



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Re-Thinking Resource Governance for Sustainable Human Development in the face of a 'New Scramble' for Africa.

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: Jun 10, 2024	Academic inquiry into theoretical positions on sustainable development in Africa have risen to prominence in recent times. This paper questions the traditional paradigms of thought on Africa's underdevelopment. It advances novel perspectives in rethinking resource governance by suggesting that an Induced Cumulative Causative Theory is key to understanding the proverbial 'box' in which Africans have to think out of to re-invent resource governance. The paper makes the connect between historical colonial antecedents of foreign resource control with the present proxy control of the same resources as a key structure that needs re-inventing in the face of the 'New scramble for Africa'. The paper suggests that depreciating global resources has put Africa in the crosshairs global imperial forces making the control of Africa's resources by Africans a near-impossible task. Policymakers will face the task of reinventing Africa's engagement with International corporations who are at the forefront the 'New Scramble'. The paper recommends that the control of African resources should be placed at the centre of the discourse on confronting the 'new scramble'.
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INTRODUCTION

The need for reinventing current approaches to governance in Africa is without doubt a strategic element of any sustainable development movement on the continent. However reinvention or rethinking suggests a systemic failure that is likely to reoccur if the fundamental underpinnings of the original structures are not understood and addressed. Our interrogation of failed systems will require an approach that may not necessarily subsist 'within the proverbial box' but embody the concept of breaking the usual moulds of perceiving and theorising the solutions to African problems. This necessarily requires that we not only think outside of this 'box' but first attempt to understand the 'box' that has put constraints on Africa's development. Thus an attempt to understand the box within which Africa's developmental problems exist brings one into contact with a vast amount of literature on the problems of underdevelopment in Africa which is largely bedevilled with theoretical conceptualizations of the ideal framework for development. None however seem to in reality provide a proven strategy for advancing sub-Saharan societies.

Conveniently Sandwiched Within this literature is the age old tussle between 'colonial apologist' on one hand and the advocates of the dependency theory as the root of African underdevelopment on

the other. Although other theoretical contestations do exist covering the fields of management, economics, history, sociology and philosophy. The previously mentioned tussle straddles this academic enterprise like a colossus. Hence for obvious reasons, this paper will engage with these varying positions for the sake of reference to enable a carefully structured analysis of the dialectics of Africa's underdevelopment as it relates to resource governance. More importantly it will rethink the use of economic theories, resource governance, human capital, political legitimacy, and the need for a new conceptualization of state and society in order to find more resilient launching pads for enduring change in African governance.

In an attempt to unravel 'the box', some scholars have called for a paradigm shift from the colonial dependency theory which Ameh (Ameh, 2013; Al-Dalaeen et al., 2023) claimed is no longer tenable, but rather explore more cogent explanations like the elite theory that places the burden of Africa's underdevelopment on the shoulders of corrupt African leaders in cohorts with the key players of the metropolitan economies of the West. (Ameh, 2013; Yuwen et al., 2023). As convenient as this may sound, dismissing dependency on the bases of the present socio-political realities may pose a problems in trying to understand the 'box' which Africans ought to think outside off. Dependency is inextricably linked to colonialism and the true nature and impact of the colonial enterprise on Africa cannot expire because academics have argued it away. A flippant summation of the 'colonial effect' within the simple frame of economic underdevelopment is a dire misjudgement of the 'historicity' of colonialism in Africa. To this effect (Taiwo, 2010; Lin et al., 2022) argues that 'a cursory investigation of the history of colonialism itself and its philosophical underpinnings reveals that it wasn't monolithic in nature but rather possessed a differential impact on various countries within the continent itself. (Taiwo, 2010) Consequently a differential spread in the variety of impacts is expected. To this end monolithic solutions are themselves out of the question.

In pursuit of solutions outside 'the box' this paper will seek to engage with a crucial fulcrum of underdevelopment which is resource governance. The ensuing discourse in this paper is not intended to examine the best strategies of resource governance, but rather interrogate the historicity of resource governance in Africa and identify the 'box' which Africans must theoretically 'think out of'. It is this exercise that is likely to avail us a more nuanced and elaborate perception of Africa's underdevelopment and also re-invent what 'sustainability' will represent for present and future African Societies. This exercise will cover theoretical expectations for resource governance and then explore the dialectics of global resource governance with the ongoing 'New Scramble for Africa' making the continent the source of the resources the world has always governed.

Re-thinking Theoretical conceptualizations of Governance and Sustainable development

As earlier mentioned in this paper, there seems to be no shortfall in developmental or governance theories that seek to propose strategies for developing African Societies. The challenge that however remains is effective policy implementation and subsequent continuity or sustainability to change processes. Thus the re-thinking process has to be focused on the factors interfering with Institutions, policy implementation and sustainable continuity which ensures resilience. Historically, foreign interference in policy implementation processes in African affairs has remained a major culprit to a certain school of thought. The role of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank during the high tide of neoliberal economic goes to prove this point.

Trickle-Down Economics

Neo-liberal economics is a staple in the history of the discourse of class struggle for power and control of resources. Consequently Trickle-down economics and classic 'Keynessianism' have always been frames designed to govern resources in developing worlds for the benefit of the developed world. The basic structure of these theories attest to this. For instance Trickle-down economics is a theory that claims that benefits for the wealthy trickle down to everyone else. These benefits are tax

cuts on businesses, high-income earners, capital gains, and dividends. (Amadeo, 2021) The logic here is that this theory assumes the upper class and rich industrialist and investors are the real drivers of the economy, thus it also assumes they will use the extra money from tax cuts to expand businesses and hire more workers, consequently allowing the money to trickle down to the workers who are the lower class in society. This has however not worked in practice. (Amadeo, 2021) Historically kings and emperors have always favoured & supported the rich financially and this has not changed today.

The global economic system is designed in this manner, with Africa at the bottom expecting the trickle-down effect. On the other hand, It is interesting to note that arguments for good governance that dominate governance literature and policy discussions essentially identify the importance of governance capacities that are necessary for ensuring the efficiency of markets. The basic assumption is that if African nations can ensure efficient markets, (particularly by enforcing property rights, the rule of law, reducing corruption and committing not to expropriate) private investors will drive economic growth and development. This approach is one that implicitly stresses the priority of developing market-enhancing governance, and is currently the dominant paradigm supported by international development and financial agencies.(Khan, 2007),

The problem however is the fact that the successful implementation of these strategies required a complementary set of governance capabilities which most African nations lack partly because of foreign intervention. (Khan, 2007) This is why the failure of these strategies in many African countries and their dramatic success in a small number of East Asian countries could not be satisfactorily explained at the instance of the raise of the Asian Tigers. These governance capabilities required for ensuring the effective implementation of growth-enhancing strategies are what we describe as growth-enhancing governance capabilities.(Khan, 2007)

The above argument supporting market-enhancing governance essentially maintains that if efficient markets can be developed, they will attract the most profitable technologies to developing African economies. In contrast, the case for growth-enhancing governance argues that the most efficient markets that developing African countries can create will at best be relatively inefficient in transferring assets and resources to growth sectors.(Khan, 2007) In addition, they are also likely to attract low technology and low value-added activities into the developing country, since these are often the only activities that are currently profitable given the technological capabilities of the typical developing African country. .(Khan, 2007; Ashraf et al., 2022) Consequently it is clear that while the vast majority of these policies may succeed in driving development in other countries, they are not entirely successful in Africa owing to the fact that the growth enhancing governance capabilities mentioned above have become deeply corroded by institutional aberrations engendered by Africa's brutal colonial past and neo-colonial present. In spite of this bleak picture, current events on the continent seem to suggest emerging dynamics are set to change the fortunes of African nations.

Sustainable 'Human' development

In the past decade, African nations posted shocking economic growth leaving pundits to estimate that Nigeria, Egypt and South Africa would remain in the ten fastest growing economies in the world between 2014-2050.(Hutchings, 2019) Currently 6 of the 10 fastest growing economies are in Africa.(Hutchings, 2019) and the big question is does economic growth translate into sustainable human development? To be more specific; will Africa's 'economic growth' translate into 'human development' that can be sustained? Is the current growth bazaar another 'economic bubble' that will likely burst soon? More importantly can growth truly be factored as 'sustainable' if the human element that engages the African populace is not represented? Patrick (2012) expresses these reservations when he states that although oil abundance produces high growth, it often benefits only a few corrupt elites rather than translating into higher living standards for most of the population. Oil-rich Angola is a case in point. Despite having one of the world's highest growth rates from 2005 to 2010, averaging some 17 percent annually, its score on the human development index remained a

miserable 0.49, and its infant mortality rate was lower than the sub-Saharan African average. (Patrick, 2012; Zain et al., 2022)

The expansion of market economies alongside economic growth measured in high GDP's and good performing private sectors are all theoretical indices of progress in modern economies. However, the observable disparity between theory and reality in the African condition is what calls for a rethink of our conceptualization of Sustainable Development (SD). The International Institute for Sustainable Development defines SD as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to not only meet their own needs but also create resilient economies.' (IISD, 2023) However the economic policies that we have largely been compelled by the west to adopt will clearly result into a Circular Cumulative Causation effect on African nations and also compromise the ability of future generations not only to meet their needs, but also create resilient economies. This is demonstrated in the present growth bubble which has not translated into 'development for the masses'.

Consequently, Sustainable 'Human' Development, should be the point of emphasis. This is the type of development that does not make expansion of markets and capitalist innovations as its central focus but rather a symbiotic engagement with natural resources for sustainability. Climate change and increasing population has made the logic of wealth redundant if the exploitation of resources makes the environment uninhabitable. Water resources and arable lands are dwindling in Africa and other parts of the world thus making the survival of humanity itself the focus of development and not wealth. However in relation to other parts of the world Africa still retains huge potentials in Natural and human resources that makes it ripe for another 'scramble'.

Circular Cumulative Causation Theory

Having assessed this challenge in relation to economic growth; one is inclined to perceive Africa's underdevelopment within the theoretical framework of the Circular Cumulative Causation Theory. This is a theory developed by a Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal in the year 1956. (Fujita, 2007) Essentially It is a multi-causal approach where the core variables and their linkages are delineated. It maintains that a change in one form of an institution will lead to successive changes in other institutions. These changes are circular in that they continue in a cycle, many times in a negative way, in which there is no end, and cumulative in that they persist in each round. The change does not occur all at once as that would lead to chaos, rather the changes occur gradually. (Fujita, 2007) This theory is factored in 'Spread effect' and 'Backwash Effect' and it is obvious that African countries fall within the backwash effect. (Fujita, 2007)

The backwash effects are those effects emanating from the centre of growth that discourage equivalent growth in the other areas. Because of their rapid growth, in contrast to the stagnation of other regions, the centres of growth (or progressive regions) attract net immigration from other parts of the country or the world in this case. There is a net movement of population, capital, and goods in favour of the progressive regions while the backward regions are continually denuded. (Fujita, 2007) This explains the influx of African immigrants into Europe and other western countries and the perpetual circle of poverty and underdevelopment in Africa.

Rethinking Theoretical Conceptualizations

Our rethink of theoretical conceptualisations have clearly set the stage for interrogating the practical use or misuse of resources in order to arrive at what type of development Africans should seek. It is my conviction of that Circular Cumulative Causation is the 'African curse' which is a function of Africa's designation by the west as a 'feeder economy' and insistence on maintaining this status quo, thus perpetuating the 'curse of Circular Cumulative Causation'. To this end I am inclined to postulate a variant of Myrdals theory which is 'Induced Circular Cumulative Causation theory.' Because to all intent and purposes, the 'circular causation' of underdevelopment in sub-Saharan Africa was induced

by centuries of cumulative exploitation and foreign governance of Africa's resources starting with labour in form of slaves and followed by natural resources in the present age. The current trade dispute between Ghana and the EU over the sale of Cocoa is a classic example of this Induced Circular Cumulative Causation. (Mieu and Ibukun, 2022) Consequently, rethinking resource governance under the spectre of a 'new scramble' for Africa will require an interrogation of the following.

Governing Africa's Resources or Resource exploitation

For the purpose of this paper, resource governance will be perceived as 'the sound exercise of political, economic, and administrative authority to manage a country's resources for development. It involves the institutionalization of a system through which citizens, institutions, organizations, and groups in a society articulate their interests, exercise their rights, and mediate their differences in pursuit of the collective good.(ADB, 2005) There exist several definitions of resource governance and it is interesting to note that they all involve the concept of power and how it is exercised over resources for the benefit of all. Hence, resources, power, and common good will remain the key analytical concepts around which our discourse will revolve. So our attempt to re-invent or re-think resource governance in Africa will require a retrospective inquiry into historical antecedents that will enable a deeper understanding of the inter play between power, resources and common good. This is the case because African resources have not always remained under the power of Africans or in more recent times been controlled by other powers by proxy.

There are no economic indices by which one can measure the performance of African economies in the pre-colonial era. As a consequence of this it is very difficult to make comparative analysis and measure growth and development during this period. Regardless it is safe to say that these societies met a certain standard of living which early visitors to the continent did not peg as 'poor'. Early European writers rather described African societies as simple, communal and mostly agrarian and primitive in nature.(Heineman,1969) It is important to observe that the concept of 'primitiveness' as espoused by early European visitors did not pre-suppose gross underdevelopment and economic stagnation but rather a relative conceptualization of modernity which they believed needed time to advance.(Heineman,1969) This modernity they maintained was the 'white man's burden' to impose to which some African scholars have argued to the contrary that colonialism rather pre-empted modernity in Africa.(Taiwo, 2010) More importantly Christopher Ehret, UCLA Professor of African History and author of 'Civilizations of Africa' has consistently maintained that rather than being backward, Africa in pre-colonial times was rich in civilization, technology and social development. (Laichas, 2003) It is however interesting to note that Europe's perception of Africa as a 'Dark Continent' did not include its resources. On the contrary African resources were characterised in a glowing albeit legendary and mythical way.

The dismissal of the dependency theory by many scholars as a mere blame games has become increasingly untenable given the intricacies of the underdevelopment quagmire. Rather than refer to African's development problems in terms of absolute culpability by either Africans themselves or The West, it has become clear that each indices of underdevelopment is rooted in a unique factor of its own. The aggregate of all these factors create a summation of how Africa's underdevelopment problems should be perceived. The reality of this summation does not suggest self destruction as the prime mover of the underdevelopment process, but rather the conniving forces at play over centuries of resource exploitation. A critical look at some of these resources presents a clearer picture.

Labor

Ehrets position above on pre-colonial African economies is shared by Nathan Nunn who maintains that currently the wage gap between African nations and their western counterparts is about 40 percent however this was not the case by 1500 when the wage gap was only 1.5.(Wheeler Institute, 2022) These claims that are backed by extensive research on the African past go to prove that the

concept of underdevelopment is a characterization of colonial and post colonial Africa and not a consistent description of African economies in the pre-colonial era. So analysing resource governance in Africa must take into cognisance the cumulative effect of this process from as far back as the 1500 when other interest groups started engaging with the governing process of Africa's resources. At this point the original elements of resource exploitation or defective governance that created a conducive environment for Myrdal's Circular Cumulative Causation Theory to function become evident. Subsequently the perpetuation of the defective resource governance environment in the colonial era validates the claim for an Induced Circular Cumulative Causation process, a new theoretical position suggested earlier in this paper.

Re-inventing the governance of human capital is critical in shifting outside of the box that colonial legacies placed African economies in. The same manner in which human labour was governed in the colonial era is the same philosophy that pervades labour governance today by African administrators. Foreign firms from China, India, Lebanon etc carry out forced slave labour like work regimes which is tacitly endorsed by African government,(Mbamalu, 2018) consequently, labour under these conditions have developed the classic slave mentality alongside an unconscious art of subtle sabotage of the system as a form of resistance. So we have human labour sabotaging their economies from within because they perceive oppression. Industrial labour laws that protect the rights of workers from foreign exploitation is critical to good governance and directly related to the outcome of labour relations, work output, productivity enhancement etc. (Mbamalu, 2018) Consequently the current state of labour exploitation is a direct legacy of Africa's colonial past that has continued to induce in a circular manner a preponderance of defective labour practices.

Natural Resource Governance.

Ironically, Africa's Natural resources were never considered to be primitive but rather exquisite and exotic by all those who came into contact with the continent and are still in contact with the continent to the present day. In his book 'The Looting Machine', Tom Burgis, probes the paradox of "the continent that is at once the world's poorest and, arguably, it's richest." (Burgis, 2015) His characterization is apt, but the stark contrast of riches and poverty is what some seek to dismiss as an African problem. The central argument of this paper remains the fact that from the slave trade era to colonial and post colonial periods, Africans have never been allowed to govern their own natural resources themselves. But rather, the vast majority of Africa's Natural resources have been governed by proxy. Consequently the assertion that Africans cannot govern their resources is faulty. Hence rethinking or reinventing resource governance must revert to the 'box' of proxy control of African resources and then think outside of it. Without this, the question of accountability cannot be adequately answered. One cannot be accountable for what he does not control.

The vast majority of African oil, fields, gold and diamond mines and huge mineral extraction rights are all run by foreign corporation. 'He who pays the piper dictates the tune'. African leaders are but puppets dancing to the tune of its international resource controllers. The reason why Africans cannot be allowed to control their resources is very clear to the west however Africans seem not to have caught up to this fact. As at 2020, Sub-Saharan Nations hold an external debt of over \$702 billion.(Pandey, 2020) Now money going into Africa annually from loans, remittances and aid amount to about \$161bn, however in contrast to this figure we have \$203bn leaving the continent annually. Some of this is direct, such as \$68bn in mainly dodged taxes. Essentially multinational corporations legally "steal" much of this by pretending they are really generating their wealth in tax havens. (Dearden, 2017) These so-called "illicit financial flows" amount to around 6.1 percent of the continent's entire gross domestic product (GDP) or three times what Africa receives in aid. Then there's the \$30bn that these corporations "repatriate", profits they make in Africa but send back to their home country, or elsewhere, to enjoy their wealth. Thus rethinking resource governance means rethinking actual ownership which settles the question of accountability. (Pandey, 2020)

In this regard, the theoretical applications of resource governance and accountability to African economies lack authenticity because true ownership and control of African resources have historically remained in the hands of the west from as far back as the 1500's. Several theories of development and underdevelopment have been bandied around with the vortex of corrupt leadership as the central fulcrum. (Adeyemi, 2017) These theories, seeks to retain Africa and Africans as the causative factor in their economic woes. However the historicity of a problem retains the hallmark of its current status and possible solutions. If 20 years ago a drunk driver hit you and broke your jaw, blinds your eyes and gives you a limp from a shattered hip, there is no amount of philosophising about the quality of life you live after the accidents that takes away the fact the accident is the central cause of your limp, loose of sight and difficulty in walking and eating. Africa's brutal experience with four slave trades and colonialism is that hypothetical accident mentioned above.

Political Legitimacy

The concept of political legitimacy is central to governance and accountability. In an attempt to reinvent governance, Africans must take into cognisance that it was compromised as a matter of principle by Africa's colonial legacy. Since government structures was created as an extension of the extractive and exploitative colonial systems, post colonial administrations have simply strengthened these structures rather than dismantle them. Participants in the political system on all levels believe and accept that the system is structured to exploit. However they fight to control it not for the purpose of the common good but for the advantage of balancing power relations in their favour. Consequently, Political maladies like God-fatherism that is often branded as a fabrication of new bred local African corrupt politics is in fact a direct legacy of the colonial system in which the colonial administrators were the God fathers of the appointed chiefs who lacked the legitimacy of true representation. Africa's political climate has always been and still is a monstrous aberration born of the colonial viral infection which has simply continued to horribly mutate, bearing more latent forms of its original nature.

Hence the question of political legitimacy and how it relates to good governance and policy implementation should not only be re-thought so to speak, it should be re-invented. Western donors have for example tied aid to good governance (Udo, 2004) which by definition often seems unattainable by African nations essentially because of the lack of implementation in key policy drives. Here we see the connection between political legitimacy and policy implementation without which the entire concept of good governance fall flat on its face. From the foregoing it is obvious that the system is tied to a 'catch 22' situation which rather perpetuates Circular Cumulative Causation.

To support this, Mamdani's for instance has vehemently maintained that by empowering local chiefs, indirect rule sowed the seeds of authoritarianism in the post independence era. (Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2018) How this presents itself as a problem to good governance is clear, however, what poses the real problem is re-inventing the concept of political authority within the confines of an atmosphere in which the political culture is permanently embossed with authoritarianism regardless of the legal framework. The human problem is clearly delineated here as the primary factor requiring systemic change. The West usually advocate legal and systemic changes, often tying them to economic aid as conditions for support. These approaches have always failed because the traumatised psyche of Africa's human capital needs to be restructured to correlate with systemic changes. The need to re-invent Africa's political structures has however been compounded by a political gap between the state and society which is discussed below.

The 'State-Society Gap'

The lack of political legitimacy for the purpose of good governance in Africa has been complicated by a 'state-society gap' developed during colonialism. The government and the governed were largely

separated by the concept of commitment. African governments were tied and most are still tied to the apron strings of their colonial masters, thus creating a conflict of commitment. Governments that rely on foreign counterparts and foreign investment in natural resources for a major portion of their budgets rather than on domestic taxation are likely to have weaker connections to citizens and domestic social groups.(Crocker,2019) This has made the building of national African identities extremely difficult. Consequently the resultant identity vacuums are often exploited by political elites and ethnic groups to pander parochial and selfish agendas that weaken state cohesion and increase the risk of unrest and conflict. (Crocker,2019; Cimene et al., 2022)

It is important to note that in the early years of the decolonisation process, Cold War geopolitics had reinforced the state-society gap within African nations as they sought external validation and desire to build diplomatic ties with the contending powers. This situation supported an external orientation in African politics in which Cold War reference points and former colonial relationships assured that African governments often developed only a limited sense of connection to their own societies. (Crocker, 2019) although current development in African politics indicate a shift from this disposition, ethnic allegiances remain a critical hurdle to African nationalism, a critical ingredient to resource governance.

Conflict and Resources

Resource governance and conflict are inextricable concepts at the root of underdevelopment in Africa. Understanding the nature of how conflicts originate and become perpetuated enables peace building processes engage with conflict transformation strategies better. The 'box' in which resource conflict is usually viewed in Africa involves the greed of local leaders over shearing formulas and control over resources. The conflict in the Nigeria's Niger Delta is a classic example of this. As a consequence, policy makers usually engage with conflict transformation strategies that conceive solutions within the immediate narrative of the conflict, rather than examining the deep historical antecedents that will offer contrasting images of the truth. Thus in rethinking conflict and resources governance, we should first redefine how we perceive conflict origins and their perpetuity.

The standard narrative of warfare and state development is enshrined in Charles Tilly's bellocentric theories of state formation with the slogan 'war made the state and the state makes war'.(Jude, 2021) Majority of the literature supporting this view argues that interstate competition between military rivals historically plays a key role in the long-run development of state capacity.(Mann,1986) According to this account, states undertake administrative reforms that increase extractive capacity and allow them to finance military efforts. As fiscal and military strength grows, states are better able to prevent Civil War because state structure and capacity grows alongside its military capacity. .(Mann,1986:109-136) This logic is true for Europe and most of the world but strangely untrue for Africa.(Dincecco, et al, 2019) To explain this unique variation, researchers in economics history have identified what they refer to as 'region specific factors' that thwarted the process by which warfare could have built fiscal strength in Sub-Saharan Africa.(Reid, 2014; Margaretha et al., 2023)

These region specific factors include, low population density,(Reid,2014) trans-Atlantic Slave trade, (Nunn, 2008: 139-176) ethnic fractionalization, and lack of social trust(Nunn & Wantchekon, 2011; Van et al., 2023). The core of the argument is that rather than encourage the growth and strengthening of pre-colonial state structures in Africa, these factors prevented state development and perpetuated conflict instead. Take population density for instance. Europe's Population density in 1500 was 14 people/sq km, 8 people/sq km in the Ottoman Empire, 13 people/sq km in China, and 46 people/sq km in Japan, but only 2 people/sq km in Sub-Saharan Africa.(Herbst,2000). In this land-rich but labor-scarce environment, the main goal of warfare was to capture people rather than territory. Thus the intensity of the slave trade exploited Africa's low population density to worsen an already precarious situation. Nathan Nunn's research goes further to conclude that a strong positive relationship can be observed between the intensity of the slave trades and the prevalence of civil

conflict today In Africa.(Nunn 2008:139-176) The intensity of the slave trade fractionalized ethnic groups who developed distrust for each other and would rather stay apart than form consolidated political structures. Consequently the inability of ethnic groups to agree over resource governance is partly rooted in a colonial legacy that needs to be confronted and utilised in conflict transformation strategies.

Deconstructing Education

The essence of interrogating critical issues is to rethink the manner in which a society has engaged with them previously. The 'box' which we have been struggling to think out of is responsible for the perpetuation of Africa's Underdevelopment. The damage in the hypothetical accident we alluded to previously cannot be ameliorated via cosmetic surgery which represents the bulk of interventions that are currently being deployed across the continent. What is needed is a major reconstructive surgery that will go deep and be very intrusive. However the only way such fundamental changes are triggered is by changing the way people think. This is more effectively achieved by deconstructing their education and infusing the seeds of the desired fruits of change.

To most people this may sound simplistic however, the drivers of policy implementations are human beings who think in a certain way. If this mindset is not changed, no matter how progressive these policies are, they will fail. By now we should have observed that all the other concentric factors mitigating against the development of Africa, revolve around human beings and their mental construct. This is what ensured the lasting devastating effect of colonialism. To enslave a people, you must enslave their minds first so that they can freely give themselves over to the shackles of mental, political and economic bondage. Specialised 'bondage' education was introduced to cultivate minds that defer to western ideas as superior. Hence every idea that exploits Africa is embraced because it was introduced by the west. This skewed education of Africa's Human capital represents the core of how Africa's human resources were mismanaged and are still being mismanaged. The deconstruction and decolonization of African knowledge systems is a critical step towards reinventing its educational systems.

Corruption

The effects of colonialism are not a one off thing as blame game apologist like to put it but rather the persistent and enduring runoff effect of institutional damages. The corruption that stands in the way of resource governance is institutional in nature. Institutional corruption is not a creation of Africans but rather an enduring legacy of the colonial system which has simply been perpetuated by corrupt Africans. Colonialism itself was a corrupt system of exploitation that was institutionalized in every strata of African society. It was characterised by forced-labour systems (ironically in an epoch that symbolized Africans' liberation from enslavement), extortion-level taxation on farmers, oppression, mass killings, empowerment of local chiefs who ruled despotically, and more.

The colonial authorities had no (or a very limited) developmental agenda, since the system was designed for extraction. Basic public goods, such as education and health, were often outsourced to missionaries. Policing was often delegated to private firms that under concessionary agreements provided law and order either by employing mercenaries or empowering local chiefs. The few transportation investments targeted mineral-rich regions or areas with high agricultural potential, as the utmost objective was to ship goods to the industrializing world. (Michalopoulos & Papaioannou,)

Effective resource governance will be practically impossible without dealing with endemic corruption within African government. Hence deconstruction and rethinking institutional structures is critical to sustainable resource governance in the light of the 'New Scramble'.

The 'New Scramble for Africa' and Resource Governance

The issue of who governs Africa's resources has become a neo-colonial debate and a central factor in the 'New Scramble' for Africa. Will the world powers allow development in Africa to follow its natural course? Both the West and the East depend on Africa's status as a strictly raw material producing continent and not a developed continent. Africa is home to 12 per cent of the world's oil reserves, 30 percent of the world's mineral reserves, eight per cent of the world's natural Gas, 40 percent of the world's gold and up to 90 percent of its chromium and platinum.(UNEP, 2023) The continent has the largest reserves of cobalt, diamonds, platinum and uranium in the world. It holds 65 per cent of the world's arable land and ten percent of the planet's internal renewable fresh water sources are in Africa. (UNEP, 2023) This makes the continent a target for 'Economic Hitmen' and re-colonization.(Perkins, 2004)

Africa's development threatens the balance in global economy just like the economic emergence of China poses a threat to America's economic and military hegemony. The 19th century scramble for Africa saw the brutal demarcation of the continent in the 1884-85 Berlin conference among the European powers of the time. This was the prelude to a brutal century of colonial exploitation that set the stage for the current underdevelopment on the continent. The close of the 20th century and the down of the 21st century have seen the makings of yet another scramble that promises to be twice as deadly and destructive as the first scramble. Africa also possesses the youngest population in the world which portends huge labour force, (Statista, 2022) a critical resource to be exploited in a 'New Scramble'. Consequently the resources up for grabs are both natural and human.

In light of the above, African policy makers are saddled with the responsibility of not only rethinking the process of resource governance, but also innovating strategic responses to this onslaught on African resources. The emergence of mega corporations as non state actors has reshaped the playing field of the private sector as a partner in governance for development. Globalization and extreme capitalism now affords corporations nation state status and the ruthless nature or psychotic assessment given to this institutions (*The Corporation*, 2003) effectively leaves them out of the purview of proper regulation by developing nations. Consequently there is 'Open Season' on African nations in the international market. In an increasingly globalized world the concept of accountability has become more porous than ever. International finance now accommodates crypto currencies and the deep web which represents largely unregulated areas of the global economy in which unbridled corruption festers. This enables billions of dollars to be siphoned out of the continent by big corporations and their African cohorts without accountability.

CONCLUSION

The essence of the theoretical arguments raised in this paper is to enforce a new way of thinking about Africa's developmental challenges by policy markers. The prevalent paradigm of thought has continually maintained the notion that Africans are incapable of developing themselves. This fatalistic thought process in my opinion was deliberately induced by colonial education. By so doing, Africans were invariably trained to validate an 'Induced Circular Cumulative Causation' in which development, manpower and resources will flow to the already developed regions of the world from underdeveloped regions of Africa.

The rethinking process is at the foundation of the drive to reinvent sustainable and resilient strategies for Africa's sustainable human development. At this point, the decolonization of African knowledge systems becomes pertinent to reinventing education in Africa. On the other hand the strategic need to protect African resources and ownership from both foreign state and non state actors should be integrated into the national security strategies of Africa's developing economies. This is has become critical because of the rise of Private Military Companies (PMC's) that are beginning to pose a security concern to African Nations with regards to their connection to corporations and proxy control of foreign powers.

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The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

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