

## **THIRD WORLD DEPENDENCY, THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND AFRICAN UNDERDEVELOPMENT: A CRITIQUE ANALYSIS**

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### **Abstract**

*This study examines dependency as a concept, its theoretical assumptions and the tendency to link the third world and in particular, African underdevelopment and periphery nations to the imperialism and colonialism of the western countries which spanned through some centuries. It is a critique analysis of this historical crisis, its woes and the structural inequity that triggered from this core-periphery relationship. The approach of the study looks into the postulations of the various schools of thought and scholars on dependency and acknowledges the fact of its existence, but cautions for a re-examination of the African underdevelopment after decades of self-rule by putting a stop to this viral blame-game and holds that third world underdevelopment from the post-colonial era is self inflicted because of leadership crisis, especially in Africa. The study recommends what African nations must do to break the barriers of underdevelopment and join the league of other third world nations who have moved away from underdevelopment to development, even though with similar historical evolutionary experiences*

Keywords: Dependency, Theoretical Assumptions, Africa, Underdevelopment and Third world.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Dependency as a concept is widely used by social scientists to explain the unequal relationship between the third world countries and the developed nations. As a concept, it developed wide appeal in the third world nations among scholars and activists who were upset by the structural imbalance in the international political economy as a result of the wide gap between the developed and underdeveloped nations also known as the core and periphery countries. These scholars therefore advanced theories, postulations and approaches to explain the exploitative nature of the relationship which exist between the core and periphery nations as a result of the penetration of international capitalism following colonialism and imperialism of the metropolises of the west against the satellite nations of the southern hemisphere.

Scholars like Fernando Henrique Cardoso who was the first person to use the word dependency, Immanuel Waderstein, Samir Amin, Andre Gunder Frank, Paul Baran, Walter Rodney among others have tried to give systemic accounts of how this relationship between

the metropolises and the periphery nation's has resulted to dependency of the periphery on the core nations to the extent that the periphery nations lack any form of autonomous development.

The dependency theory of development explores the nature of economic interaction between developing and developed nations and holds that many of the obstacles to the third world development did not in fact, originate in the developing countries themselves, but were imposed on them by external forces (the developed countries) with ultimate interest to safeguard their dominant position in the international system. In fact, dependency theorists have gone beyond blaming colonialism for the third world backwardness but now includes neo-colonialism as the root of underdevelopment in the third world nations.

The continent of Africa according to Walter Rodney "went into colonialism with a hoe and came out with a hoe". Rodney (1974:215-216) further argues that capitalism in the form of colonialism failed to perform in Africa the tasks it had performed in Europe in changing social relations and liberating the forces of production. Comparatively, Paul Prebisch reasons that the wealth of poor nations tended to decrease when the wealth of the rich nations increased.

This line of thought has some merits, particularly in the days of western imperialism and colonialism. However, developments in the third world countries in the recent decades have shown that given visionary, focused, determined, patriotic and selfless leadership, the third world nations can lift themselves up from the shackles of underdevelopment and dependency. This has been proved with the giant developmental and technological strides made by nations like, Singapore, South Korea, India, Malaysia, Brazil, Indonesia etc.

Contrary to the widely held dependency theorization view of colonial and western origin of third world underdevelopment, Igwe (2010:6) differs from the opinion of the dependency theorists and other structuralists. In his book **How Africa Underdeveloped Africa:**

He champions the cause for a change from the blame colonialism thrust of Pan-Africanists beliefs to that of burning widespread internal contradictions whose fires have been continually fuelled by Africa's leadership profligacy. In a word, massive state corruption remains the singular vice upon which all Africa's political and socioeconomic problems are predicated and the sole progenitor of all other forms of corruption altogether.

This view contradicts the view of Walter Rodney and other dependency scholars who heap the blame of African underdevelopment on the door-step of colonialism and neo-colonialism. This study sets out to argue that dependency as a historical fact in Africa and third world evolutionary process affected their development but should not be the reason why Africa has remained backward even after many decades of self rule.

African countries have had golden opportunities to lift themselves up from underdevelopment but for poor leadership in these nations coupled with other numerous internal contradictions against the widely held view of external inducement.

## WHAT IS DEPENDENCY

Dependency is the belief that resources flow from a periphery of the poor and underdeveloped states to a core of the wealthy states, enriching the later at the expense of the former (Wikipedia.en.wikipedia.org./Dependencytheory). It is the main contention of the dependency theory that poor states are impoverished and rich ones enriched by the poor states are integrated into the world system. According to Igwe, (2007:111-112.)

Dependency defines a situation in which the policy or life of a state and its citizens are exploitatively determined by an outside power or powers, usually through the simultaneous application of unequal socio-economic, political and cultural measures, and it often occurs either as a successor policy to past unequal ties, or through the acquiescence of the local agents of the foreign power who for various reasons become willing tools of such a policy.

It signifies that economic, political, socio-cultural and scientific developments in the periphery nations are helplessly contingent upon, even directly controlled by those in the core nations who have adequate internally self-sustaining mechanisms for development.

As a concept, dependency is widely used by social scientists to explain the unequal relationship between the third world and the metropolitan nations. Dependency theory germinated from the two publications in 1949 by Hans Singer and Paul Prebisch (Singer Prebisch Thesis) in which they contend that the terms of trade for underdeveloped countries compared to the developed countries had deteriorated over time hence the underdeveloped nations were able to buy fewer and fewer manufactured goods from the developed nations in exchange for a given quantity of their raw materials exports.

Dependency arose as a reaction to the modernization theory which was an earlier theory of development that holds that all societies progress through similar stages of development.

Thus, the underdeveloped countries or areas of today are in a similar situation to the developed countries of today at some time in the past. Consequently, bringing the underdeveloped areas out of poverty is to accelerate them along the supposed path of development by various means, such as technology transfers, investment and closer integration into the world market.

Dependency theorists believe that the incorporation of Africa into the world capitalist system has continued to militate against her development even in the present post-colonial era. This exploitative relationship is sustained by the comprador bourgeoisies who are the agents of the global capitalists that require the relationship for their survival.

According to Theotonio Dos Santos (1970) in his paper “The Structure of Dependence” published in **American Economic Review**, dependency is:

a situation in which a certain group of countries have their economy conditioned by development and expansion of another economy, to which the former is subjected. The relation of interdependence between two or more economies, and between these and world trade, assumes the form of dependence when some countries (the dominant) can expand and give impulse to their own development, while other countries, the dependent can only develop as a reflection of this expansion. This can have positive and/or negative effects on their immediate development.

In all cases, the basic situation of dependence leads to a global situation in dependent countries that situates them in backwardness and under the exploitation of the dominant countries. The dominant countries have a technological, commercial, capital resources and socio-political predominance over the dependent countries. This permits them to impose conditions of exploitation and extract part of the domestically produced surplus.

The high point of the dependency theory is its adoption of the critique of capitalism put forward by the followers of Leninism. In the opinion of Gilpin (1987:284), this theory asserts that the laws of motion of capitalism and the contradictions existing in a capitalist economy force capitalism to expand into the less developed periphery of the world economy. Because of the under-consumption and the falling rate of profit at home, the capitalist economies must dominate and exploit the less developed countries. This leads to a hierarchical structure of domination between the industrial core and the dependent periphery of the world capitalist economy.

Apart from the earlier writing of dependency scholars such as Hans Singer and Paul Prebisch in which they observed that the terms of trade for underdeveloped countries relative to the developed countries had deteriorated over the time whereby the underdeveloped countries were able to purchase fewer and fewer manufactured goods from the developed countries in exchange for a given quantity of their raw materials referred as Singer-Prebisch Thesis, other writers on dependency include Paul Baran, Rosa Luxemburg, V.I. Lenin, Paul Sweezy, Andre Gunder Frank, Samir Amin, Immanuel Wallerstein, and Fernando Henrique Cardoso who is ascribed as the originator of dependency as a concept. Dependency shows the extent in which one economy is subordinated to the other and in which case the external dynamics of one is conditioned by the external stimuli (Aja, 1998:47).

Aja (1998) further argues that in a non-technical sense of it, dependency means that the crucial economic decisions are made not by countries that are being developed but by foreigners whose interests are carefully safeguarded. This is why Rosa Luxemburg describes dependency as that in which an economy is structurally disadvantaged in international division of labour that it lacks autonomous capacity to exploit and manage its natural economic and human resources without falling prey to the dictates of foreign economic and other interests.

A dependent nation lacks autonomous development. Its development initiatives are determined by external manipulation of socio-economic formation and as Dale Johnson (cited in Ake, 1985) put it dependency is imperialism seen from the perspective of underdevelopment. At this juncture, attempt is made to examine some scholars of dependency theory and their postulations on this subject matter.

### **FERNANDO HENRIQUE CARDOSO**

Fernando Henrique Cardoso is credited with the original usage of the concept dependency and hence a leading dependency theorist. He was born in Rio De Janeiro Brazil on June

18, 1931. Cardoso is a sociologist, a leader and a politician who became President of Brazil from 1995-2008.

The crux of Cardoso's postulations is that the unregulated influence of the penetration of the metropolis (developed capitalist countries) finance and technology into the third world nations (periphery and semi-periphery) can distort sustained growth for industrialization and self sustaining economic growth. Cardoso and Faletto (1979) gave a sophisticated analysis of economic development in Latin America. In their work titled **Dependency and Underdevelopment in Latin America**, both scholars emphasized that the economic dependency in Latin America stems not merely from the domination of the world market, over internal national enclave economies, but also from the much more complex interaction of economic drives, political structures, social movements and historically conditioned alliances while heeding to the unique histories of individual nations.

Cardoso and Faletto (1979) discerned general stages in Latin America's economic development. These according to them are:

- i. The early outward expansion of newly independent nations
- ii. the formation of internal markets in response to population growth and,
- iii. the new dependence on international markets.

However, Cardoso's dependency theory focused on the "Relationship Between Developing countries and the West. The summary of his dependency theory is thus:

- i. There is a financial and technological penetration by the developed capitalist centres on the countries of the periphery and semi-periphery,
- ii. This penetration produces an imbalanced economic structure both within the peripheral societies and between them and the centres.
- iii. This therefore leads to limitations on self-sustained growth in the periphery.
- iv. These require modifications in the role of the state to guarantee both the functioning of the economy and the political articulations of society, which contain within itself, foci of inarticulateness and structural imbalance.

At the end of the World War II, several Latin American countries seemed to be within the periphery nation's leading to unbalanced economic structure not only in the relations between the centre nations and the periphery nations but also in the relations between the periphery nations. He therefore emphasized that the state had special role to play in the functioning of the economy and political articulation of the society because of the existence of specific patterns of class relations. During the period of Fernando Cardoso's administration as the president of Brazil (1995-2008), he emphasized further economic reforms, including privatization and increased foreign investment as well as funding for education and social services or subsidies.

Indeed, Cardoso identified the negative role of foreign capital and technology but did not reject it completely but recommended its control by the state. This may have informed his born-again liberal policies which welcomed capitalist part to development involving privatization and increased foreign investment.

It is difficult to discern from the writings and political action of Fernando Henrique Cardoso whether he is a radical scholar or a born-again theorist who is changing with the trend of global realities.

### **PAUL BARAN**

Paul Baran is popularly known in dependency circle for his writing on backwardness and monopoly capitalism. His preoccupation was on the impact of monopoly capitalism on the individual and the society as a whole. Baran examined the injustice and irrationality of capitalism in underdeveloped countries and believed that Marxism was relevant to an understanding of the condition of the underdeveloped nations.

In particular, Baran argued that socialism in advanced countries would eventually serve humanity. He advocated for a socialism that would not only attack western irrationality but cultural and moral degradation of the west underdeveloped. According to him, socialism must avoid political and social repression that had accompanied early stages of socialism in the Eastern world.

In his view, socialism in backward and underdeveloped nations must overcome “a powerful tendency to become a backward and underdeveloped socialism. Paul Baran equated colonialism with dependency in contemporary world and argued that the dependent (periphery) nations could not achieve, accumulation as the developed nations did or overcome the obstacles of monopoly capitalism and imperialism.

Baran’s concern with underdevelopment pushed him to attack the proponents of capitalist development as a way out to backwardness. He criticized W.W. Rostow on his advocacy on the stages of economic growth.

### **SAMIR AMIN**

Samir Amin’s contribution on dependency centred on his theory of unequal exchange. In this, Amin exposes a relationship that shows fundamental difference between the model of capital accumulation and economic and social development that characterizes a self-centred system and that of a dependent or periphery system. His theory departed from the assumption that the world comprises of developed and underdeveloped nations, some of which are capitalist and the other socialist, but only one, the capitalist world market, in which Eastern Europe marginally participates (Amin, 1974:1-4).

Samir Amin sees accumulation as an essential inner law of pre-capitalist mode of production. He characterized underdevelopment in terms of unevenness of the economic, and domination from outside. According to him, uneven levels of productivity are found everywhere, even in advanced countries where progress is associated with new industries. Domination from outside in his view is the consequence of dependence. External dependence is characterized by a few large scale enterprises, usually foreign, that rely on large international businesses and centres outside the underdeveloped countries. Thus, external dependence appears with external trade involving exports of primary products for imports of goods manufactured abroad. This commercial dependence accompanied by increased financial dependence upon investment of foreign capital results in an outflow of profits and a return of capital to the developed or advanced countries.

All these are followed by the growth of imports caused by urbanization and insufficient local production of food, increase in administrative, expenses in proportion to the needs of local economy, unequal income, distribution; consumptions by privileged strata, inadequate industrialization leading to imports of capital goods. These according to Amin is the development of underdevelopment.

### **ANDRE GUNDER FRANK**

Andre Gunder Frank in his capital development of underdevelopment (1969) argued that mercantilist capital colonialism penetrated the countries of Africa, Asia and South America, plundering the resources of those areas of the world and destroyed their indigenous production system in order to force them to serve the economic ends of the European colonial powers.

According to him, the economic surplus of the colonies, were siphoned off of the mother countries to the metropolises, contributing substantially to the development of the metropolises and underdevelopment of the former satellite countries or peripheries. This exploitative process of the peripheries by the metropolises has continued up to the present day, although, the form has changed from mercantile colonialism to Laissez-faire industrial neo-colonialism to multi-national corporate neo-colonialism.

In an article he published in 1966, Frank had argued that most theories fail to explain the structure and development of the capitalist system as a whole and to account for its simultaneous generation of underdevelopment in some of its parts and of economic development of others. He criticized the view that economic development takes place through a succession of stages and that underdeveloped countries of today may pass through higher stage of development. He showed that underdevelopment was not original and traditional, rather, the now developed countries according to him were never underdeveloped, though they may have been underdeveloped.

### **IMMANUEL WALLERSTEIN'S WORLD SYSTEM THEORY**

Wallerstein's world system theory consists of three level approach to economics which includes of the core, periphery and semi-periphery countries in the context of global inequality.

It is an approach to world history and social change that supports that there is a world economic system in which some countries benefit while others are exploited. Just as we cannot understand individuals behaviour without reference to their surroundings, experiences and culture, also, a nations economic system cannot be understood without reference to the world system which it is a part of. The main features of the world system theory as put forward by Immanuel Wallerstein include the following:

- i. The world system theory established a three level hierarchy consisting of core, periphery and semi-periphery areas.
- ii. The core countries dominate and exploit the periphery countries for labour and raw materials.
- iii. The periphery countries are dependent on core countries for capital.
- iv. The semi-periphery countries share characteristics of both core and periphery countries.
- v. The theory emphasizes the social structure of global inequality.

From the above, the core countries are the dominant capitalist nations that exploit the periphery countries for labour and raw materials. These countries are very strong in military power and are not dependent on any state or country. They serve the interest of the economically powerful and are focused on higher skill and capital intensive production. As powerful nations, they pay lower prices for raw material and exploit cheap labour which constantly re-enforces the unequal status between core and periphery nations.

On the other hand, the periphery countries fall on the other end of the economic scale. These countries lack a strong central government and may be controlled by other states. The countries export raw materials to core nation's and are dependent on them for capital, and have underdeveloped industry. The countries also have low skill, labour intensive production or cheap labour and are called third world countries.

Again, the semi-periphery countries fall in the middle of the economic spectrum. These countries share the characteristics of both core and periphery nations. They are sometimes exploited by core countries but they may also exploit the periphery nations.

### **AFRICAN UNDERDEVELOPMENT: RE-EXAMINATION AND TIME TO STOP THE BLAME GAME**

The history of western imperialism and colonialism in Africa just like any other part of the world especially in Asia and Latin America was no doubt tragic. The third world nations at a time of their evolutionary process came into contact with the more developed countries of the West who not only exploited them but subjugated these countries politically, some of them for centuries. No one can argue logically that imperialism of the west did not affect the third world adversely. At least, there was the tragedy of distortion of third world history, civilization, culture, religion, politics, economics and entire heritage.

In Africa, the continent suffered more than five hundred years of slavery and depopulation through the transatlantic slave trade. Within this period, the young, labour force and future of Africa were callously deprived of the continent.

Before this was the trans-saharan slave trade perpetrated by the Arabs and Islamists of North Africa and Middle-East which like the transatlantic slavery was equally calamitous and depopulated Africa. For the long period of colonial and imperial rule of the west, the third world nations were quarantined to the pitiable position of mere hewers of rock and drawers of water. Their able bodied men and women were carried away in millions while the resources of their countries became preyed by the metropolises. For instance, for many years Belgium ruled Congo Kinshasa (DRC), at independence, the vast nation apparently the second largest and endowed country in Africa had only 14 graduates; a situation that made it very difficult for them to face the challenges of independence and nationhood (Rodney, 1972). In Nigeria, after a century of colonial rule (1861-1960), the British government left Nigeria with only Yaba College of Technology and a Campus of the University of London, (University of Ibadan) irrespective of the enormous resources at their disposal exploited from the richly endowed nation.

In Kenya, the men of that country were castrated so as to stop them from procreating so as to reduce the population of the indigenous people and to increase the white population. The public service were skewed to be controlled and dominated by expatriates while social amenities were provided only in the white residential Government Reserve Areas (GRA) among other despicable policies. Indeed the African continent was not the only people that



passed through these evils of imperialism. Latin America and Asia even suffered more comparatively.

However, irrespective of the fact that one cannot deny the impact of western imperialism and colonialism on the third world underdevelopment, it is discernible today that the third world nations even after many decades and centuries of self-rule, still continue to blame the west for their self inflicted underdevelopment. It is well known that Africa is falling behind the rest of the world in terms of well being. Even though global poverty is on the decline due to rapid economic growth in China, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brazil and other parts of the world, Africa's contribution to this decline is disappointing. Absolute poverty in many African countries is in fact rising (Sachs, 2005). What are actually responsible for this backwardness?

While dependency theorists and radical African scholars tend to heap the whole blame on western imperialism, this study identifies many other causative factors other than western imperialism and colonialism as the real reasons for African underdevelopment after many years of self-rule.

For instance, Africa has the most countries classified as failed states in the world. In failed states index published in 2010, out of 10 nations mentioned, African countries ranked seven top nations and almost half of the sixty weakest nations on earth. The British department of International Development defines failed states as "governments that cannot or will not deliver core functions to the majority of the citizens or people including the poor.

African nations have failed to address the problems of neo-colonialism, endemic corruption, lack of innovation and creativity, extravagance and wastages including superstitions and primordial sentiments which have inhibited growth and development of the continent. The continent shares the highest dose of global insecurity and civil unrest/strife, political instability and unrest, economic decadence and social disparities, dictatorships, autocracy, sit-tightism, civilian dictators and undemocratic leaders. A comparative tabulation of African countries and developed nations disparities responsible for the gap of underdevelopment and development of both is here under presented:

**COMPARATIVE TABULATION OF DISPARITIES BETWEEN AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND DEVELOPED NATIONS**

<b>AFRICAN COUNTRIES</b>	<b>DEVELOPED NATIONS</b>
No accountability, corruption in government, mismanagement of resources.	Accountability, transparency in governments, prudent management of resources.
Dictatorship, Quasi-democracy, Rule of man, Militarism.	Democracy, Rule of law, civil control, strong institutions.
Political instability, social disorder and disparities, economic catastrophe/backwardness	Political stability, social harmony, economic development-/progress
Sit-light leadership, Autocracy and hereditary monarchy	Tenured/elected leadership, General will, constitutional monarchy
Clannishness, Grab and greed, nepotism, Demagogy, ethnocentrism, ascriptive orientation, insecurity, failed states, civil strife, segregation, nepotism.	Nationalistic, selflessness, service oriented, de-tribalized, statesmanship, achievement orientation. Advanced economies, law and order, equal opportunities, security.
Illiteracy, low per-capita income, low life expectancy, unemployment, investment disoriented, wealth consumption.	Literacy, high per-capita income, high life expectancy, employment, investment oriented, wealth creation.

While the third world and African nations blame colonialism for their woes, their post colonial era has been characterized by indirect or disguised form of colonialism known as neo-colonialism. There is a collaboration between the bourgeoisies in the core nations and those of the periphery nations to continue with the exploitation of the third world. Those willing tools in Africa who aid this exploitation of the metropolises are called lumpen or comprador bourgeoisies. The African political elites have been involved in the stealing of the resources of their countries and hiding them in the developed countries banks, buying of properties and investments abroad at the detriment of their countries. Mobutu Seseseko of Zaire (DRC) was said to be richer than his country. All the looted funds were lost to the foreign nations where he hid them after his death.

Public enterprises in African countries have suffered because of widespread corruption. The high rate of corruption in state owned companies and their failure to break even or make profit compared to private enterprises. This development was responsible for the policy of privatization of public enterprises in Nigeria and some other countries. There is total lack of competition among African economies. By subsidizing in-country industries and preventing outside imports, these companies may have less incentive to improve their products in order to become more efficient or to research new innovations.

The greatest reason why African countries are underdeveloped is due to the leadership problem that bedevil the continent. African leaders are mostly kleptomaniacs, looters, thieves, coveters, whose lives are characterized by grab and greed, unmitigated corruption, crass materialism, and plundering of their economies, sometimes in liaison with foreigners of the metropolises thereby perpetrating neo-colonialism. The endless political crisis in the

continent and lack of legitimacy to govern by leadership impostors create atmosphere of uncertainty which make economic growth and development difficult and often impossible. The longest sitting presidents in the world are mostly found in Africa. In Zimbabwe, President Robert Mugabe has been in power since 1980, Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea since 1978, Paul Biya of Cameroon since 1982. Before these were those who either died on the thrown or disgraced out of office. They include: Gadafi of Libya, Bokassa of Central Africa, Mobutu Seseseko of Zaire, Ben Ali of Tunisia, Mubarak of Egypt, Idi Amin of Uganda, Haile Selasie and Haile Mariam of Ethiopia, Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo, Omar Bongo of Gabon etc.

The question that arises here is: if colonialism is responsible for African underdevelopment, why is it that some third world countries that were colonized like African countries have developed or made remarkable developmental progress. Nations like Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, South Korea, Indonesia, India, Brazil, Mexico etc have become either developed or middle income nations, while African countries are still crawling.

With the above, one is forced to agree with Igwe [2010:6] that Africa is underdeveloped by Africa by burning widespread internal contradictions whose; fires have been continually fuelled by Africa's leadership profligacy in which massive state corruption remains the singular vice upon which all Africa's political and socio-economic problems are predicated and the sole progenitor of all other forms of corruption. Consequently, African nations must change from their stereotyped blame-colonialism-thrust of Pan-Africanists beliefs and dependency theorists.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Having critically examined this problem, it is the thesis of the study that for African nations to pull out of the shackles of underdevelopment and join the league of progressive and emergent nations, certain radical and fundamental changes must have to take place in the continent. Consequently, the following recommendations, are put forward to move the African countries away from their periphery status in the international political economy:

- i. Leadership problem of the African nations must be tackled dispassionately. Africa harbours the highest number unpatriotic and undemocratic leaders, dictators, sit-tight and authoritarian regimes in the world. No society grows above the quality of its leadership, hence the visionless, self-styled, oppressive and predatory leadership in African countries should be reformed.
- ii. Corruption is endemic in Africa. African leaders are congenitally and viciously corrupt. Many African nations have been rendered economically prostrate because of unmitigated corruption of the leaders. Most African leaders maintain bank accounts in the western world where they hide the stolen wealth of their countries and at the same time accuse the west of exploitation and imperialism. Mobutu Seseseko of Zaire (DRC) was said to be richer than his country. Other African leaders like Sani Abacha (Nigeria), Emperor Bokassa (Central Africa), etc were similarly disposed. The cankerworm of corruption must be eradicated not only in the third world but in the African content instead of blaming the west.
- iii. The African continent is the most endowed among all continents of the world in natural resources. This abundant resources have not be effectively tapped and deployed for growth and development. The little resources available to the

nations have been misappropriated and misapplied. No wonder Africa is still pejoratively referred as a dark continent battling with the challenges of underdevelopment. African nations should rise against ascriptive orientation, primordial sentiments, neo-colonialism and desires of the moment but imbibe vision of sustainable future. According to Awung (2011). Most African countries are suffering from political unrest, economic catastrophies and social disaster. Africa sometimes referred to as forgotten continent is blessed with various natural resources but suffers under corruption, unemployment, civil strife and terror because of dictators and citizens who are poor and desperate to earn a living despite the means. These characteristics according to him have made African countries to be described as failed states by political pundits. In the failed states index published by **foreign policy and fund for peace** in 2010, Africa claims seven of the ten top stots and almost half of the 60 weakest states on earth (Awung, 2011).

There is urgent need for African nations to initiate development strategies backed by strong and progressive political will and implementation plan that are sustainable. This should be honestly and transparently followed by all successive governments in their countries irrespective of ideological and partisan interests. Sustainable development should be the core value of all African nations since failing to plan is planning to fail.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is unfortunate that even in this twenty first century, Africa is falling behind the rest of the world in poverty, underdevelopment and economic wellbeing. Although global underdevelopment is on the decline in China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brazil, Mexico, Argentina and other third world countries, the case of Africa seems to be deteriorating. Africa has passed through slave trade, imperialism and colonialism with their manifest setbacks on the development of the continent, however, the continent must stop dwelling on her past historical experience since some other regions passed through worst experience and came out stronger, today.

The developed countries today are what their citizens want them to be. It is through patriotism, sacrifice and transparency that the developed countries are what they are today and this is the cultural value Africa and other third world nations should imbibe. African countries should throw away all vestiges of corruption, develop strong institutions and selfless leaders, invest to develop their countries and should be able to make their products more competitive by adding value to all of them in an ever dynamic and competitive global political economy.

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