, finally, high mass consumption. Rostow states the possibility of identifying all societies in their economic dimension as lying within one of the five stages and suggests that underdeveloped countries pass through the same stages of development.⁷

However, in the late 1960s, against Rostow and modernization theorists, **Dependency theory** holds that it is not internal factors that impede the development of the Third World, including Africa, but rather their relations of dependence on Western powers. Dependency theorists, such as Raul Prebisch (1901- 1986),

⁶Jerry H. Bentley, *Shapes of World History in Twentieth-Century Scholarship*, Washington DC; American Historical Association, 2003, 8.

⁷. Walt W. Rostow, *the Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1960, 1-105.

Andre Gunder Frank (1929 - 2005) and Theotonio dos Santos (b. 1937), viewed Africa as a continent which has become underdeveloped because it was an integral part of the modernization process of the Western industrial nations, but in a subordinate and exploited position.

Andre Gunder Frank has strongly attacked the *Stages of Economic Growth* by arguing that Rostow ignored the exploitation of the Third World by the capitalist economy of the United States, which presents free-market policy as a panacea for the development of backward economies. But the policy was only a ploy to perpetuate American hegemony.⁸ Frank contends that it is not internal factors that impede the development of Africa, as posited by Rostow, but rather their relations of dependence on Western powers.⁹

Yet, during the 1970s, one of the popular founders of the **World Systems** theory, Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein believed, like dependency theorists, that world economies are integrated into one market system, the capitalist system, in which the surplus is transferred from the periphery to the core. Wallerstein (b. 1930), an American sociologist and an expert on post-colonial African affairs, analysed that the core states are administratively well organized and militarily powerful.

Wallerstein observed a third economic zone (semi-periphery) to the core and the periphery of dependency theory, and this addition accounts for the experiences of countries that moved up or down in the economy of the world-system. He argues that Africa's lack of development is a result of the continent's peripheral position in the international division of labour mediated through trade exchanges without a unified political structure.¹⁰ He advocates for a truly

⁸ Andre Gunder Frank, "Sociology of Development and Underdevelopment of Sociology," *Catalyst* 3, in (New York: Monthly Review, summer 1967); also in, mcx.sagapub.com/cgi/content/refs/4/3/341

⁹ A. G. Frank, "Dependency theory" in *Capitalism and Understanding in Latin American: Historical Studies of Chile and Brazil* New York: Monthly Review, 1969.

¹⁰ Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System: Concepts of Comparative Analysis," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (1974), vol. 16, 390.

democratic world in which all peripheral countries would unite against the system of world exploitation.

Summarily, no matter the differences, western theories of underdevelopment in Africa are formulated in universalistic terms, implying that only by following their theories could resolve the situation of underdevelopment in Africa. But, among other criticisms, a cultural anthropologist, Franz Boas (1858-1942) believes that local conditions force adaptations to the local environment, and, therefore, what is adaptive for one region might not be appropriate for another.

The dependency-world system theorists have also been accused of some bias towards the West. So, neither Western ethnocentrism nor bias toward the Western capitalist economy fosters development in Africa. More so, some critics have held that dependency and world system analysts have focused on the interests and activities of Western capitalists, overlooking the roles played by peoples in the peripheral countries as active participants in the development of their world.¹¹ Thus, the issue of overlooking roles played by peoples in the peripheral countries has called to examine the opinions of African scholars on the continuing underdevelopment in Africa, following Frank Boas' important admonition that local conditions force adaptations to the local environment.

Afrocentric Theories of Economic Underdevelopment in Africa: A Critique

The causes of underdevelopment in Africa have always evoked a heated debate among post-colonial African elite. Since the 1970s, three major schools of thought have emerged among post-colonial African development experts: *the Internalist school, the Externalist school, and the Integrationist school*.¹² The three schools of thought

¹¹ Bentley, *Shapes of World History in Twentieth Century Scholarship*, 13.

¹² Y Fredua-Kwarteng, "Etiology of Ghana Underdevelopment," in *Modern Ghana News* (Thursday, August 4, 2005); <http://www.modernghana.com/print/117675/1/etiology-of-ghana-underdevelopment.html> retrieved July 3, 2009.

tend to reflect the “*functional, conflict, and interactionist* theories of inequality in sociology.”¹³ Examination of these schools points to the thinking of African experts on a continuing lack of development in their continent.

(A) The Internalist school

Drawing from Rostow's modernization theory and functional sociology of Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), the Internalist school believes that the causes of Africa's lack of development lie mostly within Africa. Especially the issues of local corruption, tyranny, and bad governance from the 'internal factor' which is the brain behind the continent's continuing underdevelopment. They hold that Africa has the sole responsibility to bail itself from underdevelopment; especially as Africa should have recovered from the scourge of colonialism after more than half a century of independence.¹⁴ Internalist scholars include *George Ayittey, Moeletsi Mbeki, Thabo Mbeki, and Chinua Achebe*, to mention but a few.

George Ayittey (b. 1947), a prominent Ghanaian economist, president of the Free Africa Foundation, Washington DC, and founder of Internalist school, holds that Africa has to seek internal solutions to its economic problems.¹⁵ In his *Africa Unchained* (2006), Ayittey argues that Africa is poor because it is not free and that the actual cause of African poverty is less of colonial oppression and mismanagement than an oppressive native autocrat.¹⁶

He listed the ills of local autocrats including bad leadership, ineffective governance, rampant corruption, capital flight, military vandalism, political repression, economic mismanagement, and destructive civil wars.¹⁷ To be replaced with a democratic government, a modernized infrastructure, debt reexamination, free-

¹³ Vincent N. Parrillo, *Understanding Race and Ethnic Relations*, Second edition, Boston: Pearson Education, 2005, 8-10.

¹⁴ Tongkeh Fowale, “The Distant Dream of African Development”, 2009.

¹⁵ George Ayittey, *Africa Unchained: the Blueprint for Africa's Future*, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, 1-10.

¹⁶ Ayittey, *Africa Unchained*, 2006, 1-10.

¹⁷ Y Fredua-Kwarteng, “Etiology of Ghana Underdevelopment”, 2005.

market economies, and free trade as preconditions of development in Africa.¹⁸

Ayittey narrated how the Internalist scholarship evolved slowly in the 1970s; how infectious the euphoria was that gripped the continent during independence in the 1960s; how African nationalists were worshipped as gods and heroes, and how it was sacrilegious to criticize them. It did not take long before the heroes and governments began to outlaw opposition parties and declared themselves presidents for life.¹⁹

There was no tolerance for dissent, no democratic freedom, but creeping despotism that sowed the seeds of internal revolt. The leaders put their own benefits before people's needs, and they blamed the continent's problems on external factors alone, instead of looking at themselves as major contributors to the continent's woes.²⁰ Ayittey continued that not long after independence, namely in the 1960s, it became increasingly clear that Africa had traded “white colonialists” for “black neo-colonialists,” and that the oppression and exploitation of the African people continued unabated.²¹

Ayittey's analysis was corroborated by the former U.S. President Barack Obama, when he visited Ghana in July 2009. In his speech in Accra, President Obama urged African leaders to end tyranny, corruption, and get rid of violence to move the continent forward. That Africa does not need strong men, but strong institutions; that no country can create wealth if its leaders are exploitative; no investment business can flourish where the government skims 20% off the top, and no one wants to live in a society where the rule of law gives way to the rule of bribery,

¹⁸ Ayittey, *Africa Unchained*, 2006.

¹⁹ Kofi Akosah-Sarpong, “Special Interview Emerging African Development Thinking, II”, in *Modern Ghana News* (October 7, 2008).

²⁰ Kofi Akosah-Sarpong, “Ghana's Externalists and Internalists (part 2)”, in *Patriotic Vanguard* (Sierra Leone: March 23, 2010); http://www.thepatrioticvanguard.com/article.php3?id_article=104

²¹ Akosah-Sarpong, “Special Interview with George Ayittey: Emerging African Development Thinking (2), in *Modern Ghana News* (September 30, 2009). <http://www.modernghana.com/news/241260/1/special-interview-emerging-africa-development-thi.html>

corruption, violence, and brutality.²² Obama categorically concluded that Africa's future lies with them, and their development depends on good governance and strong institutions.²³

In 2004, **Moeletsi Mbeki** (b. 1947), blames African underdevelopment on its political elite. Moeletsi, a political economist argues that all modern political thoughts, from Marx and Lenin on the left to Hayek and Friedman on the right, are in agreement that the private sector is key to modern economic development.²⁴ Moeletsi explains that Africa arguably has one of the largest private sectors in the world because most Africans live and work within private sectors as peasants and or in subsidiaries of foreign-owned multinational corporations.

However, neither private nor the public has complete freedom to operate within the market in Africa, hence the latter is controlled by the state. Since private sectors in Africa lacks political power, they are not free to operate in such a way as to maximize their objectives and to control their savings. The political elite prey on the peasants' vulnerability just as Karl Marx once observed.²⁵

Moeletsi concludes that African development needs a new type of democracy, that will empower the political elite as well as the private sector producers. Also that Africa should learn from China's agricultural reforms, which are today the core of its great economic growth.²⁶

Thabo Mbeki (b. 1942), the former president of South Africa (1999-2008) and the elder brother of Moeletsi Mbeki, belongs to Internalist school when he popularized *the African Renaissance* in 1998, with the slogan that “Africa is for Africans, Africa's problems

²²Cf. Barack Obama, "End tyranny and corruption for development" in Huffington Post (September 5, 2009).

²³. Cf. Barack Obama, “End tyranny and corruption for development” in *Huffington Post* (Sept. 5, 2009).

²⁴. Moeletsi Mbeki, “South Africa: The Private Sector, Political Elite and Underdevelopment in Sub-Saharan Africa” in *allAfrica.com* (August 2, 2004).

²⁵ Karl Marx, “The Eighteen Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte” in *Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels: Selected Works* London: 1970, vol. 1, pp.170-171.

²⁶ Moeletsi Mbeki, “South Africa: the private sector...” 2004.

require African solutions.”²⁷ Mbeki's African Renaissance is based on the concept that African people and nations must by themselves overcome the recurrent political, socio, and economic challenges facing the continent and achieve cultural, scientific, and economic renewal.²⁸

In 1997, Thabo listed the elements that constitute the African Renaissance, including social cohesion, democracy, economic rebuilding and growth, and the establishment of Africa as a major contributor to world affairs. Thabo's African Renaissance encouraged education and attempted to reverse the issue of the “brain-drain syndrome” of many African intellectuals toward Europe and America. But urged the Africans and their intellectuals to be proud of their heritage and to enhance it.²⁹

Chinua Achebe (1930-2013), a prominent Nigerian professor, novelist and social critic believed the Internalist factor. In his archetypal novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958), Achebe admitted that the arrival of British colonialism deteriorated the traditional Igbo-Nigerian society, but the destruction of Igbo society was the result of weaknesses within the native structure.³⁰

Achebe favoured the Igbo-African culture of pre-Western society, with its religion, government, a system of money, an artistic tradition, and its judicial system. He argued that prior to British colonization, the Igbo people lived in a patriarchal collective political system which was democratic. They did not rule by monarchy nor single individual, as decisions were made by a council of male elders. Religious leaders were also invited to settle cultural issues. Achebe contradicted the biases of many British colonial writers who depicted

²⁷ Thabo Mbeki, “the African Renaissance Statement”, from the Office of the Executive Deputy President (August 5, 1998)

<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mbeki/1998/tm0813.htm>

²⁸ Ibid., “Statement on behalf of the African National Congress, on the occasion of the adoption of the Constitutional Assembly of 'the Republic of South Africa Constitutional Bill 1996”, in Office of the President (August 5, 1996)

<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mbeki/1996/sp960508html>

²⁹ W.A.J. Okumu, *The African Renaissance*, 2002, 12.

³⁰ Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, New York: First Anchor Books, 1994, 176-206.

Africans as ignorant and uncivilized.³¹

Nevertheless, Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* faulted the native structure for the collapse of Umuofia village. He placed no blame on the Igbos for being subjected to colonialism but often criticized their traditional customs, especially those customs that appeared “static.”³² Achebe clearly endorsed the Internalist position in his book *The Trouble with Nigeria* (1983), where he articulated the Nigerian problem as unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to their responsibilities and challenges of providing a personal example, which, according to him, are the hallmarks of true leadership.³³

(B) The Externalist School

Unlike the Internalists, and perhaps more explicitly than the dependency and world system theorists, the externalists blame “outside forces” for Africa's continued lack of development.³⁴ Africa alone cannot attain any level of development because of historical constraints and the power structure of the modern world.

The externalist scholars include *Macleans A. Geo-Jaja*, *Moshood K.O. Abiola*, *Walter Rodney*, and *Cornelius P. Cacho*, to mention but a few. They hold that Western colonialism and imperialism, the transatlantic slave trade, the unfair international trade system and practices, and the policies of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), are the independent or remote causes of African underdevelopment.

They chastise rampant corruption, ineffective governance, military vandalism, political oppression, civil war and violence, and economic mismanagement³⁵ as proximate causes of underdevelopment in Africa. However, they believe that any credible healing must start from the root-sources.

³¹ Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, NY: EMC Corporation, 2003, 177-207.

³² Jeffrey W. Hunter, “Things Fall Apart, Chinua Achebe: Introduction.” (Gale Cengage, 2002) Vol. 152.

³³ Chinua Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria*, UK: Heinemann, 1984, 1

³⁴ Tongkeh Fowale, “The Distant Dream of African Development”, 2009.

³⁵ Y Fredua-Kwarteng, “Etiology of Ghana Underdevelopment” 2009.

The Externalists highly concur with dependency theorists in considering the global, political, and economic order in a core-periphery context and in the relationship between the rich North and the poor South. Moreover, they agree with the Marxist exploitation thesis which claims that European industrialization was built on the imperialist exploitation of Africa.³⁶

For instance, **Macleans A. Geo-Jaja** (b. 1930), a prominent Nigerian development economist and educationist, has asserted that African development has been deliberately held ransom by and to the advantage of some of the advanced nations. To prove his point, Geo-Jaja pointed out that nowhere in Africa is there an indigenous education system designed to meet African needs because of the conspiracy interests of some advanced nations.³⁷

Geo-Jaja, who is also a former professor of economics in the University of Utah, Salt Lake City, and, the Chair of the National Think-Tank on the Review of the Nigerian Constitution, has traced Africa's lack of development to both the African slave dealers and the Western industrialists. He thought that the scramble for raw materials and markets culminated in wars among European powers, which enabled Africans to play them off against each other.³⁸

Like Walter Rodney (1942-1980), a prominent Guyanese political historian, who in his book: *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972), supported the view that Africa was deliberately exploited and underdeveloped by the European colonial regime. Geo-Jaja argued that Africa's greatest nightmare came in 1884-1885, when the colonial powers of England, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Belgium met in Berlin and divided up the African continent. There was no consideration for pre-existing governmental structures, institutions, and tribal relations, but only for raw materials, surplus labour, and export opportunities.

³⁶ Tongkeh Fowale, 2009.

³⁷ Macleans A. Geo-Jaja, "Underdevelopment and Education in Africa" in *Africa Economic Analysis* (April 11, 2008); <http://www.africaeconomicanalysis.org/articles/15/1/Underdevelopment-and-education-i>

³⁸ Geo-Jaja, "Underdevelopment and Education in Africa", 2008

Geo-Jaja revealed that one important weapon that destroyed Africa during the colonial imperialism was “imported education systems”, which were designed to exalt the image of European societies to the detriment of Africa. Colonial powers trained Africans into a cadre of low-level clerks and administrators, and they shielded them from any intellectual or skill development as the Africans were used as wage slaves in the farms and mines.³⁹

Prof. Geo-Jaja argued that there could be no true economic development in Africa without the education of Africans, by Africans and for African purposes. There could be no democracy and peace without a population prepared to be self-governing committed to Africanization, leaving behind the divide and conquer hatreds of colonialism which are the source of so much current internal strife.⁴⁰ Geo-Jaja concluded that beyond the influence of family and religion, education is the key to stopping the continuing underdevelopment of Africa and to prevent episodes of horrible ethnic violence, like the genocide in Rwanda.

After all these analyses of the causes of African underdevelopment, it is not difficult to see why Alhaji **Moshood K.O. Abiola** (1937-1998) had to call for “reparations” for Africa and its people. M.K.O. Abiola was a popular Yoruba Nigerian businessman, publisher, and politician, who sponsored the campaign to win reparations for slavery and colonialism in Africa and in the diasporas.

“Chief Abiola personally rallied every African head of state and every head of state in the black diasporas to ensure that Africans would speak with one voice on reparations.”⁴¹ Inspired by Pan-Africanism, Abiola in 1990 confronted the issue of African development by embracing the concept of reparation. “The basic idea of Reparation is that Africa does not owe the world, but above and beyond the cancellation of the debt issue, the world that has exploited

³⁹Ibid, 2008.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Moshood Abiola, “on his Philanthropy- Reparation” in <http://eliesmith.blogspot.com/2008/senator-as-yarima-reparation-for-africa.html> Retrieved March 23, 2010

Africa for so long, owes Africa the basic capital for development. Such capital will enable Africa to build roads, railways, hospitals, schools and the necessary communication infrastructure to support development.”⁴²

In 1990, Abiola got his Concord Press to organize an international conference on Reparation in Lagos, and persuaded the then President Ibrahim Babangida (IBB) of Nigeria to endorse it at the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Abuja in 1991. In 1992, the OAU Summit in Dakar (Senegal), created a “Group of Eminent Persons” (GEP) to pursue the issue of reparation through the United Nations' (UN) Agenda. Included in the campaign for reparation were the blacks in the diasporas.⁴³

Abiola's reparation campaign helped African Americans in the United States to demand reparations from corporations from their unjust enrichment through the immoral and inhuman institution of slavery.⁴⁴ The Reparation drive is born out of a conviction that Africa's lack of development is attributed to Western colonization, unfair international trade systems and practices, and the adverse policies of the World Bank and IMF that multiplied debts in Africa and made cancellation of those debts difficult.⁴⁵

(c) The Integrationists' perspective

There is also the *Integrationist* school. This third group finds the polarizing African development experts ridiculous, as it blames both internal and external forces for the causes of Africa's underdevelopment. The Integrationist searches both within and outside Africa for solutions to the continent's backwardness. This is because it realizes from both history and contemporary global events

⁴²O. K. Amuni, “Arab Enslavement of Africans: the Reparation Caravan must reach Arabia and Middle East” (Lagos: Dept. of Foreign Languages, Lagos State University, 2003), 45.

⁴³.Ibid.

⁴⁴.Ibid, 47

⁴⁵. Hakeem Harunah, “Criticisms of Reparation” in Amuni's Arab Enslavement of Africans, 2003.

that enemies of African development abound everywhere.⁴⁶

The Integrationist scholars include Y. *Fredua-Kwarteng*, *Wangari Maathai*, *Dambisa Moyo*, and *Chinweizu Ibekwe*, to mention but a few. The analysis of this school evokes ideas of Pan-Africanism, traceable to symbolic interactionism of George Hubert Mead (1863-1931) and Herbert Blumer (1900-1987).

Symbolic interactionism examines the micro-social world of personal interaction patterns in everyday life and studies the shared symbols and definitions people use when communicating with one another. Such that it shows how individuals create and interpret the life situation they experience.⁴⁷ Symbolic interactionism is very useful in understanding the Integrationist theory because it assumes that African people are responsive and creative in the construction of their world and development, rather than being passive, as might have been suggested by the Internalist and Externalist schools of African development.

Y. Fredua-Kwarteng is a prominent Ghanaian scholar of the University of Toronto who coined the term “Integrationist school.” He stressed that in the realm of development, like any other domain in the social world, things are so interconnected that it is misleading to separate variables neatly into external and internal causalities.⁴⁸ Kwarteng cautioned that “in solving underdevelopment problems, scholars need to understand that human beings are multifaceted being: they are cognitive, emotional, religious, social and behavioural.” Therefore, a non-positivist approach is needed.⁴⁹

He argues that enemies of African development abound everywhere, both internally and externally. He cites African corrupt leadership for an illustration. He believes that the sources of African corrupt leadership include the institutions where the leaders received their education and training, the personal philosophy of the leaders, and the influence of people around these leaders. Kwarteng wonders how people could critically say that corruption and political

⁴⁶Y. Fredua-Kwarteng, “Etiology of Ghana Underdevelopment” 2005.

⁴⁷Vincent Parrillo, *Understanding Race and Ethnic Relations*, 2005.

⁴⁸Y. Fredua-Kwarteng, “Etiology of Ghana Underdevelopment” 2005.

⁴⁹Ibid.

oppression in Ghana, for instance, have no colonial connections.

Kwarteng believes that African development can be sought through fine arts, religion, philosophy, morality, and herbal medicine. He does not accept that African ethics and morality can be validated by the application of capitalist economic principles; but that African ethics and morality have their own internal logic, and that their justification lies in an African worldview.⁵⁰

Against the Internalists, Kwarteng criticized the idea of “import and implant foreign models” in Africa to attempt to solve African problems. But rather than foreign models should be viewed with suspicion and skepticism rather than with the “Europhilia syndrome” found in Africa today.⁵¹

Chinweizu Ibekwe (b. 1943), a Nigerian economic historian and cultural critic, observes that the pervasive mentality in twentieth-century Africa is one of Europhilia - an uncritical acceptance and high valuation of every bit of thing from the West. He calls for Africa's decolonization and Renaissance.⁵²

Chinweizu, the popular author of *The West and the Rest of Us*, is a contemporary Afrocentric leader and a beacon of Africanism. Pan-Africanism is a socio-political worldview, philosophy, and movement that seeks to unify native Africans and those of African heritage into a global African community.⁵³ Against Europhilia, Chinweizu attempts to reexamine African life and history from an African perspective and advocates a return to traditional African concepts about culture, society, and values.

He criticized the interpretation of African literature as a twentieth-century appendage to European literature, an

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Chinweizu Ibekwe, “Nationalist Values and Political Will: The Mental Health of the Nigerian Elite” (07 Dec., 2005); <http://www.nigeriavillagesquare.com/articles/chinweizu/nationalist-values-and-political-will-18.html>

⁵³Itibari M. Zulu (editor), “Sculpting a Pan-African Culture in the Art of Negritude: A Model for African Artist” in *Journal of Pan African Studies*, 2006; <http://www.jpanafrican.com/>

interpretation that was produced by those African writers who have digested a European tradition. He believed that the true African tradition extends back beyond the European and Hellenic kinds of literature and as far as the Egyptian pyramid.⁵⁴ Chinweizu holds that for development in Africa, there must be an appreciation of what is originally and authentically African and achievable by decolonizing the African mind by Afrophilia.

The Africanist goal of decolonization is to overthrow the authority of alien traditions. Pan Africanism calls for the dismantling of white supremacist beliefs and structures which superimpose themselves on every aspect of African life. It is not implied that Africans must ignore foreign traditions, but simply a denial of the authority of foreign traditions and a withdrawal of allegiance to them.⁵⁵

More so, the Kenyan **Wangari Maathai** (b. 1940), an environmental and political activist, in her book *The Challenge for Africa* (2009), argues that there is no inherent trade-off between economic growth and environmental protection and that African leaders should pursue both. As an Integrationist, she blames both Western colonialism for devaluing African identity and culture and Africa for its bloody attachment to fractured micro-nations.⁵⁶

Maathai criticized foreign aid dependency as part of the problem of underdevelopment in Africa. She believes in a change that will come through grassroots activism and suggests strongly that Africans must embrace their own traditions.⁵⁷ Among her Africanist objectives include the need for visionary leadership and nation-

⁵⁴Chinweizu Ibekwe, "Chinweizu, Rothenberg, Duns Scotus", in *Towards the Decolonization of African Literature* (United Kingdom: Howard University Press, 1983); <http://www.tomleonard.co.uk/online-poetry-a-prose/chinweizu-rothe...>

⁵⁵Chinweizu Ibekwe, "Decolonizing the African Mind: Further Analysis and Strategy" in (Assata Shakur Forum, Nov. 17, 2004); <http://www.assatasakur.org/forum/pan-afrikanism-afrocentricity/16...>

⁵⁶Francis Fukuyama, "Out of Africa; Foreign aid is part of the problem, but so is corrupt politics" in *Slate* (May 4, 2009); <http://www.slate.com/toolbar.aspx?action=print&id=2217394>

⁵⁷Wangari Maathai, *The Challenge for Africa* (Pantheon: First Edition, 2009), pp. 1-36.

building through a central leadership. She cited, for instance the leadership of Julius Nyerere, who knit Tanzania's multiple languages and ethnic groups together through the use of Kiswahili as the national language.⁵⁸

However, the Zambian **Dambisa Moyo**, a global economist at Goldman Sachs in London, argues in her *Dead Aid* (2009), that foreign-sponsored development is at the root of Africa's underdevelopment and calls for its cessation if Africa is to progress.⁵⁹ As a world-class economist, who has understood the “pros-and-cons” of the World Bank and IMF's consequences of the foreign aid for development in Africa, Moyo favours private sector development, no matter where it comes from and vehemently protests against the agricultural protectionism of the global North that prevents trade from becoming an engine of growth.⁶⁰

Embracing both the Internalists' Renaissance objectives and the Externalists' Reparation drive, we could see that the Integrationists hold no ideological position, but rather seek from within and outside Africa for ways to move the continent forward.

(3) Culture and Consciousness: Basis for A Sustainable Development in Africa

Regrettably, the Western development model for Africa takes for granted the impact of culture and consciousness on the political and economic dimensions of development in Africa. But the Integrationist philosophy that seeks both within and outside Africa for solutions to the continent's backwardness holds the way forward. The 'within' is Africa's peculiarity, which includes African culture and consciousness.

Kwarteng's warning that in solving underdevelopment problems, scholars need to understand that human beings are multifaceted beings and that they are cognitive, emotional, religious,

⁵⁸Ibid, 312-336.

⁵⁹Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid: why aid is not working and how there is a better way for Africa* New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2009, 180-200.

⁶⁰Francis Fukuyama, *Out of Africa*, 2009.

social, and behavioural, ought to be listened to. Perhaps, a non-positivist approach is needed in sustaining development in Africa. According to the late Afrobeat legend, Fela Anikulapo Kuti, in one of his songs titled "*teacher don't teach me nonsense*" says: "Who be government teacher? Culture and tradition" (1986).

Any model of development in Africa that excludes a genuine historical role for consciousness, culture, and religion, functions for some set of economic or political interests. Hence, I enjoin the calls to re-examine African life and history from an African perspective, and a re-switch to the traditional African concepts about culture, society and values, and that would be the way forward. To catalyze this fact, there is a need for an indigenous education system and philosophy that will serve exclusively for African purpose and worldview.

Probably, many may ask, what has culture and consciousness got to do with Africa's development? A lot, because the culture and consciousness of people carry them through all aspects of their life. It may look difficult to see that investment in ceremonies and social redistribution in African societies were part and parcel of the traditional balance between society and economies rather than just waste of economic opportunities.⁶¹

According to Battista Mondin, man has always produced culture, because he is essentially a cultural, and not a natural, being. This is because the development of cultural anthropology as a science has brought to light the value and the function that culture has in the development of civilization and in the characteristics of nations.⁶² He explains anthropologically, that culture signifies the totality of customs, techniques, and values that distinguish a social group, a tribe, a people, a nation... and the mode of living proper to a society.⁶³ Thus, man is essentially a cultural being. God has endowed man with nature, but it is man's to order nature for his progress and development. Culture must not be done without. The Catholic

⁶¹Luigi Solivetti, "W.W. Rostow and His Contribution to Development Studies: A Note" 2005.

⁶² Battista Mondin, *Philosophical Anthropology* Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2011, 145.

⁶³Ibid, 145-146.

theology teaches that grace is built on nature, so as development, civilization is built on culture.

Just in January 2020, when the US President Donald Trump threatened to bomb the Iranian Cultural Center if Iran continues to retaliate for his murdering of Iran's General Suleiman, and the world (the UN) including the US Congress rose against him, and immediately Trump rescinded his threat. Colonization in Africa was cultural, and that devalued African identity and culture.

How can Africa be compared to China? Had they the same form of colonization? Today, China is the second-largest economies of the world, but without the benefit of the "rule of law" and enforceable property rights. The Beijing Consensus proved that there could be market reform without democracy and that strong self-determination can prevent powerful international actors from unduly influencing its choices of development.⁶⁴ China, instead, developed a variant socialist rule of law that is compatible with its cultural norms, its current form of government, and its level of institutional development.

Shameful to read some development experts arguing that Africa's cultural practices could be antithetical to socio-economic development, specifically when defined exclusively in economic terms, a self-sustaining rise in the gross national product (GNP),⁶⁵ without the findings of experts on the project.

Ambe J. Njoh, a prominent Nigerian development analyst, studied the link between cultural tradition and socio-economic development in Africa. He discovered that there are clear differences between Eurocentric cultures, which are rooted in capitalist ideology and Protestant ethics, and traditional African culture, where ideas such as capital accumulation, entrepreneurial attitudes, and material wealth are not top priorities.⁶⁶

Njoh, like Chinua Achebe, argued that Africa was not poor

⁶⁴Randal Peerenboom, *China Modernizes: threat to the west or model for the rest?* New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, 3.

⁶⁵Ambe J. Njoh, *Tradition, Culture, and Development in Africa*, Burlington: Ashgate Pub., 2006, 5.

⁶⁶bid, 5.

before the coming of the white man. Achebe favoured the African-Igbo culture of the pre-Western society, which he portrayed as having a religion, a government, a system of money, an artistic tradition, as well as a judicial system of its own. He explained further that before British colonization, the Igbo people lived in a patriarchal collective political system that was democratic. They did not rule by monarchy or a single individual, as decisions were made by a council of male elders. Religious leaders were also invited to settle cultural issues.⁶⁷ Indeed, Africa needs to get back to their essences (culture and consciousness), to that 'distinctness', that which marks them as Africans, thus creating ways for its growth and development.

In summary, this article has raised the incredible question of a continuing economic underdevelopment in Africa. By a phenomenological and structural approaches, it has briefly reviewed and highlighted the theories of underdevelopment for Africa, including modernization, dependency, and world systems theory. The article also reviewed and critiqued the Afrocentric theories of economic underdevelopment in Africa, namely the Internalist, Externalist, and Integrationist schools. The study finds the African scholars on a deadlock on whether the cause of the problem is from Africa or from outside Africa. Some school calls for all hands on deck to move the continent forward. However, it is the position of the article that, philosophically speaking, African development is possible only by appreciation of what is originally and authentically Africa, which depends on the culture and consciousness of the African people.

⁶⁷ Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, New York: First Anchor Books, 1994, 176-206.