Chapter 3
Africa and the Development Narratives: Occurrences, History and Theories

Augustine Okechukwu Agugua

Introduction

A good starting point for discussing theories of African development might involve the invocation of a portion of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's (ECA) observation concerning the continent. According to that perspective, increasingly complex neoliberal globalization, changes in intercultural relations at the global level, climate change, poverty, rapid urbanization, the ICT revolution, the emergence of knowledge societies, the evolution of gender and intergenerational relations, the evolution of spirituality and of the status and the role of religion in modern societies, the emergence of a multi-polar world and the phenomenon of emerging powers in the South are some of the realities of our world today that are widely and extensively discussed by both academics and policymakers.

The question one must then ask is: How do all these affect Africa? And how prepared is the continent to face these development challenges as well as those that will arise in the future? In recent times, it has become rather difficult to keep pace with advances in science and technology, including areas of biotechnology and nanotechnology, genetic engineering and so on. The rapidity of the pace of change and development in virtually all spheres of social life at the local, national, continental and global levels makes it difficult to identify the challenges that Africa will be facing in the coming century beyond a few decades. Science itself is changing as a result of changes occurring in nature and in society. The ability of science to anticipate, read and interpret the processes of change has increased over the years. The ability of humanity to follow the developments taking place in nature, and to capture the major trends taking place within society, is likely to increase as science itself develops.

A.O. Agugua (✉)
Department of Sociology, University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria
e-mail: agugust@yahoo.com; aagugua@unilag.edu.ng

O. Akanle, J.O. Adésìnà (eds.), *The Development of Africa*, Social Indicators Research Series 71, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-66242-8_3

Indeed, Africa has entered the twenty-first century with huge unresolved issues, such as poverty, rapid urbanization, the nationality question, regional integration, gender inequality, food insecurity, violent conflicts, political fragmentation, and the fact of occupying a subaltern position in the global community and in global governance. The weight of the past is a major handicap for Africa. The effects of the slave trade, colonization and neocolonialism that Africa has experienced are still being felt, as they have individually and together resulted in the suppression of freedoms, the violation of the human rights and dignity of the peoples of the continent, as well as the looting of human, natural and intellectual resources which have led to what the pan-African historian Walter Rodney called the "underdevelopment" of Africa, (Rodney 1972). Among the major challenges of the continent at the dawn of the twenty-first century are also the low level of education of many Africans, the lack of modern techniques of production and transport, a fragmented political space and the extrovert structure of the economies. The institutions of higher education and cultures of the elites are strongly marked, not necessarily by a philosophy and development strategies guided by the interests of African peoples, but by influences coming from the Global North, influences that are more alienating than liberating.

The foregoing captures the issue of sustainable development challenges in Africa, properly located within the rubric of global development dynamics or trends, a discussion of which follows immediately. It is also on that platform that discussions on theorizing Africa's development problems would be situated.

Global Development Dynamics

In many ways, development has been seen to have advanced more rapidly over the 15-year Millennium Development Goal (MDG) era than at any other time in human history. Since the launch of the MDGs, economic growth has been rapid, aided by strong commodity prices and generally improved macroeconomic policies. The MDGs helped frame the broader goals of development and build a coalition of partners to work toward common goals. One of the most remarkable achievements during the MDG era was the significant decline in the share of the extremely poor in the global population. The first MDG target, cutting the extreme poverty rate to half its 1990 level by 2015, was met 5 years ahead of schedule. As the number of the poor declined, the average shortfall in income below the poverty line improved as well from 13.2% in 1990 to 3.7% by 2012 (World Bank/IMF 2016). The 2012 estimate represents continued progress in poverty reduction as the revised headcount in 2011 was 987 million people (14.2% of the global population). A comparison of 2011 and 2012 reveals a modest decline in the number of poor in Sub-Saharan Africa, potentially heralding an era of poverty reduction not just in the share of the poor but also in their absolute number. The Global Monitoring Report 2015/2016 unveils poverty data based on a new $1.90 international poverty line, using 2011 purchasing power parity (PPP). To be comparable, the global poverty estimates are based on a common poverty line across all countries. As with the previous line of $1.25 a day, in 2005 prices, the new line is calculated by averaging the national poverty lines of the 15 poorest developing countries. Different methods were followed to estimate these lines. Beginning with the $1.25 line, the poverty line was calculated by taking the average of the 15 poorest countries (Chad, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, Tanzania, and Uganda). Sadly, 13 of these countries are in Africa (World Bank/IMF 2016).

The implication is that the earlier expressed optimism on poverty reduction notwithstanding, major challenges to development still persist. The first key challenge is the depth of poverty, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. The decline in poverty rates has been impressive, yet poverty still remains unacceptably high with around 900 million extremely poor people in 2012 and a projected 700 million people in 2015. Poverty is also becoming increasingly concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa. Over the last decade, the vast majority (about 95%) of global poverty has been concentrated in three regions: East Asia and the Pacific, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Over time, the composition of global poverty across these three regions has shifted dramatically. East Asia and the Pacific registered a spectacular decline. South Asia saw an initial increase and a later decline, with rates remaining high. Sub-Saharan Africa saw a steady increase in its share and is now home to 43% of the global poor. The growing global share of Sub-Saharan Africa reflects slower poverty reduction there amid rapid population growth: in 2012 the region's poverty rate stood at 42.6% (World Bank/IMF 2016).

With extreme poverty on the decline globally, a second key challenge is the unevenness in shared prosperity for the bottom 40% (B40). The B40 may include many possible populations. Among developing regions, the income of the richest person among the B40 makes that person either extremely or moderately poor, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and parts of East Asia. A third key challenge relates to the persistent disparities in the non-income dimensions of development. Compared with the MDG goal on income poverty, non-income goals saw more mixed success. Progress fell particularly short for targets related to health (maternal and infant mortality), nutrition (undernourishment and hunger), and sanitation (Kenny and Dykstra 2013). Close to one-fifth of all children below five remain undernourished and some 860 million people continue to live in slums. Access to primary school education and literacy rates have improved, yet the quality of education remains a concern.

In addition, little progress has been made in improving the long-term environmental sustainability of development. Although some countries have successfully 'delinked' trends in environmental degradation from growth, most have not. The cost of environmental degradation externalities associated with outdoor and indoor air pollution, water pollution, deforestation, carbon emission and other environmental hazards rose 50% during 1990–2010 (World Bank/IMF 2016). In 2010, between 11 and 21% of all deaths in developing countries were the result of pollution and other environmental risk factors. To sustainably end extreme poverty and promote shared prosperity, more attention is needed to the non-income dimensions of development. First, to end poverty in all of its forms everywhere, it must be recognized that poverty is multidimensional. Income poverty is typically accompanied by inadequate access to education, health, housing, employment and personal security, areas where improvements would increase the chances for escaping poverty. Second, the B40 consistently underperform in non-income dimensions. Children from B40 households are more likely to die before the age of five than children in the top 60% (T60) households and are also more likely to be underweight. Access to improved water sources (piped water) and technology (the Internet) is uneven, too. Despite rising enrollment rates in poorer countries, access to primary education remains inequitably low. Third, greater efforts are needed to monitor the sustainability of development progress in its economic, environmental and social aspects. Environmental sustainability concerns, particularly regarding natural resources, environmental health, and ecosystem sustainability, need to enter more fully into economic decision-making.

The foregoing concerns will naturally lead one to observe that in world development challenges, the outcome of the MDGs shows some traits of an unfinished agenda. Given this sense of unfinished agenda and the coterminous uncertain outlook, new schemes and additional efforts are therefore needed to promote broad-based growth, investment in people and insurance against risks. These three priorities require a strategy that promotes competitive economies and stable business environments, thus ensuring broad-based growth and income-earning opportunities to benefit the poor and the B40. Investment in human development is needed to tackle non-income deprivations and inequalities of opportunity so that these same groups can gain the capacity to benefit from and contribute to economic growth and prosperity (Fryer and Levitt 2004). And robust insurance mechanisms are required so that people, although not necessarily jobs, firms or industries, are protected against evolving risks for individuals, nations and the world, all in the spirit of nurturing a competitive economy and fostering an inclusive society as it informs sustainable development.

Among economies that have sustained growth for extended periods, five characteristics are noted to be key: effective leadership and governance; macroeconomic stability so that markets work; a market orientation to guide structural change; an outward orientation to achieve scale and impose discipline; and a future orientation to boost savings and meet investment needs (Commission on Growth and Development 2008). It is in this sense that we take a look at the evolving global trends that are now shaping the focus of development that informed the evolution of the Sustainable Development Agenda.

Emerging Trends in Development and the Sustainable Development Agenda

According to the World Bank/IMF (2016), several "megatrends" are playing a critical role in framing what will be feasible through to 2030. These include the unprecedented increase in global connectedness, including the cross-border movements of trade, services, capital and people; the shift of the global economic center of gravity toward the Global East; the pace of technological change and adoption; the move toward urbanization; the evolution of demographic trends; the general failure of countries to secure long-term environmental sustainability; and the impact of human activity on climate change. Trade, finance, communications and migration are all expanding rapidly, bringing the world closer together and increasing economic integration.

These megatrends may help or hinder efforts to reach the development goals. On the positive side, the shift in the global economic center of gravity to developing countries creates opportunities. The deepening of global trade and investment connections could help reverse slipping potential growth in some countries, and technological change is also proving to be a driver of productivity growth. On the other hand, increased connectedness permits the rapid spreading of economic crises in one country to the rest of the world. Urbanization is associated with economic growth, but it can also give rise to urban slums and environmental damage. Lower fertility rates reflect improved health and labor market opportunities for women, yet falling shares of the working-age population can produce headwinds to growth and put the fiscal sustainability of many public services at risk.

Cognizant of these trends, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are noted as representing a greater level of ambition and a more holistic vision of sustainable development. By shifting the focus to quality, the SDGs seek to address the unfinished agenda and scale up the impact of the MDGs. The SDGs recognize that collective action is needed to address global challenges such as the need for more resilient international financial systems, the sharing of trans-boundary resources and, most urgently, slowing and coping with climate change. Meeting the SDG investment needs requires a shift from 'billions' in official development assistance to 'trillions' in investments to unlock, leverage and catalyze domestic public resources and private capital flows. The SDGs need to be pursued in a changing world, with new opportunities and challenges brought by evolving global megatrends that shape development prospects. The SDGs recognize the interconnections between development objectives. There are important interactions between development goals and they cannot be effectively pursued separately from each other. For example, progress on health goals depends on investments in infrastructure that provides access to safe water and improved sanitation. Similarly, limiting carbon monoxide (CO_2) emissions to slow global warming requires the modernization of energy supplies. Hence, the SDGs explicitly articulate goals that are "integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social, and environmental" (Dobbs et al. 2015; Singh 2012).

In sync with the megatrends reshaping the world, the SDGs represent a new, more comprehensive approach for scaled-up impact. These megatrends, which include rising global connectedness, the importance of the dynamic economies in the Global East, the increasing pace of technological change and adoption, accelerating urbanization, changing global demographic trends, and the growing impact of human activity on environmental degradation and climate change, have all emerged over the past two decades and are having profound effects on the evolution of development outcomes. Whereas the MDGs of the Millennium Declaration were conceived as a framework committing nations to reduce extreme poverty through enhanced assistance to developing countries, the SDGs represent a global compact that is applicable to all countries, so that all may benefit more from global interconnections while safeguarding the environment and the global commons (World Bank/IMF 2016). The implication of the foregoing narrative makes it imperative to treat issues of development side by side with themes of sustainable development.

Africa's Development and Sustainable Development Challenges

Our presentations so far have shown development as a complex, global and multidimensional process, going beyond mere economic growth to include all dimensions of life and all the energies of a community, where all members must take part in the effort of economic and social transformation and its welfare. In tune with the foregoing views, Todaro and Smith (2003, 792) define development as "the process of improving the quality of human lives". In their analysis, they highlighted three important aspects of development:

1. Raising people's living level. This has to do with raising their income and consumption level of food, medical services, education etc.; through relevant economic growth processes.
2. Creating conditions conducive to the growth of people's self-esteem through the establishment of social and economic systems and institutions that promote human dignity and respect.
3. Increasing people's freedom by enlarging the range of their choice variable, such as by increasing varieties of consumer goods and services.

As noted earlier in this chapter, the overriding sustainable development challenge in Africa is poverty eradication. Thus the African Ministerial Statement to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) identified poverty eradication as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. As shown earlier in this work, Africa is the only region in the world where poverty has increased both in absolute and relative terms. Apart from being the poorest region in the world, Africa remains the least developed, the most technologically backward, the most indebted, the most food-insecure and the most marginalized. Furthermore, malnutrition, disease, environmental degradation, natural resource depletion, poor and inadequate infrastructure, unemployment and weak institutional capacities continue to pose serious development challenges for Africa. This state of affairs is exacerbated by recurring natural disasters and the AIDS pandemic, which is reversing decades of economic gains and imposing costs on Africa at least twice those in any other developing region, thus undermining sustainable economic growth (World Bank/IMF 2016).

It is striking that Africa is the only continent that was not able to meet most of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. Sustainable development thrives best in an environment of good governance, peace and security, but armed conflict remains a major obstacle to development in several parts of the continent. The maintenance of an environment of peace and security is therefore one of Africa's foremost development imperatives. Apart from its costs in human and material terms, conflicts impede production, damage infrastructure, prevent the reliable delivery of social services and disrupt societies. Africa is the most subdivided continent, with small and fragmented economies that undermine the continent's position in the global development arena. In spite of the long-standing commitments and the emphasis placed by African leaders on the process of regional integration, this has been slow and therefore remains a major challenge for Africa.

From the work on cultural values and the human growth project (Harrison 2000), the relationship was also established more graphically in demographic details as follows: Of the roughly 7 billion people who inhabit the world today, fewer than 1 billion are found in the advanced democracies. More than 4 billion live in what the World Bank classifies as "low income" or "lower middle income" countries. The quality of life in those countries is seen to be dismaying, particularly after half a century of development assistance. HDI insight (World Bank 2009; Agugua 2015) gives a more daunting illumination by indicating that half or more of the adult population of 23 countries, mostly in Africa, are illiterate. Half or more of women are illiterate in 35 countries; prominent among them are Algeria, Egypt, Guatemala, India, Laos, Morocco, Nigeria and Saudi Arabia. Life expectancy is below 60 years in 45 countries, most of them in Africa. And in this vein, life expectancy is less than 50 years in 18 countries, all in Africa, and in West Africa's Sierra Leone life expectancy was found to be just 37 years. Children under five die at rates in excess of 100 per 1000 in at least 35 countries, most of them in Africa.

The population growth rate in the poorest countries is 2.1% annually, three times the rate in the high-income countries. The population growth rate in some Islamic countries is astonishingly high; from a high variant of 5% in Oman to a 'low' variant of 3.4% in Saudi Arabia. The most inequitable income distribution patterns among countries supplying such data to the World Bank are found in the poorer countries, particularly in Latin America and Africa. Democratic institutions are commonly weak or non-existent in Africa, the Islamic countries of the Middle East and the rest of Asia. The implication is that the world at the end of the twentieth century is far poorer, far more unjust, and far more authoritarian than most people had earlier anticipated. Thus the optimism of the people who waged war against poverty at the turn of the mid-twentieth century had been replaced by fatigue and pessimism.

Can one really adduce inadequacy and lack of the requisite traits to survive in a highly changing and complex world to be the issue at stake? Rather than this synchronic attitude that borders on ahistoricity, some authors advocate for a historical and causal path analogy. In this sense, one common perspective on the continent's current dismal state is linked to its colonial history of extraction and exploitation. Thus, Bairoch (1993) posits that no doubt a large number of structural features of the process of economic underdevelopment which its historical roots go back to European colonization. Bertocchi and Canova (2002) aver that African colonization exerted a direct impact on the postcolonial patterns of growth and human and physical capital accumulation. Grier (1999) also established that among former colonies, there is a link between a country's colonial experience and subsequent postcolonial growth. On his own, Englebert (2000) ambitiously claimed to have solved the mystery of Africa's underdevelopment by attributing Africa's poor performance to its weak, arbitrarily imposed postcolonial institutions. In the same vein, Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson (Acemoglu et al. 2001, 2002) assert that in the former colonies, where the colonizer's focus was on extraction, as in Africa, weak institutions of private property were established and these poor institutions persist to date. At this point, a little interrogation of Africa's past and colonial experience might be useful.

Colonialism and Its Implications for Africa's Development

Colonialism is the practice of invading other lands and territories for the purpose of settlement and/or resource exploitation. Colonialism is neither new nor limited to any specific historical period (i.e. the 'colonial period' of the 15th to 19th centuries). Ancient civilizations were the first to begin colonizing other lands and people. The invaders then imposed their own forms of governance, laws, religion and education. Over time, these populations became assimilated into the culture and society of their conquerors. Fieldhouse (1966) gives an illustration of various forms of colonialism, but for the sake of this chapter, and as it concerns Africa, we shall restrict ourselves to two versions: the settler type and the commercial type. The settler type involves the displacement of the indigenous or native population by the colonist's own population. This is contrasted with the commercial type of colonialism in which the indigenous population is retained as a source of cheap labor and a future market (as noted in Ali Mazrui's theme of 'labor reserve'). As to be expected, settler colonization, with its dispossession of indigenous populations, is marked by conflict between the colonist and the colonized (Chinweizu 1975).

Although there were different motives for colonial adventures, as they also vary in form, a classical motive for colonialism as it affects Africa was essentially captured in the views of Cecil Rhodes. Cecil Rhodes, a British colonial official for which Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) was named, articulated the motives and goals of European colonialism in the nineteenth century: "We must find new lands from which we can easily obtain raw materials and at the same time exploit the cheap slave labor that is available from the natives of the colonies. The colonies would also provide a dumping ground for the surplus goods produced in our factories" (Chinweizu 1975, 33).

It is often erroneously held that economic development occurs in a succession of capitalist stages and that today's underdeveloped countries are still in a stage, sometimes depicted as an original stage of history, through which the now developed countries passed long ago. Yet even a modest acquaintance with history shows that underdevelopment is not original or traditional and that neither the past nor the present of the underdeveloped countries resembles in any important respect the past of the now developed countries. Thus it is widely believed that the contemporary underdevelopment of a country can be understood as the product or reflection solely of its own economic, political, social and cultural characteristics or structure. Yet historical research demonstrates that contemporary underdevelopment is in large part the historical product of past and continuing economic and other relations between the satellite underdeveloped and the now developed metropolitan countries, as noted earlier in the views of Bairoch (1993), and others (Bertocchi and Canova 2002; Grier 1999; Englebert 2000; Acemoglu et al. 2001, 2002).

In this vein, Claude Ake endeavored to show how the nature of the capitalist mode of production and its internal contradictions, especially as it manifested in nineteenth century Europe, tended to hamper the accumulation of capital. In his view, as these contradictions developed, Western European capitalists tried to counteract their effects on accumulation; first, by making internal adjustments, but eventually, and inevitably, by transporting capitalism to new lands. And it is to be noted here that the whetted appetite of the colonists on the heels of capitalist instincts seem to be insatiable. Thus the more wealth they acquire, the hungrier they become for more. It is in this sense that Schurmann (1974) tried to link colonialism to capitalism with a related but different theme of imperialism (empire building). In his view, colonialism is expansion based on the actual needs and interests of the state, whereas imperialism is animated by expansion for expansion's sake in which every conquest is a way station to the next. In this sense, Schurmann (1974) compares imperialism to capitalism where money is the means to more money for its own sake and in endless acquisition. Since the theme of colonialism is closely tied to the concept of imperialism, it will be useful at this point to lace our understanding of colonialism with the related theme of imperialism.

Imperialism

Succinctly put, imperialism is the economic control and exploitation of foreign lands arising from the necessity for counteracting the impediments to the accumulation of capital engendered by the internal contradictions of the domestic capitalist economy. In a more encompassing sense, Brown (1974, 22) defined it as "the outward drive of certain peoples to build empires – both formal colonies and privileged positions in markets, protected sources of materials and extended opportunities for profitable employment of labour." The concept has thus been associated with an unequal economic relationship between states, not simply the inequality of large and small, rich and poor trading partners, but the inequality of the political and economic dependence of the latter on the former.

The beauty of the foregoing definition derives from the illumination it gives to the sequence of Africa's state of economic and socio-political progress when we address the theme of development and underdevelopment as it obtains in Africa today.

In assessing the extent and nature of capitalist penetration, and eventually the European colonization of African nations, Nnoli (1981, 97) wrote on the social conditions of Africa owing to the impact of colonialism. In his view, the most significant consequences of colonialism on social and economic progress in Africa lay in the impact on the production system; it replaced the subsistence economies of the pre-colonial societies with a capitalist one motivated and dominated by foreign private capitals and responding to their aims, serving the interests and needs of the external capitalists rather than the local population. By so doing, it caused a sharp and dramatic break with the past history of the African people and drastically altered the dynamics and direction of their future. It charted a new historical course for the people.

The point is further made that even though the traditional pre-colonial pattern of subsistence production continued, it was now subordinated to the productive ventures that were of interest to the colonialists who now dominated the economy and engaged most of the attention, efforts and resources of the new leadership. The focus was now anchored on the world market: export crop production, mining of minerals for export and the importation of manufactured goods from Europe predominated. Summarily, it is observed that in its desire to promote the new colonial activities, the colonial government acted to disrupt, disorganize and destroy the pre-capitalist system of production, subordinating it to the needs of the colonial economic zone.

Indeed, under the foregoing circumstances, the cost of external transaction increased. Dependence on external conditions and vulnerability to political pressures, as well as the manipulation of major local decisions by a coalition of external forces or the carving out of different territorial, functional and institutional spheres of influence by competing external forces characterized national life. Also it became difficult to weed out inefficient and inappropriate external resources. The dependence of national activities on external centers frustrated any attempt to transform the pattern of national and international economic life in a way consonant with the full and effective mobilization of internal resources. It imposed a straight-jacket pattern on the type and quantity of the factors of production and distribution of goods and services. In addition, by increasing external influence in the country, it imposed exorbitant costs on national independence. Such a situation served the interest of the colonialists. As competitors in the capitalist world market, they had no objective interest in increasing the bargaining power of the colony relative to that of their own country. This severely limited the power and influence of the colonies in international transactions.

The impact of the foregoing scenario on the state and psyche of the colonized lingered well into and after independence in what has been referred to as a neocolonial setting. In this sense, Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) were to aver that while the term ‘postcolonial neocolonial world’ might sound convoluted, it best captures the complex situation of the truncated African liberation project that gave birth to a problematic and fragile African nation-building process. It encapsulates an African state of ‘becoming’ that never materialized. The envisaged new African postcolonial world and a new African humanity that were expected to be borne by the decolonization struggle were soon captured and engulfed by strong neocolonial imperatives that shaped the African liberatory process into emancipatory reformism. Therefore, at the center of the 'postcolonial neo-colonized world' are the delicate issues of African liberation and freedom as well as African development and knowledge production that were never fully realized beyond some emancipatory pretensions. The main weakness of the emancipatory projects is that they do not question the core logic of Western modernity that globalized Euro-American views of the world and that constructed a racialized, hierarchical, hegemonic, patriarchal and capitalist global social system. At this point a look at the concept of neocolonialism will be useful.

Neocolonialism

An insight into the issue of colonialism and its implications for colonized African independent nations can be illustrated with the aftermath of their independence experience. Indeed a landmark in the history of the development and growth of most African nations was seen to have been recorded in the attainment of political independence. At least, the foreign control of the national apparatus of the African states was ended, and with it, the indignity, degradation and national humiliation that accompanied that control. The focus of national self-assertiveness and emancipations achieved an important victory and prognostications were made of emergent and ebullient great nations. At this point, however, the ovation tapers off and another series of tell-tale mixed feelings set in; sad to note, as has been observed in several quarters, the success of the African nations in those events of independence was seen to have been confined to the political realm.

The sore note here was that the battle for economic emancipation dignity and progress was yet to be waged. Thus, in spite of political independence, the pattern of production and economic activity forcibly instituted by colonialism survived largely unscathed. Rather, it grew stronger and more formidable. The nationalist movements made no significant effort to question the colonial export–import economy. Therefore, they neglected the consequences of that colonial economy for the marginalization of the vast majority of the African populace, distortion of the consumption pattern, neglect of local needs and resources, restriction of the capitalist mode of production from disintegrating the pre-capitalist modes and increasing production in accordance with its own internal dynamics, predominance of tertiary activities over the more productive primary and secondary sectors, the repatriation of capital/profits to foreign countries and, therefore, the loss of the benefits accruing from investments made with them. Other consequences included the high propensity to import and consequently the loss of benefits that would accrue from the use of the relevant income to purchase goods and services within the continent, and the confinement of African nations to the realm of imitative rather than innovative technology except in rare cases involving South Africa, as noted by Nnoli (1981).

The inherited pattern of production has not only persisted, it has been reinforced and strengthened by the expansion of its activities; greater orientation to the external environment, and growing divergence between local resource use and consumption on the one hand and consumption and local needs on the other. With increased activities in the field of manufacturing, importation and the construction industry, occasioned by the growth in oil wealth, the continent is more than ever before integrated into the world capitalist system in a manner which destroys self-reliance, increases external dependence and leads to the external control of local economic life. This scenario is seen as the basis for the onset of underdevelopment in societies like Nigeria as well as Africa in general (Nnoli 1981, 128).

In the views of Nnoli (1981), the aforementioned intensification has been possible largely because of the class character of the leadership of the nationalist movement. The economic motivations of the principal actors in the struggle for independence did not seek to make a clean break with the colonial production process. Members of this class merely sought promotion within the hierarchical system of distributing the benefits of that process, particularly between them and the foreign bourgeoisie who controlled production. They had no objective interest in abandoning an economic system which guaranteed their economic privileges, social prestige and political power. In order to improve their benefits from it, they were of course willing to make those reforms which do not threaten their privileged positions.

Indeed, the view is held that one of the most significant developments of the neocolonial period is the growth in the size and power of those local classes with vested interests in the reproduction of the inherited colonial production process. Over the years, increased urbanization, greater opportunities for education, proliferation of public projects, and increased economic opportunities at the supervisory level of the economy have produced an increased and increasing number of people who have joined the ranks of the privileged class. And these privileged classes have increased their powers through the use of public funds to build private financial empires. Thus the nagging view here is that the present African ruling class having acquired a vested interest in the neocolonial economy, has, therefore, become its political and socio-cultural guardians. They cannot therefore be expected to support, much less promote, a new economy in which their power and prestige would be severely damaged. Salvation must, therefore, lie with those classes which have antagonistic interests to those on which the neocolonial economy was founded; those who have not acquired vested interests in it and who have objective interests in a new system of production. This situation essentially requires the altering of power structures politically and bridging the gap of inequality economically.

The foregoing when anchored on the testy issue of development and underdevelopment x-rays why the cluster of modernization theories which arose in the 1960s were heavily criticized by scholars like Andre Gunder Frank, who posited that the underdevelopment of societies like African nations was caused by the dependency which former colonies endured under the aegis of their colonial rulers. Capitalist development in Third World countries (with the capitalist West being labeled the first world and the socialist bloc the second) is heavily dependent on the centers of core financial capital in the West. Immanuel Wallerstein further developed his viewpoint in his world systems theory which takes a comparative historical approach to show how capitalism first developed in a small number of core countries, with other countries forming semi-periphery or periphery states. The foregoing brings to the fore the essence of germane decolonization when development theories of Africa are discussed.

Colonialism and Decolonization

It is instructive to note here that during the twentieth century, 130 countries gained political independence from their colonial masters. This process of gaining political independence is known as decolonization. Decolonization is a process of undoing colonialism such that the colonized country achieves independence from the so-called mother country. Decolonization can be a peaceful process by which the parties negotiate the terms of independence; it can be a violent disengagement that involves civil disobedience, insurrection or armed struggle (war of independence). Effective decolonization entails the former of these. Colonization and decolonization are social processes even more than they are political processes. Governance over a people changes only after the people themselves have sufficiently changed. The meta-narrative of nationalist triumph takes two forms. First, which may be called the narrative of social mobilization by those who disparage it, the narrative of bourgeois nationalism goes like this: resistance to colonial rule, often local, which had been evident since the conquest was channeled into a unified anticolonial movement in the years after World War II by Western-educated intellectuals.

Mobilizing people through a wide range of organizations from ethnic associations to trade unions and bringing them into modern political parties, these leaders forged a movement that attacked head on the fundamentally racist construction of the colonial state and claimed its territory, its symbols and its institutions to bring material progress and a sense of national identity to the people of each African colony. The second meta-narrative is the revolutionary one, most powerfully articulated by Frantz Fanon: the anti-colonialism of Western-educated intellectuals and indeed of wage workers, aspiring only to become a labor aristocracy was false, and the revolutionary dynamic lay in a peasantry and lumpen proletariat willing to face up to the absolute denial of identity that colonialism necessarily entailed and to use violence to overthrow the colonial regimes. Fanon had little sympathy with the rhetoric of racial unity or the invocation of symbols of the African past which "bourgeois nationalists found easy to embrace as they set themselves up as brokers between African 'tradition' and post-colonial 'modernity'". His imagined future came out of the struggle itself: "The last shall be first and the first last." Decolonization is the putting into practice of this (Fanon 1966).

Economic (Mandan)/Marxist Theory of Development

Marxian theory rests on the fundamental assumption that changes in the economic 'infrastructures' of society are the prime movers of development. For Marx, society consists of two structures – 'infra-structure' and 'super-structure'. 'Infra-structure' consists of the 'forces of production' and 'relations of production'. The 'super-structure' consists of those features of the social system, such as legal, ideological, political and religious institutions, which serve to maintain the 'infra-structure', and which are molded by it. To be clearer, according to Marx, productive forces constitute 'means of production' (natural resources, land, labor, raw material, machines, tools and other instruments of production) and 'mode of production' (techniques of production, mental and moral habits of human beings). Both and their level of development determine the social relations of production, that is, production relations.

These production relations (class relations) constitute the economic structure of society—the totality of production relations. Thus, the socioeconomic structure of society is basically determined by the state of productive forces. For Marx, the contradiction between the constantly changing and developing 'productive forces' and the stable 'production relations' as the determinants of all social development or social change, is the order of nature and society (Turner 1999; Smelser 1976).

This is inherent in the matter through the contradiction of forces. Marx wrote: "Matter is objective reality, existing outside and independent of the mind. The activity of the mind does not arise independent of all the material. Everything mental or spiritual is the product of the material process." The world, by its very nature, is material (Turner 1999). Everything which exists comes into being on the basis of material course, and arises and develops in accordance with the laws of motion of matter. Things come into being, exist and cease to exist, not each independent of all other things but each in its relationship with others. Things cannot be understood each separately and by itself but only in their relations and interconnections. Marx believed that change occurs through the contradiction of forces and is present throughout history in some or other form. Accordingly, change, development and progress take place by way of contradiction and conflict and the resulting change leads to a higher unity (Smelser 1976). In particular, Marx viewed the class struggle and the transition from one social system to another as a dialectical process in which the ruling class viewed as 'thesis' evoked its 'negation' ('antithesis') in the challenger class and thus to a 'synthesis' through revolutionary transformation, resulting in a higher organization of elements from the old order. Marx believed that the class struggle was the driving force of change, progress and development. For him it was the "motor of history". He states that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" (Communist Manifesto 1848 in Smelser 1976).

Modernization Theory

Modernization theory was developed in the 1950s–1960s to explain the change from traditional, pre-industrial society to industrialized modern society which was first experienced in the West, hence the tag on the West as the 'First World'. An efflux of the philosophy informing the conceptualization of the First World led to the observation that the non-existent or slow change in undeveloped countries, the Third World, can be explained by a difference in values in those countries which have developed. In this sense, Talcott Parsons argued that whereas in traditional societies there is a system of ascription whereby individuals obtain their roles by 'who' they are, in modern industrial societies achievement is valued, that is, individuals have to compete for positions on the basis of merit (Turner 1999). In the view of Parsons, pre-industrial societies will become modernized as they adopt and internalize the values held in developed countries. In this sense, the process of modernization is seen as being universal and a sine qua non for development (Gosling and Taylor 2005).

Modernization Theory and Its Relevance to Germane Development in Africa

According to modernization theory, modern societies are more productive, children are better educated and the needy receive more welfare. In a political sense, Coleman stresses three main features of modern societies: (i) differentiation of political structure; (ii) secularization of political culture with the ethos of equality, which (iii) enhances the capacity of a society's political system (Ohmae 1995). Modernization is a phased process, for example Rostow's theory of economic development for a particular society has five phases. In summary, these five stages are: traditional society, precondition for takeoff, the take-off process, the drive to maturity, and high mass consumption society. Modernization is a homogenizing process; in this sense, we can say that modernization produces tendencies toward convergence among societies, for example, Levy (1967 in Agugua 2003) maintains that "as time goes on, they and we will increasingly resemble one another because the patterns of modernization are such that the more highly modernized societies become, the more they resemble one another." Modernization is an Europeanization or Americanization process; in the modernization literature, there is an attitude of complacency toward Western Europe and the United States (Scholte 2002; Rostow 1960). These nations are viewed as having unmatched economic prosperity and democratic stability. In addition, modernization is an irreversible process, once started modernization cannot be stopped. In other words, once Third World countries come into contact with the West, they will not be able to resist the impetus toward modernization.

The application of modernization in Africa, therefore, provides strong indication of a new scramble for Africa which departs from the old imperialism (colonialism) only in form. The new imperialism does not seek political control of economies. Its main interest is to devise ways to assume direct control of a territory's natural resources and thereby accomplish the objectives achieved by colonialism. Many newly independent African governments served as "policemen" for the new "imperialists"; and the few African countries that dared to resist them were considered as subverting the process of modernization by stifling foreign investment and encroaching on expatriate right. It is in this sense that in certain quarters, globalization has been described as euphemism for neo-imperialism. At this point, a succinct overview of globalization theory and its implications for theorizing Africa's development becomes necessary.

Theory of Globalization

Globalization can be defined as the process of increased harmonization of national economies with the rest of the world to create a global coherent economy. The theory of globalization emerges from the global mechanisms of greater integration with particular emphasis on the sphere of economic transactions. In this sense, this perspective is similar to the world-systems approach. However, one of the most important characteristics of the globalization position is its focus and emphasis on cultural aspects and their communication worldwide. Rather than financial and political ties, globalization scholars argue that the main modern elements for development interpretation are the cultural links among nations. In this cultural communication one of the most important factors is the increasing flexibility of technology to connect people around the world (Gosling and Taylor 2005).

The main assumptions which can be extracted from the theory of globalization can be summarized in three principal points. First, cultural factors are the determinant aspects in every society. Second, it is not important, under current world conditions, to use the nation state as the unit of analysis, since global communications and international ties are making this category less useful. Third, with more standardization in technological advances, more and more social sectors will be able to connect themselves with other groups around the world. This situation will involve the dominant and non-dominant groups from each nation. The theory of globalization coincides with several elements from the theory of modernization. One aspect is that both theories consider that the main direction of development should be that which was undertaken by the United States and Europe. These schools maintain that the main patterns of communication and the tools to achieve better standards of living originated in those more developed areas. Regrettably, globalization may be seen as a force of exploitation, oppression and injustice. The rage that drives terrorists to commit obscene crimes can be said to be a response to globalization. Terrorism thrives on poverty, and international capitalism thrives on poverty too. The work of multinational companies like Coca Cola, Walmart and Shell in underdeveloped societies is seen as a new form of colonialism. The preaching of laissez faire as a modus operandi shortchanges undeveloped areas since it entrenches their underdevelopment. Globalization has also fueled the rise of transnational corporations and their power has vaulted to the point where they can now rival many nation states since majority of them are richer than some nations. For instance, based in Finland, Nokia represents nearly two-thirds of the stock market value, and provides a large share of the nation's tax revenue. With this much power, managers of the company have unprecedented influence in the politics of Finland (Gosling and Taylor 2005).

Dependency Theory

At this point, a look at the theme of dependency will complement the effort so far in explaining underdevelopment in Africa. Dependency theory as an approach in the explication of change and development in Africa came as a result of the criticism of modernization theories. The central argument is that the explanation given for some countries not having developed because of their traditional values and institutions is wrong. The theorist greatly associated with dependency theory is Andre Gunder Frank, who in 1967 argued that it is the perpetuation of an exploitative relationship between the developed and developing countries that keeps the developing societies such as Africa and Latin America dependent on the developed nations. In his own view, Frank used the phrase 'the development of underdevelopment' to explain how the exploitation of the capitalist system in the industrialized nations has not only prevented countries from developing but has actually reduced the overall level of development in the world (Gosling and Taylor 2005).

By the mid-1960s, dependency theory, which represents the first major shift from modernization in development conception and theory, was well formulated. In opposing the Ricardian-inspired claims that international specialization conferred benefits on Third World countries for exporting primary products to the European and American markets and receiving industrial goods in return, scholars within the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), particularly Raul Prebisch, held that this international division of labor was at the root of the developmental problems of the Third World. This is because it bequeathed to the Third World the position of subordinate incorporation in the global economy polarized into a core and a periphery, where the core is the developed world and the periphery the Third World. Among the main authors of dependency theory we have Andre Gunder Frank, Raul Prebisch, Theotonio Dos Santos, Enrique Cardoso and Samir Amin (Scholte 2002; Elias 1987).

Dependency scholars are of the view that development and underdevelopment are two sides of the same coin The development of developed societies is as a result of the underdevelopment of underdeveloped societies and vice versa. They are of the view that in the beginning all societies were developing independently, but the development of others was hijacked by a culture which claimed to be superior, thereby aborting the development of cultures seen as inferior. Dependency scholars recommended selective diffusionism, a system for boycotting all that is unnecessary in their culture. It has been found, as in Andre Gunder Frank's case study of Latin America, that underdeveloped countries experience more growth when their ties to the monopolies are weak, contrary to the popular notion that societies are degenerate when their ties to capitalist centers are weak.

The Theory of World System

The form of negative influence imposed by the integration of developing societies into the developed nations, as adumbrated by the dependency theorists, was to metamorphose into an unholy alliance of what Immanuel Wallerstein described as world systems theory. This theory shows how the world, through the aforementioned global integration, has been partitioned into three compartments of unequal relationships, namely:

- Core: developed nations or the First World.
- Semi-periphery: developing nations or the Second World such as the Asian Tigers.
- Periphery: underdeveloped nations or the Third World such as Sub-Saharan African and Latin American nations (Olurode 2006).

A world system is a social system; one that has boundaries, structures, member groups, rules of legitimation and coherence. The world systems theory developed by the Colombian sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein is an approach to world history and social change that suggests that there is a world economic system in which some countries benefit while others are exploited. The core countries dominate and exploit the peripheral countries for labor and raw materials. Core countries own most of the world's capital and technologies and have great control over world trade and economic agreements. They are also cultural centers which attract artists and intellectuals. The peripheral countries are dependent on the core countries for survival. They focus on low-skill, labor-intensive production and extraction of raw materials; they have weak states. The semi-peripheral countries share the characteristics of both. They have less diversified economies and stringer state. This theory emphasizes the global structure of inequality. According to Ritzer (2008, 303–308), Wallerstein embarked on historical research and came up with the idea that there are two kinds of international systems: (i) *the world empire*, a system based on political and military domination, of which ancient Rome was an example; and (ii) *the modern capitalist world economy*, which relies on economic domination. The kernel of Wallerstein's world system theory is that once certain nations got rich, they reordered the international system to ensure that others remained poor. Thus the international economic system came to be seen as a deterministic framework within which countries would be either dominant or dominated and, then, remain as such.

In many models of economic analysis, the geopolitical North and South correspond to the mostly capitalist regions of Western Europe and North America (the *North*) and the poorer regions of Sub-Saharan Africa and South America (the *South*). However, this distinction does not deny the fact that quite a few emerging economies like Brazil, China and South Korea have displaced some economies of the traditional 'north'. Thus 'North' and 'South' are to be understood in this chapter as designations for the rich and the poor. Unfortunately, this theory having explained this exploitative relationship between these areas does not have a recommendation for underdeveloped societies. However, its deep insight regarding the workings of the world economic order and how it relates to African development challenges makes it necessary for us to discuss its viewpoints more deeply.

The World Capitalist System

The modern capitalist world system with which we are concerned probably came into being not long after the Industrial Revolution had seen the rise of the Western hemisphere as an economic power. But exactly how do the economic powers keep others underdeveloped? Wallerstein uses the concept of *core* and *peripheral* states. According to Ritzer (2008, 303), "the core economic area dominates the capitalist world-economy and exploits the rest of the system." The peripheral areas provide raw materials to the core and are heavily exploited by it. However, there is a residual semi-peripheral zone "that encompasses a set of regions somewhere between the exploiting and the exploited." It is within this region that may be located what are now being known as emerging economies as noted above. During the Western colonizing adventure in Africa, that was clearly the case. As Walter Rodney has brilliantly demonstrated in his seminal *How Europe underdeveloped Africa*, the colonizing powers simply structured the economies of the colonized peoples to serve the interests of the colonizing nations. And for all the economic benefits that accrued to the Europeans, the Africans got very little. For instance, Rodney notes that during the 500 years of Portuguese colonization of Mozambique, they did not even manage to train one doctor! (Rodney 1972). That of course, may have been an exception, but it certainly shows how exploitative colonialism was.

In the current world system, the dominant economic powers have set up the international trade system to ensure unfair trade practices which further impoverish the poorer nations of the South. The international aid institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank were set up ostensibly to assist the process of economic growth and reconstruction in the developing world. However, the policy of trade liberalization placed as a precondition for accessing the financial assistance provided by these organizations often implies that the aid recipients end up worse off, and thus remain dependent on the aid of these organizations. The upshot is now the call for fair trade as opposed to free trade. Some examples illustrate this.

According to Gregory Elich of the Jasenovic Research Institute: "In the US, Western Europe, and Japan, billions of dollars are provided to rice growers each year, allowing them to set an export price of rice well below the cost of production. Local growers in Sub-Saharan Africa cannot compete on equal terms, especially as they must manage without subsidies due to IMF/World Bank strictures." He adds that: "Under WTO agreements, Ghana is permitted to raise the tariff on poultry to as high as 99%. But when the nation actually attempted to raise its tariff from 20% to 40%, the IMF threatened to halt future loan disbursements and the tariff increase was never put into effect" (Elich 2010, 154).

With reference to the effect of liberalization on African countries, Elich (2010) explains: "In Cameroun, a threefold increase in poultry imports over a five-year period reduced local production and led to the loss of over 100,000 rural jobs every year. It took only five years to drive 92% of poultry farmers out of business. In Mozambique, vegetable oil imports now account for 81% of the total market, while most oil crushing operations have closed." He states further that economic restructuring in Cote d'Ivoire has led to the closure of the privatized rice mills and the elimination of fertilizer subsidies for the rice growers. "In their place there was only the removal of restrictions on imports." There is also the possibility that the lopsided structure of the capitalist may be sustained by certain enabling policies by the dominant powers. Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) identify technology and education as two important engines for economic growth. These engines, the authors note, are the products of what they describe as inclusive economics. They explain that inclusive economics create inclusive markets, which not only give people the freedom to pursue the vocations in life that best suit their talents but also a level playing field that gives them the opportunity to do so. Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) assert that this accounts for the economic prosperity of South Korea as opposed to the poverty of North Korea.

The skewed nature of the international capitalist system is also manifest in the discriminatory commodity-pricing system which ensures that the prices of most of the raw materials extracted in the developing countries are determined by international bodies controlled by the powerful nations. Of course, it can be argued that the organization of petroleum exporting countries (OPEC) is made up of mainly oil-producing developing nations. Still, we cannot underrate the fact that its power is severely limited by some crucial factors: (i) some developed nations and non-OPEC countries have very large deposits of oil which means they can significantly influence the oil market; then, the disposition of non-OPEC majors can lead to much speculation and hence price fluctuation (see also *The Nation* 2009); (ii) the extraction of crude oil from the poorer countries is largely undertaken by multinational companies since oil exploration requires very sophisticated technology which is not yet at the disposal of the developing nations; and (iii) the growing emphasis on the development of renewable sources of oil and clean energy can only mean declining export revenues for crude oil exporting nations.

Not to be forgotten too is the manifest division of trade in the international system such that while the countries of the South concentrate on primary products (i.e. raw materials), the countries of the North do more of the manufacturing and finished products (see also Ritzer 2008, 305 on Wallerstein). This widens the poverty gap in that the production of finished products often has greater value added and, consequently, more revenue and employment opportunities. For example, although Nigeria has oil refineries at Port Harcourt, Kaduna and Warri, the country exports much of her crude oil and imports almost 70% of refined petroleum products for domestic use. This means great advantage for the exporting countries because of the many by-products of the petroleum reefing process and, of course, loss for Nigeria in terms of employment generation and small business opportunities.

A particularly painful example is the case of coffee, a major export commodity of some African countries. Arguing for action on the part of US President Barack Obama to redress the gross injustices of the international coffee trade, an article in the pan-African magazine *New African* (2009, 11–17) quotes a Ugandan economist and coffee grower. The quote was actually lifted from a British newspaper *The Observer*. It is quoted in part here:

> African manufacturing and processing seldom adds much value to the raw product … Of the 35 billion pounds the global coffee market represents [only] 3.8 billion pounds accounts for the raw coffee beans traded annually … The industrialized countries' tariff and non-tariff barriers escalate with each stage of processing for most primary commodities. The vertical integration of transnational corporations means producers are usually unaware of their product's true value …
>
> One needs, approximately five grams of roasted and ground beans to make a cup of coffee that sells for 2 pounds, so one kilogram can make 200 cups worth 400 pounds. Green coffee beans are bought for an average price of 70p per kilogram. In other words, less than 0.2% of the value of processed coffee is retained by the growers.

Another manifestation of the world system is what can be described as the new Chinese imperialism. Extant evidence shows that China may be using her partnership with Africa to take advantage of the vulnerability of African economies and weak government regulation mechanisms to further impoverish the continent. A report on the shoemaking industry shows that although the shoemaking line of Ariaria market in Aba, South Eastern Nigeria, employs over 50,000, including apprentices, their masters and suppliers, lack of federal government patronage and inadequate infrastructure prevents it from performing much better than it is currently doing (*The Guardian* 2013, 44–5) The report adds that in the past, Aba sold leather bags, belts and shoes to traders from Cameroun, Ghana and Equatorial Guinea, but now on account of cheap and inferior products from China, the industry is dying. Then, in a case of intellectual property theft, one of the traders reported:

> [The] Chinese came in here and took samples of our shoes and brought them back in another way and in great quantity. Chinese designs are picked from us and put together with a special kind of gum. We locally manufacture our gums and most times, it makes our work last less than what it should.

As the traders have claimed, with electricity, raw materials and modern machines, Ariaria can become a world class manufacturing area. Another point of interest, though, is the question of intellectual property rights. Although the claim by this Ariaria trader might be debated, intellectual property rights have long been an issue in the lopsided world trade system: while industrial countries hold 97% of all patents worldwide, most of the knowledge that forms the basis of their technological breakthroughs was obtained from the locals who receive no compensation for their own contribution. This has been the case for years in the pharmaceutical industry (see Giddens et al. 2005, 643). The foregoing analysis illustrates how the capitalist world system places some nations at an ever-increasing advantage and others at an ever-increasing disadvantage, thus aggravating the poverty of the nations of the South. To be sure, certain instances may not necessarily derive from the distorted world system. For example, the non-functioning of Nigeria's refineries or Nigeria's generally poor infrastructure is less a matter of a lopsided world oil market than the patent incompetence and corruption that characterizes Nigeria's public service.

This analysis only illustrates the angle of the world system in the poverty of the nations of the south.

Conclusion: The Interplay of the World System and Development

Development is a multidimensional concept which embraces the multifarious economic and social objectives concerned with the distribution of income, the provision of basic needs, and the real and psychological well-being of people. Hence, in theorizing about Africa's development within the world economic order, what emerged from the discussion is that the world system is manifestly skewed against the poorer regions of the world. Thus it cannot be overemphasized that even with all the progress that has been made to make the international system more open with a view to spreading its opportunities, the poorer nations of the world may still struggle to catch up. This is because their poor infrastructure will limit the extent to which they can benefit from the opportunities of the age of information technology. For instance, telecommuting as noted means that considerably more work can be accomplished with fewer people and less space.

Also, on account of the progressive integration of new technology, an economy can develop rapidly once it begins to operate more efficiently. And then there are the multiplier effects. More efficient energy sources means less consumption of fossil fuels; this leads to less atmospheric pollution and, quite conceivably, healthier citizens and less health spending. The extra money can then be channeled to more developmental projects, with greater human development in view. Conversely, those who remain with inefficient technologies are somewhat condemned to run greater economic overheads so to speak. In short, technology—or more correctly, its application—can widen the gap between the rich and the poor.

The upshot is that once a nation gets on the train of development, it has attained a certain leverage that can enhance further development. The role of the political authorities in this regard is critical as well. Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) cite the example of two tribes—the Lele and the Bushong. These two tribes had almost everything in common, save for the fact that the Bushong became more prosperous than the Lele. The authors traced the difference in their economic prosperity to the purposeful political leadership of the Bushong which harnessed all available opportunities and reorganized the Bushong society such that they could achieve the level of prosperity they did (Acemoglu and Robinson 2012). It would then appear that the immediate solution to the poverty of the poor nations is to address their mode of social and political organization and their practices. This is something entirely within their power to handle despite whatever experiences such societies must have endured owing to colonialism, imperialism and the machinations of neocolonialists. And the issue is that African nations must stand up to the challenges as no level of theorizing can bail them out.

References

Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. (2012). *Why nations fail: The origins of power, prosperity and poverty*. London: Profile Books.

Acemoglu, D., Johnson, S., & Robinson, J. A. (2001). The colonial origins of comparative development: An empirical investigation. *American Economic Review, 91*, 1369–1401.

Acemoglu, D., Johnson, S., & Robinson, J. A. (2002). Reversal of fortune: Geography and institutions in the making of the modern world income distribution. *Quarterly Journal of Economics, 117*, 1231–1294.

Agugua, A. (2003). Social change in Nigeria since independence. In A. Osuntokun, D. Aworawo, & F. Masajuwa (Eds.), *History and cultures of Nigeria up to AD 2000*. Somolu: Frankad.

Agugua, A. O. (2015). The place of culture in economic growth and development in West Africa. In S. I. Koffi, J. O. Igue, & S. O. Akande (Eds.), *Growth and development in West Africa*. Berlin: Auflage.

Bairoch, P. (1993). *Economics and world history: Myths and paradoxes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bertocchi, G., & Canova, F. (2002). Did colonization matter for growth? An empirical exploration into the historical causes of Africa's underdevelopment. *European Economic Review, 46*, 1851–1871.

Brown, B. (1974). *The economics of imperialism*. London: Harmondsworth.

Chinweizu. (1975). *The West and the rest of us: White predators, black slavers and the African elite*. New York: Random House.

Commission on Growth and Development. (2008). *The growth report: Strategies for sustained growth and inclusive development*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Dobbs, R., Manyika, J., & Woetzel, J. (2015). *No ordinary disruption: The four global forces breaking all the trends*. New York: McKinsey and Co., Public Affairs.

Elias, N. (1987, September 29–October 2). *Technik and Zivilisation*. Paper presented at 23rd bi-annual meeting of the German Sociological Association (Soziologentag). Hamburg, West Germany,

Elich, G. (2010). What free trade is doing to Africa. *New African*, June: 72–74.

Englebert, P. (2000). Solving the mystery of the Africa dummy. *World Development, 28*, 1821–1830.

Fanon, Frantz. 1966. *The wretched of the earth.* (Constance Farmington, Trans.). New York: Grove.

Fieldhouse, D. K. (1966). *The colonial empires from the eighteenth century*. New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

Fryer, R. G., & Levitt, S. D. (2004). Understanding the black–white test score gap in the first two years in school. *Review of Economics and Statistics, 86*(2), 447–464.

Giddens, A., Appelbaum, M., & Richard, A. (2005). *Introduction to sociology* (5th ed.). New York: Norton.

Gosling, R., & Taylor, S. (2005). *Principles of sociology*. London: London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).

Grier, R. M. (1999). Colonial legacies and economic growth. *Public Choice, 98*, 317–335.

Harrison, L. E. (2000). Promoting progressive cultural change. In L. E. Harrison & S. P. Huntington (Eds.), *Culture matters: How values shape human progress*. New York: Basic Books.

Kenny, C., & Dykstra, S. (2013). *The global partnership for development: A review of MDG 8 and proposals for the post-2015 development agenda*. Policy Paper 026. Washington, DC: Centre for Global Development.

New African. (2009, August/September). *Obama, do something before you go*.

Nnoli, O. (1981). *Path to Nigerian development*. Dakar: CODESRIA.

Ohmae, K. (Ed.). (1995). *The evolving global economy: Making sense of the new world order*. Boston: Harvard University Press.

Olurode, L. (2006). Modernization and the dependency approaches. In S. A. Adebagbo, T. U. Obinyam, & L. Olurode (Eds.), *Family and social change: Essays in sociology and social welfare administration*. Lagos: Rebonik.

Ritzer, G. (2008). *Sociological theory* (7th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.

Rodney, W. (1972). *How Europe underdeveloped Africa*. Washington, DC: Howard University Press.

Rostow, W. W. (1960). *The stages of economic growth: A non-communist manifesto*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Scholte, J. A. (2002). *Globalization: A critical introduction*. London: Macmillan.

Schurmann, F. (1974). *The logic of world power: An inquiry into the origins, currents and contradictions of world politics*. New York: Pantheon.

Singh, S. (2012). *New mega trends*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Smelser, N. J. (1976). *Comparative methods in the social changes*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

The Guardian. (2013, June 2). *Aba shoemakers threatened by unhealthy imports, poor infrastructure*.

The Nation. (2009, November 9). *OPEC identifies challenges in global oil business*, p. 28.

Todaro, M. P., & Smith, S. C. (2003). *Economic development* (8th ed.). Boston: Addison Wesley.

Turner, B. (1999). *Classical sociology*. London: Sage.

World Bank. (2009). *World development indicators 2009*. Washington, DC: Policy Research Department, World Bank.

World Bank/IMF. (2016). *Global monitoring report, 2015/2016: Development goals in an era of demographic change*. Washington, DC: The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Dr. Augustine Okechukwu Agugua lectures in the Department of Sociology, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos, Nigeria. He has co-authored books in diverse fields of human endeavor and also contributed chapters in many highly rated books and journals both within and outside Nigeria. Dr. Agugua has equally been a benefactor of several fellowship programmes from reputed institutions of higher learning and is a member of the ECOWAS Regional Research Project. Dr. Agugua's major areas of research interest include Political Sociology; Social Policy; Inter-Group Relations, Criminology, and Sociology of Development. e-mails: agugst@yahoo.com, aagugua@unilag.edu.ng.