



Prospects for Africa's Socioeconomic Development despite Marginalization

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Abstract. This paper discusses the external and internal factors hindering holistic and sustainable socioeconomic development in Africa. The factors are identified as: 1) marginalization engineered by manipulation of market forces, transnational corporations, the globalization stream, the debt trap and the 'consumption syndrome'; and 2) internal cracks within Africa's political and economic systems exemplified by the aspects of bad governance on the continent. Therefore, the paper advocates for a revolution by Africa against *the north* as well as an internal revolt against her own tendency to *self-destruct*.

Keywords: Marginalisation; International trade; Globalization

1 Introduction

Since the early 1990s, poverty is back on the agenda of international agencies and research institutes, as the number of poor people continues to grow. One of the places where practically more people become poor every year – and the already-poor poorer –, is Africa. And yet it would be incorrect to assert that Africa is poor, for it is not poor but impoverished. And she is impoverished by both non-Africans and the Africans themselves. If Africa is 'poor' – and it is –, it is because of basic problems, difficulties and challenges that it still has. These can broadly be categorized as follows: basic shortage of food, capital, technical and other skills; population problems with the resulting pressures on food supplies; problems related to industrialization including both the need for development aid and technical assistance; problems related to trade in agricultural products, involving commodity agreements, preferential arrangements and other measures; the export of manufactured goods and the

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difficulties of breaking into new markets; problems related to social and political attitudes to economic development, the performance of governments and the standard of administration (Richard Bailey, 1970). From this broad categorization, seeking to explain the status quo, we see that there are major strong currents against Africa's path to integral development; these are both external and internal. The external can be summarized as an attitude: *marginalization*; they signify causes from outside of Africa, in other words, impositions on Africa. In sociology, *marginalization* is generally the social process of becoming or being relegated or confined to a lower social standing or outer limit or edge (Mullaly, 2007).

The internal currents denote the negative contribution (the failures and mistakes) within Africa herself, whereby she simply tends to be self-destructive. Both of these factors turn Africa into a region that produces 'unproductively', that is, to no avail.

Thus, the main argument in this paper is that, amidst the terrifying phenomena of marginalization and alienation from world trade via its denial of meaningful access to the so-called free market, as well as the heavy cracks in the internal workings of African countries themselves, Africa can still dream her own dreams and follow them through. For, Africa can only be marginalized where she is 'marginalisable' and also where she accepts the marginalization. Otherwise, she can assert herself so as to (aggressively, or, even 'forcefully') take her place at the table of global economy. So, we can say that in-here is a lay-out of some of the strategies that can be given serious thought by the African leaders and the entire civil-society machinery so as to ensure that Africa can meet what will be a genuine liberation from the fetters of suffering constant want and a degraded human dignity of its peoples. This is because Africa has a voice, which she only has to discover. She has a power which is not expressed perhaps for fear of reprimand and/or chastisement because of her dependency, or else because of her own laziness. And who says that there is no case for the self-repudiation of Africa (self-hatred leading to self-annihilation)? The means for all this would have to be de-marginalization and internal re-organization (repudiation of Africa's self-repudiation!).

2 The North-South Relationship as Africa's Undoing

In the 1950s the rich countries of the North thought that their concerted efforts would help to speed up the development of the developing countries. This idea was concretized into the *Development Decade* that began in 1960 and whose goal was to achieve an annual GNP growth-rate of five percent, as well as opening the developing countries to the frontiers of an increased share in world trade (Richard Bailey, 1970). Unfortunately, the above goals did not

materialize, and instead, the reigning *world economic order* continued to hold sway on the process of growth. In this order the North practically has the monopoly especially due to high technology and the corresponding means of production as well as the world market, leading to high-level inequality in output and consumption (Venkataramana, 1989). Under the world economic order, therefore, there is 'economic dependence' whereby, on addition to capital monopoly, the development of the under-developed economies rests on and is conditioned by the more developed economies in terms of financial aid and technology transfer. The result is the manipulation of the trade policies and the market, and the planting of conditionalities that hinder those who hold the lower end of the stick from ascending the growth ladder. Thus, the North has managed to enfeeble the South (Khor, 2001). Concretely, and briefly, this enfeeblement has taken, among others, the channels below.

2.1 International Trade and the Market Forces

An important point to grasp is that comprehensive poverty or general lack of development is actively reproduced. As such, it cannot be understood without referring to the dynamics of global capitalism and the interests of international investors and trans-national corporations, nor to the actions of the prime mediators of these interests, nation states and international institutions. As such, the efforts of African countries all along in battling the new situation after independence and hoping to see something of real 'independence' have all been in vain. One would be excused for asserting that Africans did not win independence, it was the colonialists who tactfully withdrew to put the front elsewhere; Africa is still a colony in the economic sense, and a child, for that matter (to be patronized), in the political sense. In other words, our countries "developed prior to independence, as dependencies of economic, cultural and political centres elsewhere" (Hobsbawn, 1995). This attitude is responsible for the detour from colonial economics via development economy and back to colonial economy in a different form. In all this, African political economy has been and still remains in crisis as a toothless dog in the spectrum of forces that are manipulated from outside. The World Trade Organization is an archetype of these forces.

2.2 The World Trade Organization (WTO)

Placing, as it does, economic considerations ahead of concerns for human rights and the environment, eroding national sovereignties, increasing inequality, that is, making the rich richer while it leaves the poor poorer, and providing the platform for the world's developed countries to impose tariffs on imported farm products that are several times higher than those levied on industrial goods,

among others, the World Trade Organization is practically 'hook and bait' for those who are looking for someone whose back to ride on. For that matter, there has been much reluctance to reform the institution's un-just rules, backed by the wealthy countries which are the beneficiaries (Steger, 2003). This, in spite of demands and pleas already in 1074 for a new economic order "based on equity, sovereign equality, inter-dependence, common interest and cooperation among all States" (Llosa, 1997, p. 63). Instead, for instance, many rich countries subsidize exports of surplus home-produced food, driving down world prices. These same countries agreed to prohibit subsidies because they distort markets. Besides, tariff and non-tariff barriers hinder the growth of commerce among developing countries, as well as between them and the developed world. It is a question of economic opportunities being denied through the stifling of market-growth (Madrack, 2002). It does not make sense for rich countries to go on giving aid money to poor countries with one hand while they take the same money back from them through trade restrictions and debt servitude with the other hand. It can then be seen that "the neo-liberal idea of a self-regulating market has been overwhelmed, and it can also no longer be argued that liberalization and integration of global markets are 'natural' phenomena that further individual liberty and material progress in the world" (Steger, 2003, p. 97).

2.3 The Debt-Trap

External debt repayments and low commodity-prices deprive countries and communities of the resources they need to invest in production and social welfare provisions, increasing their exposure to economic crisis and poverty. This lethal interaction of global forces with local structures of poverty is the basis of the poverty trap (Oxfam, p.14). For instance, "the un-sustainability of Uganda's debt burden expresses itself in human welfare indicators: death rate which is very high, exceptionally high infant and child mortality rates, the reigning of preventable killers such as malaria, diarrhoea, pneumonia and malnutrition, reflecting inadequate provision of primary health care and sanitation" (Oxfam, p. 181). This picture cannot be unique to Uganda; practically all of Africa has a share in it, as well as the entire developing world.

2.4 Transnational Corporations

These trans-nationals wield a lot of power, "penetrating all the national sovereignties with their merchandise, services, capital, technology, telecommunications, credit cards and patterns of consumption" (De Rivero, 2001, p.45). Further, they have a practically exclusive interest in the national factors that will produce the highest profits without running any great risks,

which is what attracts them to the technical capacity and productivity of the workers, the opportunities for sub-contracting to national companies with technological capacities, good infrastructure, the size of the domestic market, the legal security and the political stability of a country (De Rivero, 2001). As Khor (2001, p.50) rightly notes, “today nearly all the underdeveloped countries have become large importers of trans-national goods, and many of them are suffering serious external deficits..... The purpose of free trade is to find clients and not to help countries to develop”. And there is also what could be called ‘repetitious suffocation’ of local markets through dumping. All this boils down to what some call ‘corporate globalization or ‘globalization from above’ (cited in Steger, 2003, p. 48).

Yet, on the other hand, the investment of the trans-nationals is exactly what the poor countries, especially those of Africa, fraught with problems like lack of national capital, huge rates of unemployment, high demographic growth, and raw material exports at unprofitable prices, see as their salvation. (De Rivero, 2001). This explains the craze by the Uganda government to have investors come in almost at all cost. A lot of important assets are being given to investors, which will lead us to serious environmental degradation via deforestation and pollution. From this it takes little to see how the African countries are marginalized and their growth crippled.

2.5 Phenomenon of Globalization: Saviour or Monster?

On the economic plane, globalization has to do with global economic relations especially in terms of trade. It can be said that world trade has generally been boosted since the 1990s as a result of multi-lateral and regional initiatives (Kabbaj, 2003). But it is also clear that it has not been easy up to now for some countries or even entire regions to benefit from this global and increased opening-up of trade and investment. For instance, it is said that, for many African countries, in the last 2 decades, the average export growth has been only 2% annually. Consequently, Africa’s share of world trade has declined from 5% in the early 1980s to 2% (Kabbaj, 2003, p. 8). Now, whatever reasons may be advanced for the slowness of some economies, it is clear that globalization is like a net spread to catch especially the poor, as its forces, relying on rapidly changing technologies and innovations, are still largely driven by developments and changing perceptions in the advanced countries (Kabbaj, 2003). African countries in particular, relegated to participating marginally are, thus, unable to get out of acute problems such as low commodity prices and debt, unable to cope with problems of liberalization and unable to benefit from export opportunities (Khor, 2001). For, “when the market goes too far in dominating social and political outcomes, the opportunities and rewards of globalization are spread un-equally, concentrating

power and wealth amongst a select group of people, regions, and corporations at the expenses of the multitude” (Steger, 2003, p. 104). Thus, globalization, polarization, wealth-concentration and marginalization are, therefore, linked through the same process; globalization and structural forces aggravate poverty and continue to push individuals to the margins of society (George, 2007).

2.6 Development Theories that are Alien to African Culture

One of Africa's biggest problems is the ‘consumption syndrome’: always consuming what others want her to consume, whether it is the right diet for her or not. At the heart of this consumption syndrome are the theories and ideologies that are produced in the West and swallowed here without digestion, so they are not assimilated (Khor, 2001). Yet *Development*, both as theory/thinking and praxis, is a phenomenon that eludes idealization or ‘universalisation’ in terms of a particular approach being floated as the norm. As such, in spite of the good intentions and the real positive value that might lie behind any particular paradigm, due to the limitations of the cultural frames of reference and the priorities of the various peoples, it will result that there will always be pitfalls.

It is common knowledge that the countries of the so-called ‘North’ are economically more developed than those of the ‘South’. In the forefront of pursuing this economic progress have been theories that have either interpreted or led practice. Success in one area has always led to the induction of the theories and approaches to development in other places because of the erroneous assumption of the indiscriminate universality of these theories – termed ‘one size fits all’. The result has been an utter distortion of the systems and lives of the people on whom these visions have been imposed. We have an elaboration on this point in these words of Fantu Cheru (1989, p. 9):

Although responsibility for Africa's economic disaster is widespread, the principal cause has been the wholesale transfer of Western development models that are counter-productive to the notion of ‘self-reliance’ enumerated in the Lagos Plan of Action in 1980. Policy prescriptions have long included a re-orientation of African agricultural production to the export market to generate foreign exchange. They have promoted the development import-substitution industries largely dependent on Western financial and technological inputs to meet domestic demands. Direct foreign investment by multi-national corporations in the mineral, plantation, and light-manufacturing sectors for the export markets has been encouraged. The pursuit of such policies has left Africa virtually stranded as little good has come from them.

Since development is about and for people, it goes without saying that the people themselves, as subjects, have to spearhead this development and in a

contextually-based vision. This is what it means *to do development as a subject*, which is also ‘to dream one’s own dreams’ rather than those dreamt elsewhere and then extended to all. Without any doubt, Africa lives an externally-operated life in terms of the development theories that are alien. The Millennium Development Goals, for instance, are pursued as a political agenda whose success is in the fact of ‘some’ implementation following the grading of external bodies.

3 Africa’s Self Destruction

The opportunities that Africa can and should use lie within the ambit of internal factors that hinder its growth as well as in the areas where it (Africa) is not marginalisable. With regard to the internal factors that hinder its development, it is a question of Africa sloughing off the many internal weaknesses that lead to her self-destruction. This requires Africa to be introspective and examine her inner managerial workings of her affairs.

3.1 Democracy and Governance

Globalization and liberalization have changed the role of the state, civil society and the private sector. There has been a blurring of boundaries and a shift in the provisioning of public interest goods from the state to private and voluntary actors. In addition, there has been a shift from ‘government’ as the sole responsible actor to government acting in conjunction with other actors, i.e. ‘governance’, as a result of the growing importance of citizenship identities and collective action by civil society organizations. In the context of the development debate, ‘good governance’ and ‘poor governance’ are used to define the functioning of actors. The important criteria for ‘good governance’ are seen as democracy, accountability, transparency and participation. These important areas of public life are so much wanting in our African countries that their lack probably counts for most of the poverty and the relegating of ourselves further towards the periphery. The lack of democracy leads to notable loss of ideas and causes disinterest in the development of the country by some people. That is the issue of participation. There will be unchallenged misallocation of resources and utter plundering of the country due to the absence of strong institutions to act as checks and balances. Where there is no accountability there is practical anarchy and plundering, and where there are no strong institutions there cannot be accountability. There is still quite some amount of dictatorship in many African countries even as elections are held. And where there is some kind of dictatorship there will not be transparency.

Institutions will be over-ridden and therefore weakened and corruption will be the order of the day!

3.2 Corruption

However much aid comes to Africa, nothing will come of it if the level of corruption remains as high as it is. This corruption, of course, is owed to a low level of general civilization and political development, together with a lack of ethics that stems from selfishness and greed. Corruption in Africa has meant that much of the monies that come in either from internal revenue collection or external debt are appropriated by few individuals. This further means that the services will not be given and development projects will not take off, and that we remain in debts, the servicing of which deprives our countries of any meaningful programmes of development. In particular, all this means that the poor will constantly become all the poorer since nothing trickles down to them. We continue to remain at the crude level of dying of simple diseases like malaria because even when efforts are made by external development partners to help eradicate them (the diseases) some within our countries are just ready to misappropriate the funds. Currently in Uganda some people are in court being prosecuted and others have been remanded for the embezzlement and misuse of billions of shillings meant for the eradication of Malaria and HIV-AIDS – the so-called *Global Fund*. And the further result of these acts is the cutting off of the funds, so that these diseases will remain a big problem to many. How can a country that behaves like this not remain poor?

3.3 Lack of Technology and other Skills

Development these days goes with technology. One could actually say that all we need in Africa is technology transfer and not merely the aid that is advanced. For instance, in Uganda we are talking of stopping to export raw crops and materials and instead process them so we can benefit from our exports. Now, even if we accessed some market, to process would remain a big problem because we lack the technology to do so. The oil case is already a controversy, with many company coming in and wanting to handle our oil for us because we cannot do so ourselves, with the result that they will benefit a lot more than we shall. This is probably why the Uganda government is trying to prioritize the science subjects so that we have enough scientists to handle the issue of technology. But this cannot be taken in isolation apart from other crucial issues like the eradication of corruption by introducing stringent codes of conduct in politics, government, civil service and business, and following them up with stringent action in case of transgressions. Otherwise, even if you

have scientists but they lack the facilitation because the middle men have embezzled the funds, it will be a vicious circle of ignorance and poverty.

3.4 Internal Re-organization

It is, indeed, unfortunate that, especially in the case of Africa, “globalization and regionalization are over-taking the standard unit of development, the nation or society” (Jan Nederveen Pieterse, 2001, P.1) because it means that in general, economic, social, cultural and technological policies have increasingly come under the influence of international agencies and processes of big private corporations and economic/financial players. This has led to the erosion of national sovereignty and narrowed the ability of governments and people to make choices from options in economic, political, social and cultural policies. Yet it is even more unfortunate and sad that we Africans are plundering the opportunity we have to advance on the international scale in terms of economic development. The African elite have also contributed to the crisis on the ground: political leaders have betrayed their people; they have preferred to enrich themselves at the expense of the people, and some have practically sold their countries. Many African leaders have become dictators and have turned the countries into private properties.

The disorganization that exists in African countries especially on the political front coupled with inefficiency and corruption cannot allow Africa to shake off the mantle of poverty. Instead of crying foul all the time and waiting to be fed, it would be better for politics in Africa to be handled seriously with ethics, leading to the eradication of selfishness which breeds corruption. Institutions of government also need to be strengthened so that we have points of reference and guidance.

4 My Dream for Africa: a Transforming Power

Africa’s dream must relate to the marginalization in question as the horse to be ridden out of it and in direct reaction to it. And it has to be the product of opportunities seized and exploited consciously and deliberately as a way out of the marginalization. In other words, the future of Africa lies in her picking up her mat and going on. How: by facing the external factors head-on, and by daring to heal the internal cracks in her. These moves should be looked at as being radical, hence, as revolutions.

4.1 An African Revolution (Cum the rest of the South)

Given that Africa has been manipulated a lot by the economically powerful continents of Europe and North America, my major dream is that there be a

revolution spearheaded by Africa (cum the rest of the south) if the latter is to get away from the fetters of neo-colonialism. In fact, just like countries fought physically to shake off the colonialists in the first half of the twentieth century, so also do they have to fight (this time as one force) to shake off the continued colonialism. How would this be possible? The fact is that there is hardly a single country in the world that is entirely self-sufficient in terms of satisfying its development needs. Even the so-called developed still depend on others to buy their products. At least they do need less-developed countries like those of Africa (as also of Asia and Latin America) to manipulate and flood them with their products while suffocating what is produced in these very areas. In particular, from the assertion of Ash (1999, p. 7), "the Third World assumed importance in the 60s and 70s for a variety of reasons. It had, and continues to have, enormous natural and human resources. It produces most of the world's oil and other raw materials. Without them, the industrial economies would collapse." Can there be more power than that?

In fact, Africa can make a rebellion against the north in the form of a revolution. The move would be to desist from taking in the products of the north – just as, of course, the north would not buy Africa's produce; they already do not, anyway. This would lead the south to organize and strengthen its market and trade policies. Besides Africa's re-organization of herself, the revolution would have the repercussion of compelling the north to at least look at Africa as a real partner in development. In other words, a kind of "bargaining and negotiating strength in international relations" (Khor, 2001, p. 21) would be attained by Africa and the rest of the south. What must be demanded still by African countries (they have already been demanded), as Shariff (1997, p. 34) enumerates, should not be less than:

"non-discriminatory and preferential treatment for their manufactured goods in the markets of industrialized countries, more stable and higher prices for their commodities, re-negotiations of their external public debt, codes of conduct for the activities of multi-national corporations, more transfer of technology to less developed countries and a greater voice in the management of the world's monetary system".

Of course, this move would mean that Africa undergoes an excruciating sacrifice. This sacrifice would be quite a crisis due to the hitting of an apparent impasse in many sectors of both public and private life. From this point of view it would be a big risk as there would be no more aid coming in, no loans or even the possibility of market for the commodities from Africa. Still, it would be worth the while, as it would later help Africa to develop in a genuine way.

The rebellion should also take the form of self-affirmation with regard to the theories and strategies of development. Africa's biggest poverty is intellectual, leading to near bankruptcy in terms of ideas and creativity. The development path in Africa should follow theories and strategies that are home-made, that is,

contextually-based, rather than borrowed ones which continue to alienate us and cause for us a stressful competition which, when we cannot cope, hits us into further despair and self-repudiation. Development ought to be a holistic enterprise covering and respecting the people's world-view and basic assumptions, their culture, indigenous knowledge, their hopes and desires, and their whole understanding of what it means to develop and to be free. You cannot simply be borrowing what defines life because, though essentially uniform, life is lived and experienced and shaped circumstantially, that is, contextually – and therefore, differently.

4.2 Pan-Africanism, the African Union and the Actual Unity of Africa

Pan-Africanism originally meant to shake off the negative conceptions about Africans. Founded as a 'reactive' ideology against un-due White supremacy, it was more of a movement than an ideology, and it was more for the sake of the self-preservation of the Africans than a serious agenda to positively advance the cause of Africa in a competitive way on the global plain. It aimed at promoting racial pride even without much being done to establish it (the pride). Names like Edward Blyden and James Johnson are prominent in this earlier movement (Powers, 2001). In the same stream there sprang up subsidiary ideologies like negritude (blackness) in the 1930s and especially among the French-speaking Africans, and Black Theology in the United States of America and later on in South Africa. These latter were purely circumstantial, something that explains their irrelevance and obsolescence after the acquisition of civil rights by the minority groups in the United States and the abolition of apartheid in South Africa. In these forms of 'Pan-Africanism' there was no intention (and probably no need and ability, too) to transform a 'survival' movement into an enduring socio-political agenda. "... pan-African ideas moved naturally into nationalism, which agitated for equal access to education and land as well as political and economic freedom" (Powers, 2001). In fact, it can be argued that the goal of this kind of pan-Africanism was Nationalism. And Nationalism developed as a political ideology in opposition to foreign rule; its goal was to use the colonial system as a framework for an independent Africa. Thus, this form of Pan-Africanism did not help Africa to advance as a continent.

As such, we see that Africa neither has a meaningful uniting force nor regional blocks which have a political agenda, except the loose connection of searching for an easier exchange of goods, which does not take away the political hurdles, sometimes embedded in the lack of common ideology and in sharp nationalisms-differentiations. These commercial associations are such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), New Partnership for Development (NEPAD), the Common Market for East and

Southern Africa (COMESA), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), among others.

Now, these regional, loosely-hanging economic ties have hardly resulted in any improvements in the economies of these countries, not even in terms of trade itself. In the first place, this is because there are higher and bigger ties with the international community with weightier demands and strategies that undermine these regional efforts – not to mention the ‘monster’ of globalization. Secondly, African countries are always engaged in bickering of one sort or another. This easily makes one country to fall out of favour with another, either because of supposed support for the enemies of the reigning regime or because of disagreements on principles or approach on how to implement certain common projects, or simply because of some anger generated and felt in one country. For instance, Uganda and Kenya are involved with each other in a number of forums. But, being land-locked, when any problem occurs in Kenya, Uganda too pays the price, especially because of the oil-transportation blockage. Thirdly, the economic viability of these regional organizations greatly falls short because it lacks the extra step of harmonizing the production dynamics, determining where the comparative advantages lie, and streamlining who may or may not export what to whom. And all this is because of lack of binding and directing political power in these organizations. And in the absence of this political force, the propensity for the individual countries to survive individually and within the framework of the current global forces takes precedence. In fact, there is no new framework under which any country is trying to fight poverty, to protect the environment, to industrialize or to modernize agriculture. This leaves each country in these organizations probably even more confused and an easier prey to the machinations of the globalization monster. African unity, therefore, needs to be more than a mere moral force.

Indeed, nationalist movements and governments throughout Africa have been completely unable to halt the devastating impact of global capitalism on the continent or to secure any real independence from imperialism. In the context of staggering economies, economic cooperation can only be meaningful if there is also political power. This political power will make up for the individual states whose powers have been by-passed by the current trends of globalization (Jan Nederveen, 2001; Steger, 2003). In short, the way to self-assertion should be seen to be via the re-assertion of state influence but at a ‘conglomeration’ level which can have the muscle to wrestle the World Trade Organization and the trans-national corporations. In 1967, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania formed an East African Currency Union. It lasted 10 years, but it completely failed to stop competition and conflict breaking out between these national enclaves. Instead, by 1978 Uganda (under Idi Amin) and Tanzania had

problems, resulting into wars. The relational and economic costs of these operations damaged further the already-weak economies.

The forming, truly political block, is the current East African Community involving the five countries of Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi – most likely to be joined later on by Southern Sudan. If this experiment works out, it will provide a forum for economic strength to reckon with, as a comprehensive political alignment taking care of trade, market, freedom of movement, unified currency, comparative advantages in productions, economies of scale and, of course, a unified and directed voice in dealing with the outside world.

The idea of the African union, if based on the up-coming East African model, should have a big power and voice to wrestle with the rest of the world and to compete favourably for the market while in liaison with other marginalized regions of the globe. Only, this union, made to have strong political implications, should be well-reflected through and not hurried simply for the sake of it as some would want.

4.3 African Numerousness

The population in Africa is feared to be growing at a sky-rocketing pace. It is now said to be one billion, and is projected to have doubled, that is two billion, by 2050. The fears are quite legitimate, given the inadequacy in procuring optimum conditions for a human life worth the name. And that is for the time-being. With passage of time, things are expected to get worse, that is, more people and fewer and fewer and poorly-managed – or else ravaged – resources. Land does not expand, instead, it gets relatively smaller and depleted, and the resources of Mother Earth do not increase, they get depleted. There should be no dilly-dallying about that.

While Malthus argued that difficulty in procuring adequate necessities of life indisposed people from marrying early and rearing very large families (cited in Amartya, 1999), occurrences in some African villages show that not even scarcity of necessities bars the formation (perhaps not rearing) of big families. It seems right to argue that the more a society is in dire material need, the more the people need one another, and are there-drawn. As such, this phenomenon of African numerousness is a weakness in the sense that it (paradoxically) results from and expresses poverty. And it is also a threat in the sense that it designs a future that ought to be dreaded.

This same scary phenomenon can, however, be transformed into a strength. A large and un-empowered population becomes a liability, as it consumes more than it meaningfully produces. On the other hand, a large and empowered population can become a strong agent especially of socio-economic development. It can produce manpower, it can provide a reasonable market for

its products and those of others, and it can make a provision (allowance) for the 'export' of manpower. The latter point is significant especially as the populations in the West seem to be dropping radically and there is already need for both skilled and un-skilled labour.

The argument here is not that people should produce more and more; on the contrary, everything should be done to have the population 'bang' brought down. But here the starting point is a situation that is not hypothetical – it already is, and the question is: how best do you utilize such a big presence of human beings? How do you tap/harness it to turn it into a positive force for socio-economic development? Harnessing it means empowering it with education and skills geared towards especially practical ability, creativity and astuteness (acumen). A population of end-less job-seekers remains a liability. Thus, the insistence by some African governments on science subjects and vocational training is well-placed. Besides, when a large population is empowered, it not only produces more, it also consumes more of what it produces, which is the important question of the market for the goods produced. Here then, the issues of education (in all its forms), and the prioritizing of vocational education, while the streams of Universal Primary and Universal Secondary Education are improved upon, are paramount.

4.4 Religion and the Christian Church in Africa

In general, Africa still boasts of the following: big numbers of people still with some respect for religion-related values, including those who do not even go to worship; many and vibrant spiritual movements of renewal, the abuses therein notwithstanding; a growing number of vocations to the religious life and to the priesthood, and a network of unity for the entire continent, via the individual Episcopal Conferences like the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC, etc), the Regional Conferences like AMECEA and that of Western Africa, and the Pan-African one with the name of Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM). This network ought to enable the Catholic Church, together with other churches and other believers like the Moslems under the auspices of the Inter-religious arrangement, to become a strong voice in society at all levels in Africa. The presence of faith in society is a big opportunity for any society; religion and development are strongly connected. Belief in and hope for life after death helps people to experience meaning in this life if they are well-formed. Faith is, therefore, a big opportunity for Africa. Further still, there is still a listening ear and even obedience by the people in Africa towards their religious leaders even when the latter can be reckless in some of their utterances or scandalous in their actions. This listening should give the leaders a podium for leadership, the pastoral formation of the people in all aspects of social life, and especially the processes of economics and governance. This is

the issue of enlightenment and empowerment of the people so they can have a glimpse of further possibilities of what life can be, beyond the current horizons. According to Lonergan (1971) – and I believe him, contrary to popular understanding, a horizon is something negative, a hindrance. It prevents you from seeing beyond it; and the overcoming of a horizon enables one to access new realities, themselves limited by the next horizon. This is why the human being is never complete, never fully knowledgeable, never fulfilled. This leads to constancy in search for meaning and how to achieve that meaning. Education, instruction and enlightenment are key to these dynamics.

Now, it is only people or organizations without vested personal interests who will have no fear of anything to lose who can let people know what there is to know. Politicians would rather have the majority ignorant so they can manipulate and exploit them. This is why they are basically liars. We should be able to count on the church and civil society organizations to enlighten the people on socio-political matters. We should place a heavy responsibility on the Church to spearhead the renovation of Africa because it is well-placed to have the moral authority and voice to do so. But, while the work of the Church in social services is a sign of hope and it has kept the people going, preventing them from dying, it remains true that in order to help liberate Africa, the Church needs to first let herself get liberated from her historical fetters so she can resemble her Founder and Head. Moral authority comes from authenticity, and this authenticity comes not from the mere fact of institution but from both being and activity to fit the institution. If the Church is found wanting in her life and mission, she will not be credible and will be dismissed as irrelevant.

5 Conclusion

In this work, I have shown some of what I believe to be the causes of Africa's socioeconomic underdevelopment despite the aid that has been extended to the continent. I have argued that Africa is not in itself poor but simply impoverished, which is the inference that comes from my thesis. Unfortunately, this impoverishment is caused not only by an external play of factors and conditions but also by Africans themselves in their mismanagement, greed and confusion. As such, Africa needs a transforming power; many ingredients of this power are present, lying un-activated. To activate these ingredients should be understood as the real task of and hope for Africa, if she is to survive this state of threatening death. We need radical measures, as desperate times call for desperate measures. This will include rebellion against external oppression and privation as well as internal cleansing – also by rebellion if need be. The mere affirmation that Africa is the cradle of humanity, that civilization began in Egypt, that Africa contributed to the Bible-formation, that God loves Africa, and the mere presence of many resources and the resilience of Africans amidst

adversity, among others, are not necessarily signs of hope; they only point to a powerful beginning of our Motherland. But without radical and teleological transformation of this Motherland, we shall not see any eschatology.

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