

Postmodern cynic appraisals of Africa's geriatric culture of social development in the age of western globalisation and millennial consciousness

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Abstract

The paper interrogates the sub-culture of the older generation of the African population and aspires to ascertain if this class of the African population can drive the development of the continent. The research is motivated by the control that the older generation in Africa asserts as they by the virtue of their mature ages and experiences are at the helms of affairs in divergent walks of life on the African continent, particularly in political administration. The paper employs Hollis Chenery's model of Structural-Change Theory which emphasises the patterns of development as the appropriate approach to economic development of a nation as the Structural Change Theory maintains that many countries of the world acquires wealth through different channels. In Africa, a sizeable number of the people in position of authority especially in governance are in the geriatric category of the population and do characteristically exhibit such tendencies as inordinate avarice, ostentation, self supremacy, suppression of the views of women, retributive vengeance with African voodoo, monarchial absolutism, superstition, financial prayer miracle, multiple births, as well as the beliefs that elders should not be queried on their deeds and actions. All of these attributes characterise the traditional African culture, and go against the modern global cultural and attitudinal principles such as financial prudence, hard work, fundamental human rights and science. The social and economic development of the African continent may be stalled and its progress hampered as long as those at the helms of affairs on the continent refuse to approach governance with postmodern approaches and attitudes. There is indeed the need for overt repudiation and elimination of such unprogressive and unproductive traits such as avarice, abuse of women, self supremacy, superstition, conventionalism, and ostentation to mention but a few.

Keywords: African culture, Postmodernism, Social development, Old generation, Globalisation,

Introduction

The African continent is in search of a ground-breaking development that will impart the world. The Continent is desirous of this feat, tenaciously. The primary motivation for this objective is the urgent need for the Continent to attain relevance in the comity of nations. Additionally, the African continent is desirous of remarkable development as a step towards the redemption of the battered image of the Continent in global ratings in many ramifications, be it in economy, governance, health, infrastructure, military capabilities, educational development, social harmony including science and technology. However, shadow is cast on whether the current elders who are the active administrators



are capable of leading Africa into the era of prosperity and development. The orientation and cultural ideologies of this category of the African population tend to contravene the modern yardsticks of social development. Such cultural ideologies include but not limited to inordinate avarice, ostentatious lifestyle, self supremacy, suppression of women, retributive vengeance with African juju, monarchical absolutism, superstition, financial prayer miracle, negligence to birth control, and beliefs in impunity. All these are societal vices and do not align with global best practices for development of a nation. This study enumerates how such ills are inimical to the development of the African continent.

A General Survey of Corruption and Development in Africa

The image-redemption undertakings embarked upon by African political, economic as well as civil society stakeholders have been informed by the many unsavory perceptions of Africa and revelations about the Continent. African countries are known for matrixes of underdevelopment and economic and political stagnation. For example, it has been reported that Nigeria has emerged the poverty capital of the world as could be noted in the declaration that:

Nigeria is making little progress in eliminating poverty. New reports by global development institution show that human capital spending in Nigeria –the poverty capital of the world after recently overtaken by India-is among the worst in the world in the second ever Commitment to Reducing Inequality (CRI) index compiled by Development Finance International (DF) and Oxfam, Nigeria placed bottom in a ranking of 157 nations.¹

This is further heightened by the infrastructural insufficiencies in South Africa. This is going by the view that:

One of the issues that remains a perpetual bugbear in South Africa, is the governments ambitions but slow infrastructure spending programme... President Jacob Zuma's recent State of the Nation speech highlighted the urgent need to address energy security with the soon-to-be-formed Energy Security Cabinet Sub-committee tasked to address all activities in the energy sector.²

The crux of the Weimer's observation above is that South Africa still battles persistent constraints of infrastructures in the country. And the South African situation likens to Nigeria's current experimentation with nano-technology to

1 Kazeem, Y, (2018). Nigeria is set to stay the World's poverty capital for at least a generation [Online] Available at: <http://qz.com/Africa/Nigeria-po>. [Accessed 09 December, 2019].

2 SA Commercial Prop News. (2014). Infrastructure deficit threatens S.A's economic growth S.A. Commercialprop-News. [Online] Available at: www.sacommercialpropnews.com.za [Accessed 17 December, 2020]

solve her gross energy insufficiencies.³ The situation about the manifestation of the indices of social development stagnation in West Africa and Southern Africa is the same in or compares in alignment with East Africa. In East Africa, as populated by countries such as Comoros, Island, Mayotte, Seychelles, Tanzania, and so on, there is endemic outbreak of communicable diseases. This is the core of the statement that:

The East African region is endemic with multiple zoonotic diseases and is one of the hotspots for emerging infections zoonotic diseases with reported multiple outbreaks of epidemic diseases such as Ebola, Marburg and Rift Valley Fever.⁴

It is indubitable that a region that is plagued with epidemic outbreak in the millennial era and rests on other regions (advanced regions) of the world to combat the fatal diseases is certainly a signifier of backwardness. It is so because most nations from Europe and America have long overcome such disasters as epidemic outbreak but are concerned with futuristic social issues such as environmentally-friendly and carbon-free energy. This is what the world is witnessing in the city of London which has banned fossil-fuel vehicles from plying its roads, in order to give way for electric vehicles. The situations or social conditions of the countries in the northern part of Africa could not be described as any better than what obtains in West Africa, Southern Africa, and East Africa. The deplorable status of Africa in global advancement rating, apart from the ills mentioned earlier, is compounded by massive political and economic corruption which has bedeviled the Continent even in the north of Africa.

The African continent is held static by the ubiquitous spread and consequent prevalence of process manipulation for self gratification in Africa which has been described as "grand corruption".⁵ This underscores the perception that corruption was so endemic in Africa that it was inevitable that African leaders would cart away the gains the Continent made for gratification. In effect, Africa is incontrovertibly a Continent suffering from retrograde conditions in its social advancement standing. However, the Continent is not complacent but making effort to leave her state of inertial and backwardness. Governments on the African continent have made remarkable moves and giant strides in advancing the African cause. Significant among those moves is the renaming of the Organisation of African Unity as African Union (2002), the institutionalisation of the African Peer Review Mechanism (2003), the adoption by the African Union leaders in Lusaka of the New partnership for Africa's Development (2001), and for example, the Not-Too-Young-To-Run legislation in Nigeria which is intended to motivate the potential of the younger generation(s). Also, notable in the steps

3 Sadik, O. (2015). Energy Crisis in Nigeria Nanotechnology as a Sustainable Option. Anniversary & Convocation Lecture, 2015. Redeemer's University, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria.

4 Kamuto, N., Eddy, M., Osoro, E. et al. (2018) Zoonotic Disease Research in East Africa BMC Infections Diseases. [Online] Available at bmcinfectdis.biomedcentral.com [Accessed 18 December, 2018]

5 Moody-Stuart, G. 1997). Grand Corruption. Worldview Publishing: Oxford.

that Africa has taken to move up the rungs of the social development ladder is the determination of the respective countries in Africa to implement/domesticate the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). But then, in spite of the potential laudability which these moves portend, they are only one aspect of the social sphere. And it is opined that the alleged ineptitude of most administrations in Africa may mar the possible success that the political will may record in lifting Africa out of doldrums or regression. The ineptitude of African political leaders is aggravated by and proven in the indictment of some of them who are notable African political leaders in all ramifications. Examples of such include the ousting of Ben Ali, former Tunisian leader, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, former president of Algeria, accusation of corruption against Jacob Zuma and to mention a few, the guilt-verdict and sentencing to imprisonment of Joshua Dariye, Jolly Nyame as well as Orji Uzor Kalu. All are former executive governors in Nigeria. To this end, it may be asserted that political approach to attaining Africa's development is ineffectual.

As a result of the seeming inappropriateness of the political angle to achieving African's development, the civil society tends to be the option. And this brings to the fore the contestation as to whether the future of the Continent is in the hands of the older generation or the younger generation. Or, it brings to discussion the potential and capabilities of which generation Africa should count on to drive the future of the Continent. That is, does the innovative future of the continent of Africa depend on the Continent's geriatric category? The geriatric cadre of the African demography is at the centre of consideration because it is *the first, the senior*. When used literally, the elders come first (in descending order). When used figuratively such that 'geriatric category' stands for African culture and tradition while 'the youth' stands for civilization, newness or modernity. Still, the geriatric class comes first. To this end, this paper aspires to scrutinize the philosophies, epitome, orientation and the worldview of the older generation in Africa. And the aim of such an undertaking is to determine the functionalism, suitability, as well as the utilitarian capabilities of the geriatric class in Africa to initiate, motivate and drive the Continent's social advancement, an exigency which Africa currently thirsts for and pursues vigorously.

Contextual Categorisation of African Demography

The population of Africa shall be categorised in a way that assures the convenience of the argument of this paper. As a result of this, the class of neonates to adolescents (the teenagers) is the category of the population that is classified as children. From the vicenarian through tricenarian and quadragenarian, and quinquagenarian shall be categorized as youths while the class of sexagenarians and nonagenarians are the geriatric category as this paper sees it. The centenarians and above are left out because senility often plagues this group of the African population even though there seems to be an exemption in the case of the-104-year old Amuda Aluko, for example. He is a World War II veteran of the Nigerian Army recently honoured by the Nigerian Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Tukur Buratai and who is still standing strong

because he is hale and hearty.⁶ Therefore, the population groups relevant to this study classified as geriatric class are the sexagenarians. Sexagenary is made the minimum age for old age categorization because at the coming of the Millennium in Africa, more than two decades ago (Year 2000), most of the African leaders at the time were sexagenarians. For example, Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria was sixty three (63), Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe was seventy six (76), Mammam Gaddafi of Libya was fifty eight (58), while Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya was seventy six (76). And, today, Africa is in the mire of underdevelopment and stagnation caused, significantly, by corruption and sit-tight syndrome among African leaders. It was at the advent of the millennium that tenure elongation (the third-term menace) rocked the Obasanjo administration. It was also at the advent and in the course of the millennium (2011) that the Arab Spring erupted from North Africa. These political philosophies and administrative menace are counter-productive to the twenty-first century civilization which governs the contemporary global community, the community of the age of globalisation. And civilisation needs be synchronically situated in Africa at the millennium. This is engendered by the contextual inter-link between the millennium and the technology-driven modernity which the millennium has symbolized in Africa. The millennium is the era of hyper-technologies and civilisation in Africa. It is the era pronounced with unprecedented scientific and technological innovations and products. For example, it is the era of the institutionalisation of Automated Teller Machine. It is the age of advanced and prevalent internet connectivity. It is the era of multi-functional telephones and tablets.

It has been an age of process computerization and computer dependence. It was during the millennium that global social connectivity has happened with the birth of Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, and other platforms of social relation, connectivity and education, generally known as social media. It needs be underscored that some of these technological innovations, for example, Automated Teller Machine or Cash Machine and process computerization, had definitely been in existence and utilization in the Western World before the millennium. But these *novel* technologies *birthed* in Africa at the advent of the millennium. The millennial age could therefore be seen as the Age of Enlightenment for Africa and Africans. It is reputed for being the era when African civil society and consciousness aligned with the global thinking, at least to a substantial extent. This has come on the heels of the situations that due to the millennium consciousness and its innovation, many superstitions shook and a few indeed collapsed, African early-age mysteries unraveled, and the dark shadows cast on the general African episteme were beamed the search light on. And this is Africa's manifestations of "...the radical shift in global pattern of cultural consumption"⁷, which globalisation as aided by the internet and the computer has occasioned. Such a shift in cultural consumption in Africa is seen in the manifestation of Western matrixes of modern development in African

6 Bologi, M. U. (2019). Breaking- NACEL 2019: Army Honours 104-year-old World War II Veteran, Other. [Online] Available at: www.blueprint.ng [Accessed 21 December, 2019]

7 Power, D. and Scott, A. (2004). Cultural Industries and the production of Culture. Abingdon: Routledge

societies. This is an affirmation of the observation that globalisation is making global societies the same.⁸

As it stands today, the penetrative universalism of Western civilization is the yardstick for determining and measuring the advancement of a given society in most parts of the world. This is in terms of the cutting-edge science and technology emanating from these parts of the world. Specific mention is made of aircraft technology as represented in Gulfstream and Antonov jet. Also worth the mention are the missions to the moon, automobile innovations, the submarine know-how, drone technicalities. And scientifically, we talk about the unimaginable breakthroughs in human medicine and Deoxyribonucleic Acids (DNA). Again, the West has made significant mark in governance and diplomacy. All these are some of the bases for determining the advancement of a country. They are still the reference points in assessing and adjudging Africa as an underdeveloped continent because none of these intuitively emanated or is emanating from Africa. As it is doubted if there are other innovations that are intended to better the lives of the people which Africa can come up with apart from what the West (including the East) has afforded the world. Western civilisation as represented in advanced technology and science, liberal politics, humane governance, consultative diplomacy, productive economy and currency are therefore what Africa aspires to attain to assume the status of a developed or advanced continent. However, is the old generation- the sexagenarians through to nonagenarians- of Africa capable of leading the Continent out of the stagnation the Continent has been plunged into? The situation appears to be cloudy and dicey along the line of proposition as the belief systems, sensitivities and orientations of this category of the African society contradict the modern development model in the age of globalization. These cultural beliefs, sensitivities and orientations are thus enumerated forth.

Philosophies and Episteme of Africa's Older Generation

Those who are at least sixty years old in Africa have their peculiar belief system and perception of life. They lead their lives by such beliefs and perceptions as their philosophies of life. Their knowledge base, their ideas of progress, craft and education often are shaped by such philosophies. Judging from the nature and goal attainments of such knowledge and belief system, in relation to the demands of and challenges that Western advancements pose, it is uncertain that the sub-cultural beliefs of the geriatric category of African population can lead the Continent out of stagnation. When critically examined, it is these individuals in Africa's population that had lived for about forty years before the millennium. That is about forty years of imbibing the traditional African values, for example, communalism, elaborate burial ceremonies, lavish spending at parties, suppression of the views of women, retributive vengeance with African voodoo, monarchical absolutism, superstition, miracle of prayer for financial breakthrough, multiple births, beliefs that elders cannot and should not be questioned and many of such non-empiricist philosophical positions. As a result of their firm beliefs in these African ways of life and many more, they lead a life in contradiction of the principles of civilization which can lead to the

8 Mowforth, M. and Munt, I. (2009). *Tourism and Sustainable Development, Globalisation and New Tourism in the Third World*. New York: Routledge

development of Africa through indigenous knowledge. It is to be reiterated that the intuitive technical know-how of the elderly in Africa is being assessed in the context of Western development yardstick. And Western civilization indices become inevitable because whatever innovative productivities that may come from Africa is, incontrovertibly, a fabrication and so a repeat of what has already been in existence and use, as lent the world by the West (and the East). Therefore, to the extent that Africa would want to re-fabricate Western technologies and reinvent science, can the elderly class in the continent's demographical categorizations drive this continental ambition? It is re-emphasized in the negative! A number of factors are a motivation for this position.

In the first instance, elders in Africa believe in the supremacy of their class. An elder believes he or she is superior to the younger person. The idea that an African elder has spent many more years on earth than a young person gives him/her the idea of being more knowledgeable than the younger person. The assumption is in the contextualisation of knowledge and experience or experience through knowledge as an accurate day-by-day encounters from inter-personal relationships. However, this assumption is an exclusion of the intuitive and ingrained potential precocity and ingenuity which a younger person may possess and which supersede earthly or social experiences which have inhibitions and limits. It is obvious, therefore, that the African geriatric category is either not aware of the fact that intuitive skills, crafts and knowledge are greater than life encounters, or they deliberately, though un-reflexively, suppress the natural endowments of the younger generations. The earthly or social encounters that African elders underscore are irrelevant in innovative engagements. This is because knowledge of science and technology is primordial, autochthonous, and perhaps supersensible. Though elders of today were once young and some of them could have been precocious. What, however, was precocious decades past is ordinary today. Again, what is it that the old-generation population of Africa could present as the output of their precocity? Or what justification can the geriatric class cite for any iota of the potential that they may possess? It is doubted if there is any, in the least. Therefore, African leaders' underestimation of the potential of the younger generation could be seen as a faux pas. And such dissociates them from other category of the population and excludes the youth as that other category. To this end, there is no motivation or role-modeling for the African youth. There is no generational interaction which may activate an iota of ingenuity that the younger generation may have at the instance of the older generation. Also, there is no prompt to engender or evoke generational knowledge sharing capable of enabling Africa achieve indigenous know-how through technology copy or technological transfer, to say the youths have continued from where the older generation have stopped. The superiority consciousness of the older generation in Africa has made them belittle the capabilities of the younger generation as could be seen in the Yoruba philosophy of *ki l'omode mo?* (What does a young person know?). And this mars, in philosophy, the essence of the United Nations, SDGs Goals 17 which emphasises collaboration through partnership.

There is a contextual conception of leadership in among the geriatric class in Africa. Old age is seen as leadership. And old people in Africa as leaders do feel superior to the young ones. Most of the people in position of authority in Africa

today (from the millennium year) are the sexagenarians and those above. And the domineering disposition alleged against them in this study characterises their leadership. From political leadership to cultural leadership including professional and civil society leaderships, there is high tendency for the leader to suppress the follower as a means of boosting his/her ego and aggrandisement. The causal factor for this is that leadership which is substantially related to the elderly is contextually construed by Africans as a means of empowerment and an instrument of oppression and suppression. For example, political leaders in Africa who have been in power for so long rule as if they are doing the masses a favour. When they are using the road (and they rarely do), they harass other road users of the road. They do honk the horn and blare the siren to scare people away and announce their presence and supremacy. They are not accessible to the electorate any longer after they have been elected into office.

In the same vein, professional leaders in Africa do see their positions as opportunities to tell subordinates that the leaders are superior to them. Their disposition, directives, tone of speech, relationship to subordinates, and, to mention a few, countenances are characteristically overbearing and belittling. There may be a few exceptions. That is, not all leaders are guilty of these allegations and that a young person may be in certain positions of authority and be guilty of the allegation. And this is because a few old people in position of authority who are not guilty of the allegation have made a deliberate resolution to be different as a result of their personal life encounters and experiences. Again a possible young person in position of authority guilty of the allegations is a victim of the precedent and antecedent that African elders have shown or exhibited in leadership. The cause of the supremacy that Africans in positions of authority do exhibit is the reflection of the traditional African system which is tyrannical and oppressive. We see this in the monarchical system of public administration in Africa. In the family, the leader, especially who is sexagenarian, and being a man, is usually dominant and domineering. This is the demonstration of the patriarchal nature of the traditional African society. The father believes the children should be pant and kowtow to the whim and caprice of their father. He believes his wife should play second fiddle to him which is a contravention of the SDGs Goal 5 - Gender Equality - of the United Nations which reflects global modern consciousness about gender inclusivity and decency. Clerics in Africa are leaders, religious leaders. Their dispositions to the laity portray the aura of a master. This is attributable perhaps to the situation that Africans do inflict one another with plague, using voodoo as a means of attaining retributive vengeance. Such an affliction, however, is expunged by the clerics with the help of God. Rather than give God the glory, their disposition often shows they take the glory. This is just as doctors in Africa take the glory rather than acknowledging the roles of science and technology in diagnoses and medication. As a result, doctors in Africa do see themselves as super beings and, therefore, superior to the patients. The doctor-patient relationship is therefore ruptured. And this is a dropdown of the seemingly inappropriate conception of leadership and authority by the autochthonous African life which elders perpetrate on the Continent. This is even in the age of globalisation. What progress can a society ridden with exclusivity and dichotomy attain? The first elements of the binary constructs above, for example, political leaders, professional leaders, monarchs, husband/father,

clerics and doctors cannot receive absolute cooperation and understanding from the respective other pairs. That is the electorate or the masses, subordinates, the subjects and people, wives/children, the laity, and patients, respectively. The energy in synergy, the opportunities in togetherness and oneness in inclusivity are lost to tyranny and monopoly. When somebody intercepts a great discovery, it takes a listening political leader to uphold the innovation with political will. While Albert Einstein was listened to by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1939 in a letter the former sent to the latter on Uranium potential, President Olusegun Obasanjo 'interrupted my presentation and said "Oga Oga this model will not work"'.⁹ The interruption of the presenter during the presentation could be interpreted as a disregard for the presenter. What makes the disregard worse is the manner of the interruption with the use of *oga* (as repeated) which becomes a derogatory term when used especially in Nigeria by a superior person for a person considered inferior. The raw disdain which typifies leadership and authority in Africa being the feature and old consciousness of the elderly class on the Continent, cannot lead Africa out of stagnation in which it is at the moment.

The study has opined that African elders (the class of at least sexagenarian) are tied to African traditional consciousness which is old cultural dispensation. This has been elaborated as the ideology of Africanity, that is, the pursuit of that which is aboriginal to Africa. There tends to be a knotty conundrum at this juncture. This complexity is borne out of the pursuit of the study which is how the Continent could develop using the ideology is the craving for the promotion of African values, education, medicine, administration, and knowledge system.

This goal aligns with the objective of this study which is the development of Africa. However, the goal of Africanity departs from the pursuit of the study because Africanity seeks an independent aboriginal development in Africa while the study seeks the development of Africa within the purview of Western development indices. Ambitious (or over-ambitions) consciousness of Africanity attempts to argue that Western development is of African origin. How sincere and achievable, then, is the goal of Africanity as an ideology? There are a number of complexities. To begin with, are Africanity sympathisers and apologists aspiring for innovations that are different from and surpass aircraft technology, space technology, DNA science and technology, cell phone technology, automobile technology, cable TV technology, the science of modern medicine, the technology of modern architecture, a new model of court system, a fairer mode of governance than democracy, a more productive banking system and banking technology, a better science of agriculture, a more efficient material for tarring roads than bitumen and its extraction technology, a new technology for electricity and so on? This ambition is doubtful! Or are all these and more going to be obliterated and a new way of life created? This too is doubted! It then points to it that whatever Africa may come up with has to be within the purview of Western technology and social development indices.

⁹ Adeleke, A. (2018). Development by Choice and Prime Performance: Entrepreneurship for Industrialization. Ede: Redeemer's University Press.

The pessimistic disposition in this study to the abilities of the elderly population in Africa to drives the Continent's social development bid is further sustained on the substantial illiteracy within the rank of African aged population. There is a contextualisation of illiteracy as lack of education and enlightenment within the modern-day Western and civilized consciousness at this juncture in the study. And this is missing among the holder population in Africa. What this means is that awareness of Western ideals and civilization is missing among the elderly in Africa. This is because about 80 per cent of the members of this category are uneducated the Western way. Yet the Western way, that is, Western consciousness, as could be gleaned from such canons as a way of life, technical know-how and social ethos of the people in the advanced countries is crucial to the position that this paper is advancing. And this is the development of Africa in the framework of Western civilisation. It is true that there are those who are educated in those ranks even up to the professorial cadre, yet too many of them are uneducated and attached profoundly to the Africa aboriginal consciousness.

The substantial 80 per cent of the population reside in the rural communities. Those of them who are in the cities through rural-urban migration do reside, or lie low, in the ancient section of the urban centre; or in the outskirts of town. This, therefore, leaves a few to participate in the development mainstream which involve the universities, government, court system, and diplomacy. The conception of literacy as education or Western enlightenment in the context of this paper and marking it as crucial is to the effect that a fusion or diffusion of education and knowledge is capable of perfecting human nature and experiences.¹⁰ To this end, education or enlightenment (the Western way) is crucial especially among the geriatric category of the African population. It is important to stress it that the deplorable situation of education among elderly Africans could be attributable to the lack-luster handling of and disposition to education by successive past political administrations on the continent. African countries have not paid due attention to education because "public policies, including those for education, remain insufficiently financed despite increased public spending on education".¹¹ It is also as a result of the yet ineffectiveness of *African indigenous education* which some intellectuals claim exists. The lopsided 80%-20% distribution of the uneducated and educated respectively is of great concern. This is because the 20% hope is too lean for fortuitous happenstance, accidental discovery and world-changing innovations to occur. The larger the percentage of the potent population, the better it is, especially in a region of the world where superstitions occupy central space in the consciousness of the people. If one of the threefold nature of the future is will through evolution¹² then the future of Africa in terms of social development is in jeopardy. This is

10 Rosenthal, A. (2010) Reinhold Niebuhr and the Crisis of Liberalism: Augustinian Realism and Democratic Politics in the Past- Enlightenment. In: P. Losonczi and A. Singh, ed., *From Political Theory to Political Theology*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group, pp 139-151..

11 Husson, G. (2018) Financing Education in Africa. [Online] Available at <http://www.iiep.unesco.org/en/financing-education-africa> 2018 [Accessed 22nd February, 2020.]

12 Jouvenel, de H. (2001). *The Nature of the Future*. In: J. Binde, ed., *Keys to the 21st Century*. New York: Berghahn Books, pp 12-13.

because the will of the African geriatric class is motivated by lack of knowledge of the need to align with Western generic culture of civilisation.

One other impediment against the African geriatric population in leading the continent to the development status is the pressure, distraction, and pain inflicted on them by the harsh economic performances of African countries. As a result of this, much attention of the entire population which includes the aged class is directed to battling with survival rather than the activation of their intuitive potential for innovations and discoveries. Again, there is the factor of avarice or inordinate money consciousness among the elderly in Africa. This stands in their way and against them in driving the development cause of Africa. Though the younger cadre of the population are not fairing any better in this regards, yet one would expect the older population constituted by individuals who lay claim to the prerogative of wisdom to be exemplary to the youth in terms of ethical standards and African cultural values. The postmodernist sensibility of the youth rank makes them preferable and perhaps suitable to rescue the continent from abyss. The ill of graft or financial corruption could be said, safely, to have been initiated by the older generation and the extent of its perpetration and perpetuation by this category of people in Africa is, to say the least, mind-blowing. How could a money-chasing population lead a continent out of its current near primitiveness, doldrums and underdevelopment? The impossibility of the older generations to lead the Continent into prosperity and other indicators of advancement is the duplicity of the elders and the crack in the rank of the elderly.

The few educated, rich and powerful ones among the elders live a double cultural life - the Western cultural life and the phony showy African cultural life. It would be reiterated that the 20 per cent active section of the African geriatrics belong in the academia, judiciary, and to mention a few, governance and diplomacy. This exposes them to the West (and the Far East) and, as a result, affords them the benefits of Western advancement. They consume imported grocery, situate their businesses in the West, and receive foreign medical care. They also educate themselves and children abroad. This *attainment* is, however, used as a tool of oppression of those who do not have access to these Western benefits. Yet the same set of people who are in positions of power advocate African way of life in the fulfillment of their duties in public offices. In Africa, arts and cultural festivals are graced by people in competition of whose Limousine is the latest or whose Rolls Royce is the most expensive or which is best in the array of Range Rover Spot, Limousines Rolls Royce, Mercedes. Government officials do fly helicopters. Emphasis here is the contradiction between the promotion of Africanness and the exhibition (that is ostentatious exhibition) of the products of Western civilisation and know-how. It is therefore doubted if these elderly ones can accede to a change in the status quo. Again the massive 80 per cent uneducated section of the African elders do characteristically get oppressed. And they do aspire to get out of the penury through illicit means such as civil trade or business duping and money ritual killing. Voodoo which is used for ritual killing is in the custody of the elderly in Africa. These atrocities certainly impede processes and are accountable for the conspicuous incapability of the geriatric class in Africa to lead the Continent to meaningful social advancement.

It was earlier stated that the elderly group of the African population are the custodians of African voodoo (juju), and African metaphysics in general. This is significantly because it is these elders that are custodians of certain idol cults. The transmission of such custody and power is hereditary which emphasizes that it is only the elders that are in charge of African metaphysics. However, it is alarming or may be seen as alarming that the elders do use their access to metaphysical power to threaten each other and the younger generation (the youth). When there are conflicts between typical traditional African elders the usual default way of settling them is through metaphysical supremacy. That is through whose *juju* can inflict more affliction and plague on the other rival. Same applies to the situation where African elders do punish younger ones who have offended them through metaphysical affliction by way of destiny manipulation. There are two dangers emanating from these circumstances, respectively. The first is that many talents and much ingenuity in the African context have been lost to the death or affliction of the rival contenders in metaphysical supremacy. This is because often times the custodian of voodoo eliminates the offender or contender. The African aged category does derive pride and accomplishments in this. There is unfortunately no end in sight because there will always be conflict that is the contradiction in values perspectives and opinions¹³ and if ethnicity, politics and religious leaning continue to fuel such conflict.¹⁴ These means that conflicts are inevitable among African civil societies as a community of individuals. It then means that the Continent will continue to lose her best. How can Africa develop through her geriatric population? Again, the younger generation, the youth, are scared of the elders in order not to be inflicted or afflicted. There is no generational collaboration between the older generation and the younger generation in Africa. This does not allow dissemination of information and ideas. The benefits of synergy are lost because of information cluster, lockdown and hoarding. The general African society suffers stagnation, consequently, therefore.

The Future of Africa as the Volition of the Youth

It is incontrovertible that the future of Africa in terms of social development is dependent on the youth of the African Continent. This means that the development that the Continent may record in the area of technological, scientific, political, infrastructural, diplomatic and cultural advancement can only be attained by the enquiries and breakthroughs that the younger generation in Africa makes. A couple of factorial attributes of the African youth justify this assertive observation. The first is the avant-garde, postmodernist, counter-culture, pro-West dispositions of the contemporary African youth. Breaking away from the superstitious inclination of the traditional African society which a substantial part of the geriatric class upheld and live/d by. The counter-culture emanating from the postmodernist proclivities will make the youth question existing knowledge thereby extending the frontier of knowledge. Furthermore, the pro-West posture of today's African younger

13 Lari, O. (2013). *Industrial Sociology: A Comprehensive Approach*. New Delhi: CBS Publishers and Distributors Ltd.

14 Neuliep, J. (2009). *International Communication: A Contextual Approach*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Inc.

generation is in alignment with the development pattern of the African aspiration. It has been averred that the development that African can attain is necessarily is within the purview of Western development matrixes, for example, in terms of technological and scientific innovations. The matrixes have been set as conditions because it is not certain that Africa is capable of evolving novel concepts of development that are different from what that West has lent or afforded the world. This is in terms of what can make life comfortable for the people. What can be attained is, to the utmost certainty, is the fabrication of the present accomplishment, and it is the counter-culture disposition of the contemporary time which is the rejection of the traditional African portend iota of likelihood for the fortuitous attainment by the African geniuses several decades to come. It, however, needs be stressed that it is not the African youth that are critical in the assertion that it is the youth that will drive the development bid as undertaken by Africans. It is their liberal orientation and pro-West conception of development which rejects superstitions, sentiments, and lineage dogma. The youth are not critical because it is not all the young ones in Africa today that are motivated by public service.

Many indeed are debauched engaging in sharp practices such as internet fraud and drug abuse. The youth have been identified as possible derivers of Africa's development because their breakaway from cultural superstition will enable that reason outside the box, liaising with counterparts in other clime for information sharing, collaboration, synergy, as well as technical transfer. This liberal tendency however departs from the stern attachment of the older generation to Africa's customary superstitions and culture which, in the name of nationalism and race rhetoric, have been claimed to be the best in the world by cultural merchants on the continent. Such a claim is however ruptured by the Westernization of the lifestyle of the custodians of the African culture that has been claimed to be the best. The same occurs in the ideological pursuit of Africanity by African culture intellectuals who believe that African culture is the best. But then, the canons and matrixes of development are defined and conditioned by Western innovations. What all this amounts to is that emphasis is on the philosophies and orientations of the two generations that are critical in asserting that the older generation cannot drive Africa's development and that it is the younger generation that has the potential to achieve this feat for the continent.

In conclusion

The development agenda of the African continent tends to not be in tandem with and driven by the principles and cultural orientations of the older generation of African population. That is many of those who were at least about forty years old at the advent of the millennium do not possess the orientation that makes it possible for them to effect a remarkable social change in terms of the development of Africa's indigenous technology and science, economic model, educational system, and to mention a few, military hardware and tactics. This basis for the position is the worldview and cultural philosophies of the old generation of Africa's population hamper such a lofty cause as the development of Africa. Such is obvious in the belief held by this category of Africans that African culture and deeds are better than any else. This is however contradictory to the canons, yardsticks and matrixes of development in the age

of globalisation. In this age, it is the Western development indices that rule the world. And it is in utmost doubt that Africa and its geriatric population category are capable of evolving through discoveries a new platform of convenience for the world. It is not certain if Africa can come up with totally novel innovations apart from what the world has known such as the jet plane, the tube, automobile, the internet, the Automated Teller Machine, the tablets and phones, electricity, the television et cetera. These are Western brainchild and they contradict the concept of Africanity. However, the millennium has witnessed huge presence of Westernization and Globalization which has been imbibed by the younger generation in Africa. This is what has accounted for the counter-culture disposition of the younger generation in Africa, manifesting more conspicuously is their break away from superstition and cultural rhetoric. This therefore poses the inclination and proclivities that may result in the successful fabrication of Western innovations in Africa which may be branded Africa's indigenous technology. This can subsequently herald Africa's development as the Continent will be enabled to be visible at the global stage. Again, such will contribute to the situation whereby globalisation traffic will originate from Africa rather than the present situation in which globalisation traffic originates from the West and the Far East.

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