



# 3

## Review of Conventional Explanations

### Overview

Dismayed by Africa's seemingly never-ending troubles amid concerns that the region may be entrenched in an ever-deepening fix, people from both the region and the development community may be inclined to either find scapegoats to take the blame or to come up with excuses. When things go right, everybody wants some credit for it, but when things go badly, the blame game is on. Passing the buck is particularly serious in Africa, and this is also a problem in itself. In intellectual circles, many observers, experts and academics are seen to come up with standardized, textbook-style explanations in keeping with the line of their thinking rather than searching for fundamental reasons and exploring new ideas or solutions.

What seems to be an insurmountable state that African countries find themselves in may give cover for foreign countries and international organizations, as well as African leaders and the privileged class, to follow the status quo as if nothing can be done to change Africa's fortunes. Unfortunately, in many instances, Africa's political leaders in effect take advantage of the entangled situation to

hold on to power. And in some cases, an unexpected and ironic political situation emerges. I was quite appalled to watch *BBC News Africa* (8 October 2017) reporting on Liberia, which aired on the eve of the nation's presidential elections, showing Liberian citizens expressing how much they missed their imprisoned former leader Charles Taylor and that they would vote for him should he run again.

Despite how much conundrum the African issues may pose, the goodwill and enthusiasm on Africa's development on the part of the global community has not been lost, and numerous internationally based private entities are robustly engaged in activities to help tackle Africa's fundamental problems with their professional expertise and international network.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter is a prelude to the next chapter, which will unearth the root cause of Africa's underdevelopment. But identifying or agreeing on the root cause(s) has been very elusive as there have been so many different views and interpretations on this subject. Nonetheless, the objective of this book is to make the case that there is indeed such a thing as a principal root cause for Africa's underdevelopment and to provide ideas on how it can be redressed.

In this chapter, I will very briefly discuss conventional explanations or arguments that are frequently made as to what constitutes a fundamental cause or a set of fundamental causes for Africa's continuing poverty and other troubles. These include: colonial legacies; ethnicism and neo-patrimonialism; institutions, governance and democracy; the role of government; natural conditions like climate and geography; and other factors (geography, corruption, globalization and China).

## Colonial Legacies

Can historical experiences have a profound impact on the nations to the extent that they leave a permanent imprint in their lives and determine their fate? Certainly, our civilization, cultures and traditions, social behaviour patterns and even the way in which we view the world can be affected by the events of the past. How much impact they will have will depend on many things, including the scale, intensity, duration and nature of historical events, and how they have been perceived.

But what is also true is that people and nations have the ability and resilience not only to react to various phenomena or forces, but also to 'interpret' them in a context that is variable. The negativities of history can also bring about the opposite in later generations, like renewed positive resolve. And we can see many such examples in our history, both recent and old. It may be more accurate to say that this is not the exception but the rule in our lives.

The history of humanity bears two facets: being subjected to difficulties (adversity, survival, tribulations, struggles and conflicts) on the one hand, while also overcoming hardships (adopting, persevering, creating new things and making progress) on the other. Individuals, people, societies and nations have the ability not only to tame natural conditions but also to respond and overcome various obstacles. Action leads to reaction, and that is how life has evolved. Nothing is static about human beings and their lives. It is one thing to say that European colonizers were utterly exploitive towards Africa, which they were, but quite another to say that Africans are 'bound' by the colonialism of the past and its legacies, even to this day.

The slave trade and the inflow of weapons in exchange of slaves on a grand scale for many centuries must have had a devastating effect on Africa, both economically and socially. And then, during the later stages of colonization, European powers arbitrarily imposed their artificial criteria of creating states in Africa. This, along with the manner in which they managed their colonies, is deemed to have inhibited national identity or nation states from properly emerging and developing in Africa.

In his book *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Colonialism*, Mahmood Mamdani argues that colonialism led to systems that impeded the development of democracy in African states. The colonialists' indirect rule in Africa produced 'decentralized despotism', giving rise of new chiefs who become more despotic as they were empowered by colonial authority that was not embedded in local societies, which undermined the existing mode of accountability.<sup>2</sup> Mamdani explains that this led to a 'bifurcated' system: direct rule was exercised in the urban centres where civil powers (mostly the expatriate colonial community) prevailed, while indirect rule was maintained by the rural tribal powers (native authority).<sup>3</sup> Mamdani argues that politicized

ethnicity is the source of much of the political-social problem in Africa today and that the colonial politicization of indigeneity was the greatest crime of colonialism.<sup>4</sup>

The colonialists arranged their rule in Africa so as to keep indigenous people separate and under political control. Due to European colonizers' policy of dividing the indigenous population along perceived ethnic lines, the latter's sense of citizenship or individual national identity was never fostered during the colonial era. And when independence was finally achieved, their tendency was towards expanded politicization of the 'ethnic community' rather than pushing for politics at the national level.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, Englebert and Dunn note that the European colonial conquest of Africa was remarkably brief. It took just a few years to bring down the African political systems, some of which had endured for centuries. But the European institutions they introduced were surprisingly shallow and 'the colonial reengineering of African politics was haphazard and superficial'.<sup>6</sup> Interesting but all important point they are making is that while European colonization of Africa is often criticized for 'dividing' the continent and hampering African unity, in reality 'there never was any political African unity, and colonisation actually consolidated a myriad of diverse political systems into some fifty territorial states, dramatically reducing the already Balkanized nature of the continent'.<sup>7</sup>

All in all, it would be fair to say that while Western colonialism had a profound impact on Sub-Saharan Africa, it is too far-fetched to hold it principally accountable for the region's current state of development. The colonial period, the post-colonial era and the period of more than half a century since independence should not be bunched together as one. Some might like to think in terms of historical determinism, but the reality is that the colonial legacy is only one of many factors that have had consequences. Exaggeration of the influence of past history carries with it the danger of vastly underestimating the voluntarism, spontaneity, subjectivity and will of the population. In this regard, 'constructivism' is deemed an instrumental tool to be used alongside conventional method of study.<sup>8</sup>

Proponents of neo-colonialism argue that Europe's colonization of Africa continues even after independence and, similarly, a group of left-ist ideologists and scholars influenced by Marxian class theory have forwarded such theories as dependency theory and world-systems theory explaining the systematic exploitation and manipulation of the Western powers in Africa and other developing countries through international trade and economic systems.<sup>9</sup> But with the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Communist Bloc and socialist regimes alongside the rise and success of Asian economies, these theories lost their appeal, persuasiveness and relevance. In the post-Cold War era, the topics that draw international attention are globalization, climate change, terrorism, humanitarian crises and so forth, and these pose important challenges to both the developed world and developing countries alike.

Crawford Young sums it up well: 'the explanatory power of colonial legacy, initially compelling, becomes less central as time goes by. The half century of postcolonial existence now matches the historic duration of effective colonial rule'. In other words, the number of Africans having a personal recollection of 'being colonized' is dwindling.<sup>10</sup>

## **Ethnicity and Neopatrimonialism**

Much has been made of ethnicity and neo-patrimonialism when it comes to the problem of Africa's development, and they are interesting themes. Generally, the discourse on Africa's ethnicity and neo-patrimonialism tends to treat these negatively, suggesting that they are inimical to Africa's development. 'Colonial legacy' is more or less an 'imagined' factor, but ethnicism and neo-patrimonialism certainly can have more relevance to real life, in that they are social elements. Certainly, ethnicism can play out to undermine social cohesiveness. For its part, neo-patrimonialism, which is generally understood as the practice of leaders and state officials parasitically using their state offices and resources for the furtherance of informal patron-client relationships in which they are engaged, can also be problematic.

It is true that the prominence of ethnicity is markedly high in Sub-Saharan African compared to the rest of the world. For the entire

Sub-Saharan African region, the probability that two randomly picked individuals belong to different ethnic groups is 66%, compared to 36% for the whole world.<sup>11</sup> However, it should be noted that there are wide variations in ethnic heterogeneity among the Sub-Saharan African countries.

Another salient feature that is observable in the region is the tendency to espouse what seem to be incompatible or contradictory aspects of their perception, to the point that it is mystifying. For example, people basically identify themselves primarily in terms of their ethnicity, but they also show in no ambiguous terms a sense of national identity. Experts of Africa's ethnicity point out that subnational citizenship and national citizenship coexist in Africa. It is pointed out that: 'The simultaneous display of subnational and national identity is one of the most puzzling dimensions of identity politics in Africa.'<sup>12</sup>

In general, people's attachment to their nation seems to fall short of what we call patriotism; rather, it appears to be more associated with opportunism. Perhaps it can also be understood in terms of 'realism', 'openness', 'flexibility' or 'pragmatism'. In other regions, the term 'sense of nation' may mean being patriotic in terms of sacrificing oneself and serving one's country. But the situation seems quite different in Africa. When I was attending a seminar on history in Kampala, we had a chance to discuss Ugandans' perception of their national identity and sense of nation. A Ugandan participant expressed that 'since we already belong to this country, we might as well get along'. His lukewarm response towards nationhood did not sound out of the ordinary under the circumstances. After more than 50 years since Uganda became independent, I thought that at least the Ugandan intellectuals would have a stronger sense of nation. One panellist, a scholar, even said that life in Uganda was better before independence.

As many have pointed out, the duplicity of people's adherence to different identities is common in Sub-Saharan African nations. Moreover, the characteristic of ethnicity is that it is malleable rather than immutable and exclusionary, as different ethnic groups coexist and live peacefully with one another most of the time. A high degree of ethnicity can even have a mitigating effect on the potential division at the national level. The openness and accommodative attitude of Africans with

respect to other ethnic groupings and different identities are evident.<sup>13</sup> Ethnic clashes mostly surface in relation to issues concerning land rights and government policies or interventions (or the lack thereof). Ethnic tensions or conflict are also exacerbated when leaders try to use ethnicity for their own political purposes. In the case of 'kingdoms', the issue can relate to local autonomy and authority vis-à-vis the state.

The pursuit of self-interest and opportunism seems to be the prevalent motivation for society. One might be perplexed to see many Africans 'display both ethnic polarization and nationalistic fervour'.<sup>14</sup> Tim Kellstall points out how the tendency of Africans to have multiple identities has led to a 'fragmentation of the self', and in their quest for survival, people develop links to potential patrons in a bid to garner as many favours as possible: 'The ways in which people make a living in Africa encourages them into plural identities, which prevents them from organizing collectively over time, thereby foreclosing certain types of social movement and power.'<sup>15</sup> It may be even called a 'multiple personality'.

Edmond Keller notes that in Sub-Saharan Africa, 'one's social identity is fluid, intermittent, and experimental' and that two forms of citizenship exist in the minds of people in their daily lives: 'a form of communitarian citizenship and a form based on residence in a national community largely created as a by-product of colonialism'.<sup>16</sup> Keller observes that among the most common causes of inter-group conflict in Africa today are disputes over identity and citizenship, exacerbated or prompted by bad politics. And they are inherently linked to land rights and immigration issues, as was the case in Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Rwanda and Kenya.<sup>17</sup> 'Ethnic groups are not closed corporate communities, bouncing off each other like billiard balls; rather, they are permeable at the margins and are entangled with 'the other' in numerous ways. Crawford Young observes that ethnic consciousness can vary widely in its intensity, depending on the depth of cultural resources on which it draws and its degree of mobilization'.<sup>18</sup>

Is Africa's ethnicity the cause or consequence of what is taking place in Africa? Does it negatively impact nation-building or is it like many other factors, being essentially *neutral*, depending on how it is employed? I think what we need to be careful of in this discourse is

the possibility of having a ‘Eurocentric bias’. From the perspective of Western countries, a sense of national citizenship, civic society, good institutions and governance, and a free-market economy are considered to be factors that are conducive for development. But from the standpoint of developing countries, many feel that these are the features of the end results, not the causes, of development. How can we reconcile such differences?

The identity and ethnicism of Africans seem to be a reflection of how Africans are adapting to reality. The ethnic community, considered as an expansion of one’s family and relatives, constitutes a basic foundation or system of people’s life. But confronted with the reality of deepening ‘dualism’ in every aspect of life—the economic, social and political gap or discrepancy between rural and urban areas—people have come to realize the limits of what their ethnic communities can provide to them, in contrast to the opportunities and benefits that can be sought from the state or foreign partners. For Sub-Saharan Africans, differences in terms of religion and political views do not seem to matter and they are rarely made into an issue, except in some isolated cases. For ordinary people, their fundamental concern has been subsistence or survival, while the privileged class has sought the maintenance of the status quo or the protection of their vested interests.

Ethnicism should not be viewed as the primary motivator for people’s actions; there are many other elements that account for social dynamism. When problems seemingly taking on an ethnical dimension arise, it is usually the outcome of a combination of various factors at play and is not solely due to ethnicism.

A landmark paper on ethnicity published by the Harvard Institute of Economic Research in 2002 revealed that the Sub-Saharan African nations were the most ethnically diverse in the world.<sup>19</sup> Since many Sub-Saharan African countries are seen as fragile, conflict-ridden and poor, there may be a natural inclination to presume that ethnic diversity leads to more conflicts and hinders economic development and democracy. There have also been quite a number of studies purporting to back such a view, but it is also true that there are many different ways to conduct research and interpret the data.



On the question of whether there is a correlation between ethnical diversity and development, including stability and governance, the more prudent and objective studies seem to suggest that it is inconclusive or conditional at best. Ethnicity is just one factor among many that have an impact. If we think of ethnicity in terms of the 'fragmentation' of a nation, it is all relative. Ethnicity depends on how we define it conceptually and technically. The 'diversity' and 'fragmentation' of a nation is common all over the world. Even if a nation is racially homogeneous, there are sub-regional or socio-cultural divides in most countries. Even in developed countries, cases of regional animosity, stereotyping or even discrimination are not uncommon.

Korea is acknowledged as probably the most homogeneous nation on earth. But ethnical homogeneity does not make democracy or development any easier to come by. Despite being the same homogeneous nation, the two Koreas could not be more different from each other in so many aspects. As the example of North Korea shows, political ideology and the type of regime in place can eclipse all other factors.

There are many examples all over the world where ethnical homogeneity does not guarantee development. In Africa, Somalia exhibits unusual national homogeneity, with the same languages, religion and race,<sup>20</sup> but unfortunately it suffers from extreme internal conflict, destabilization and divisions due to clan warfare and rivalry. On the other hand, Uganda, which is considered one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world, has enjoyed relatively positive political stability, security, economic growth and business prospects for a Sub-Saharan country. And political and social tensions within homogeneous societies cannot be always less than those of heterogeneous societies.

Rather, I think that conflicts and other problems in Sub-Saharan Africa are not caused by ethnic diversity or 'fractionalization' per se, but fundamentally by the 'concentration' of power that inordinately favours one particular group over others. Paul Collier also notes that except for a few specific cases, ethnic diversity neither increases the likelihood of civil war nor obstructs economic growth: 'multi-ethnic societies can usually be socially and economically fully viable'.<sup>21</sup>

Surprisingly, many African intellectuals that I have met have stressed that in Africa, ethnicism is not the fundamental cause of troubles; instead, it is being used as a rationalization or means to enhance one's leverage whenever political leaders are faced with problems. The conflict in South Sudan that started in December 2013 is a telling example of this. What started as a power struggle between President Salva Kiir and the former Vice President Riek Machar developed into a broader conflict of seemingly 'ethnic' proportions. But as the conflict continued, it became increasingly evident that its nature was more of a personal power struggle rather than a civil war between different ethnic groups.

Along with ethnicism, neo-patrimonialism is another distinctive feature of Sub-Saharan Africa. Neo-patrimonialism is a term that is mostly used to characterize the state of Africa and can be defined as 'a system whereby rulers use state resources for personal benefit and to secure the loyalty of clients in the general population'.<sup>22</sup> A more elaborate definition of this term is given by Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle: in a neo-patrimonial state, 'relationships of loyalty and dependence pervade a formal political and administrative system, and officials occupy their positions less to perform public service, their ostensible purpose, than to acquire personal wealth and status'.<sup>23</sup>

There are scholars of primordialism who believe that ethnicity is a deep-rooted, non-negotiable element defining one's identity in Africa. According to primordialism, Africa's ethnic diversity is seen to be a cause of conflict and the reason for the poor functioning of its states.<sup>24</sup> Because there is widespread corruption and continual economic-business failures and poverty in black Africa, it is easy for Afropessimists to blame the region's 'cronyist-neopatrimonial' tendencies for such problems. As a result, 'stressing the cultural or neopatrimonial dimension of African business (and states) promotes a determinism about African business whereby it is ineluctably corrupt: the very nature of patron-client ties in Sub-Saharan Africa would appear to render the expansion of legitimate commerce extraordinarily difficult, if not impossible'.<sup>25</sup>

A typical social culture in many countries in the region is that ordinary people do not distinguish their immediate family members from their relatives (even distant relatives) when it comes to referring them as 'brothers', 'sisters', 'mothers' and 'fathers'. The tradition of 'extended

family' persists, and those individuals who have acquired the means or power are expected to help out the other members of the extended family who are in need. Critics would see such cultural elements as making Africa's neo-patrimonial practices even more detrimental to development.

But just like ethnicism, being fixated on neo-patrimonialism without taking into account the wider picture of interacting elements poses the danger of exaggerating or misrepresenting its significance. Based on his case studies on Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, Malawi, and Rwanda, Tim Kelsall argues that neo-patrimonialism can be harnessed for developmental ends, provided that mechanisms can be found to centralize economic rents and manage them in the long term.<sup>26</sup> Neo-patrimonialism embodies aspects that breed corruption and are not consistent with the practices of developed nations, but it cannot be singled out as a determinant for underdevelopment. Similar traits existed in Asia, Latin America and even Europe. Botswana is a model country for democracy and governance in Africa, despite its patrimonial politics.<sup>27</sup> Rather, it should be viewed more as a sign or outcome of a failure on the part of African countries to meet the challenges and properly adapt to the new environment brought about by their independence.

Theoretically, we can trace the concept of patrimonialism back to Max Weber's famous three types of legitimate authority or rule: traditional, charismatic and rational-legalistic authority. Weber defined patrimonialism as a component of traditional authority, a system in which personal relations dominate in the political and administrative power relations between the ruler and the ruled. Many Africanists observed that traditional patrimonialism has endured into contemporary African regimes in the post-colonial era. Alongside African leaders' essentially patrimonial behaviour coexist formal institutions, laws and bureaucracies, making the task of comprehending Africa ever more complicated. Hence, the notion of neo-patrimonialism was developed to cope with the two dimensions of African states: essentially patrimonial rule coexisting with legal-rational authority.<sup>28</sup>

Neo-patrimonialism is a testament to the lack of or weakness of an authoritative mechanism for the impersonal and rational allocation of

state resources, and hence to the disappointing state of nation-building. The crux of the matter is that leaders in general have used the modern state apparatus to serve their personal and immediate interests instead of being 'bound' by it to advance the public interest. Hence, the opposite of modernization or nation-building has been taking place: the state institutions have been adapted to the existing socio-cultural practices instead of institutions bringing about changes and progress in society by making the people conform and adapt to them.

Goran Hyden, Julius Court and Kenneth Mease identified three dimensions of governance from the development context: economic, political and administrative.<sup>29</sup> In order for a nation to properly follow the path of development, a clear separation between the public domain and the private domain must be observed. Equally, economic, political and administrative governance should be pursued 'independently', without their boundaries becoming blurred by personal interests and short-term political considerations. This would require a strong commitment and moral authority from the top. But what is probably more important is the 'empowerment of people' not only as an effective check against the abuse of power and mismanagement by the authorities and the privileged, but also to *make things work* in terms of the everyday business of the nation.

There may be various reasons why neo-patrimonialism is so prevalent in Sub-Saharan Africa, but I think the big issue here is the absence of a critical turning point or occasion to 'break away' from the past and 'shift' the mindset of the people so that it fits into the developmental mode. Western countries underwent political struggles and upheavals, and many Asian countries experienced national movements or political uprisings, both during and after colonization. The political consciousness of the people, the sense of socio-political rights expressed in actions, movements and campaigns that constitute the bedrock of nation-building and development were feeble in Sub-Saharan Africa. To this day, African leaders and elites are largely unable (whether willingly or unwillingly) to change the unwholesome syndromes typical of Africa, a subject I will address in more detail later in this book.

## Institutions, Governance and Democracy

Debates on Africa's institutional problems can be taxing to both the proponents and critics of Western institutions. It boils down to the question of what makes institutions work and who is responsible for the weakness or failure of Africa's institutions. There is no question that democracy, the rule of law, human rights and good governance are universal values and principles to which virtually every nation would aspire. The challenge for developing countries is how these goals can be realistically and substantively attained. This is a fundamental task that calls for open-mindedness on the part of all stakeholders.

Is adopting Western-style modern state institutions, good governance and democracy the surest way for Africa to realize development? In other words, are weak institutions, bad governance, and undemocratic and authoritarian rule chiefly responsible for Africa's shortcomings? The mainstream donor community would think that it is a matter of course. However, this seems to be misperception or oversimplification of such a premise, which needs to be viewed in a more objective light.

Much has been made about institutions, but 'institution' itself is a vague term. Sub-Saharan Africa has emerged as a prototype case of the mismatch between 'having' and 'doing'. This mismatch shows no sign of dissipating and the institutional problem is a good example of this reality in the region. Having good institutions is one thing and making them serve their purpose is another. What makes institutions work are the actions of people who uphold them.

In essence, good institutions and governance, the rule of law, freedom of speech, human rights and democracy are essentially ultimate goals or the end state of development rather than the means to achieving development. These are the features that emerge from successful development through the process of 'embodiment', which in itself requires arduous endeavours. They are not what can be simply 'introduced' and 'adopted' upon wish. The same applies to economics. Many seem to be unaware or have forgotten that economic growth and income generation cannot come about by transfers of wealth, but by the creation of

wealth or the production of goods and services. Their preoccupation is mostly with the distribution of wealth rather than the creation of wealth.

Another important aspect that may be overlooked is that democracy, the rule of law and good governance are in reality 'modes' rather than 'substance'. In Sub-Saharan Africa, democracy is viewed too much in terms of 'freedom', while the sense of 'responsibility' and citizenship, which is just as important as freedom, is woefully neglected. In a mature democracy, freedom does not mean unfettered liberty that does harm to others, but that is responsible. Freedom of speech and individuals' rights alone cannot guarantee progress, and the obsession to 'duplicate' Western-style institutions and norms only superficially could hinder Africa's path to genuine democracy.

Developed nations and the established international community regard politics and development premised on the notion of 'rationality'. Because in the West 'rational' thinking prevails in life, Westerners may take it for granted that others will think in the same terms. This applies in relation to universal values and norms, business and the market economy, development, science and technology, global challenges, etc. However, as people will soon discover, the reality of Africa seems to be quite removed from such expectations.

The Sub-Saharan African countries have maintained the state system that is the continuation of the former colonial establishments. The introduction of the European rational-legal state has led to a Westernization of the political order in Africa and around the world. But Bertrand Badie states that a crucial consequence of this is the failure in terms of 'loss of meaning' in the relationship between rulers and the ruled which 'discourages the individual in his effort to adapt to an institutional life of no concern to him'.<sup>30</sup>

Not only have Western political institutions and values failed to take firm root in most African countries, but the manner in which they have been pursued or applied is also seen to have inhibited the growth of the very fabric that makes them work. After independence, Sub-Saharan African political leaders 'adapted' to the reality in the way they saw convenient, resulting in the formation of 'hybrid (or mixed) regimes' which are neither true liberal democracies nor the kind of outright dictatorial regimes.<sup>31</sup>

Basil Davidson suggested that the Western colonization of Africa actually held Africa back from forming nation states in its own way: it is the imposition of the European nation state rather than an intrinsic African characteristic that is at the root of the most of Africa's political problems, and colonialism promoted the rise of alienated African elites largely trained in Europe and oblivious to their historical foundations of political legitimacy.<sup>32</sup> According to Davidson, what Africa's leaders inherited was 'a crisis of social disintegration' from which sprang the current problems of Africa: while it was commonly assumed that Africa had no indigenous models for ruling nation states, it was in fact well into the process of evolving its own models for the nation state. The Asante kingdom of modern-day Ghana, for example, was 'manifestly a national state on its way to becoming a nation-state with every attribute ascribed to a Western European nation-state' and even after Africa's independence, the adherence to African tradition was still derided as 'tribalism' and viewed as an obstacle to development.<sup>33</sup>

So what we see today in Sub-Saharan Africa is the perennial gap between what is in spirit and what is actually being practised. African countries all have modern executive, legislative and judicial branches modelled after the Western political system and over many decades, their leaders and political elites were orientated in this modern model of statehood. Every nation should follow good governance, the rule of law, accountability and democracy—the standards that are now taken for granted as global norms. But these values or standards have been achieved over centuries of historical progress in the West through many internal and regional conflicts and social, political, economic turmoil and evolutions. And it was only in the twentieth century that these Western ideas and norms gained the status of being 'universal values'.

There is no denying that Africa's fate and development rests squarely with Africans, not the Western world or the international development community. How deep an impact the colonial legacies have had on Africa is matter of debate, but what is not debated is who are the owners and subjects of development. No matter how convenient and tempting it may be to place the blame on 'outsiders', these 'outsiders' only play a secondary role at best, and the unshakable truth is that the protagonists of Africa's development are none other than Africans

themselves. And Africa's development is inexorably tied to nation-building, which is a process that is still very much in the making. But nation-building is not about just 'adopting' or 'adapting'—it should be about carrying out the arduous tasks of making and undergoing change. If African countries have not been able to do this up to this point, after half a century of independence, who should they blame for this other than themselves?

In the meantime, the political dynamics in Africa are seen to follow their own unpredictable course. As stated by Dani Rodrik, according to Freedom House's count, more than 60% of all the countries in the world are electoral democracies, meaning that their regimes have emerged through competitive multi-party elections. But the majority of these 'democracies' are in fact 'illiberal democracies' that brought about the rise of popular autocrats with little regard for the rule of law and civil liberties. Rodrik reminds us that liberal democracy rests on distinct sets of rights—property rights, political rights and civil rights—and that democratic bargaining can work only when the masses are able to organize and mobilize around common interests. And, historically, such mobilizations have been the product of industrialization and urbanization, wars or anti-colonial struggles. But in the developing world, these bargains, by their very nature, produce electoral democracies rather than liberal democracies, so that in practice, the emergence of liberal democracy is rarely seen today.<sup>34</sup>

The 'irregularity' of political developments is common in Africa. For example, in Burundi in May 2015, people took to the streets to protest against the removal of term limits for the President, and a military coup was attempted against President Pierre Nkurunziza, who wanted to remain in power. On the other hand, in Rwanda, with two years left before the next elections, people were petitioning Parliament to amend the Constitution, which limits presidents to two terms, in order to allow President Kagame to stand for President again. Even the second-largest political party, the largest opposition party, has backed the removal of term limits for elected political leaders.<sup>35</sup>

David Booth and Diana Gammack's observation is a telling reminder of the reality in Africa: the reason why the 'development business' most often fails in Africa is because much of the effort of the development



community is predicated on false assumptions about how progress takes place in human societies. For the last two decades, development efforts have been based on the thinking that good governance provides a universally valid prescription for economic transformation and social advance, but this 'ahistorical view takes insufficient notice of the fact that Western states did not become economic powerhouses (from the 1750s onwards) ... by adopting good governance institutions. Full-blown capitalism creates the social structures and organisational capabilities that lead to democratic governance, not the other way around'.<sup>36</sup>

Brian Levy also makes a case that over the long term, good governance may indeed be a final destination where developing countries can see their governance systems converge. However, he argues that 'the ability to describe the characteristics of effective states does not conjure them into existence out of thin air. Best-practices approaches assume that all policies and institutions are potentially movable and can be aligned to fit some pre-specified blueprint. But they cannot. The central question has less to do with the end point than with the journey of getting from here to there'.<sup>37</sup>

Those who have lived in Africa long enough will agree that one of the syndromes plaguing Africa today is that people by and large are good at expressing their views, but there is very little corresponding action or responsibility taken to make good on the words spoken. Liberal democracy, the rule of law and good governance will bear fruit when they become the way of life and are embodied in the leaders and the people alike. We should not forget that liberal democracy was not bestowed by the rulers, but was earned by the people who struggled for it. Democracy is something that cannot be 'provided for', but which has to be 'won'. What seems to have been forgotten during the course of liberalization and globalization is that democracy cannot be realized by 'free expressions' alone, but requires concrete deeds and toil.

The problem in Africa is that the mismatch between 'lofty expectations' and continued 'disingenuousness' on the ground persists in a kind of vicious cycle, only to breed disappointments and ill feeling without actually getting things done. This has produced the problem where African elites, whether in government or the private sector, talk the talk but do not walk the walk. Often, their motive is to present a good face

to donors and receive aid or benefits, whilst knowing they will fall short in their obligations. Despite the challenging environment, efforts to attain sound institutions and governance should not be stopped. Recent studies have shown that the vast majority of people surveyed in Sub-Saharan African countries thought that democracy was preferable to any other kind of government. Obviously, it would be in the best interests of the African countries if they can espouse and 'internalize' these values as much and as early as possible.

Critics may find fault with the way in which the Global North is trying to 'impose' its values, but the Global North will be criticized even more if it was not seen to be steadfastly upholding the universal values. Isn't the European Union referred to as the 'normative power'? But an important thing for Western countries to realize is that it is not enough to only 'assert' these values; equal weight should be given to addressing how to reach the goals, while taking into account the local conditions, indigenous elements and socio-cultural characteristics of African nations.

While most African countries inherited democratic constitutions in the decolonization process, few maintained them. Botswana and Mauritius are just about the only countries that were born democratic and have remained so over the years, although in the case of Botswana, the same political party has been in power since independence. The vast majority of other African countries followed a path that consisted of a few years of democratic multi-party systems, followed by the progressive establishment of single-party regimes or a military takeover.

But most often in this process, there have been frequent political deadlocks and crisis. By and large, formal democratic institutions proved incompatible at the time with the rise of personal rule and neo-patrimonialism. Formal institutions lost their importance and power became concentrated in a close circle around the personal ruler. Many of these rulers then organized single parties, mass mobilization movements that were then seen as plausible instruments of nation-building. The rapid failure of democracy in Africa is a sobering reminder of its inherent drawbacks to democracy, particularly in light of the fact that in the post-Cold War era, donors made extensive efforts to promote democracy in Africa.

What transpired from this for the majority of African states was the rise of authoritarianism and the deterioration of citizens' rights. Many rulers argued that traditional African values such as consensus-seeking and loyalty justified the adoption of regimes that were seen as dictatorial across the continent. Within a few years of independence, most of the region's democratic aspirations had been stifled. Whatever the merits of the cultural arguments of some African elites to justify their domination, the relative ease with which African dictatorships persisted for decades suggested that many countries shared conditions favouring this type of regime. So what caused this? There must have been some commonalities in effect for the countries to produce such similar results across the continent. I believe that the problem is caused not by the failure of institutions themselves, but rather by the inertia and noncommittal attitude when it came to upholding institutions.

Institutions do matter. Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson's book *Why Nations Fail* is an inspiring work that tries to explain why some nations become prosperous, but others remain poor. The authors argue that the answer lies in the difference between inclusive institutions and extractive institutions. The former 'are those that allow and encourage participation by the great mass of people in economic activities that make best use of their talents and skills and that enable individuals to make the choices they wish', while the latter have the opposite properties 'designed to extract incomes and wealth from one subset of society to benefit a different subset'.<sup>38</sup> They argue that nations that develop inclusive institutions have far greater potential for growth than those that support extractive institutions that transfer rather than create wealth.

The authors have also pointed out the stark contrast between South and North Korea. They described the former as having inclusive economic institutions, while the latter has extractive economic institutions. Koreans are homogeneous people with a history of many thousands of years of sharing a national identity, language and culture. No doubt, it was the nature of North Korea's institutions—its regime and ideology—that turned North Korea into a failed state.

However, despite their appeal, the terminology of 'inclusive' and 'extractive' institutions comes with some question marks. I cannot help

thinking that the term sounds tautological, as if to say ‘what is good (inclusive) is good (prosperity) and what is bad (extractive) is bad (poor)’. ‘Institution’ is instead an abstract term that implies many things like ideologies, policies and actions of the state besides formal governing bodies. The question remains as to why such institutions came about in the first place and what drives them to continue functioning in this way. And the authors seem to have come up short in proposing specific mechanisms for encouraging better institutions.<sup>39</sup>

Institutions, however well thought out and meticulously stipulated into law, are only as good as the intention, persistence and capacity to ‘operationalize’ them. The success of institutions depends not on the existence of seemingly good institutions, but rather on the commitment and ability to make those institutions work, including continuous efforts to improve or reform public service mechanisms. The majority of Sub-Saharan African countries may have the ‘right’ institutions, but the pace of moving ahead with governance and development is all but gratifying.

Perhaps from a developmental perspective, what should draw our attention the most is the Human Development Index (HDI): out of 188 nations in the world that were surveyed, the bottom ten countries are all Sub-Saharan countries, and among the ‘low human development’ group of 41 countries having the lowest scores, 36 nations are from Sub-Saharan Africa. The Fragile State Index (2018) shows the top ten most fragile states and includes seven Sub-Saharan African countries (South Sudan, Somalia, the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Chad, Zimbabwe). In Freedom House’s Country Freedom Index (2017), five Sub-Saharan African countries were included in the top ten least-free countries (Eritrea, South Sudan, Somalia, Sudan and Equatorial Guinea). Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index (2016) found that four countries in the region ranked in the top ten most negatively perceived states (Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Guinea-Bissau).

As Pierre Englebert and Kevin C. Dunn explain, what is troubling for both the donors and Sub-Saharan African countries alike is that there has been no visible progress in the region’s governance during the period from 1985 to 2012 over which the study was conducted, no matter what indicators (Country Policy and Institutional Assessment,

World Governance Indicators, the Ibrahim Index or the Political Risk Service) were used.<sup>40</sup> The World Bank's latest Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA), which measures four areas (clusters) of governance—economic management, structural policies, policies for social inclusion and equity, and public sector management and institutions—illustrates that there was a slight downward trend in the regions' governance over the period from 2008 to 2016.

However, there are countries in the region that usually rank in the top ten in most of the indicators—the usual suspects like Mauritius, Botswana, Cape Verde, the Seychelles, Namibia, South Africa, Ghana, Senegal, São Tomé and Príncipe, Benin and the new rising star Rwanda—that should also be given due attention. An exception might be Ethiopia, which is the fastest-growing economy in the region, sustaining around 10% growth per annum in recent years.

Lastly, what cannot be stressed enough is the importance of governance in Sub-Saharan Africa. From a worldwide perspective, while debates on the correlation between democracy and economic development remain largely contentious and inconclusive in the light of the Asian experience, and notably China, which is a recent example, in Sub-Saharan Africa things seem to be quite different. In this region, it is clear that the countries exhibiting a high level of democracy and governance also fare well economically. For example, countries that are categorized as 'free' by Freedom House like Mauritius, Namibia, Botswana and South Africa are all ranked as 'high-middle income countries', and other countries scoring high in governance like Cape Verde, the Seychelles, Ghana, Rwanda, Senegal, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Benin are some of the fastest-growing economies in the region.

The reason for this may be found in the difference in the level of the work ethic: in Asia, a strong work ethic and government's role, and discipline in bureaucracy are seen to offset the negativities of weak democracy and corruption, but in the case of Africa, which is seen to lag behind in such traits in comparison to Asia, there is an extra burden posed by rampant corruption, ethnicism, nepotism, neo-patrimonialism, rent-seeking, etc., and here, as a result, democracy and governance must make up for such drawbacks in order to catch up with other regions. Yes, institutions, governance and democracies

should be fervently upheld, but the path to reaching the point where these become effective would require a massive endeavour by society as a whole, entailing enhancement of performance in virtually every segment and sector of the nation (Tables 3.1, 3.2, 3.3).

## The Role of the State

According to Irma Adelman: 'No area of economics has experienced as many abrupt changes in the leading paradigm during the post-WWII era as has economic development. These changes have had profound implications for the way the role of government has been viewed by development practitioners and their advisors in international organizations' (see Note 40). The issue of the role of government regarding development is nothing new, but it continues to plague African countries and must be re-examined.

On the face of it, African governments have a high degree of centralization and strong presidential systems. Apparently, out of 49 states in Sub-Saharan Africa, no less than 40 have presidential executives. The centralization bias is considered both the colonial legacy as well as the reflection of reality: the inclination of the colonial administrations was to retain central authority and personal rule prevailed, while African societies were forcefully integrated into the post-colonial mold.<sup>41</sup> Another distinct feature of African governments is that they have a rather large number of ministerial posts.

However, despite their large 'horizontal' government structure, African executives do not have big 'vertical' bureaucracies in terms of formally employed civil servants. More importantly, African governments suffer from weak capacity to undertake given tasks in terms of implementing policies, solving problems and providing public services. The Fragile States Index (formerly called the failed states index), published annually by the Fund for Peace, assesses states' vulnerability to conflict and collapse, using a total of 12 indicators that fall into one of the following three groups: social (4), economic (2) and political indicators (6). Among the political indicators are state legitimacy, public services, human rights and the rule of law, security apparatus, etc. The

**Table 3.1** The Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance (2016)

Country		2015 score	Trend 2006– 2015	Country		2015 score	Trend 2006– 2015
1.	Mauritius	79.9	+2.3	28.	Liberia	50.0	+8.7
2.	Botswana	73.7	−0.5	29.	Swaziland	49.7	+1.0
3.	Cape Verde	73.0	+1.9	30.	Sierra Leone	49.4	+3.8
4.	The Seychelles	72.6	+4.0	31.	Ethiopia	49.1	+7.0
5.	Namibia	69.8	+3.6	32.	Gabon	48.8	+1.5
6.	South Africa	69.4	−1.9	33.	Madagascar	48.5	−7.6
7.	Tunisia	65.4	+3.4	33.	Togo	48.5	+9.7
7.	Ghana	65.4	−2.1	35.	Gambia	46.6	−3.9
9.	Rwanda	62.3	+8.4	36.	Djibouti	46.5	+2.3
10.	Senegal	60.8	+3.7	36.	Nigeria	46.5	+2.5
11.	São Tomé and Príncipe	60.5	+2.9	38.	Cameroon	45.7	−2.1
12.	Kenya	58.9	+5.1	39.	Zimbabwe	44.3	+9.7
13.	Zambia	58.8	+4.3	40.	Mauritania	43.5	−2.7
14.	Morocco	58.3	+5.7	41.	Guinea	43.3	+1.9
15.	Lesotho	57.8	+0.3	42.	Congo, Rep.	43.0	+2.6
16.	Benin	57.5	+0.7	43.	Burundi	41.9	−2.1
17.	Malawi	56.6	+1.1	44.	Guinea- Bissau	41.3	+4.0
18.	Tanzania	56.5	−0.6	45.	Angola	39.2	+5.0
19.	Uganda	56.2	+3.4	46.	Congo, DR	35.8	+2.7
20.	Algeria	53.8	−0.6	47.	Equatorial Guinea	35.4	+2.0
21.	Cote d'Ivoire	52.3	+13.1	48.	Chad	34.8	+2.3
21.	Mozambique	52.3	−1.8	49.	Sudan	30.4	−0.6
23.	Burkina Faso	51.8	+1.0	50.	Eritrea	30.0	−5.6
24.	Egypt	51.0	+3.5	51.	Libya	29.0	−18.0
25.	Mali	50.6	−4.7	52.	Central African Republic	25.7	−4.9
26.	Comoros	50.3	+3.7	53.	South Sudan	18.6	
27.	Niger	50.2	+5.9	54.	Somalia	10.6	+0.3

Source Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) 2016

Governance as the provision of the political, social and economic goods that citizens have the right to expect from their state

The IIAG assesses progress under four main conceptual categories: safety & rule of law, participation & human rights, sustainable economic opportunity, and human development

Table 3.2 Freedom country scores for Sub-Saharan Africa (2017)

Not free			Partially free			Free		
Country	Rating	Score	Country	Rating	Score	Country	Rating	Score
Uganda	5.5	35	The Seychelles	3.0	71	Cape Verde	1.0	90
Gabon	5.5	32	Lesotho	3.0	64	Mauritius	1.5	89
Mauritania	5.5	30	Malawi	3.0	63	Ghana	1.5	83
Congo	6.0	27	Burkina Faso	3.5	63	Benin	2.0	82
Djibouti	5.5	26	Liberia	3.5	62	São Tomé and Príncipe	2.0	81
Rwanda	6.0	24	Sierra Leone	3.0	61	South Africa	2.0	78
Angola	6.0	24	Tanzania	3.5	58	Senegal	2.0	78
Cameroon	6.0	24	Zambia	3.5	56	Namibia	2.0	77
Gambia	6.0	20	Madagascar	3.5	56	Botswana	2.5	72
Congo, DR	6.5	19	Comoros	3.5	55			
Burundi	6.5	19	Mozambique	4.0	53			
Chad	6.5	18	Cote d'Ivoire	4.0	52			
Swaziland	6.5	18	Kenya	4.0	51			
Ethiopia	6.5	12	Nigeria	4.0	50			
Central African Republic	7.0	10	Niger	4.0	49			
Equatorial Guinea	7.0	8	Togo	4.0	48			
Sudan	7.0	6	Mali	4.5	45			
Somalia	7.0	5	Guinea	5.0	41			
South Sudan	7.0	4	Guinea	5.0	40			
Sudan			Bissau					
Eritrea	7.0	3	Zimbabwe	5.0	32			

Source: Freedom House, Freedom on the World 2017 country scores

Freedom rating is an average of political rights (PR) and civil liberties (CL): 1 = most free and 7 = least free

Above score is aggregate: 0 = least free and 100 = most free



Table 3.3 Other state performance indicators

Country	Human development	Corruption perception	Fragile states	Country	Human development	Corruption perception	Fragile states
Angola	0.533 (150)	18 (164)	91.1 (32)	Madagascar	0.512 (158)	26 (145)	84.0 (55)
Benin	0.485 (167)	36 (95)	77.6 (73)	Malawi	0.476 (170)	31 (120)	88.0 (44)
Botswana	0.698 (108)	60 (35)	63.8 (120)	Mali	0.442 (175)	32 (116)	92.9 (31)
Burkina Faso	0.402 (185)	42 (72)	88.0 (44)	Mauritania	0.513 (157)	27 (142)	93.7 (28)
Burundi	0.404 (184)	20 (159)	98.9 (17)	Mauritius	0.781 (64)	54 (50)	41.7 (148)
Cameroon	0.518 (153)	26 (145)	95.6 (26)	Mozambique	0.418 (181)	27 (142)	89.0 (40)
Cape Verde	0.648 (122)	59 (38)	70.1 (106)	Namibia	0.640 (125)	52 (53)	70.4 (103)
Central African Republic	0.352 (188)	20 (159)	112.6 (3)	Niger	0.353 (187)	35 (101)	97.4 (20)
Chad	0.391 (186)	20 (159)	109.4 (8)	Nigeria	0.527 (152)	28 (136)	101.6 (13)
Comoros	0.497 (160)	24 (153)	84.8 (52)	Rwanda	0.498 (159)	54 (50)	90.8 (34)
Congo, Rep.	0.592 (135)	20 (159)	93.4 (29)	São Tomé and Príncipe	0.574 (142)	46 (62)	72.1 (97)
Congo, DR	0.435 (176)	21 (156)	110 (7)	Senegal	0.494 (162)	45 (64)	82.3 (60)
Cote d'Ivoire	0.474 (171)	34 (108)	96.5 (21)	The Seychelles	0.782 (63)	55 (47)	59.4 (125)
Djibouti	0.473 (172)	30 (123)	88.9 (41)	Sierra Leone	0.420 (179)	30 (123)	89.1 (39)
Equatorial Guinea	0.592 (135)	19 (163)	85.0 (51)	Somalia	NA	10 (175)	113.4 (2)
Eritrea	0.420 (179)	18 (164)	98.1 (19)	South Africa	0.666 (119)	45 (64)	72.3 (96)
Ethiopia	0.448 (174)	34 (108)	101.1 (15)	South Sudan	0.418 (181)	11 (174)	113.9 (1)
Gabon	0.697 (109)	35 (101)	73.8 (91)	Sudan	0.490 (165)	14 (170)	110.6 (5)
Gambia	0.452 (173)	26 (145)	89.4 (37)	Swaziland	0.541 (148)	43 (70)	88.8 (42)
Ghana	0.579 (139)	43 (70)	69.7 (108)	Tanzania	0.531 (151)	32 (116)	80.3 (65)
Guinea	0.414 (183)	27 (142)	102.4 (12)	Togo	0.497 (166)	32 (116)	83.9 (56)
Guinea-Bissau	0.424 (178)	16 (168)	99.5 (16)	Uganda	0.493 (163)	25 (151)	96.0 (24)
Kenya	0.555 (146)	26 (145)	96.4 (22)	Zambia	0.579 (139)	38 (87)	87.8 (46)
Lesotho	0.497 (160)	39 (83)	81.7 (62)	Zimbabwe	0.516 (154)	22 (154)	101.6 (13)
Liberia	0.427 (177)	37 (90)	93.8 (27)				

Source: UNDP Human Development Index (2016); Transparency International CPI (2016); Peace Foundation Fragile States Index (2017) Parenthesis: ranking (HDI 188 countries, CPI 176 countries, FSI 178 countries)

2017 Index showed that 32 Sub-Saharan African countries were ranked in the top 50 most fragile.<sup>42</sup>

A conspicuous feature of Sub-Saharan African countries is the weakness of their governing power and hence their weakness in performing the basic functions to serve the public and realize economic development that is worthy of their potential. Many African governments apparently lack the drive and persistence to achieve short and mid to long-term national goals. And as is often the case, well thought-out national policies are rendered nominal when confronted by hard realities.

Unfortunately, corruption, bad governance and inefficiency have become almost synonymous with African governments, so that donors and the African people may be wary of the notion of governments being 'strengthened'. Yet, for developing countries that are still in the midst of nation-building, discrediting the need for strong government and giving up on the state could be extremely detrimental.

European countries built their nation-state system with centralized government and a highly developed bureaucracy over a long period in their tumultuous history. On the other hand, in comparison, Sub-Saharan African countries lacked a strong social fabric, political norms and systems that form the basis of state. And such elements as tribalism and neo-patrimonialism, while they cannot be branded as definitive causes of underdevelopment, are still very much prevalent and pertinent. Under the circumstances, if African leaders, elites and people are serious about developing their country, it is imperative that they find ways to make their government much more functional, and naturally this will take some time to achieve. But what is more disconcerting is that Africans themselves may not be well aware or concerned about this problem. And development partners do not seem to be particularly interested in helping 'empower' African governments either.

However, the donor community tried various approaches in the early stages of development assistance for poor countries, including efforts to empower the state with optimism. As John Harris notes: 'In the 1950s and 1960s, the centrality of the role of the state and the need for regulation of markets was hardly questioned. It was generally understood that economic development must involve industrialization.'<sup>43</sup> In the

1960s, donors indeed espoused such a stance in their aid policy, putting trust in working with African governments so that the latter would follow the course of state-building and economic development, counting on a trickle-down effect for rural development and industrialization. But the approach was short-lived, due to unforeseen disappointing results and also because of the inherent restraints in the political dynamics of the donor community that was impatient with ongoing failures and was under pressure to seek alternative measures.<sup>44</sup> Kingsley Chiedu Moghalu also notes that: 'In the 1960s, the main focus of aid was on large-scale industrial and infrastructure projects. This was the golden age of foreign aid; one which could be justified as a catalyst of growth and development. Dams, roads, bridges and railways were constructed across the continent. But this phase didn't last long.'<sup>45</sup>

The approach that focused on building infrastructures and creating local industries, preferably starting with the agricultural sector, should have been pursued for far longer, instead of quickly shifting to poverty reduction programmes in the 1970s. The policy choice was right and timely. However, what was lacking was commitment as well as fundamentals like 'internalization' efforts and a sense of ownership on the part of developing nations.

The golden opportunity for African countries seems to have been missed in this period encompassing the 1960s and 1970s. If they had indeed capitalized on this opportunity and exerted themselves, many success stories would have emerged in the region, as was the case in Asia. While African countries today have registered high economic growth, this masks many worrying features: overdependence on raw materials; continued underdevelopment and low-value addition of the agricultural sector; the 'curse of resources' and the extractive industry; the dominance of foreign companies; a lack of industrialization; over-reliance on foreign, multi-national companies and negligible indigenous manufacturing industries; rapid population growth and youth unemployment, etc.<sup>46</sup>

Turning to the international development architecture, the world has witnessed transitions in mainstream development theories and policy orientations: the structuralist/modernization theory-dominant period (from the end of the Second World War to 1979); the

neo-liberalism ascendancy period (1979–1996); and the ‘revisionist’ or ‘Post-Washington Consensus’ period from 1996 onwards. The ‘revisionist’ school advocates a dynamically changing mix of state and market interactions. The World Bank published a report, ‘The State in a Changing World (1997)’, in which it stated that development without an effective state is impossible, stressing the need to find a balance between the market and the state, and recognizing that there are market failures as well as state failures.<sup>47</sup>

The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was introduced into African countries in the mid-1980s to reduce the role of the state in the development process and give market forces a greater role in the allocation of resources, but ended in failure and worsened Africa’s economy. As a result, an overall policy shift was made, and the New Orthodoxy Era (1996–2010) unfolded for Africa.<sup>48</sup> But, apparently, African countries have not yet learned to ‘right’ the role of the government.

The global economic and financial crisis of 2008–2009 was another turning point in the thinking on economic development. Following the crisis, there appears to have been a convergence of ideas, at least within the African Union Commission (AUC) and the United Nations Economic Commission on Africa (UNECA), on the imperatives of economic development. The two reports, the ‘UNECA/AUC Economic Report on Africa (2011)’ and ‘Governing Development in Africa: The Role of the State in Economic Transformation (2011)’, suggest that the state has a crucial role to play in meeting the development challenges in Africa. Their recommendation is that the ‘developmental state’ approach should be used through disciplined planning, while avoiding the pitfalls of state intervention.<sup>49</sup> The notion is quite sound, but putting this into practice this still remains a big challenge in the absence of concrete actions.

African countries missed the golden opportunity discussed above because successful development through industrialization is becoming increasingly difficult for developing countries to achieve. Dani Rodrick reminds us that historically, rapid growth has always been associated with industrialization. But today, even BRICS countries, including China and India, have not realized the full-scale development (in terms of percentage of employment by economic sectors) of the

manufacturing industrial sector that characterizes the growth path of Western economies, but instead have prematurely dipped in the industrial structure, that is, deindustrialization. Rodrik mentions that only South Korea succeeded in achieving sufficient industrialization before, making a transition to an advanced industrial structure that we see in Western economies. He points out that 'less room for industrialisation will almost certainly mean fewer growth miracles in the future' and that 'today's developing countries will possibly have bumpier paths to democracy and good governance'.<sup>50</sup>

Capitalism's most important components include private property, production factors, capital accumulation and competition.<sup>51</sup> Private property rights are a central tenet of capitalism, and the land ownership question can be most problematic but crucial for developing countries. In classical economics, labour, land and capital constitute production factors, but today elements such as technology, entrepreneurship and innovations are considered as crucial means for enhancing production. This is all the more so in the increasingly competitive international environment under globalization.

According to Kingsley Chiedu Moghalu, the fundamental requirements for successful capitalism are innovation, property rights, and financial and capital markets, but none of these is present to any significant extent in Africa.<sup>52</sup> This is a fair assessment, but the interesting thing is that these three fundamental factors—innovation, property rights, and financial and capital markets—all invariably demand focused, disciplined and 'intrusive' government intervention. Hence, on the question of whether African countries need strong government, the answer seems to be self-evident. First of all, regarding land reform, only the government can authoritatively certify, allocate and regulate land ownership for the people. Technical innovation requires active, systematic and long-term investment and support of the state. Developing, regulating and reforming financial markets, and operating capital resources to assist the private sector are all rudimentary tasks of the government.

The responsibility for the lacklustre development of African countries rests with Africans themselves, not the donors or the international environment. And 'to imply that entrepreneurs can carry on in

environments in which governments are failing in their duty to provide an enabling environment for value-adding business activity is to make a case for failed states dominated by stunted entrepreneurs'.<sup>53</sup> But few people in the region seem to take this seriously enough. The reality is that both market failures and government failures are commonplace. As long as we are talking about the development of 'nation states', mindful that Sub-Saharan African countries are still a long way from completing the task of nation-building, it is imperative that strong, functioning governments must be zealously sought. And the scope of governance that is required is not what the international community can provide on behalf of African states.

The international community must also be reflective and understand that in order for African states to properly tap into and implement policies, and to enhance their output, the latter need to have an effective government. In light of all the problems that African states have experience up to now, it could be argued that it would be better to have as little government as possible. But outsourcing just about everything that the government should be doing while forgoing their task of 'learning by doing', which is the case in most African countries, is tantamount to the state's self-denial of its *raison d'être*.

Sub-Saharan states are marked by the weak functioning of the government and an inappropriate or 'wrong' policy orientation for economic growth. Many Sub-Saharan African regimes have the facade of authoritarian power, but in reality they lack the focus and determination to get things done and to push the agendas through, as East Asian countries were able to do. The Asian experience provides fertile ground for sober reflections on the part of both African countries and the donor community. In this vein, not enough lessons have been learned, while some experts are dismissive of the East Asian examples, claiming that the 'conditions are different' and they are not applicable. We need not simply stick to the examples of the East Asian Tigers, since there are also good case studies in other Southeast Asian countries.

In his book *Asia-Africa Development Divergence: A Question of Intent*, David Henley explains why Southeast Asian countries have become much more prosperous over the last half-century compared to African

countries, which have stumped without visible signs of a major turnaround. Regarding the scope of divergence, he points out that:

[I]n [the] 1960s, South-East Asians were on the [sic] average much poorer than Africans; by 1980 they caught up, and by 2010 they were two and a half times richer. In South-East Asia the whole of the intervening half-century was a period of almost continuous growth, apart from a brief hiatus at the turn of the century caused by the Asian financial crisis. In Africa, per capita income stagnated in the 1970s, declined in the 1980s, grew weakly in the 1990s, and in 2010 was still barely higher than it had been in 1975.<sup>54</sup>

Henley argues that state-led rural and agricultural development that led to higher incomes for peasant farmers has been central to Southeast Asia's economic success, while its absence in Sub-Saharan Africa was critical for the continent's failure. The policy prescriptions by the world development agencies like the World Bank and IMF demanding liberalization, deregulation, and privatization and austerity measures in Africa were contradictory to the reality of strategic planning of the national economy that underpinned the success in East Asia. For developing countries, the weaker the government, the more it is likely to be dependent on outside forces, jeopardizing their chances of development.

When coming up with initiatives, especially in multilateral forums, African leaders did show a certain level of energy and enthusiasm. For example, in 1980, African governments adopted their own economic blueprint—the Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa 1980–2000 (LPA)—calling for collective self-reliance. But this was scarcely implemented and, moreover, did not sit well with the international development community, as it repudiated the logic of neo-liberal thinking, ending up in failure.<sup>55</sup> After the aborted LPA, African leaders launched a second major attempt to reclaim African development agenda and adopted the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in October 2000. But again, African countries failed in this endeavour, drawing considerable criticism because it was never properly implemented.

The reason why Sub-Saharan African countries continue to struggle with economic transformation and remain poor while being heavily dependent on foreign aid and capital may be attributable to the inability to push for development or a lack of determination and willingness.

## Natural Conditions

The geographical and natural conditions of Sub-Saharan Africa, characterized by the existence of many landlocked countries and vast inland territories that are very difficult to access due to very poor and sparse roads, the harsh tropical climate and widespread diseases like malaria, are often cited as obstacles to development for the region. The narrative of the history of colonization of Africa by the Western powers that we are familiar with might have contributed to the stereotypical worldview of the continent.

However, two things must be pointed out: first, foreign explorers and settlers back then must have faced great hardships, but the geographical condition for development should be judged not from the outsider's point of view but from the locals' position; and, second, objective assessment should be made based not on historical documents, but on the present situation.

In *The Age of Sustainable Development* (2015), Jeffrey Sachs, a pioneer in the research on geographical differences between places, reiterates that the geography of Africa and adversity of the African climate matter for development. Paul Collier similarly views that being 'land locked with bad neighbours' makes African countries' development harder. In his book *Prisoners of Geography*, Tim Marshall depicts Africa as a historically remote and isolated continent cut off from the centres of trade and disadvantaged in terms of lack of navigable rivers and having too large a land mass to be effectively connected as a single region or even as sub-regions.<sup>56</sup>

The effects that geographical and climatic factors can have on the development of countries should not be downplayed and it is a fact that landlocked countries face huge challenges in making their economy competitive in terms of exporting commodities and attracting foreign



investment. For the majority of foreigners who have never been to Africa, the mere notion of travelling to this region would entail great adventurism and a psychological challenge.

But this is just one aspect of Sub-Saharan Africa in its natural form, and to a certain degree it is deceptive, masking the overall, accurate picture of Africa. When the Ebola epidemic broke out in West Africa in 2014, it alarmed the international community and travel to and from Africa was greatly curtailed. However, I remember an international health expert telling CNN that people should not be panicking because Africa is not a country but a very big continent.

We must bear in mind that Africa is a huge continent with diverse geographical and climatic features. I know all too well that Africa is not only attractive for foreigners to live in, but undeniably also has a huge potential for growth and development due to its rich natural resources and many other things. Thus, we should be careful not to be simplistic and prejudiced when talking about the ‘conditions’ of Africa. If there are places where the conditions are adverse, there are also places where the conditions are most favourable. And when one visits Sub-Saharan Africa, it doesn’t take long for one to realize that here so many places are far more ‘favourable’ than other parts of the world.

The geographical and natural conditions of Sub-Saharan Africa should not be construed as a root cause of its underdevelopment. Instead, it is the human factor, the failure to deal with these conditions that has led to the perpetuation of the problems. Strictly speaking, even endemic and epidemic diseases are largely man-made. But sadly, we tend to attribute the failures of human beings not to humans, but to what we think is convenient. We do not need to mention Arnold Toynbee’s famous axiom ‘challenge and response’, as it is apparent that human endeavour to overcome adversities makes all the difference. Many rich nations had to tame geographical and natural conditions much harsher than those in Africa in order to arrive at where they are now.

Uganda provides a good example at this point. Its nature—the weather, agricultural conditions and natural resources—provides all that one could ask for. It is no wonder that it is called the ‘Pearl of Africa’. Other East African countries like Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Kenya,

Ethiopia and even South Sudan all boast wonderful natural conditions. We need not mention countries in the south like South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Botswana, Zambia and Namibia. And there are so many countries in western Africa that are richly endowed. I have not heard of instances where great natural calamities such as earthquakes, volcano eruptions and tsunamis have occurred in Sub-Saharan Africa. Because of global warming and climate change, the whole world is suffering from unexpected or extreme weather conditions. In sum, it is Africa's negative and stereotyped image, along with many other things, rather than the actual workings of the geographical and natural conditions that has far more debilitating effects. Unduly exaggerating the given conditions will only breed despair and dependence.

## **Other Factors (Population, Corruption, Globalization and China)**

We also could conceive of various other factors that may not necessarily be the root cause of Africa's underdevelopment, but can affect the region's development. Corruption readily comes to mind, but there can be other elements like population size and the effects of globalization that also have a bearing.

Regarding population size, conventional wisdom would suggest that it will be easier to foster and run democracy in a smaller nation than a larger one. Direct democracy like the Athenian democracy would only be possible if the size of the community of the people is limited. It could also be argued that the formation of identity and consensus of the people and maintaining of social order will be easier when communities are small. Certainly, in Sub-Saharan Africa, the least-populous nations, such as the Seychelles, São Tomé and Príncipe, Cape Verde, Mauritius, Botswana and Namibia, are among the highest scorers in governance and freedom. But countries like Djibouti, Guinea-Bissau and Equatorial Guinea, which have very small populations, score very low in terms of governance and freedom, so this is not a reliable criterion. Another

factor that may need to be considered along with population is the size of the territory or the sparseness of the population.

The correlation between the size of the population and economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa is not easy to gauge either. GDP and per-capita income are generally in a trade-off, hence it is difficult to rank highly in both. GDP represents economic influence or market size, while per-capita GDP represents the level of wealth enjoyed by the people. For developing economies in particular, both of these matter, and the degree of income or social inequality should also be counted in assessing a nation's overall economic performance. In terms of GDP, the top five countries are Nigeria, South Africa, Angola, Sudan and Ethiopia in that order; however, the top five in per-capita GDP are the Seychelles, Equatorial Guinea, Mauritius, Gabon and Botswana.

A major issue for Sub-Saharan Africa is the population explosion that has produced an extraordinarily large youth population, which poses huge social economic challenges, given that most of the countries experiencing such phenomenon are the poorest and most fragile countries. It is pointed out that the SSA's population, which is currently over 1.0 billion (that of the entire African continent is over 1.25 billion) may double by 2050.<sup>57</sup> The population of Nigeria, the biggest in the continent, is expected to grow from 191 million in 2017 to 411 million in 2050 to become the world's third-most populous country, behind India and China. However, it would all come down to how the population is managed. The youth population can turn out to be an asset or a huge liability depending on how the state and society respond to this, which in turn hinges on their ability, commitment and mindset for development.

Compared to the demographic timebomb, corruption is viewed as being outright negative, and many suggest that this is the biggest reason for Africa's problems. But corruption can also be viewed as a reflection or outcome of more fundamental problems, in addition to being a reason for underdevelopment. Corruption exists everywhere, in any society and country, but is more conspicuous and widespread in developing countries and is seen as a general attribute of a weak social fabric. But in Sub-Saharan Africa, corruption is so rampant that it is relentlessly exposed time after time in the news.

As a continent, Africa continues to top the list in the category of having the most highly corrupt countries, with 12 countries ranking in the top 20 and five in the top ten, according to Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (2016), which surveyed 177 countries worldwide. An African Union study conducted in 2002 estimated that corruption cost the continent roughly \$150 billion a year. The foreign aid that Sub-Saharan Africa received from developed countries amounted to \$22.5 billion in 2008, according to the OECD.<sup>58</sup> According to the East African Bribery Index of 2009, compiled by Transparency International, over half of East Africans polled paid bribes to access public services that should have been provided for free. Corruption in Africa, which ranges from high-level political graft to low-level bribes given to public officials, has a hugely corrosive effect on basic institutions and unduly increases the cost of doing business. It is argued that academic research shows that curtailing corruption can drastically enhance the economic productivity of a country, and some economists propose that African governments need to fight corruption instead of relying on foreign aid.<sup>59</sup>

There are several reasons why corruption in Sub-Saharan Africa is particularly detrimental to the region's development. Its regularity and rampancy are unmatched. Corruption can be defined simply as 'the abuse of entrusted power for private gain'.<sup>60</sup> Hence, discussions on corruption usually centre on 'public sector corruption', but corruptive behaviours or 'irregularities' are not confined to political leaders and public officials; they extend far beyond to include the private sector and the public in general.

Except for a very small number of countries, Sub-Saharan African nations experience corruption as the 'norm' rather than the 'exception', with people taking advantage of the 'opportunities' whenever they arise, political graft and systematic extortion by the powerful (leaders and their inner circles) being deeply entrenched and persistent without being challenged, politicians and top officials routinely and incessantly engaging in private business, officials at various levels in government departments and public offices frequently being involved in 'organized' irregularities, and police, customs officers and other officials in public service taking bribes. And this is not the end of the story.

Another form of corruption is 'absenteeism', which is also a very serious problem in the region: government organizational (central and local) officials, teachers, doctors, etc. frequently being absent from their offices to the detriment of the public interest. Corruption in Africa is linked to many other facets and problems inherent in African societies and therefore its scope and impact is as much far-reaching. And the negativity of neo-patrimonialism, ethnicism and other issues related to various syndromes, the mindset and ethics, etc. all contribute to corruption.

While 'corruption' is broadly defined to mean all the 'irregularities' taking place in a society, corruption is also widespread in the private sector as well. It is difficult to distinguish between corruption and theft, and maybe it is meaningless to make the distinction. Especially for foreigners, the difficulty in countering corruption in Africa is that one doesn't know who is involved and at what level. The widespread and common practice of seeking 'commission' is another good example of how corruption can take many forms in the region. Not only are the most fundamental public services that are taken for granted in the developed world not properly provided, even those expensive utility installation services, for instance, that users have to pay high cost to access do not come automatically.

Foreign aid projects can also (and often do) become the targets of corruption. They can be subtle in their approach, but it is customary for officials who are involved to explicitly or implicitly ask donors to give them some kind of 'commission' for receiving aid. It is true that donors often feel they have to 'pay' for the good deeds they are trying to do, instead of being fully embraced and appreciated.

What makes Africa's corruption more nuanced compared to that in other regions is that it is combined with many other negative factors. The case in point is that although corruption was widespread in Asian countries, this did not prevent these countries from achieving fast economic growth. Hence, we need to look at the whole picture, taking into account all the relevant factors and the reality on the ground. An interesting observation has been made that 'corruption in African countries tends to be of the decentralised and disorganised type in which paying a bribe to one official does not guarantee that a service will be provided. This type of corruption may be more deleterious to growth and

development than the centralised and organised type found in Asia. For all these reasons, it is most likely that corruption could have a different effect on economic development in African countries than elsewhere'.<sup>61</sup>

The state of Africa's corruption is a reflection of the African reality. Fundamentally rectifying this problem will by no means be an easy feat and would require all-out and sustained responses. Nonetheless, various supervisory, sanctioning mechanisms to enforce transparency and discipline in the relevant institutions and offices, along with pressure exerted by the development community, should be stringently applied.

Another subject that deserves our attention, I believe, is the consequences of globalization on Sub-Saharan African countries. While globalization can in general be seen in a positive light in terms of Africa's business and cultural connectivity with the world, its overall impact is anything but simple to assess, and it can entail various risks and side-effects, depending on the capacities of the countries. There is no denying that today African countries find themselves in a quite different international setting compared to when they gained independence. And globalization—inter-dependence and inter-connectivity among economies—may be the most potent force affecting developing and developed countries alike in today's world.

The impact of globalization is clearly felt in Sub-Saharan Africa, as this was reinforced by the acts of both the international community and the African countries. Perhaps the first major shockwave of globalization to hit the continent came in the form of policy measures: the neo-liberalist policies prescribed by international financial and development institutions during the period of structural adjustment and the Washington Consensus. In order to obtain aid and loans from donors, African countries had to show commitment to market-oriented economic reforms and good governance. And while African countries did not have much choice but to conform to donors' terms, they actually opted for a pro-business liberal economy for a number of reasons.

The elites of Sub-Saharan African countries are pragmatists, who are keen to obtain wealth by seeking business opportunities with foreign companies and partners. The limited financial resources and capabilities of African states is understandable, but the major problem is really the lack of entrepreneurship, commitment and perseverance to successfully

pursue business demonstrated in African business circles, and their inability or hesitation to make the necessary investments for future returns. This has left a huge vacuum that foreign investors and partners have had to fill. In many instances, even in remote provinces, landlords and local communities are willing to sell off chunks of land they possess at low prices to foreign investors. Since the locals do not have the means to make use of their land in any case, it would make sense to find an option with those who can develop it. For landlocked African countries in particular, the need to remove trade barriers and make their markets more accessible and appealing is deemed to be crucial in order to offset their disadvantages.

Obviously, there are also downsides to globalization, which are the ultimate price developing countries have to pay for being integrated into the global economy. For example, over the years, East African currencies have undergone a continuously sharp drop in their value against the US dollar, but the East African governments have admitted that there is not much that they can do to counter this phenomenon.

The deepening of liberalization over recent decades and the way in which African countries have 'adapted' to it have no doubt undermined their economic 'autonomy'. For them, the window of opportunity to approach the ranks of industrialized economies has been narrowing because of the slow pace of structural changes and the absence of strategic thinking and genuine efforts to 'catch up', amid increasing international competition and faster cycles of technological ratcheting-up. Confronted with the economic tasks at hand, African leaders have opted for convenient solutions like inviting foreign capital and expertise to fill their financial and capacity gaps, without concurrently taking competitiveness-enhancing measures at their end. This is mostly true throughout the region, including South Africa, where there is a juxtaposition of the 'First World' and the 'Third World', making it an interesting testing ground for 'radical economic transformation'.

For developing countries, continuously relying heavily on foreign firms and capital would not be the best solution in relation to economic development. The goal should be for African countries to build an industrial economy that is suited to their own specific situation in which they enjoy ownership, even while they trade freely with

the outside. Unfortunately, many Sub-Saharan African countries have opened up and sold off their precious economic rights too soon to foreign companies, without even realizing their long-term value. The prospect of earning immediate profits, perhaps with 'premiums', can override consideration for the long-term national interests. A good example of this is the telecommunications market. African countries easily gave away their frequency usage rights to foreign companies, unaware that this is tantamount to giving up their strategic leverage and valuable economic sovereignty that could be used for many decades to come.

Lastly, as a feature of globalization, China's increasingly proactive economic engagement with Africa deserves our attention. But the impact that China has on the landscape of Africa's development, the ODA policy of traditional donors and the overall economic dynamism of Africa are uncertain. What is clear is that China's method of economic cooperation is quite different from the mainstream donor community, so African countries tend to think of China as an alternative to Western partners.

China's greatest strength lies in its financial capability and readiness to do business with Africa. China, employing generous assistance and sumptuous loans as tools, has made tremendous inroads in infrastructure-building and the energy development market in particular, based on their price competitiveness of labour, which is unmatched. For African countries desperate to find any financial resources for large-scale construction and engineering projects, China's partnership becomes handy. As both China and African countries will point out, these come with 'no strings attached'.

However, while there might not be any strings attached, various socio-economic costs may be incurred. The impact on the already-fragile governance and business practices in Africa comes to mind. Furthermore, it is no secret that Chinese goods and work that are found in Africa often turn out to be substandard, while Chinese merchants' businesses in retail frequently attract complaints from local competitors.

A latest report by the McKinsey Global Institute shows the profile of China's economic footprint in Africa in comparison to other countries, including the US, Germany, France, the UK and India, in terms



of trade, FDI, aid and infrastructure financing. We can see that China's lead is absolute in trade and infrastructure financing, and while China's FDI is comparatively low, it is registering fast growth; its ODA level is also considerable, on a par with the UK.<sup>62</sup>

In the past, corruption scandals involving Chinese firms appeared frequently in the African news, and the region's overall perception of China's economic expansion and mode of doing business in Sub-Saharan Africa is mixed, as is captured by surveys. However, we should not be unduly critical. Many Chinese firms enter African markets taking risks in the areas where no one else is likely to venture. Contrary to conventional thinking, aggressive as they may seem, Chinese companies are not necessarily successful in Africa. In fact, they commonly face stiff competition even among themselves and many withdraw from African markets after incurring losses. Maybe the biggest downsides to such a 'no-strings-attached' way of doing business with Africa lies in the possibility that it can make African countries more complacent and exacerbate the already-serious dependency syndrome, moral hazard and poor governance. And it is my impression that there is still a considerable misperception amongst African leaders and elites about the situation of their markets and economies, and how companies do business and operate to make profit.<sup>63</sup>

In this regard, the presence of big multi-national corporations and aggressive Chinese firms may have had an undesirable impact in terms of making people overestimate the capacity of these entities and to have inaccurate views on how business works. For instance, they seem to think that big foreign companies can operate and make a profit for as long as possible and can do anything.

## Notes

1. Among many private entities involved in international development, a notable example that I encountered is the Geneva Institute for Leadership & Public Policy based in Switzerland. The Institute organized, jointly with South Korea's Science & Technology Policy Institute and with its partners Kumi University and the Uganda National

Council for Science & Technology, the Conference on National Transformation with special focus on science & technology, business & industry, in Kampala, Uganda, 5–7 October, 2017 (Africana Hotel). The special guest speaker was David Beasley, Executive Director of the World Food Programme.

2. Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).
3. 'Native authority' refers to the indigenous chiefs or black elites who were granted power by the colonialists according to Mamdani. In a way, the vestiges of this remain in many parts of Africa as dual legal systems, in which power is divided at both the national and local levels.
4. Mahmood Mamdani, 'Beyond Settler and Native as Political Identities: Overcoming the Political Legacy of Colonialism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43, no. 4 (2001), pp. 651–664.
5. Edmond Keller, *Identity, Citizenship, and Political Conflict in Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), p. 23.
6. Pierre Englebert and Kevin C. Dunn, *Inside African Politics* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2013), p. 25. The authors point out that new states were created without much attention and resources being devoted to them. It is argued that, fearful of the expense, colonial offices were rather reluctant and lacked a master plan.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
8. Constructivism is a philosophical viewpoint about the nature of knowledge and is widely applied in various social science disciplines like education, sociology and cultural studies, including studies on ethnicity, international relations, etc. According to Englebert and Dunn, constructivism has displaced primordialism as the mainstream approach to ethnicity among Africanists. Constructivists view ethnic identity as something that can be invented or constructed, and they stress perception, an interactive process, mobility or evolution of behaviourism and relationships among individuals and people. See Englebert and Dunn, *Inside African Politics*, pp. 70–71.
9. The idea of neo-colonialism was created by Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first post-independence president, in his book *Neo-colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965). Dependency theory makes the point that through economic transactions and international systems, resources flow from the 'periphery' of poor and underdeveloped countries to the 'core' of wealthy countries, enriching the latter at the expense of the

former. Dependency theory originates with Singer-Prebisch thesis on comparative advantage. Dependency theorists include Latin American Marxists like Celso Furtado, Aníbal Pinto, other Americans like Paul Baran, Paul Sweezy and Andre Gunder Frank, and many others. Immanuel Wallerstein refined the Marxist aspect of the theory to form the world-systems theory.

10. Crawford Young, *The Postcolonial State in Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), p. 339.
11. Englebert and Dunn, *Inside African Politics* (2013), p. 65.
12. In East Africa, for instance, even after the nations gained independence, different people of different ethnicities or tribes have been 'migrating' or seeking refuge regularly in one another's territory without any noticeable opposition from the host tribes. The massive inflow of South Sudan refugees into Uganda has not changed such attributes on the part of Ugandans.
13. Englebert and Dunn (2013), p. 75.
14. Ibid., p. 74.
15. Ibid., p. 75.
16. Edmond Keller (2014), p. 27.
17. Ibid., pp. 147–150.
18. Crawford Young (2012), p. 320.
19. Alberto. F. Alesina et al., 'Fractionalization', *Harvard Institute Research Working Paper* No. 1959, June 2002.
20. However, there is an argument that in Somalia, despite such racial and social homogeneity, division of clans or sub-clans was always existent. See Max Fisher, '5 Insights on the Racial Tolerance and Ethnicity Maps, from an Ethnic Conflict Professor', *Washington Post*, 17 May 2013, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2013/05/17/5-insights-on-the-racial-tolerance-and-ethnicity-maps-from-an-ethnic-conflict-professor/?utm\\_term=.48cfd79a2c28](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2013/05/17/5-insights-on-the-racial-tolerance-and-ethnicity-maps-from-an-ethnic-conflict-professor/?utm_term=.48cfd79a2c28).
21. Paul Collier, 'Implications of Ethnic Diversity', *World Bank Working Paper* Report No. 28127, vol. 1, World Bank, 17 December 2001, p. 2. See also Paul Collier, 'Ethnicity, Politics and Economic Performance', *Economics and Politics* 12, no. 3 (2000), p. 225. Collier points out that '[ethnic] diversity is highly damaging to growth in the context of limited political rights, but is not damaging in democracies'.
22. Daniel C. Bach and Mamoudou Gazibo (eds), *Neopatrimonialism in Africa and Beyond* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

23. Michael Brandon and Nicolas van de Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) in Crawford Young, *The Postcolonial State in Africa-Fifty Years of Independence 1960–2010* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), p. 68.
24. Englebert and Dunn (2013), p. 68.
25. Scott D. Taylor, *Globalization and the Cultures of Business in Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), pp. 5–6.
26. Tim Kelsall, 'Rethinking the Relationship Between Neopatrimonialism and Economic Development in Africa', *IDS Bulletin* 42, no. 2 (2011, March 2).
27. Anne Pitcher, Mary Moran, and Michael Johnston, 'Rethinking Patrimonialism and Neopatrimonialism in Africa', *African Studies Review* 51, no. 1 (April 2009), p. 145.
28. Englebert and Dunn (2013), p. 132.
29. Goran Hyden, Julius Court, and Kenneth Mease, *Making Sense of Governance: Empirical Evidence from 16 Developing Countries* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004).
30. Bertrand Badie, *L'État importé: l'occidentalisation de l'ordre politique* (Paris: Fayard, 1992), p. 227.
31. Other terms describing typical African politics, I believe, are 'electoral democracies' and 'semi-democracy'.
32. Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (New York: Times Books, 1992), pp. 9–24, 99–161.
33. Ibid.
34. Dani Rodrik and Sharun Mukand, 'The Puzzle of Liberal Democracy', *The Independent*, 22–28 May 2015, p. 40. Rodrik writes that this is because 'the dispossessed minorities who have the strongest stake in civil rights play no role during the democratic transition for the simple reason that they cannot normally bring anything to the bargaining table'.
35. President Kagame commanded the rebel force that ended the 1994 Rwandan genocide and is noted for steering his country towards socio-economic transformation.
36. David Booth and Diana Gammack, *Governance for Development in Africa* (London: Zed Books, 2013), Introduction.
37. Brian Levy, *Working with the Grain: Integrating Governance and Growth in Development Strategies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 8.

38. Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* (New York: Crown Business, 2012), pp. 74–76.
39. Homi Kharas, 'Development Assistance', in Bruce Currie-Alder, Ravi Kanbur, David M. Malone, and Rohinton Medhora (eds), *International Development: Ideas, Experience, and Prospects* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 858.
40. Irma Adelman, 'The Role of Government in Economic Development', in Finn Tarp (ed.), *Foreign Aid and Development: Lessons Learnt and Directions for the Future* (London: Routledge, 2000) p. 48. According to Adelman, there have been three phases in the dominant view concerning the optimal role of government in development: the prime mover phase (1940–1979); the problem phase (1979–1996); and rehabilitating government (1996 onwards, in the making).
41. Englebert and Dunn (2013), p. 156.
42. Failed State Index, <http://fundforpeace.org/fsi/data>.
43. John Harris, 'Development Theories', *International Development* (2014), p. 39.
44. John Degenbol-Martinussen and Poul Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid: Understanding International Development Cooperation*, translated by Marie Bille (London: Zed Books, 2005). This was originally published in Danish in 1999.
45. Kingsley Chiedu Moghalu, *Emerging Africa: How the Global Economy's 'Last Frontier' Can Prosper and Matter* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), p. 30.
46. Regarding the emergence of indigenous or black-owned firms in Sub-Saharan Africa, Kenya and Nigeria are frequently cited as examples. South Africa, on the other hand, is seen in a negative light, as locals continue to struggle in comparison to white businesses, which are dominant in the country. But even for Kenya and Nigeria, more detailed and accurate data needs to be accumulated and analysed in order to come to a better understanding of their situation.
47. John Harris, 'Development Theories (2014)', p. 45.
48. Olu Ajakaiye and Afeikhena Jerome, 'Economic Development', in Bruce Currie-Alder, Ravi Kanbur, David M. Malone, and Rohinton Medhora (eds), *International Development—Ideas, Experience, and Prospects* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 786–787.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 745.

50. Dani Rodrik, 'The Perils of Premature De-industrialisation' in the *Opinion, The Independent* (Uganda), 18–24 October 2013, p. 8.
51. Greg DePersio, 'What Are the Most Important Aspects of a Capitalist System?' *Investopedia Academy*, 7 April 2015, <http://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/040715/what-are-most-important-aspects-capitalist-system.asp>.
52. Kingsley Chiedu Moghalu (2014), pp. 64–66.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
54. David Henley, *Asia-Pacific Development Divergence—A Question of Intent* (London: Zed Books, 2015), p. 5.
55. Olu Ajakaiye and Afeikhen Jerome, 'Economic Development (2014)', pp. 742–743.
56. Tim Marshall, *Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps That Tell You Everything You Need to Know About Global Politics* (London: Elliot and Thompson, 2015), pp. 116–139.
57. 'World Population Prospects the 2017 Revision', [ESA.UN.org](http://esa.un.org) (custom data acquired via website), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. It was retrieved on 10 September 2017.
58. See the article written by Stephanie Hanson, 'Corruption in Sub-Saharan Africa' for the Council on Foreign Relations, 6 August 2009.
59. *Ibid.*
60. Huguette Labelle, 'Corruption', in *International Development* (2014), p. 240.
61. Kwabena Gyimah-Brempong, 'Corruption, Economic Growth, and Income Inequality in Africa', *Economics of Governance* 3 (2002), pp. 183–209, 185.
62. McKinsey Global Institute, 'The Closest Look Yet at Chinese Economic Engagement in Africa', June 2017 report, <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/middle-east-and-africa/the-closest-look-yet-at-chinese-economic-engagement-in-africa>.
63. Some Western experts who have long served in Africa have expressed the view that many African leaders still run their economy following the socialist mindset.

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