

**THOUGHT PREDICAMENT AND UNWILLINGNESS TO ACT:
TWIN MINIONS OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA**

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Abstract

Varied theories and models of development have been advanced by many scholars to explain the failure of developmental theories and policies in Africa. This paper critically reviews the existing literature on the bane of development in Africa, arriving at what it considers as the most fundamental twin minions of underdevelopment in the continent. The two implicated interrelated issues are thought predicament and unwillingness to act (which in itself is also a predicament). Whereas thought predicament affects the intellectual faculty, unwillingness to act is the defect of the volitional and affective faculties. This paper strongly claims that without first rectifying these three core faculties of the African person, the continent can at best be chasing shadows. This, however, does not suggest that all other reasons for underdevelopment are insignificant or implausible. Well-planned educational system and deliberate conscientiousness towards enhancing the intellectual, volitional and affective faculties of humans are key to sustainable development of any state in Africa.

Keywords: Thought Predicament, Unwillingness to Act, Underdevelopment, Africa.

Introduction

There has been a variety of theoretical attempts to understand the problem of underdevelopment in Africa with critical reflections on the most pertinent pathways out of the Continent's labyrinth of underdevelopment. Several developmental theories have been advanced in this regard. Ikenga K. E. Oraegbunam (2009) reviews a number of reductionist models of development such as the "economic growth" model, "science and technology" model, "secularist and historicist" model, and "urbane" model. Iniobong S. Udoidem (1992) and Joseph Omoregbe (1990) focus on integral development which takes care, especially, of the spiritual, moral, religious and other important dimensions of the individual within a given society. Ike F. H. Odimegwu (2008) advances the view that development is a

multidimensional phenomenon that could be grasped at the individual and human society levels. The list of possible theories and model of development from both African on non-African authors is endless.

In this paper, I submit that scholars have failed to give a fair measure of attention to incapacities inherent in the intellectual, volitional, and affective faculties of many African people. In this particular conversation I work to show that these latent incapacities that are often neglected are amongst the most vital things that should be discussed – other discussions are perhaps merely secondary and can only come after we must have settled the basic issues of re-educating the intellectual, volitional, and affective faculties of the Africans. If this is not done all efforts might amount to papering-over the most fundamental issues in any sincere argument for development. Meanwhile, I must clearly emphasize from the outset that ignorance lies at the roots of the intellectual, volitional and affective inertia. But this should not be taken as an inherent racial incapacity that is irredeemable in Africa; for Africans can always kick-start the tortuous process of re-educating themselves unto development with huge success.

With regard to methodology, I do not engage in empirical, quantitative or scientific investigations of the basic impact of the combined three fronts of the intellectual faculty, volitional faculty and affective faculty, especially with regard to how they affect development in Africa and anywhere else in the world. My role is in every respect theoretical; it is merely to provide prima facie evidence that Africans are somewhat incapacitated when it comes to the full and right use of those three faculties under consideration and that this is a plausible explanation for under-development on the continent. Of course, scientists still have the full warrant to carry out some investigations on the authenticity of this claim.

In what follows in this paper, I shall first look at some of the theories of development, and then present some muted causes of underdevelopment in Africa. Next, I shall discuss the issue of thought predicament or mental indolence in Africa and follow it up with the phenomenon of unwillingness to act. Consequently, the conclusion comes as a necessary end.

Theories and Models of Development

Richard Peet and Elaine Hartwick, in [Theories of Development], see development from two broad perspectives. One is the physical or material perspective, which could be further considered in strong and weak sense. The strong dimension of development involves using the productive resources of society to improve the living standard of the poorest of the poor. The weak dimension of development involves the

provision of more of everything for everyone, wherein a few individuals gain more. Now, the other perspective is spiritual or human, to be precise. Peet and Hartwick see this particular aspect of development in terms of self-emancipation which particularly has to do with “control over social relations, conscious control over the conditions under which human nature is formed” (1991, 1).

They provide a detailed historical exploration of various theories of development, ranging from economic theories of development, sociological theories, Feminist theories, Marxist and Neo-Marxist theories, post structuralism, post colonialism and post developmentalism (EMEDOLU 2010a, 40). To be sure, in each of these theories Peet and Hartwick outline that there are many sub-theories.

Meanwhile, Ikenga K. E. Oraegbunam, in “A Review of Models of Development in Africa”, discusses some other models of development in Africa: reductionist model, science and technology model, economic growth model (economism), secularist and historicist model, and the urbane model. Oraegbunam argues that for any developmental drive to be successful or robust in Africa, it must take into consideration the integral constitution of man. For him, man “is both an ‘animated body’ and an ‘incarnate spirit’. He is ‘hypostatically’ both spirit and matter...” (2009, 71). Ike F. H. Odimegwu, in “The African Person in Dialogics of Religion, Politics and Development”, advances the thesis of integral development by insisting that “Integral development is ultimately human development”. He argues that all the aspects of the African man, namely, religiosity and political orientation must be brought to bear on the African man’s developmental strides (ODIMEGWU 2008, 21). This supports Joseph Omoregbe’s position that “primacy [should be given] to the development of human personality through moral and intellectual development” (1990, 199). More so, in line with Omoregbe’s position, Iniobong S. Udoidem argues that, “the best way to develop the persons is in the development of the self. If, therefore, the individual selves are developed... the nation will be developed” (UDOIDEM 1992, 111).

For his part, M. L. Jhingan, in [The Economics of Development and Planning], provides extensive discussions of the economic theories of development. He considers Adam Smith’s theory, Ricardian theory, Malthusian theory, Mill’s theory, Classical theory, Marxian theory, Keynesian theory, Fei-Ranis theory, Lewis theory, Nurkse’s theory and a lot more. In spite of his detailed discussions of the various economic theories of development, what fascinates me more is the following passage from Jhingan:

Though the study of economic development has attracted the attention of economists right from Adam Smith down to Marx and Keynes, yet they were mainly interested in the problems which were essentially static in nature and largely related to a western European framework and social and cultural institutions. It is, however, in the forties of the present century ...that economists started devoting their attention towards analyzing the problems of underdeveloped countries. Their interest in the economics of development has been further stimulated by the wave of political resurgence that swept the Asian and African nations after the Second World War. (1992, 2)

An interesting aspect of Africa's intransigence and economic underdevelopment is that after all these years of toil by world economists to bring out several economic planning blueprints, growth models and indices Africans have remained as moribund as ever. Both African scholars and their foreign counterparts have tried to adduce several expert reasons for this ugly scenario. Hence, it is my role in what follows to critically look at such reasons.

Muted Reasons for Underdevelopment in Africa

The argument, which I consider weak and unscholarly, in the explanation of underdevelopment in Africa is that Africans are under some kind of curse from God or some demons. Some contemporary Africans tend to blame God, or some demonic agents, say witches and wizards for their conditions and wellbeing. But I say that both God and these satanic agents should be exculpated. The fact that many enterprising African intellectuals thrive in other continents certainly proves that there is always this possibility of liberation from any curse. The divine injunction to "subdue the earth" includes both the African and the rest of mankind. If the African has decided to forever invoke the mystique of *omere ma chi ekweghi* (i.e., Human effort towards success can be impeded by God) or *advocatus diabolo* (i.e., devil's advocate serving as an impediment towards human success) in the vicious African deities still hanging in the African clouds, then he must have himself to blame for the kind of retrogressive and wicked mind he has unleashed upon himself. If the foregoing is true of the *diabolo* (i.e., the devil), then a lot of exorcism must have to be done in order for Africa to free herself from such self-inflicted demonic spells. God has little or nothing to do for the so-called religious African who depends on divine magic for even the simplest things he can do for himself – Self-

deliverance from religious attachment is of essence in human capacity development.

Nobert C. Abah argues that, “Some scholars have identified some of the factors that lead to the failure of development in developing countries as: shortage of well-trained public managers and technical experts, lack of capability for implementing Development plans and programmes, the structural problem of achieving co-ordination between the rapidly expanding and new administrative units and the existence of many cultural values that may constitute obstacles to change” (2000, 63-64). The interesting thing here is that the human person is implicated in all of this, showing that underdevelopment is largely a human or spiritual problem. Beyond man, Fred W. Riggs emphasizes the impact of environment on the success or failure of any economic theory or plan to be administered on a developing nation. As it stands, Riggs is “primarily concerned with investigating the impact of ecological factors in the environment and cultural and historical experiences of societies on the need and effectiveness of administrative systems in the management of development programmes” (ABAH 2000, 67). With regard to Africa, the historico-cultural experiences and ecological features may serve as serious hindrances to development. But this should not have been the case if Africans are at home with human ingenuity as celebrated by Sophocles in the tragedy of Antigone:

Wonders are many, but none,
none is more wondrous than man
Man moves over the grey sea,
Using the wind and the storm,
daring the depths and surges.
Even the eldest of all the gods –
Earth, inexhaustible Earth –
man masters her...

If the Europeans and the Asians are able to surmount or master their countless natural disasters or tragedies, then Africans should make themselves ready to handling comparatively “mild” catastrophes. Therefore, I submit that Africans can never use the environmental factor as an excuse.

Evarestus Igwe, in [Africa’s Economic Underdevelopment: Causes and Prospects], ferrets three Western theories of underdevelopment in Africa. First, he discusses the modernization theory in its various dimensions ascribed to Walt W. Rostow, W. Arthur Lewis, Cyril E. Black, David Apter, and David McClelland, among others. The exponents of this theory of development hold that, “Africa’s

development is impossible without abandoning its (i.e., Africa's) traditional practices and values and adopting Euro-cultural values and ideology... [As it stands,] Africa's cultural practices can be perceived as antithetical to socio-economic development, when development is defined exclusively in economic terms" (IGWE 2011, 15). Bassy Oben shares this conviction when he "...identifies the root causes of Africa's underdevelopment to include the intellectual and moral categories inherited from traditional system, which seem to be at loggerheads with the modern idea of development" (2014, 20). But, then, some other thinkers do not accept this kind of explanation. This can be exemplified with two serious questions posed by Basil Davidson: "But why then adopt models from those very countries or systems that have oppressed and despised you? Why not modernize from the models of your own history; or invent new models?" (1992, 19). It simply entails that the possibility of development in African is guaranteed without actually abandoning Africa's values and traditional practices or "adopting Euro-cultural values and ideology".

Second, Evarestus Igwe analyzes the dependency theory of underdevelopment. This has to do with the continual ploy of Western conspirators to exploit and liquidate Africa in order to make her eternally dependent on the West. The two preceding theories are "...related to the relationship between the developed and the underdeveloped countries" (IGWE 2011, 19). It is this sort of orientation that perhaps influences Anthony Okeregbe to submit that it is not feasible for Africa to solve "its problem itself". For Okeregbe, doing so will be "counterproductive to global relations" (2016, 32). But, then, one begins to wonder why should this relationship that has continued to keep us in perpetual servitude be maintained. Why can't we learn some lessons from the Chinese who closed their walls in order to undergo some spiritual regeneration? They came out strong and formidable. Tony Binns and Etienne Nel have also acknowledged that "self-reliance" is one of the few workable options for the poor nations of Africa "who seem to have been abandoned by the Western-dominated global economy" (1999, 390).

Third and last, Evarestus Igwe highlights the world system theory of underdevelopment, wherein Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein advances the view that the entire world is a global economic system where some progressive states form the core and the rest of the states hover on the periphery. Evarestus argues that the core states have strong military might and are properly organized. In the world system there is a perfect division of labour between the core and periphery states. The periphery states supply cheap labour and raw materials (in terms of

Agricultural produce or mineral deposit) to the core states (IGWE 2011, 34-35).

Beyond the above three Western theories of underdevelopment, Evarestus explains the post-independence views of most African scholars. For instance, Evarestus argues from the internalist perspective as follows: “The internalists like George Ayittey, Moeletsi Mbeki, Thabo Mbeki, and Chinua Achebe, to mention but a few, accept the notion that colonialism marked a great turning point for African development. However, they strongly argue that Africa should have recovered from the scourge after more than half a century of independence” (IGWE 2011, 47). The internalist scholars blame corruption, bad leadership, identity crisis, ethnicity or nepotism, absence of innovative spirit or entrepreneurial skills, capital flight, poor diplomacy, geographical location, and poor industrialization strategy and other internal problems for the underdevelopment of Africa.

Achebe, particularly in his celebrated [The Trouble with Nigeria], identifies leadership as the bane of Nigeria’s progress. Titus Mamadu, in [Corruption in the Leadership Structure of Nigerian Polity], extensively discusses all the dimensions of corruption in the Nigerian leadership structure. Stanley C. Igwe discusses the “Impact of corruption on African Economies” in the fourth chapter of [How Africa Underdeveloped Africa] (2010, 88-123). Stanley insists that, “Leadership in Africa must endeavour to come to terms with facts concerning corruption and look for ways of eradicating it” (2010, 120). This explains why Claude Ake (1996) blames politics a great deal for Africa’s inability to develop.

From the externalist perspective, responsibility for Africa’s underdevelopment is shifted to foreign or outside forces. To be sure, this externalist argument is fully developed by Walter Rodney, in his [How Europe Underdeveloped Africa]. In this historiographical survey, Rodney peeps into Africa’s developmental past which direct contact with Europe critically undermined. Rodney observes in the prefatory remark that his book particularly “delves into the past only because otherwise it would be impossible to understand how the present came into being and what the trends are for the near future” (1972, 7). One may not doubt the impact of external influences on Africa’s development. Charles Mene reviews Ake’s [A Political Economy of Africa] on the issue of external influence thus:

Colonialism on its part was to engender the loss of sovereignty and independence by the various peoples of Africa. On the economic front, colonialism consolidated the destruction of Africa’s industrial and technological foundations and integrated

the continent as a subordinate entity into the world capitalist system. The type of economic system which colonialism and capitalism produced in Africa was and is still characterized by monumental disarticulation, dependence, contradiction, ruthless pillaging and exploitation of the continent's economic resources, all of which combined to underdevelop Africa. (2002, 46-47)

As it stands, neo-colonialism, globalization and the conspiracy of powerful and developed nations are issues that cannot be ignored. But Africans can check this if they really wish to. They must not go all the way virtually borrowing "foreign ideas without...properly internalizing, indigenizing or domesticating... basic principles" of development (EMEDOLU 2010a, 25). Now, to all intents and purposes, the argument which derives from this externalist orientation and state that since Europeans violently raped Africa (before, during and after the colonial days) they must pay some monetary reparations to enable Africa get back to her feet is to a large extent weak. Given the terrible internalist conditions of Africa, I say that this cannot be a favourable option and will make no impact on the continent; rather, it will perfect our laziness and ineptitude. In point of fact, the western imperialists have little or no questions to answer regarding Africa's underdevelopment. Through self-will the trauma of any form of rape could, after all, be overcome. Yes, we were once sadistically violated by the Europeans, but must we remain inert, refusing to gather our loins and get down to work?

What we need is re-education of the African person, not any superabundance of theories of development and underdevelopment, as the case may be. Any theory of development can work in Africa if properly domesticated along the lines of our cultural heritage. The three fronts of the intellectual faculty, volitional faculty and affective faculty must be kept in view as we start this rather difficult process of re-educating ourselves unto development. Meanwhile, I ask leave to re-examine the predicament of traditional Africans at the operative level of the intellect or judgment.

Thought Predicament in Africa

For there to be any meaningful development in whatever way the contemporary African chooses to follow, he must not try to circumvent the agony of thought and strain of systematic practice in his surrounding cultural milieu. To get to the depth and completeness of thought, there must be some measure of intellectual liberty. This liberty allows for a smooth organization and re-organization of thought gathered from daily experiences, mental introspections, imaginations, and critique of foreign ideas. One of the simple reasons for Africa's backwardness in recent

times, despite the fact of political independence, remains that the African has refused to think for himself; he still allows himself to be ruled by other people's thoughts without even knowing the *raison d'être* (*reason to be*) or ultimate essences of those strange or foreign ideas. Precisely, as an uncreative and dislocated person, the average African lacks the mental agility to latch onto meaningful and progressive insights. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, in his [Insight: A Study of Human Understanding], brings out the fervent beauty and use of insight when he observes:

Thus, insight into insight brings to light the cumulative process of progress. For concrete situations give rise to insights which issue into policies and courses of action. Action transforms the existing situation to give rise to further insights, better policies, more effective courses of action. It follows that if insight occurs, it keeps recurring; and at each recurrence knowledge develops, action increases its scope, and situations improve. (LONERGARN 1958, xiv)

The foregoing lesson on insight is what Africans have refused to learn. I insist without any fear of contradiction that the valid way forward to a sustainable continental, national and personal development is through a systematic education in mental independence. Analogically, it involves the bringing of the basic principle of engineering to bear on the African mind. Nuts and bolts need to be tightened here and there, for tough constructions need strong and stable engines. The African *Lebenswelt* needs heavy mental engine to move it to reasonable and sustainable developmental heights. It is not just enough to import ideas, theories, manufactured goods and hi-tech machinery without even knowing how to put these things to service and how to maintain the machines. It is just like importing and planting exotic rose without knowing how to keep a rose garden. Soon afterwards the rose dies and one skids off again to purchase yet other twigs of rose. What an effort in futility!

Fundamentally, there remains one real way to live and assert the humanity of one's personality. It is not just to *leave* as mere primitive brute or infant, lacking in the power of self-consciousness and independent reasoning. The real way, to reiterate, is to develop the art of original and/or critical thinking. At some point in one's intellectual evolution, one must be able to assert a reason for every of his belief or faith, at least in the manner of *fides querens intellectum* - faith seeking understanding. In moral theological realm, the moment of asserting this decisive reason is called *moment of fundamental option*. Using yet again our horticultural analogy it involves the question, how do I learn to grow

my own rose from exotic rose twig? Or in the alternative, do I go for the wild native rose which does not need much care to survive? It is by this dedicated power of self-decision that one matures as an individual, gaining a necessary self-identity and concomitant self-confidence. A crossbreed of exotic and wild native rose does not detract from the notion of self-identity. There is this urgency for African intelligentsia to always formulate and found or establish theories on some fundamental African cultural realities. A creation of what Basil Davidson calls *African model*. Proliferation or heterodoxy of ideas or thoughts guarantees somewhat the developmental prospects of any given human society, since there are many options to choose from. On the contrary, dogmatic orthodoxy or myopic view of the world often stunts the growth of human intellect.

Meanwhile, let us give a typical traditional African example to illustrate the key point. We have three to four ways of climbing a palm tree. The climber may use the ladder (or scaffold); he may prefer the *ette* (a wheel-like rope that fastens him against the tree round his waist as he climbs); he may also have a predilection for the *ugah* (a rope with loops that support his feet and thigh as he climbs); or he may be brave enough to climb bare-handedly.

One is certainly free to choose any of these alternative methods of climbing the palm tree, for there is no single route to Parnassus. Still, one thing that is baffling about the Africans in general is their instinctive stubbornness of sometimes not wanting to compromise certain cultural practices that are not sound and efficient even when the inefficiency stares them in the face. A point some Africans often forget is that culture is ever dynamic and not static. Many a cultural heritage is good for keeps but not when it tampers with moral and socio-economic growth of the human society. It remains a constant puzzle to me how some twenty-five years ago an octogenarian in Ngwa hinterland (South-East of the Niger) proudly told me why they expelled a man from their community after one of their palm fruit cutting seasons. The ostensible reason was that whereas they belong to the *ugah* tradition, the rusticated man (who hails from Anambra State – the same South-East) belong to the *ette* tradition. The curious fact was that the man with *ette* tradition cut faster and more efficiently than their own *ugah* experts. The fact is that if they had wanted to improve on their skills they would have learnt one or two things from the *ette* expatriate. They may seek a way of making their own *ugah* more efficient or simply buy into the new *ette* tradition. Perhaps complacency, indolence or laziness of mind might have contributed to their inability to invoke *insight* on how to improve on what they have. But, then, we should also understand that the palm-fruit cutting spree is a sporting event of a sort in Ngwa land; so they

wanted a level-playing field for all. From that point of view they were right. But this is beside the point. Basically, from the point of view of economy (saving of man-hours) and development, it was a wrong decision to expel the faster and more efficient Anambra *ette* man.

The above true-life story of the workings of a true African mentality poses a very dilemmatic situation for genuine development. Of a truth, one must have to be the pilot and master of one's own ingenious ideas before one can adequately master and control foreign ideas. Africans must not prize foolish adherence to tradition over skillful adaptation to plausible technological and social changes. Originality of thought lies in the patterns of acquisition of exotic ideas. Foolish consistency remains, in the celebrated words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, the "hobgoblin of little minds". Therefore, originality should be considered in terms of brighter and broader vision of life than self-imposed blindness. It is a deliberate viewing of reality from different perspectives and settling thereafter for the viewpoint that enhances the efficiency of one's personality and potentialities.

In the stadium of original thinking there is no actual fear of *dangerous thought*. In any case, one keeps wondering why different governments, the world over, try to influence and control the thoughts of men right from inception of the civil society. The ancient Roman historian, Tacitus, rightly observes: "...rare is the felicity of the times when you can think what you like and speak what you think" (CICERO 1969, 9). Reason for this control of thought and speech could be as varied as ever. In his [Nineteen Eighty-Four], George Orwell reveals that ideological motives are fundamental to thought control. Moral and cultural reasons could be other causes of branding certain thoughts *dangerous*. Mediocrity and ignorance on the part of the controllers are yet other two causes. Both affect African leaders greatly. Yet it is on record that the onetime Mozambican leader, Samora Moses Machel, insists that: "To create a sense of initiative is also to create a sense of responsibility and to make (the masses) feel directly concerned by everything related to the revolution, to our life" (ROSE and ROSE 1976, 129). Here, I think Machel's purpose is to drill the Africans to rise to the challenges and responsibilities of original and critical thinking so to acquire some degree of intellectual and moral integrity. Originality guided by articulateness and alertness bears the eternal flower of creativity or productivity, as the case may be.

The African predicament ultimately terminates in the facts of indifference to a prolonged or sustained thought and critical observation of the realities surrounding us. The traditional African intellect finds it pretty difficult to think out of the box, as it were, picking insights from actions and experiences of life. This explains why mental indolence is,

indeed, a source of backwardness in Africa (EMEDOLU 2010*b*, 141). The African intellect is often gagged by whimsical wishes or/and uncoordinated emotions. His thought is often contextualized or subjectivized in the sense that “who is involved”, “what do I stand to gain”, and so on, blind his intellectual judgment, making it rather impossible for him to adequately engage pure thought. Therefore, the traditional African now lives on borrowed theories and scarcely understands the activating principles of nation-building and ultimately finds it difficult to look inwards and dredge up some culturally suitable or conducive models of development. Hence, Bassey Oben is right in sustaining the claim that, “the African mindset...is a root cause of Africa’s underdevelopment” (2014, 26).

The Predicament of Unwillingness to Act in Africa

Beyond mental indolence, the average traditional African suffers from “*akrasia*” or weakness of the will; so much so that his volitional faculty cannot blend with the affective faculty in order to bring the fire of passion to bear on any developmental stride. Scholars, especially colonial missionaries and anthropologists, have adduced several reasons why Africans have got a volitional faculty that is not well-trained. The African life (at simple romantic or idyllic level) does not provide it with any opportunity to test one’s resolve of the will or to challenge any obsessive compulsion. This makes the African an easy prey to “impatient temperament”. As George I. Basden puts it:

... he [the African] is of an impatient temperament, lacks determination and perseverance, and is more or less untrustworthy. As in games so in work, unless matters proceed entirely to his satisfaction, the Ibo man becomes hopelessly depressed and quickly gives up in despair. Trying until success rewards persistence is not an inherited trait. (2006, 115)

Much as I admire Basden’s courage to narrate his encounter and assessment of the Igbo, I do not wish to claim that whatever ills he discovered in Igbo culture are racially and ethnically determined character traits. It does appear, again, from Albert Schweitzer’s own submission that the underdeveloped will of the African seems to make him possess only a little moral fiber. This German missionary and medical doctor categorically claims that, the African can hardly resist any temptation, financial or otherwise. This explains why Schweitzer concludes that all African employees are untrustworthy and any temptation will make them fall. More so, they can steal anything, even worthless things. Therefore, it is better to remove from their sight

anything that could tempt their insincerity (SCHWEITZER 1926, 53). To my mind, this claim could be an exaggeration, but I know that this ugly tendency still remains with most of our political leaders who loot our treasury dry and fail to provide accurate structures that will check some of these ugly tendencies and “prebendalist” excesses. Anyone who denies this should consult extant statistics for evidence.

Coming to the district of affective faculty, I am more concerned with the capacity of the African to act or work and achieve a tangible result. I particularly need to examine this from the point of view of Western missionaries who met Africans before and during the colonial days. As much as I know, none of them has ever doubted the ability of the African to execute any manual task, for the Africans were used to begin and accomplish some physical task. Schweitzer argues, in his *Swischen Wasser und Urwald* (i.e., *Between the Water and Thick Forest*), that the black man is not really lazy (1926, 94). For instance, the laboring Africans can work with courage and strength to clear a forest. But, then, Schweitzer insists that the black man’s work ethics is determined by circumstances. If he is not working for himself but for others, then there is a problem. The truth is that the African does not commit himself fully to other people’s work. In such circumstance he works in a half-hearted manner. The African can work assiduously if he is well-paid and properly supervised. This is the case because if the African is unsupervised, he will simply while away his time. Schweitzer tells a story to substantiate his claim. He set a specific task for a group of black men and enjoined them to finish it before he returns. Unfortunately, the work could not be finished and the men categorically stated: “Doctor, do not blame us. You caused it. Remain with us and we will work” (SCHWEITZER 1926, 97).

Just like Schweitzer, Basden acknowledges the capacity of the Ibo of sub-Saharan Africa to work. Basden’s words run thus: “Of the capacity of the Ibo for work there can be no doubt. He has sufficient latent ability and physical strength to undertake any task allotted o him” (2006, 115). As it stands, Basden, Schweitzer and a lot of other scholars know too well that it is not enough to possess the brawns and energy to work, what matters is whether the brawns, and of course, the brains can be rightly galvanized when it counts most in developmental strides.

The uncoordinated-brawns-and-brains have been characterized as “akpor syndrome”, which inevitably makes it possible for Africans to live almost in perpetual condition of total dependence on the West and other emerging economies and nations (EMEDOLU 2016, 338-343). In point of fact, an akpor is simply one who finds it difficult to learn; he lacks the initiative and the will to execute any strategic or worthwhile task. To be sure, “In traditional Igbo culture parents often feed akpor ...

sumptuously because he is not enterprising or clever enough to know how to work out supplementary food for himself” (EMEDOLU 2010, 26-27). The hallmark of the “akpor”, *ceteris paribus et negligibus*, is clearly that he suffers from intellectual laziness, volitional indolence, and affective ineptitude. Africa, having reduced herself to the status of an “akpor”, is finding it extremely difficult to achieve any sustainable development, save to keep thinking and hoping that “the West has the solutions” of the problems of development (OKEREGBE 2016, 24).

Nevertheless, by symbolizing Africa as a continent suffering from a syndrome orchestrated by an ingrained form of lethargy, I am not insinuating that Africa has got no modicum of intelligent people who are at once strong-willed and affectively or passionately driven to achieve any level of sustainable development for Africa. Without mincing words, in Igbo traditional culture such smart and vibrant people are referred to as “nkirinki”; they are “the wise and intelligent” individuals in the society who know how to eke out their sustenance in their own local dwellings (EMEDOLU 2010a, 27).

Now, since the will can be trained and passion can be set ablaze to work for common good, then what is required here is to conscientize the African masses towards a revolutionary and authentic development in Africa. This revolutionary dimension must be brought in; otherwise, the tripartite union of the intellectual faculty, the volitional faculty and the affective faculty will not hold. This explains why first things must be done first. Theories and models of development should come second in the scheme of any genuine preparation for sustainable development.

Conclusion

Indeed, if Africans were actually thinking, willing and acting rightly, then, they would have launched themselves into a new wave of cultural, intellectual, and scientific revolution as was achieved in China and Japan in the last century. Perhaps all the African developmental policies, theories and models have been lacking adequate praxis owing to the kind of weak ideology upon which they are premised. But, then, to ask people to think, will and act rightly without the appropriate foundational policies or the right educational framework might simply translate to asking them to drink and make merry without the wherewithal. Africa’s fortune will thrive best when there is good governance with perfect political and educational structure and some set principles of action.

This then spells out the entire lesson for a developmental prospect in the African continent – and this development comprises human or spiritual and material or physical advancement. In the words of Claude Ake, true development remains a “...process by which people create and recreate themselves and their life circumstances to realize

their own choices and values” (1996, 125). Granting this notion of development, it simply implies that everyone in unison should think, will and act in order for us to witness authentic progress in Africa.

Relevant Literature

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