

THE HEGEMONY OF EUROCENTRISM AND DILEMMA OF AFRO-CENTRIC THEORY OF DEVELOPMENT: A SOCIO-POLITICAL ARGUMENT ON CULTURAL AUTHORITY

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Abstract

The current paper is an African-centred supremacy of truth and dilemma of Afro-Centricity deification of authority, the idea of ‘good governance’; which since the 1990s, has been a prescription of the international development institutions for all development challenges facing developing countries. Despite almost two decades of implementation of good governance reforms in Africa, poverty, corruption and underdevelopment persist. The analysis showed that the limited involvement of local people in the design of donor-sponsored good governance reforms mainly produced a universal, donor-conceptualized good governance agenda, which did not fully capture local issues. Afrocentricity is the theoretical framework for this paper. Mainstream development theories have mainly guided the development efforts of African countries but these theories are based on the experience of the European countries and primarily seek their interests. Given the failure of Eurocentric development theories in Africa, this study deemed it fit to adopt a theoretical framework that is based on African experience and that seeks African interests. Afrocentricity is the only theory in which the centrality of African interests, principles, and perceptions predominate. This study’s Afrocentric approach to the understanding of good governance is an epistemological rupture against the Eurocentric idea of good governance.

Key Words: *Afrocentricity, eurocentrism, good governance, development, poverty, colonialism.*

Introduction

Africa has not remained the same since the rape of its continent by the West who pretended to be on a “civilizing mission”. There was a total distortion of all the values of the African to the advantage of the West. For over two centuries now Africa is not certain as to the path of civilization to follow: Afrocentric or Eurocentric? This became worse as the invaders have dictated the politico-socio-economic trend in the whole world. The index in measuring world development is based on the triad concepts of politics, sociology and economics. Hence, various terminologies have arisen to delineate levels of development namely; developed,

undeveloped, developing, first world, etc. The so called developing or third world countries have tasted several passing phases in the European socio-economic and political experimentations with them. This has led to changing perceptions and attitudes.

Martin Khor states the reasons for this thus:

The reason for the changing perception of and attitude towards globalization are many. Among the important factors are the lack of tangible benefits to developing countries from opening their economies, despite the well-publicized claims of export and income gains; the economic losses and social dislocation that are being caused to many developing countries by rapid financial and trade liberalization; the growing inequalities of wealth and opportunities arising from globalization; and the perception that environmental, social and cultural problems have been made worse by the working of the global free market economy.¹

This apparent lack of benefit from the passing phases of European experimentation with developing countries dominates the Afrocentric circles especially as globalization is the latest stage of imperialism. Certain questions are raised; what is actually meant by development? In the face of competing choices as to which path to toe - African or European- which is the rightful or best alternative for Africa if it wants to develop? What should guide African choices? Should it continue to trail behind Europe and their value base on the evolution of society?

The purpose of this paper is to address the above questions with the view to recommending the best path to toe for African development. However, so many postulations have been made by scholars as panacea to African under-development. Most of them toe the line of exclusionism or boycott. The real impact of Afrocentrism and Eurocentrism is not fully understood. This lacuna as to what should constitute the nature and mechanism of the impact of the value base of these opposing development plans is what this paper intends to address.

History and Definition of Afrocentricity

The history of Afrocentricity could be traced to the work and struggles of many authors, scholars, and activists such as, W. E. B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Cheikh Anta Diop, Harold Cruse, Malcolm X, Ida B. Wells Barnett, George James, Maulana Karenga and many others (Monteiro-Ferreira. However, Afrocentricity as a theoretical and methodological approach to social science research has been attributed to the publication of Molefi Asante,² titled Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change. Afrocentricity can be regarded as a paradigm, theory, and ideology of thought and action in which the centrality of African interests, principles, and perceptions predominate. According to Asante³ Afrocentricity is a framework of reference where a given phenomenon in or about Africa is viewed and understood through the lens of the African people. Afrocentricity creates and raises black people's consciousness against all forms of oppression and racial domination. It reinforces that, just like European, Asian and other cultures of the World, African people also have their unique ideas, traditions, norms, values and culture which shape their worldview. Afrocentricity involves a conscious

research of indigenous African societies for valuable principles, behaviour, practices, theories, patterns, ideas, representations, institutions, rituals and ceremonies, which can be adapted for contemporary usage.⁴

When discussing issues relating to African people, whether political social or economic, Afrocentricity remains the most appropriate paradigm, theory or methodology because it places Africa at the centre of any analysis. It can be observed that European colonization of Africa not only involved the exploitation of the continent, but also the superimposition of European culture, language, ethics and ways of knowing on the African people to the displacement of African knowledge, customs, and norms. Many years after colonization ended, Africans remain mentally subjugated to the European perspective of modernization and civilization because civilization, like any other term, is a victim of Western particularistic expansiveness.⁵ According to Afro centrists, European modernity is nothing but the African holocaust, racial enslavement, and colonialism, as well as, the destruction of the sovereignty, cultures, and civilizations of various peoples of colour. This perversion and subversion of indigenous culture, also accounts for the suppression of Africa's political arena.

Due to Europe's international imperialism, the West for many years, has succeeded in placing itself superior to other peoples of colour. European cultures have been made the centre of all social structures, and the reference point, by which every other culture is defined. Eurocentric paradigm has also assumed a hegemonic and universal position in the world's problem solving so much that most modern intellectual activities follow Eurocentric paradigms of intellectualism. According to Imani,⁶ Eurocentrism institutionalizes the European and Anglo-American political, economic, social, and cultural formations as 'standard', 'norm' and 'natural' while any differing functional perspective from other cultures are regarded as 'dysfunctional', 'abnormal', 'deviant', or 'corrupt'. This is why European cultural philosophy and ideas such as, development and democracy are regarded as the best forms of political and social institution without questioning.⁷ African traditional forms of governance and indigenous perspectives of development have thus been marginalized which has also made it difficult to orient African lives in a positive and constructive manner.

Eurocentric theories mainly reflect the culture and experience of countries in Europe and the United States. And given the fact that African culture and history greatly differ from those of Europe, the application of European Anglo-American theories and approaches to explain the ethos of African people will be highly inappropriate and probably, unethical. Unfortunately, due to the Western inclination of many scholars, (including African scholars, who are also products of the colonial education), many intellectual analyses have actually misrepresented Africa. Eurocentric knowledge production about African people is particularly distorted, biased and subjective; which due to the universalization of European thoughts, led to a sweeping generalization about the continent and ineffective policy recommendation and interventions Afrocentricity aims at correcting the disparaging distortions of African people's

histories, achievements, and contributions to World's civilization perpetuated through centuries of racist, Eurocentric scholarship. In this regard, Afrocentricity argues that the reason why poverty and underdevelopment persist in Africa is the imposition of the Western worldview and their attendant conceptual frameworks.

In relation to African development challenges, Asante⁸ argues that Africa's problem is not a question of the absence of capability or technical know-how, rather development challenges faced by the continent can be traced to economic exploitation and cultural degradation by the Europeans. For about half a million years, the African continent was subjugated and exploited by the Europeans through the slave trade and colonialism (Rodney and Martin 1974). Through the capitalist international trading system, the imperialist West's exploitation of the African continent continues in the post-colonial years. Examples include the United States and the European Union's subsidization of their Agricultural sector to the tune of \$20 billion per year in the United States and €48 billion per annum in Europe. Meanwhile, poor African countries are forced to remove all subsidies and trade restrictions due to the World Trade agreement. Subsequently, farmers in Africa and other developing countries who are not receiving such subsidies have not been able to produce competitively and as a result, many have been driven out of the market).

Given this condition, Asante⁹ argues that the challenge to solving Africa's problem is mainly the lack of organizational and political power to see that the continent's economic interests are protected. Following Asante's argument, the challenge of governance in Africa in general is due to lack of political leaders who are culturally centred on pursuing and defending African interests in the face of Western hegemony.

Unlike Eurocentric ideologies such as, liberal democracies and modernization theories, which are presented as valid for all cultures, Afrocentricity does not claim to be a universal theory. Instead, Afrocentricity is an African-centred perspective that advocates the supremacy of the African experience for African people. Afrocentricity argues that all societies have a perspective, which stems from their centres and every society has the right to practice their own culture. Thus, Afrocentricity views traditional Eurocentric theories and methodologies as one out of the various perspectives available and as a perspective valid and most appropriate for the European environment. The world can then rightly be viewed and understood from different centres rather than making European culture and experience the centre of a diversified and multicultural universe. Therefore, Afrocentricity rejects the idea of social science universalism arguing that no one theory or paradigm can be used to explain social phenomena among all people and in all cultures.

Afrocentricity seeks to find the African subject place in all phenomenon while also ensuring that African values and thoughts are protected and clear of interpretations that are un-African. According to Asante Afrocentricity is a new form of self-determination and self-reclamation

for African people. Afrocentricity is, therefore, the liberation of Africa from Western epistemological hegemony. Afrocentricity resuscitates the African knowledge systems as the appropriate means of understanding African phenomenon and as an African approach to problem-solving whether, social, economic or political. An Afrocentric perspective to good governance and development in Africa, therefore, mean an inquiry into the African culture and indigenous knowledge to understand the African perspective to the understanding of governance and development and to find that the cultural qualities in political leadership and citizenries that will achieve goals.

Development as a dominant ‘discourse’ of Western modernity

Development has many construals. For us to appreciate this term properly, we have to survey the construals as they appeared over the years both in theory and in practice. Agbakoba sees development as a process by which humans seek to maximize the realization of themselves. This is in line with Mabogunje’s conceptualization: ‘Development is essentially a human issue, a concern with the capacity of individuals, to realize their inherent potentials and effectively to cope with the changing circumstances of their lives’.¹⁰ To clarify the notion of self-realization leads Agbakoba delineates development as universal and particular. ‘The universal dimensions of self-realization consist of those values, orientations, attitudes, ideas, practices and objects which are necessary (either as preconditions or as enhancing conditions) for the realization of people across the globe’.¹¹ He notes that the particular aspects of development are those that concern specific communities and individuals. His critical analysis brought to light that every society, based on its historical, cultural and geographical antecedents and conditions formulates its communal values and aesthetic sense in respect of secondary needs.

This school of thought is also referred to as post-modern or post-development approach to development. It is based on the assessment that the application of mainstream development strategy in the Third World only led to worsening living conditions and underdevelopment. Most importantly, the idea of development as a discourse is rooted in the work of Michel Foucault (1979) on the dynamics of discourses, power, and knowledge in western countries. Foucault (1979) argues that European enlightenment led to the transformation of existing knowledge structures (e.g. medicine), which is based on the true nature of the world to produce new knowledge (like anatomy, psychology) which merely constitutes discourses through which power is exercised over target groups such as, the sick or insane. Put differently, knowledge discourses use the influence of power to create target groups, which never existed before in order to exercise control over them.

Based on the same argument, Post-Modernists maintained that development is best understood as a discourse because it is a language and mechanism used by the West, through its hegemony, to construct inferior target groups (such as Third World, backward economies, underdeveloped or poor countries) while also normalizing the Western domination and subjugation of these target groups. Thus, development project is a deliberate effort of the West to develop ‘others’,

and it began in 1949 when American President Harry Truman articulated a new direction for American foreign policy called the Truman Doctrine. The fourth point is that the United States will “embark on a new bold programme for making available the benefits of the country’s technical and scientific knowledge for the development of the undeveloped areas ... Their economic life is primitive and stagnant. Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and more prosperous areas”

Thus, the Truman doctrine dichotomized the world as developed and underdeveloped, poor and rich, modern and backward. Development is thus the problematisation of the condition of other people even if these people are not aware of such problems. For example, Zubeiru (2010:5) points out that African people have no word for underdevelopment and did not identify themselves as ‘underdeveloped’ until Europeans used their power to define them as so. Put differently, underdevelopment is not defining the unpleasant reality of any people per se but a way of defining any worldview or manner of lives that do not align with the West. The Truman doctrine

also shows the western ingredients of development. “[...] what we envisage is a program of development based on the concepts of democratic fair dealing. Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace. And the key to greater production is a wider and more vigorous application of modern scientific and technical knowledge” From this speech, the key elements of development include democratic governance, increased use of technology or industrialization, increased growth, adoption of western education and cultures according to Escobar. As noted by Pieterse that development involves telling other people what to do.

Kingston-Mann particularly notes that the convictions of European intellectuals are mainly “rooted in anecdote and culture-bound assumptions rather than a systematic empirical investigation of any non-elite population”. That is, the European construct of backwardness and underdevelopment of ‘others’ is never based on any evidence but can only be linked to the European idea and power of “white supremacy”. Knutsson also shows that development was a weapon used during the Cold War, which was an ideological warfare between Western and Eastern Europe. The arguments of Kingston-Mann and Knutsson depict that development originates as an unfair and subjective project. In the African context, the clear contrast between European assumptions of development and African realities, as noted by Zubeiru makes development irrelevant and ineffective. According to Escobar, development has continued to create more of the problems it aims to solve. Subsequently, Africa and other Third World countries need to find and follow their independent development paths.

Critics have complained that post-development theorists like Escobar are pessimistic and that they overlook the diversities of development interventions of the World Bank and other donor institutions as well as the positive impact of these interventions such as longevity and increased literacy (Pieterse 2000: 180). In response to such arguments, post-modernists argue that despite diversities of the development interventions of the World Bank in Africa, the approach remains

the same: ethnocentric technocratic and universal methods that reduce local people to mere figures (Ramsamy 2006:12). According to Escobar (1995:167), the impact of the World Bank should not be viewed only in the economic aspect because the institution is an agent of economic and cultural imperialism of Western developed countries. Audu et al (2013:6) also note that the neoliberal policies of the World Bank, the IMF and WTO are fundamentally unfair to the welfare of the poor. Similarly, Adedeji (2002:3) shows that these institutions have been using their financial power and hegemonic position to prevent and incapacitate home-grown development initiatives, especially if it does not align with the interests of the West. This study follows the post-development line of thought because it acknowledges the ineffectiveness of externally imposed development theories in Africa and advocate for home-grown, context-specific approach to development.

However, development at this level is characterized as a mere process without showcasing the movement process of development. In the 1950s up till 1980s, development was conceived in terms of one of the triads. This was measurable in terms of the level of industrialization, technological prowess and Gross National Productivity. Rogers captures this notion most succinctly when he wrote that development was “a type of social change in which new ideas are introduced to produce higher per capita income and levels of living, through more modern production methods and improved social organization”.¹² Development was conceived basically in this construal such that capitalist west was seen as a model. This view led the third world into conceiving development in terms of replication or imitation of Europe. This wrong concept of development was responsible for the state of Africa since development was construed as a transfer of European economic and technological prowess into Africa. Unfortunately, the impacts of the universalistic conception of development were different in Europe as they had a nodal organizing principle of development. This differing effect base led to the lack of a universal conception of development in Africa. The need for a broader conception of development became imperative. Samir Amin for instance argues that development is principally about reaching modernity encapsulated by a secular worldview. This includes freedom of individuals in making their own histories, both as individuals and as communities within the purview of democracy. This means the conferment on individuals the ability to challenge and break with tradition.

Diagne’s conception of development emphasis the exploration of the future as a “prospective” in time as it relates to the problem of African development. Keita captures this position. First Diagne critically evaluates and finds wanting the theories of time in the African sociological context as formulated by John Mbiti and French colonial theorist Levy-Bruhl. Diagne argues against Mbiti’s notion that time in the African context is not intrinsically future oriented with reference to the different plans and programmes for African development, such as the Lagos plan of Action and the present NEPAD, Diagne attempts to show how the idea of time as it applies to prospective and a developmental political culture could produce for the youth of Africa a vision of tomorrow with a future in Africa and not elsewhere.¹³

Gordon approaches development from the Fanonian stance. Gordon's survey of Fanon's two classic works *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin, White Mask*, lays emphasis on the cardinal aspects of colonialism and neo-colonialism: the psychological dimension which determines the political and economic worldview of the African leadership. Gordon opines that the logical result of western normativity vis-a-vis under-development is the creation of what he called "problem people." For him, the crux of the matter for the "problem people" is how to be actional. Gordon further invokes Wynters critique that development theory is a symptom of western narcissism. Gordon finally formulates a theory of development he terms postcolonial phenomenology. This is simply the idea that development requires an existential and actional output. Messay Kebede opines that development in Africa should be conceived in terms of the prior decolonization of the African mind. Hountondji's conception is a radical observation of the dependent and marginalized relationship between intellectual research in Africa and that of Europe as needing separation if actual development has to be met for the African. Nyamnjoh takes the problems of development in terms of the alienating education forced on Africans via colonialism. For him, European education is a concourse of empiricist and materialist epistemology. His solution is a paradigm change in educational orientation of the African. Keita's attempt is holistic. Africa is conventionally believed to be a special case study for development plans as it has never attempted to develop. But his standpoint is a recast of antique history of Africa as the cradle of civilization. Though this condition changed about five centuries ago, he sets for an evaluation of what the development contour for Africa should look like economically and politically. Ultimately Keita opines that it is only when the discourse is predominantly African within the context of theories in African universities and research centres that maximal and concerted progress will be attained. Hence, he argues:

Critical analysis of the idea of development reveals that development entails not just economic ministrations about alleviating poverty but also psycho-socio- logical analysis in the form of the examination of mental structures, beliefs, and attitudes conditioned by the colonial experience, sociological analysis in the form of examining the role that religion plays in facilitating or retarding development, and historical analysis in the form of evaluating the historical contingency of economic, political, and sociological ideas of Western provenance that are now viewed as universal and necessary for development. An examination of role of the concept of time in Africa's pre-colonial sociology also demonstrates that the essentialist and qualitatively different notions of time attributed to Africa cannot be supported and hence play no role in formulating dynamically prospective theories of development.¹⁴

Our efforts so far have been to show that the concept of development is a complex and difficult one to realize. This is because any attempt to define development in a non-holistic sense will result in overemphasis on an aspect of development as seen in those that reduced development in terms of economics. Development is therefore, a holistic evolution of all the aspects of the society, namely politically, socially, psychologically, religiously, intellectually technologically, scientifically and culturally for the advancement of the society as a whole as an aggregate of individuals. At the base of our discussions are the notions of two radically

opposed paradigms: Afrocentric and Eurocentric ideas. Since, development has to be taken holistically; we think that rational choices have to be taken holistically if Africa is to move ahead. Therefore, none of the two paradigms has any moral right to appropriate to itself the panacea to African under-development.

Afrocentric Philosophy versus Eurocentric Philosophy

Afrocentric philosophy is founded on the tradition, culture, and values of Africa before the advent of European and Arab influences (Schiele 1996:285). It cannot be denied that years of European slave trade and colonization have badly impacted Africa, suppressing and making inferior its philosophy so much that African lives are defined by European standards. This is what is referred to as Eurocentric philosophical hegemony. According to King (1990:165), power is the ability to shape reality. In the words of Lowy (1995: 714) “Eurocentrism is the single global term that encompasses the totality of oppressive experiences that racial and ethnic groups share collectively because of a history that fell outside of the European definitions of civilization, culture, and humanity”. The presentation of Afrocentric philosophy is contrasted with Eurocentric philosophy for better understanding of how Western development theories contrast African cultural realities.

Eurocentric philosophy includes the idea of materialism, individualism, competition, rationality, power, superiority, rationality, and linearity (Hunn 2004:68). Individualism advocates for the right and interest of individuals rather than the common good of the society. Feudalism, slavery, colonialism, capitalism and liberalism or free markets are all entrenched in the European philosophy of individualism, materialism, and competition. According to Adam Smith (1776), allowing an individual to pursue his or her self-interest in a free market allows efficient allocation of resources and the greatest maximization of social wealth.

Afrocentric philosophy, however, differs distinctly from Eurocentrism in perspective beliefs and values. Afrocentric philosophy includes the notion of interdependence, interconnectedness, spirituality, human-centeredness, holism, and harmony. Humanism as against European individualism is one distinctive feature of African philosophy and African societies. According to Asante (1998:8), “it is only by regaining our own platforms, standing in our own cultural spaces and believing that our way of viewing the universe is just as valid as any, that we can achieve the kind of transformation that we need to”.

In other words, Afro centrists are saying we are still lost and enslaved if we continue to view and understand ourselves from other people’s perspectives. True liberation needed for African transformation, therefore, starts when we believe in our own culture and philosophy and apply the same to advance our societies. Afrocentric philosophy aims to emancipate African people from the racial mis-education and philosophy of ignorance employed by Eurocentrism. And the term “mis-education” is used to refer to the form of training designed to make European perspective more dominant and to make the heritage, history, and self-worth of other cultures of less importance.

Eurocentrism and Development in Africa

The dialectical inter-phase that occurred during European colonization left Africa and its diaspora wrecked psychologically, economically, culturally, politically and otherwise. In effect, this period saw Africa under colonial bondage, involving socio-political domination, slavery and economic exploitation, racial and cultural devastation. In fact, the colonizers destroyed the philosophical and religious base of Africa and foisted European system as alternative. Colonial experience left two broad “legacies” on Africa: denial of African identity and the foisting of western thought and cultural realities and perspectives on Africans. The European colonialists found it difficult to believe that a group of people raped and devastated by them could own the ancestry of letters and civilization that they share in. Historians, ethnographers and philosophers were therefore recruited to do the ignoble job of distorting historical facts.

Hugh Trevor Roper’s anti-intellectual stance captures this atmosphere:

It is fashionable to speak today as if European History were devalued: as if historians in the past, have paid too much attention to it, and as if nowadays; we should pay less. Undergraduates seduced as always by the changing breath of journalistic fashion, demand that they should be taught the history of black Africa. Perhaps, in the future, there will be some African history to teach. But at present there is none or very little: there is only the history of the Europeans in Africa. The rest is largely darkness, like the history of pre-European pre-Columbian America. And darkness is not a subject for history.¹⁵

Other highly revered western scholars added credence to this ignoble enterprise. Hegel opines that Africa only hears the echo of the majestic march of world civilization across Europe and through which the absolute spirit fulfils and realizes itself. He avers that a nation without a metaphysical view is like a temple richly ornamented in many respects but without its holy of holies”¹⁶ The import of this is that Africans are zoo-bound as they lack philosophy which is mankind’s greatest intellectual achievement. David Hume was no less a hireling of Eurocentrism. He describes the Negro in this damning stance: I am apt to suspect the Negroes to be naturally inferior to the whites. There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of that complexion, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures among them, no arts, no sciences. On the other hand, the most rude and barbarous of the whites, such as the ancient Germans, the present TARTARS, have still something eminent about them, in their valour, form of government, or some other particular. Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction between these breeds of men. Not to mention our colonies, these NEGRO slaves dispersed all over Europe, of whom non ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity; though low people, without education; will start up amongst us and distinguish themselves in any profession. In JAMAICA, indeed, they talk of one Negro as a man of parts

and learning; but it is likely he is admired for slender accomplishments like a parrot, who speaks a few words plainly.¹⁷

Max Weber was caught in this web of intellectual rascality when he averred that all forms of indices for civilization existed in Europe namely arts, music, architectures, printing, science, politics and other aspects of human endeavour. He asserts that it is only in Europe that science had reached its apogee of evolution which ...we recognize today as valid. Empirical knowledge, reflection on problems of the cosmos and of life, philosophical and theological wisdom of the most profound ... the full development of a systematic theology must be credited to Christianity under the influence of Hellenism.¹⁸

It is amazing that up till now Eurocentric ideas are still prevalent in Africa. The invention theory of Terrence Rangers is paradigmatic. In the face of the self-recovery or the renaissance movement by some Africans, Rangers puts up a new theory. According to him, whatever is rediscovered and called African vis-a vis civilization are inventions of Europe. Hence, there can never be any originality in African identity and culture. All these are at their best, the inventions of Europe especially as the name was invented. This atmosphere has made it conducive for Europeans to subtly manipulate Africans to view the world from European perspectives in all spheres as social, political, developmental, technological, scientific etc. This mentality took sway as even African intellectuals began to reject and deny their own cultural and intellectual achievements. Nwala captures this: 'It was African scholars who were affected by Eurocentric education or who had not been exposed to the rich cultural history of Africa that denied the existence of African philosophy during the "Great Debate" of the seventies and eighties'.¹⁹ This Eurocentric notion pervades all aspects of life in Africa.

Afrocentrism and African Development.

We noted earlier that imperialism bequeathed Africa with two main unforgettable experiences namely the denial of African identity and the tendentious imposition of western thoughts and cultural realities and perspectives. African achievements of the Nubian culture were appropriated as European. Nwala notes:

African achievements in science and philosophy were appropriated as European achievements. Thus, we read about such African philosophers like St. Augustine, Origen, Philo, Plotinus, Porphyry, etc as part of Western intellectual tradition and achievement. The great achievements of Egyptian thought were largely appropriated as European achievements. This is a phenomenon which GGM James called Stolen Legacy.²⁰

Thus, it did not take long for European perspectives to triumph over those of Africans. Hence, what is today referred to as colonial mentality took sway and Africans took to denying and rejecting their intellectual and cultural prowess. Those who got trapped in Europe and America during the slave trade were consequently made to develop low self-esteem. This consignment as vagabonds on the part of the African diaspora in the face of racial discrimination forced

them to self-emancipation. This flaming spirit of freedom and nationalism took two forms namely the struggle and subsequent freedom of Africa politically and the search for African identity in the pages of antique history. A variety of intellectual materials emerged in the course of this search for identity. Among those pioneers of Afrocentric ideas are William Dubois, GGM James, Anta Diop and Martin Bernal. What then is Afrocentrism? This concept which means African – centredness was created by Afro-American intellectuals in asserting that Africans should be given their intellectual pride of place as the originators of civilization. Gordiano Bruno accepts this intellectual debt: “We Greeks owe Egypt, the grand monarchy of letters and nobility to be the parents of our fables, metaphors and doctrines”.²¹ Onyewuenyi writes copiously the aims and objectives of the Afrocentric movement:

The Afrocentric movement is a series of activities by concerned African and African-American scholars and educators and directed towards achieving the particular end of ensuring that the African heritage and culture, its history and contribution to world civilization and scholarship are reflected in the curricula on every level of academic instruction.....Advocates of Afrocentrism demand a reconstruction and rewriting of the whole panorama of human history in its account of the origin of mankind, the origin of philosophy, science, medicine, agriculture architecture etc²² Radical Afrocentrism exists.

Some critics as Arthur Schlesinger Jr. have dismissed it as superficial, romantic and shallow ideology. Asante, a radical Afro centrist voiced his fulfilment: “African people for over 300 years have lived on the intellectual terms of Europeans. The African perspective has finally come to dinner”.²³ Accordingly, he sees Eurocentrism as a complete dislocation, self-alienation, disorientation and misinformation of the Afro-Americans. It is evident however that the flaming spirit of freedom in Afrocentrism has led some to consider it as a racial ideology. Though our interest in this paper is to relate Afrocentrism and Eurocentrism to development and to indicate where Africa may follow for authentic development, we shall present Onyewuenyi’s defence against alleged racialism of Afrocentrism. He asserts:

Afrocentrism, which means African centred-ness, does not violently confront any person or people, but is a resolute attempt to put the records right. It is about placing African people within their own historical framework. It is a demand that the contributions of Africans in all areas of civilization be reflected in world history .²⁴ We have tried to lay bare the concept of Afrocentrism. But how has it affected development in Africa? It should be noted that Eurocentric thought has led to the tendentious capturing of the African mind in all the spheres of development. As an ideology that arose as a reaction against Eurocentrism, Afrocentrism perceives authentic development as that, that should be grown and bred in Africa. It seems to advise Africans to boycott all the “boycott Ables” of Eurocentrism. This phrase captures lucidly the spirit of Afro centrists. Even Keita feels that development in African could only be ensured when discourse itself is predominantly that of African theorist within the context of African environments Universities and research centres. Thus seen, maximal preference for African agencies are ideal for progress in Africa. It is however, very disheartening that the Afrocentric visions are not shared by the leadership in Africa. Hence the presence of

Eurocentric or Aryan model; what Mazrui termed the “Greek mystique” of development still persists Africa.

Whither Africa? Development is a holistic evaluation process of the epistemic, cultural, normative, psychological and sociological stance of a group of people. A strong overhaul will make for a stronger hold and technological indices that are seen in the modern times as the hallmarks of development. Africa has been raped and since then, it is not the same. In making for a rational choice for African development, it will be an exercise in self-conceit and deceit for any of the two opposing ideologies in discourse to ignore the other. Our position is that since there is hardly any idea one can call unadulterated African given our historical background; and since Africans can hardly imbibe unadulterated Eurocentric ideas, there should be a multicultural approach. What then is multiculturalism? This is an attempt to place the child at the middle of the intellectual experience and not an attempt to replace all things either European or African.

The New Webster’s Dictionary of the English Language defines multiculturalism as “The emphasis in education on encouraging and understanding of and appreciation for the contribution and cultural identities of various groups in a society”.²⁵ It is our view that since Africa is an ideologically polarized society, it will not augur well with the existential realities of our time to look into any of the schools above for authentic development model for Africa. This is especially as most of those radical opponents of Eurocentrism cannot extricate Eurocentric thoughts from themselves. Hilde Hein captures this mood in Onyewuenyi -a professed Afrocentrist: ‘While I believe, sadly that Fr. Onyewuenyi is probably right in his accusations that the Egyptian origin of Greek philosophy have been viciously suppressed, I believe that he too, concedes more than he might (or should) to his own Western education’.²⁶ This mood is at times reflected by other scholars in a way that is depictive of inferiority complex; Areji’s view is paradigmatic: ‘Nevertheless, Afrocentricity is a worthwhile project. For a people, who have been long oppressed and subjected to subhuman conditions, for a race that was made an object of history rather than a subject of history....’²⁷ However, why did Africa cave in to Eurocentric ideology? In his paper entitled “The Absence of a genuine supreme being in Traditional African Thought, Ethics and their Effect on contemporary African society” Agbakoba traces the answer to the above question to the particularistic traditional ethics of Africans as against the universalistic ethics of Europe. This in turn consigns African’s with the lack of a universal secondary ideology that gives a people stern and firm hold on themselves. He like other scholars as Afigbo refused to push all the blames for the gross poverty in Africa to its stint with colonialism.

We strongly share this view: Afigbo states: Why is it that almost every major situation so far known in history appears to have placed the Blackman, his historians, sociologists and other cultural interpreters to invest him with responsibility for what happens to and around him. The central peg in which many scholars...have hung the Blackman’s history is ... ‘a race under

perpetual siege"... it means he is "effect" rather than cause that he is an object on which things act rather than a subject that act on things.²⁸

The question now is how do Africans make themselves the subject of history rather than its object? Africa as a society with these two opposing ideologies should embolden itself with the challenge of appreciating the need for a multicultural reality. This entails that there is no problem with borrowing anything that is good in Eurocentrism especially in this period of globalization-the latest stage of imperialism. But all we are advocating is that before one gets to drive a bargain with another, such a one should increase his bargaining power so as to drive for an equal bargain. As it is now Eurocentrism is having the upper hand in the game of development in Africa. We should go insular and insulate ourselves with the secondary ideology that will eschew the particularistic and materialistic ethic that have affected our psyche (psychology) As it is today the quality and strength of the black man's reaction to Eurocentrism is theoretically not strong enough. We should develop a new pedagogy of development to include austerity, hard work, rationality, universality, objectivity and internalize them. This does not mean that we should throw away the values that we have but that we should adapt tradition with a new ideology that will take our experiences of the past 300 years into cognizance. This will predispose us with knowing what we want and being serious to say no to what we do not want.

Conclusion

The search for an authentic model for African development is by no means an easy one. This is more so when Eurocentric thoughts pervade the realm of governance in Africa with the few intellectuals in the academia pursuing Afrocentric thoughts. This paper studied the meanings of the concepts of Eurocentrism and Afrocentrism and related them to African development. It equally took a diachronic view of development as the indices of development had faced evolution since the inception of civilization. At this juncture, it is imperative that we should not accept the view that Africa never developed, is undevelopable and ipso facto a special case for developmental studies.

This is because history is replete with epochs when Africa called the shots in civilization. It is after weighing the implications of an adulterated society where there is "syncretism" of ideologies that we opted for the development of virile secondary ideologies that should be internalized before going to bargain and exchange ideas with the west. No sane person will run away from anything that will benefit him; all he has to do is to position himself in such a way that he could exchange ideas by barter. I do not mean however that Africa should cease to communicate with the West for a while; all I mean is that in the process of developing, internalizing and disseminating his sacred values, she should guide against further erosion of her values for the forces of civilization can never allow anybody as it is today to be on his own. It is only intellectual rascality that can let one go insular when one could get external ideals that could soar up one's developmental capacities.

How does this idea get internalized? The value of education can never be over-emphasized. Onyewuenyi notes: The leaders of the movement are very much aware of the roles of education in character formation. They trace the root of Africa-American's feeling frustration, self-alienation and inferiority to the education (miseducation) that the system has imposed on them- an education that has stuffed them with an overdose of western ideology and denied them of any knowledge of their own ancestral history and culture.²⁹

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