

Africa and the Challenges of Development in the Twenty-First Century World

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Abstract

This paper examines how Africans have contributed to the development of Africa via the use of self-help, education, and good governance examples. It also looks at the relationships between common misunderstandings about Africa and the sorts of reforms that would enable Africans to become global citizens. This paper looks at how Africans end up on the outskirts of the 21st-century knowledge economy while attempting to become more integrated into the global economy. It does this by referencing previous research on the inaccurate portrayals of the African continent found in some textbooks, as well as development discourses from international organizations and mainstream Western media. This paper is structured into three main sections. The first examines the relationship between manpower needs and development, using education as a foundation. It also highlights the challenge of reorienting African minds to unlearn some traditions that do not align with contemporary trends of interconnectedness. Here, it is important to highlight the contributions that education has made to Africa's growth on a national and global scale and to point out areas in need of drastic change. Africa's economic growth is mostly driven by effective governance, according to the second portion. It examines how cultural differences impact how the outside world views Africa and contrasts African political aspirations with actual development measures. The third and last section examines self-help projects, describing efforts made by local and international groups to assist Africans in developing self-help projects as a way to overcome some of the biggest development roadblocks. Most of these problems suggest that Africans need to abandon their long-standing habit of being the objects of other people's projects. In order to argue that Africa can overcome most of its development challenges with the right education and a dedication to sustainable

development, China and other Asian countries are used as successful development models, highlighting the necessity for Africans to be independent.

Keywords: Africa, Development, Leadership, Good Governance, Self-Help, Education, Democratization

Introduction

Africa is a continent undergoing rapid change. However, a lot of people still find it to be a strange place covered with myths and stories. Despite possessing over 20% of the world's land area and 14% of its population, the 54 nations only accounted for 2.2% of the world's commerce by value in 2019 (Chukwudi, 2019: 119-120; Adebola, 2020: 334-339), compared to 38.5% from Europe and 40.7% from Asia. In many respects, Africa remains a marginalized continent. But there is no denying that things are changing and will change much more in the near future. Asia's middle class has grown significantly as a result of China and India's economic progress in the first decade of the twenty-first century. In spite of often dubious statistical evidence, there are signs that this could be happening in certain African nations, and Africa will surely be the continent to watch over the next 20 years and beyond. Many African countries have among of the highest economic growth rates in the world today, even if their economies occasionally started with weak foundations. Thirteen African countries saw average annual GDP growth rates above 6% between 2009 and 2018. (Nwodo, 2021: 433; Roth and Adewunmi, 2019: 234).

Unfortunately, Africa remains the world's poorest and least developed continent, despite notable improvements in several countries in the areas of democratic governance, education, and healthcare. In the United Nations' 2016 *Human Development Report*, 19 of the 20 lowest-ranked nations are in Africa; Afghanistan is the only country not in Africa that made the "bottom 20" list (Abe, 2018: 366-368; Urwin, 2022). Swaziland, a tiny nation in southern Africa with a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, holds the sad distinction of having the lowest life expectancy at birth in the world, at just 48.9 years, much below the 83+ years of nations like Japan, Singapore, and Switzerland (Nordstrom, 2016: 189; Saheed, 2018; Adelaja, 2021: 113-114). In contrast to Norway, where 2.6 out of every 1,000 newborns died before the age of 5, Angola had the highest rate in the world—156.9—in 2018. (Uvin and Adepeju, 2019; Adelaja, 2021).

Africa continues to have a rich and dynamic cultural heritage (Toussaint, 2014: 98; Ejiofor, 2021; Muyideen and Ahmed, 2022: 222-223). The origin of humanity, the illustrious legacy of ancient civilizations, historic cities, a vibrant tapestry of art, music, and literature. But these qualities are unknown to so many individuals. Most people have limited knowledge of Africa, which is largely due to sensationalized

stories in the international media that frequently show a lack of knowledge of African nations and people and focus on 'newsworthy' topics like natural and man-made disasters like drought, desertification, civil war, terrorism, and famine.

Neo-patrimonial governments have been said to control the African continent for the past few decades, yet this kind of government does not appear to be beneficial to Africa (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1994: 475-476; Nwodo, 2021). Some academics tend to blame neocolonial activities for the widespread occurrence of weak governance and underdevelopment on the continent, which they blame on the intervention of development partners like the World Bank. They contend that these actions take the shape of foreign aid that is intended to support Africa's development efforts but comes with requirements that are more harmful than beneficial to the continent's economy (Abe, 2018; Moyo, 2019: 7; Uvin and Adepeju, 2019; Ejiofor, 2021). However, it is frequently charged that development partners are not doing enough for Africa. This paradox, which characterizes foreign intervention as a form of neocolonialism while also attributing inadequate funding to international intervention, has dominated African development literature to the point where it frequently pays little attention to the part that Africans themselves should be playing in the process.

Using examples from education, good governance, and self-help, this paper explores the role of Africans in the development of Africa by investigating the connections between prevalent misconceptions about the continent and the kinds of reform that would help Africans become global citizens. The paper examines how, in trying to increase their inclusion in a global economy, Africans wind up on the periphery of the twenty-first century knowledge economy by drawing on existing literature on misrepresentations of the African continent, as presented in some textbooks, as well as development discourses of international organizations and the mainstream Western media.

The paper is divided into three main sections: the first establishes education as the cornerstone of African development by examining the connection between labor market conditions and growth, and the second poses the problem of reorienting the African mind to unlearn some traditions that do not follow contemporary trends of interconnectedness. Here, it is important to highlight how education has contributed to Africa's growth on a local and global scale and to identify areas in need of significant change. The second section identifies strong governance as Africa's primary driver of economic expansion. It compares the political expectations of Africans with real development strategies and looks at how cultural variations affect how the world perceives Africa. The third and last section looks at self-help initiatives, detailing efforts by both domestic and foreign organizations to support

Africans in cultivating self-help initiatives as a means of solving some of the most significant development obstacles. The majority of these issues indicate that Africans must give up their long-standing custom of becoming the targets of other people's initiatives. We utilize China and other Asian nations as successful development models to underline the need for Africans to be independent in order to make the case that with the correct education and a commitment to sustainable development, Africa can overcome the majority of her development issues.

Education and Development in Africa

It is common knowledge that a stagnant workforce indicates the possibility of economic disaster. Because most national economies rely on their human resources to provide them with use value and exchange value for their natural resource resources, this is true. It is crucial to realize that, in contrast to the twentieth century, when industrial development depended on the knowledge and abilities of a select few, "economies depend on the talents and knowledge of all [their] people" in current era of globalization and interdependence (Spring, 2008: 337). That is, mass rather than elitist interests now provide the development base for the majority of economies, and such shifts in the use of human capital essentially shape the knowledge economy of today. Wealth is "linked to knowledge workers and eventually to educational systems" in this postindustrial economy. Many Africans doubt the effectiveness of their education systems when their economies underperform because education is crucial to providing competent workforce for any economy. It must be highlighted that these inquiries typically lead to educational modifications intended to refocus educators' attention on current development needs (Toussaint, 2014; Dei, 2014: 28; Adebola, 2020).

For example, during the 1960s, Ghana has implemented a number of educational changes, but none of them has been completely effective. The two most recent reforms in the Ghana Education Service emphasize a focus on mathematics, science, and technology education, primarily because these subjects are believed to form the core of today's development needs (Dei, 2015: 269; Roth and Adewunmi, 2019). The Ghanaian government often uses cosmetic education reforms as a tactic to avoid taking responsibility for poor performance. However ineffective curriculum reforms may be, as we show below, modifying the curriculum by itself will not sufficiently prepare Ghanaians for the challenges of the contemporary world. Actually, the emphasis of educational changes in Ghana has often been on one accomplishment or another. In the end, nevertheless, they failed Ghanaians, who hardly notice the anticipated socioeconomic transformation that these reforms promised. It might be necessary to remind Ghanaian politicians that education is not the primary goal but rather a means to an end. It is a tool that must be employed

to further a nation's objectives for strong leadership, economic transformation, the rule of law, and other things. However, this cannot be true of Africans, even if national education initiatives frequently aim to promote national development and are started by people who belong to the community for which they were created. Because they are not particularly good at taking the initiative, Africans tend to prefer to experience economic advancement as recipients (Palmer et al., 2019: 165). Regretfully, Africa's smug approach to progress has not been changed by formal education. Put another way, those who desire to finish their education and those who drop out of school both participate in deviant activities even if these are not taught in schools. Using simple parallels, we might conclude that Africans' obligations and conduct are not governed by the governmental machinery, but rather are accommodated by larger society.

We believe that a strong society is one that is structured on the power of "we." It is based on interpersonal relationships and a system for defending group interests over those of the individual (Durkheim, 2012: 65). Therefore, selfish interests contribute very little to establishing a strong (economic) community in education and growth of an African society. This is likely the reason why most individualistic standards or development issues are usually rooted in selfish attempts in African economies. That is, people engage in counterproductive behavior and occasionally resort to violence needlessly because the laissez-faire environments in which they live continue to degrade them to the point where they are unable to apply the knowledge they have learned in school for the benefit of society at large. The pursuit of collective interests like pan-Africanism, patriotism, national peace and security, good governance, genuine self-reliance, and the sharing culture has to be radicalized through education. Global interdependence is about cooperation, networking, and sharing within and among people of various communities, as well as *inside* communities. Therefore, changing Africans' mentality to one of "each other's keeper" is necessary for Africa to participate in a globalized world. After all, for Africans, who have a long history of interdependence that may be modified to suit the demands of contemporary African societies, globalization is hardly a new phenomenon.

Classic examples of how traditional African communities have relied on one another for their necessities include the barter trade and the extended family system. The barter trade was a network that encouraged the exchange of products and services among people, organizations, and communities. To participate in this network, one was expected to have some sort of valuable possession. The main prerequisites for barter commerce today can be compared to the degree of globalization and interdependence, which may include sound government, security,

and peace as well as science and technology advancements and sustainable economic growth. Good governance, stability, and security are commodities that can be "swapped" for foreign investment, sustainable development is exchanged for skilled labor, and science and technology is exchanged for innovations in the global market.

As most Africans are aware, a family member who simply gets from others and never has to contribute is disregarded and considered not only as a dependent, but as a nuisance. This understanding of the extended family system may be seen as a wonderful asset in today's interconnected world. Such a person is known as "tuurnyuur" in the Dagara community of northern Ghana, which technically means "one who follows others for drinks" but also, generically, "one who is always on the receiving end." We think that tuurnyuur, or *maskini* in Swahili, is present in the majority of African societies and cultures. Africans may therefore clearly comprehend why a tuurnyuur does not earn respect from children until he can demonstrate that others can rely on him for certain needs as well. And the only way to do that is to use whatever abilities or assets he has (such as farming, weaving, or constructing) to make some money so that he can contribute financially when he goes out with family or friends for a pot of *pito* (a native beer in northern Ghana). The tuurnyuur starts to get the respect of people in his group once he is able to share with others at least twice.

Africans understandably hold a marginalized position in the world society if Africa's situation in the context of globalization is understood according to the concept of the tuurnyuur, with the continent being essentially dependent on foreign aid. Africans have the ability to reorganize themselves and gain the respect of the rest of the world, just as the tuurnyuur never allows circumstances to reduce him to an object of humiliation. Therefore, while discussing topics like education, globalization, and interdependence, the focus should not be on what others are doing to stop marginalizing and misrepresenting Africa, but rather on what Africans themselves are doing to break free from this situation.

Some Africanists have attributed the stereotypical portrayal of sub-Saharan Africa to a Euro-American depiction of the continent as a place of wild natives who live in jungles, stuck forever in a hunter-gatherer lifestyle. This explanation relates to why sub-Saharan Africa has been misrepresented in the West and elsewhere. They have frequently bemoaned the fact that most Americans still know very little or nothing about Africa since they (Americans) think of Africa as a single nation where wild animals roam freely and humans suffer from famine and malnutrition. Critics have refuted this disinformation by pointing out, for instance, that many wildlife species, like the tiger, are not native to Africa but rather to Asia, and that most of the

wildlife in Africa resides in game reserves and zoos, where Africans, like most other people, visit to see them (Osunde and Tlou, 2006: 121-122). Additionally, although diseases and hunger are frequently linked to the African continent in nations like Ethiopia, Uganda, Angola, and Somalia, these may be the exception rather than the rule because nations like Ghana, Nigeria, Botswana, Lesotho, and South Africa have occasionally been "self-sufficient in food production" (Osunde and Tlou, 2006: 120). If the uninformed and stupid continue to imagine Africa as a "primitive place of sweltering, humid jungles populated by wild animals and savages," even if "just 10% of the African continent is jungle," it is simply because Africans have failed to refute such misrepresentations (Christine, 2017). It is important to recognize that efforts have been made to dispel historical myths regarding Africa's lack of civilization and its lack of capacity for self-government. There have been claims made that ancient Africans interacted with the Greeks, Chinese, Romans, and early Indonesians. It has also been suggested that Africa formerly had an "advanced" civilization, as evidenced by the existence of the early West African kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai (Christine, 2017: 72). However, it is clear that this ancient society never advanced.

Why then does it appear difficult for Africans to advance upon this old but sophisticated "capacity for social organization," "a talent that operated at the village level and in the complex kingdoms," and through which "many Africans achieved a kind of social harmony that could exist without the power of a centralized authority"? (Christine, 2017: 73). Some ideas, myths, and stereotypes about Africa, while possibly false, have "continued to flourish in Europe," "North America," and elsewhere because Africans appear to lack the confidence to sustain and build on early trade and interdependent initiatives and to demonstrate to the world that, in fact, Africa has an advanced civilization (Christine, 2017). Therefore, it is the responsibility of Africans to inform the global community about the realities and possibilities of the continent. Africans must first be sure they actually possess the items they want to display before they can proceed. Without this, no matter how persuasively they argue for their claim to inclusion, Africans will never feel like they belong in the global community.

This is likely the reason why some critical observers have noted that despite the close political relationships between China and Africa, the Chinese have a tendency to look down on Africans. This attitude is typically attributed to the Chinese lack of information regarding the reality of Africa (Gillespie, 2019: 214). These observers claim that some Chinese publicly inquire about what Africans have contributed to the table in exchange for the things that China is seeking from them. Because the Chinese have no faith in the socioeconomic background of the former, they

essentially look down on Africans. The answer is to strategically rebuild Africa as an independent continent rather than insisting on respect and recognition from the Chinese. Africa's inclusion and acceptance in the current interdependent global society would be guaranteed through self-reliance. Development activists should focus more on reversing the pervasive and troubling passive attitude that many Africans have toward issues that influence the development of the African continent. Our point is that Africans frequently contribute to the discrimination they experience and fight against. We are not advocating that discriminatory behavior be condoned in a globalizing society. This is the reason why some of the proposals made in relation to certain myths and preconceptions about Africans as being inadequately responsive to Africa's development needs, both at home and in the diaspora, come as a surprise (Osunde and Tlou, 2006: 123).

For instance, some researchers have given American social studies teachers the task of finding up-to-date information on Africa through their own library research in order to supplement what is provided in textbooks, outlining the various ways in which American social studies teachers may effectively teach about Africa. They assert that teachers can obtain free materials from the embassies and consular offices of African countries in New York, Washington, DC, and San Francisco because, in their opinion, such materials portray the realities of life in African nations, despite the fact that this is obviously untenable. These materials include current maps, hotel and tourist brochures, pictures, videos, films, and economic, educational, and demographic information (Osunde and Tlou, 2006: 124).

In general, it is a good idea to encourage instructors to steer clear of outdated historical materials that reflect the perspectives of colonizing Europeans and to update classroom learning with data from original sources. It is quite doubtful that such recommendations will inspire American or non-Africanist professors to act in accordance. Since social studies teachers are likely to be tasked with teaching not only about Africa but also about the rest of the world, the prospect of having to go through lengthy red tape in order to obtain a video from an African country's embassy, should such teaching resources not be available online, may be so discouraging that teachers may opt to use readily available (albeit out-of-date) information instead. It would be preferable if researchers and other Africanists collaborated with the proposed African embassies to bring such accessible instructional materials and teaching aids on Africa directly to American teachers rather than passively asking foreign teachers to search for updated information on the continent. This might be accomplished through a well-designed website, with print versions of crucial data made available to educational institutions that could experience connectivity issues with the Internet.

We think joint outreach initiatives and educational resources for schools would support American educators in efficiently and truthfully educating their students about Africa. Because it is imperative that Africans in the diaspora work together to replace outdated historical materials if we demand that teachers refrain from utilizing them.

Africans, both at home and abroad, must collaborate with their development partners or, better yet, take the initiative in the fight to get rid of other significant development issues as well as misconceptions and prejudices about Africa and Africans. In order to avoid giving the idea that such situations of extreme need exclusively exist in Africa, NGOs and media outlets must exercise greater caution in how they use information about African children who require assistance. Television advertising and other online media frequently portray African children in a very degrading light, ostensibly because taking advantage of such terrible circumstance garners donor support (Moyo, 2019: 37).

Africans must cooperate to dispel false information since it inevitably undermines their continent's credibility in the international marketplace. Africans living abroad can contribute to this by taking on the responsibility of ensuring that debates of educational and development-related problems accurately represent the continent. In the end, this would dispel the dreaded myths and prejudices and increase the chances for international investment, trade, and interdependence, which would benefit Africans' progress. However, this will require responsible civic and political leadership. In the next section, we explore how the system of rule in Africa has shaped the continent's socioeconomic transformation.

Democratization and Good Governance

Democracy is viewed as a better form of government that has the potential to move Africa toward attaining its development goals and is increasingly gaining ground in several regions of the continent (Keller, 2017: 2). Therefore, campaigns for the democratization of the entire continent have been a primary focus for local and international activists concerned with Africa's development. While some contend that the current push for democracy will go a great way toward resolving Africa's various issues, others think it is simply a new form of authoritarian leadership. The majority of African states that have chosen democracy as their form of government have been characterized in various ways as failures, which is consistent with the latter viewpoint. A quick look at some of these arguments might help us understand why democratization is still a problem for most African states today.

It is well-known in the development discourse about Africa that "expectations on the continent and around the world were high" shortly after Africa gained its freedom (Keller, 2017). Leaders believed that sub-Saharan African governments

would "take off" politically and economically through self-governance to become strong, autonomous players in the international community.

As a result, a lot of Africans prayed for the spread of democracy. It was widely believed that having Africans rule over their own continent would not only be potentially democratic but also represent an unprecedented indicator of sustainable growth.

Contrary to these aspirations, however, the introduction and acceptance of democracy and self-rule in Africa swiftly gave rise to a disastrous political and economic catastrophe, shattering the hopes and dreams of the already hungry and optimistic majority of Africans. This failure is what some opponents refer to as "neopatrimonialism," a system of military oligarchies, plebiscitary and competitive one-party regimes, or personal tyranny. The African leader shamefully stands out in these neo-patrimonial regimes as the "strongman" of the country who controls by decree; political rivalry and involvement are forbidden. Unfortunately, these systems' own initiatives to reform themselves often fail, and "genuine political change" does not appear possible (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1994: 476). Because of this, politicians in Africa frequently have the chance to take advantage of the populace. Because most African politicians do not actually represent their people's interests, this issue persists today. A few African nations that have experienced (neo)patrimonial rule at some point include Uganda, the Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (previously Zaire), Togo, Gabon, Zambia, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, and Ghana (my own nation) (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1994: 457). Some African states are still mired in violent conflicts, poverty, and bad governance in the twenty-first century, which is expected to usher in peace, development, and global interdependence (Zimbabwe, Kenya, and Sudan are among the recent examples of political unrest and insecurity on the continent). This political legacy not only casts doubt on Africa's already tarnished reputation as a player in the global economy, but it also erodes our hopes for the likelihood of change and progress. Perhaps we need to be reminded that it is unacceptable to extend one hand toward growth, interdependence, and globalization while firmly grasping onto bizarre customs and cultures with the other. It is crucial to highlight that hoped-for improvements in African cultures and economy would not occur "without upsetting traditional beliefs, upsetting old routines, requiring fundamental organizational changes, and without in turn generating new difficulties with which we must grapple" (Durkheim, 2012: 3). African governments must abandon the practice of sycophantic leadership and follow the lead of the few democratizing African states like Botswana and Ghana

that have shown a dedication to these objectives if they truly believe in good governance and the socioeconomic development of Africans.

Some African countries have commended open elections and equality before the law, demonstrating that the continent is capable of having good governance and economic development. If there are indeed bright spots in once extremely impoverished African nations like Ghana and Botswana, as well as in South Africa, which has severe racial and ethnic divisions, stark income disparities, and a high crime rate, then it becomes easier to believe that development challenges in Africa can be overcome. Ghana's political maturity is a noteworthy success story in African politics. The country's citizens twice overthrew the incumbent in hotly contested general presidential and parliamentary elections without igniting any political unrest. The country seems ready to put an end to lawlessness and corruption because of stronger state institutions, more political rivalry, and a proclaimed commitment to effective management. President Barack Obama, the 44th president of the United States of America, visited Ghana and publicly praised its development initiatives. He also pledged to provide the model African nation a lot of support on behalf of both his country and the international community, which is likely what led to this progress. Obama approved a trade deal with Ghana in response to the country's commitment to prosperity and good governance, drawing attention to the needs of interdependence in the global economy. This point of view contends that in order to participate in an interdependent world, all participating nations must attain a certain level of development, good administration, and domestic peace and stability (through democratic government).

Africa won't be able to reap the benefits of globalization in large amounts until its people can meet these demands. And just as one would not physically try to "enter a market" without first opening the gate, African countries cannot be a part of a system to which they do not have access. In other words, these prerequisites are the key to the global market. African leaders are frequently accused by critics of having a propensity "to preside over the development of underdevelopment" rather than championing the continent's real Development, which they claim is to blame for the continent's generally weak economies (Keller, 2017). While African leaders have fallen short of the expectations of their citizens, they exhibit considerable "competence" as promoters of underdevelopment, corruption, and nepotism.

We have already seen that among Africa's leadership, "the small number of individuals with power has often eroded any semblance of accountability, legitimacy, and justice," which has left many planners, economists, and policymakers disappointed. These individuals expected African governments to "introduce a reasonable and collective attack on poverty, disease, illiteracy, and

other challenges of development" (Kpundeh, 2002: 33). While it is true that African leaders are, in large part, to blame for the deteriorating situation in sub-Saharan Africa, it is important to note that widespread ignorance among the populace, both literate and illiterate, is also a major contributor to governments' inability to meet the continent's development needs.

Although crucial in teaching and giving local people with self-help solutions to close this development gap, international organizations and NGOs' operations in Africa are made more difficult by the beneficiary communities' ongoing lack of initiative. The following paragraphs explore some NGO-led development initiatives and Africans' response to such problem-solving efforts.

Self-Help and Interdependence

Prospects for development on the continent cannot be overstated due to the abundance of natural resources. In the portions that came before, we saw how Africa's constantly declining human capital is caused by a lack of confidence brought on by the continent's marginalization in a world of interdependence. The majority of African politicians and their supporters have a history of turning to foreign intervention to address domestic issues. This legacy has frequently caused issues because it appears that foreigners can only provide so much assistance, and because Africans are frequently slow to understand that it is up to them to first provide that to which others may add. As a result, the narrative has frequently turned negative against development partners for either doing little in the way of development aid or for exploiting a continent that is already in a precarious position. Regardless of the veracity of these assertions, research on African development has frequently avoided emphasizing the crucial role that the African people should play in the process. The private sector, NGOs, international and bilateral financing organizations, the private sector as well as a wide range of civic organizations make up Africa's development partners (Archer, 2016: 7-18).

The World Bank (WB) has a history of lending to African countries to fund development projects. According to some academics, the World Bank's sponsorship of these programs has yielded significant quantitative and qualitative benefits. For instance, it has funded school construction projects and helped to promote teaching and learning at the primary, secondary, vocational, and higher education levels in numerous nations. Despite these beneficial effects, the WB has come under heavy fire for its operations in Africa, which have been dubbed a failure, a type of neocolonialism, or even imperialism.

According to the WB's detractors, the practice of attaching loans to its own policies (i.e., ideological requirements or conditionalities) for lending to African countries violates both the rights of those nations and imposes a strategy that may not be

suitable for all borrowing nations. The WB is generally viewed as having a negative impact on the area and connoting more failure than success in Africa (Diawara, 2013: 66).

According to some detractors, the involvement of international organizations like the World Bank is a glaring example of ongoing postcolonial rule over the African continent. While many formerly colonized African nations have achieved territorial and political independence, they contend that cultural and economic independence has never truly been accomplished (Wickens and Sandlin, 2017: 276-277). In other words, they contend that former colonists continue to rule the so-called developing countries economically, culturally, monetarily, militarily, and ideologically through the activities of these multinational organizations. However, these arguments have frequently "missed the mark"; the World Bank might be seen as a partner in development rather than a leader in Africa's growth (Castro, 2012: 396). "Multilateral banks are just like commercial businesses," perhaps we need to be reminded. They do not make grants; they simply borrow and lend money. In reality, these banks "find it easier to lend US\$200 million than to offer US\$20,000 as a grant" because they "do not have \$20,000 to give, even though they have \$200 million to lend" (Castro, 2012: 389). It is only logical that the World Bank shows concern not just about how much money to lend but, more importantly, about the best way to lend this money since it is a commercial institution with many clients (countries) all over the world. In other words, lending organizations like the WB strive to promote compliance with the terms of borrowers' loans—conditions that borrowers must initially accept—rather than default. Despite the fact that "banks are not so bothered about payback... they do worry about corruption, about a negative publicity, and about people bragging that they had a free ride with the bank's money", it is equally significant to remember that (Castro, 2012). This is why each loan specifies how the money should be used, "in ample detail".

We rarely recognize that the truly impoverished nations of sub-Saharan Africa cannot really profit from WB loans because of their weak public administration and lack of decent governance. Due to the fact that development "projects require a level of bureaucratic efficacy at the receiving end" that is seldom ever seen in Africa, it is actually challenging for development banks to assist poor African governments (Castro, 2012: 390). African governments cannot claim ignorance of the reality that many loans given to underprivileged African communities end up in the personal bank accounts of those leaders.

Yet, they keep signing loans for politically significant projects. What kind of economic development can we anticipate given that the majority of loans are made for political rather than economic justifications? Can we hold the World Bank or

other international organizations responsible for loans that were legitimately contracted for economic development goals but were disbursed by local authorities on the basis of politics?

The subject of poor leadership comes up once more. The current status of African affairs is the result of the combined efforts of African governments, civic coalitions, NGOs, gender and community development campaigners, and other organizations. They are all aware of the fact that funds raised locally or internationally for the development of Africa are frequently instead used to pay off debts owed to other countries or simply to lubricate the wheels of corruption (Dei, 2014: 6). Therefore, these local organizations owe it to the continent to mobilize local resources in a way that would, at the very least, lessen reliance on outside donations. The World Bank is frequently referred to as a "hip" organization that is right now concerned with supplying a qualified workforce for a postindustrial economy. Most African countries should be more concerned with building local procedures that would facilitate broader involvement in a knowledge economy because they frequently get WB loans and are among the bank's most valued clients (Morrow and Torres, 2000: 29).

Critics should definitely spend more time discussing the critical topic of self-help in Africa in order to encourage Africans to participate in a knowledge economy. They must comprehend that international organizations are aware of Africa's shoddy administrative systems and that some of the conditions we find objectionable are actually intended to keep development initiatives on track. For instance, if country A receives a loan to buy computers for its senior high schools, it is the moral responsibility of governments to make sure that the money is used on the computers and not on paying off country B's debts or even on the receiving country A's Independence Day celebration (Akinpelu, 2020: 116). We argue that such interventions are corrective rather than exploitative given the current patterns of leadership in Africa and that financial organizations like the World Bank attach criteria that would compel borrowing governments to remain faithful in the administration of loans. This is likely the reason why lending organizations may impose harsher requirements for loans to African countries as contrasted to more lenient restrictions for loans to other borrowers like China. Because the high cost of foreign labor and other inputs may consume almost all of the funds for the project, lenders sometimes send their own experts and equipment ostensibly to help execute projects for which they have provided loans. This practice should be seen not only as exploitation, but also as a response by the lenders to the borrowers' poor leadership and weak human resource base, and possibly as an expression of a general lack of trust in their clients. We require a change in image in order to gain

access to better loan terms. The paperwork for loans is completed by our leaders, and only they have the authority to reject loans with unfavorable terms. But individuals in positions of leadership also play an important part. That is, the general public can influence governments to refuse loans that do not assist Africans, or even force them to do so. Naturally, we must be aware that change, whether top-down or bottom-up, is uncomfortable (Williams, 2013: 224). Uncertainty, worry, and anxiety are always there while adopting new methods of doing things, but Africans must overcome these obstacles. For instance, obtaining the right funds from outside sources can aid in increasing economic capability. However, for such growth to be realized, African countries need responsible leaders and unselfish citizenry.

Conclusion

The potential for progress in Africa has been demonstrated in this paper, but there are other development hurdles that Africans must overcome, including inadequate leadership, subpar governance, an underdeveloped labor force, extreme poverty, conflict, and insecurity. These issues, which have persisted for a long time, have a tendency to halt development in the majority of the continent's regions. The paper has demonstrated how Africa's ostensibly appalling condition has led to a dependency on foreign aid that contributes to the development or reinforcement of false representations and unfavorable stereotypes. Such falsehoods undermine Africa's standing in the international marketplace, and only the African people can work together to fix them by altering the underlying dynamics.

Africans need to step up to the plate to make sure that conversations on educational and development concerns accurately reflect the continent, both at home and in the diaspora, as we have witnessed. African leaders must receive new training to promote peace, development, and societal welfare along with their people. These adjustments would finally dispel the worst myths and stereotypes, improve external commerce and interdependence, and expand African development chances to draw more foreign investment. The paper has underlined that while foreign aid is important for maintaining economic activity in Africa, its suppliers must be recognized as partners with their African beneficiaries and must not be misrepresented or thought of as being in charge of the continent's development.

Africans and their leaders would be less reliant on foreign aid once they took ownership of their own economic transformation by participating in altruistic local income mobilization activities across the continent. The West appreciates Japan, Hong Kong, China, and Taiwan today because these nations did not wait for the advice of the white man to jump into their own type of modernity. They would then be valued and recognized as having meaningfully participated in a knowledge

economy. Africans must also pave their own place in the contemporary world, which is characterized by interconnectedness and global commerce (Diawara, 2013: 67).

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