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Re-possessing Africa, new approaches to leadership, governance and democracy: Critical implications for public policy 61

Danfulani Ahmed
Review

Re-possessing Africa, new approaches to leadership, governance and democracy: Critical implications for public policy

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Elsewhere in Africa, all you need to do is to compare the sterling nature of leadership thrown up on the continent by the decolonizing project in the last quarter of the last century with the current uninspiring miniaturists. There is no contemporary African leader who has seized the imagination of the continent, or who is showing a deep grasp of the crisis of colonial nations and underdevelopment on the continent making a pitch in the process for continental superstardom and immortality. Yet it is obvious that the benighted and ill-starred continent is a victim of a catastrophic historic miscue in which the historical currents and trajectory of the west overwhelm its own trajectory blindsiding it from seeing itself as it truly is and the need for urgent recuperative politics by its great scions in order to rescue it from the jaws of underdevelopment and endemic political instability. But not to worry Just as it has happened in the last six hundred years commencing with colonization and the internationalization of slavery, the fate of Africa will be determined somewhere else and with the unusual merciless severity reserved for those who cannot take their destiny in their hands, or manage their own affair satisfactorily. “The long twenty first century: On the nexus between epochs and leadership”, Tatalo Alamu, The Nation, Sunday, November 12, 2017. P 3.

Key words: Leadership, Decolonizing Project, African Leader, Imagination, Underdevelopment, Historical Currents, Great Scions, Political Instability, Colonization, Internationalization, Africa, Destiny

INTRODUCTION

At the close of the 15th, 16th and 17th Centuries, which eventually dovetailed into the 19th century (1800/1900), global preoccupation was purely centered on economic, socio-cultural, political competition and rivalry among and between the world powers, mainly Europe and later America (Lavroff, 1980). The greatest challenge faced then was how best to ensure the survival of human civilization at a time when Africa was targeted as just a dark continent, a fertile land for economic exploration, exploitation, giving birth to the deadly pursuit of Vital Strategic Interests: slavery/men, territories, raw materials, politics and policies (Alli, 2007a). The then nascent scientific and technological exploration powering the industrial revolution eventually produced undeniable
world powers’ spheres of influence giving birth to Asia, Latin America, Middle and Far East, plus China as new terrain of economic and social civilization, under the stronghold of Europe: Britain, France, Russia, Germany and Spain (Howard,1982). The successful and gradual power of “human thinking”4; leading to serious Scramble for Africa , given birth to search for survival, political cum economic competition and strategic stability led to the Berlin Conference of 1883/84, where the fate of Africa was sealed and the continent shared, among the European powers, commonly referred to as Imperial Powers and Colonial Metropolis5 (Howard, 1982). An important figure, the like of the first African Literature Nobel Laureate in the person of Wole Soyinka (1998) concurred to our analysis when he declared quite satirically that:

“African Nations, newly ‘baptised tribes’ have been cut and sewn together like a QUILT across a foreign bargaining table”6.

Africa, acknowledged as the brain child of Europe, was partitioned along the following lines – Anglophone/ Francophone/Arabophone and Lusophone, often described North Africa and Africa South of the Sahara/ Black Africa (Ravenhill, 1988). The Colonial history of Africa has been fully analyzed in quantum in different languages, specific interests and focus across the planet, and our libraries are replete with loads of those works7. Our submission here, follow-up to the powers that dominated Africa, as well as the post colonial phenomenon, is meant to x-ray a summary overview of the ‘Journey So Far’8, putting emphasis on the dynamics of socio-economic, political and cultural imperatives within Africa (particularly our focus (Nigeria) which represents by its history – a mini-picture of Africa, a country often regarded as the power-house, with every 4th African a Nigerian, and every 8th Blackman in the world, as also one from the continent; representing the greatest concentration of black people in the world, soon totaling 200 million by 2030 (Obasanjo, 2019). This study aims purely to evaluate some very cogent historical, social, political, cultural and economic landmarks that will be analyzed under a two part strategic overview of the trajectory of Africa/Nigeria, putting emphasis on issues of governance and public policy (Jackson and Rosberg, 1982).

**STRATEGIC DIAGNOSIS**

The post-colonial phenomenon

Much has been accomplished on this topic as well as others within the purview of this piece (Bourjol-Flecher, 1981). It suffices therefore to admit that Colonialism visited different parts of Africa in a somewhat and rather different pattern. We shall not develop here the various colonial practices and their policies (Chabal, 1986), but our emphasis will be focused on the fact that all the colonies were peripheries of exploitation with little or no regard for Fundamental Human Rights (Forsythe, 1991).

In overseas, territories deliberately created for exploitation, issues of socio-economic, cultural and political development were the least preoccupation of the Metropolis, and this reality, refined several times, (1800 to date) happens to be the genesis of the crisis of governance, democracy and socio-economic development in the entire continent of Africa, with relatively varying degrees across the board (Ake, 1987; Gurr, 1985).

With the realities of North Africa itself previously a strong bastion of slavery, socio-economic and political exploitation of the citizenry inspite of its seeming homogenous religious and cultural hegemonic unity (Anderson, 1995), the region is in a hopeless state when it comes to governance14. Almost the entire black Africa is debilitatingly, previously and even now afflicted with issues of tribalism, nepotism, socio-economic and religious fundamentalism, conflicts, confrontation, coups, counter-coups, poverty, hopelessness, marginalization, bribery, corruption, visionless political leadership, democratic deficit, sophisticated clannishness, misinformation, disinformation, local and foreign technical exploitation15. All of these are inimical to peace, and national security, stability, democracy and development inspite the serious and massive international funding, technical assistance and global solidarity16 (Moore, 2007; Fung and Wright, 2001).

Seemingly oblivious of the reality of hegemonic colonial power, the founding fathers – Nkrumah, Azikiwe, Mandela, Nyerere, Kenyatta, Kaunda, Senghour, Houphouet, Ben Bella, to mention only these, struggled for independence from the JAWS of imperial might. One of the heroes of African independence in the person of late President Kwame Nkrumah (1959) captured this better when he wrote prophetically that:

“We prefer independence with danger to servitude in tranquility” (Mohamed Salih, 1989).

Emerging through different constitutional networks, outright political warfare and diplomatic engineering (Tunteng, 1973), independence came around the 50s, 60s (1959 Ghana – 1992, Namibia and South Africa 1989/90), running through the delicate political trajectory, but it was much political independence on paper. This was followed by the failure of self-governance, a non-democratic polity, militarization, despotism and outright dictatorship18 (Katz, 1990).

**Militarism and global ‘cold wars’**

Africa that became independent was born at a most dangerous period of global ideological competition and East/West rivalry for the control and domination of the
different zones of vital strategic interests: raw materials, men, policies, and territories covering the entire length of Africa 19 (Howard, 1982; Ohaegbulam, 1982; Shaw, 1983). Colonialism was enthroned by the use of force, diplomatic persuasion and warfare, specifically deployed to subjugate the different countries with technical imposition of their leadership, with pseudo-democratic institutions, over population and merger of a people that could hardly co-habit and even survive under the same roof: Nigeria, Rwanda, Sudan, Ghana, Somalia, Côte d’Ivoire, Kenya, Ethiopia, Congo and Liberia are examples, just to mention a few (Jenkins and Kposowa, 1992).

As we had earlier mentioned (Danfulani, 1992), it suffices to admit that independent Africa, from Accra to Windhoek, has this built-in structural violence: incongruous state architecture, difficult and often strange cultural groups were called to assume political leadership of an artificial geographical entity that could be anything but a viable state, not to talk of a nation, the implications of which have been analyzed and the consequences of which produced the death fields of Rwanda, Burundi, Chad, and Sudan, just to mention a few (Onyong, 1989).

It must also be admitted, that given the arduous task of nation building, the different groups that were fighting the same common enemy (colonialism), discovered that after independence, they must now work together inspite of their differences, a dream turned nightmare, when they could not, considering the level of destruction occasioned by some of these conflicts. Importantly however, what is generally condemned in research and policy circles, and in the words of Riley (1991) as purely “an imperial fiat”, has turned out, to be another weapon of domination, extermination, marginalization, arrogant majority or minority syndrome, arbitrary rule, and recklessness from those the departing Lords trusted with State power (Clapham, 1993; Diamond, 1990).

The obvious difficulties at nurturing and sustaining a nation becomes the ‘achillesshile’ of the first group of African political leadership, which unfortunately were to be drafted into the bipolar hegemonic capitalist and communist antagonism, fatally sustained through the cold wars between East and West (Tatalo, 2017). The resultant proxy confrontation for the control of the zones of vital strategic interests eventually culminated in militarism (coup/counter-coups), arms build-up, bogus defence expenditure, conflict/confrontation, rebellion, exploitation, despotism, outright dictatorship, accumulation of lethal nuclear weaponry with resultant poverty, disease, hunger, democratic deficit, and hopelessness as we shall articulate later21.

Possessed by different European masters – themselves bigger victims of greater world powers, under the powerful claws of Washington and Moscow; almost the entire continent was led by the rampaging force of military dictators, professing different ideologies and vision with little or no regards for the rule of law, democracy and fundamental economic, political, social and cultural rights of the citizenry. It is this unfortunate global cold war reality that largely underpinned the crisis of political governance, as well as the survival of state in Africa; Ghana, Senegal, Congo, Tunisia, etc., and Nigerian examples are worthy of note22 (Kemp, 1984). It is specifically on the fringes of this phenomenon that we must situate the genesis of the failure, difficulties and challenge of African political leadership, an unfortunate strategic debilitating outcome which exists and undermines our polity to-date, leading us to examine issues of our nascent democracy.

**Nascent democratic dynamics**

Africa that settled for the independence of the 60s, fell into the grip of global East/West conflict, global arms race, subversion, incongruous state architecture, excruiciating debt and IMF burden. Politisation of the security apparatus, religious fanaticism, sabotage, brain-drain, dependency, electoral manipulation, teleguided electioneering. Resulting from the above are the issues of visionless leadership, lack of political transparency, economic dependency and slavery, democratic deficit and finally, fragile democratic institutions, etc, which eventually led to the collapse of the state23 (Danfulani, 1998). It is this failure of the system, post East-West divide that led to the clamour for democracy, a second liberation from the excruiciating clutches of the decrepit political leadership and institutions. The international response to this was to be manifested in the nascent democratic experience following the defeat of communism and the gradual disappearance of socialism, uni-party state architecture, giving way to multi-partism24 (Riley, 1991).

The 90s gave hope that, at least with the defeat of communism, and the gradual nascent democratization dynamics, particularly in the previously hot zones of influence and bipolar confrontation: Benin, Mali, Zaire and CDR, Tanzania, South Africa, Somalia, Ethiopia, etc., there seems to be greater apprehension that a new Africa may not take too long to arrive25a. This approach and expectation by scholars within and outside the continent was not to be, particularly because of inter-related issues of socio-cultural and socio-economic dimensions, and quite poignantly, the in-built values of democracy and democratization of the polity. The continent saw an array of political intrigues in both the francophone, arabophone, luscophrone and Anglophone countries where difficult and somehow incongruous and dangerous bed fellows were called to midwive a new political transition (Nzouakeu, 1991).

As we shall focus latter, this hopeless political hybrid had the singular merit of bringing old wine (political warlords) into new bottles, because, those that initially possessed Africa, fighting on political ideology had not for
once forgotten, nor have they discarded, the highly valued principle of vital strategic interests. Based on this reality, it is observed that African countries, eager to demonstrate their political weight as sovereign, constituent members of the international community with equal rights, in 1965, the countries of the South voted massively for the U.N. General Assembly Resolution 2131, meant to entrench the principle of the "inadmissibility of intervention in domestic affairs of states". Africa unfortunately discovered that political sovereignty by itself is not the only "magic wand" for national economic prosperity. Independent Africa largely cherished the sacrosanct principle of non-interference in the affairs of sovereign states. But to the extent to which outsiders, from the closest neighbor to the remotest regional partner, and by extension, the "international community," could not, by right and force of law, "interfere" in what was then considered the "internal affairs of states in Africa, so was it possible to establish laws, political practices, and governance meant to suffocate legitimate opposition, crush dissent, foment discord, plunder national wealth, support rebellion, exterminate a group or neutralize its ambition, most often with foreign assistance.

Admittedly, the nascent post-communist democratization political transition was equally hijacked with the resultant highly-destructive political leadership25b; as we shall decorticate "pronto".

Political transition and leadership failure

Most African economies are already deeply integrated into the global economy, albeit at the wrong end of the stick (aid dependence, highest capital flight of any region, massive brain drain, and trade in primary commodities buffeted by volatile and declining terms of trade) (Okenjo, 2010). It is quite clear that Africa has experienced the wave of political transition, from dictatorship to democracy, there is palpable air and climate of failure, essentially due to 'leadership political deficit', arising from 'a skewed and deliberate political and constitutional manipulation', resulting from teleguided elections and hybrid socio-political non-democratic culture (Riley, 1991).

Put in the language of the streets, political transition from dictatorship to democracy and multi-party politics, as indeed transition from militarism to teleguided pseudo-political military-democracy, amount to changing 'Khaki /Uniform to Agbada/Kaftan', without necessarily imbining appropriate democratic values, neither by the governors nor by the governed, leadership and followership dilemma, creating a climate of stagnation, voter apathy and outright rejection of political pluralism and its architects27 (Kegley and Raymond, 1992).

Given the post-independence history, as well as the different constitutional and political developments, experts are aware that solid political stability and strong national democratic culture are the fundamental ingredients of successful and fault free democratic political environment, devoid of friction, inter-group squabbles, party acrimony and socio-cultural fractionalization (Guto, 1990; ETzioni, 1992/93; Clapham, 1993; Chabal, 1986; Moore, 2007). In all these, African/Nigeria seems to have unfortunately been deprived of serious and committed political statesmanship. What we have witnessed so far is the abject dereliction of duty, disregard for constitutionalism, resulting in outright abuse of the rule of law, and most times threats to political stability, lack of patriotism, entronement of the cancer of divisionism, excessive political patronage, and dissimulated political terrorism; resulting from skewed and ill-intentioned ideas, qualified statesmanship and systemic degeneration of the polity (Gupta et al., 1993).

On the imperative of serious leadership, this paper admits that the post-colonial African state cannot effectively function without restructuring the intra-national polity, therefore, a system of law, of equal distribution of state wealth, of access to equal opportunities, justice and equity would have to evolve to curb the excesses of arrogant minorities and the tyranny of the dominant majority. If Africa and its leadership could not develop an Olympian supranational strategic structure, horrendous and devastating conflicts will continue to luck and erupt as a volcano. Of course, so will Africa and the world at large receive nerve-shocking images from battle fields of extremely rich nations turned to donor camps of pity, refugees, diseases, and famine purely from the design and tyranny of their leadership or the insensibility of the various warlords. We now have Boko Haram, Insurgents and ISIS! (2013/2018) (Danfulani, 1998).

Given the near absence of transparent political leadership, given the poisoned climate of political pluralism, given the unfortunate growth and spread of centrifugal forces hell-bent on the disintegration of the polity, given the absence of solid political citizenry and followership, and finally given the abuse, misuse of Foreign Aid and international patronage with direct foreign investment (Khan and Hoshino, 1992) the resulting poverty, especially of the leadership, that could salvage Africa/Nigeria etc, from being condemned to another circle of slavery, technical exploitation, dehumanization, there is an urgent need to address the widespread poverty in all its ramifications (Thee, 1991).

Poverty: Ideas, men, policy and system

No doubt, there has been no shortage of global agenda, and, in particular, there has been about a dozen special international initiatives on Africa since 1980. However, thus far they have not worked. Poverty and inequality continue to rise. And there is a broad consensus that a global response is required, but disparate ideas remain
on how to do so. Our argument here is that the world is in need of a fundamental rethinking of the governance structure in Africa in the light of the increasing economic interdependence (Okonjo, 2010).

It has been argued that what is lacking in Africa: Nigeria/Kenya/ Cameroonian Namibia, etc., are the quartet of ideas, men, policy and system (Ross, 1993; Holman, 1997), this piece wish to argue to the contrary. In the sense that we have been inundated with ideas, we have produced some of the Best Technocrats, Scientists and Politicians, etc., in and outside Africa, there has been policies, home grown and foreign in origin, and above all, we have inherited and even created several systems that could respond to our peculiar circumstances (Ellis, 1996). On a very serious note and based on an empirical analysis, it is here essential to dissect, even if briefly, the premise and essentialities of these constructs.

Poverty

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1992 attempted a concise definition of poverty, posting almost 100 of such definitions from different experts across the planet taking cognizance of the different regions and world geopolitical realities: the Americas (USA and Latin America) Africa, Asia and Europe. It needs no prophet to confirm that there can be no universally acceptable definition of poverty, as indeed there could be no meaningful understanding of the term without full cognizance of its historical, geo-strategic, socio-economic and cultural realities of human civilization (Bevan et al., 1999). Let's limit ourselves here, for the purpose of this piece to Africa: North and South of the Sahara. Scholars have concurred that poverty in itself is not a serious phenomenon in all societies; as within the richest and poorest societies across the planet, there are a myriad of poverty inducing etiologies, the most significant of which is centered on the person of man.

In Africa, the phenomenon of poverty: ideas, men, policy and system can squarely be placed on the nature, quality and class of the political leadership. Research has amply demonstrated that all parts of Africa (all sections and regions of Nigeria and each country) is replete with tapped and untapped tactical and strategic raw materials: the value and importance of which are indispensable to industries of the Countries of Europe, USA, China, Japan, etc. Notable of these strategic raw materials are: Oil, Nickel, Uranium, Platinum, Gold, Copper, Diamond and dozens of ultra sensitive solid minerals buried under the African soil, Nigeria, CDR, South Africa, Algeria, Angola, etc., are among these countries, considered of great importance to global industrial survival which aptly support the thesis and relevance of the etiquette Vital Strategic Interests (VSI). Where man, and therefore the indispensable political leadership is deficient, both in ideas, quality and character, there is ample evidence to sustain the notion of failed system, failed policy and failed or failing state (Holman, 1997). It is in line with the aforementioned that Soludo (1996) while evaluating the African situation declared that:

*Africa is at risk of permanently remaining behind. The challenges are simply too overwhelming to permit meaningful progress in today’s competitive, globalizing world, and, as stated earlier, even the continent’s current star performer – Uganda – is estimated to remain an LDC until 2020.*

Not surprisingly, poverty remains pervasive, even after two decades of market-oriented adjustment programmes. With nearly 50% of the population living in absolute poverty, 5% of gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate is required just to prevent the number of poor people from increasing, and more than 7% annual growth rate is needed to significantly reduce poverty in the longer run. With poverty on the rise, it is little surprise that civil wars and socio-political unrest, as well as violent crimes have been escalating in recent years in the region (with all the added burden of refugees, for example).

So far, and quite unfortunately, Africa/Nigeria/ Ghana/ Tanzania, Ethiopia, Egypt, etc., are not lacking in most of the human instruments of power and politics, rather what is often criticized is the method of their emergence, their education, the political utility value, the quality of their vision, their inward and outward personality, proneness to corruption and corruptible tendencies, authoritarianism, occultic tendencies, lack of transparent character disposition, as well as the dangerous disregard for the fundamental economic, social, cultural and political rights of the populace. Where these types of leaders emerge, as we are witnessing right now in Nigeria, CDR, Tunisia, Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia, etc., the results: abject poverty of the system, the polity, human and material wherewithal, with serious consequences for conflict, confrontation, oppression, exploitation, primitive accumulation, rebellion, injustice, insecurity and societal instability (Etzioni, 1992; Drayton, 1995).

In sum, the trajectory from colonialism, pre and post-independence phenomenon, including the previous climate of bipolar East/West rivalry and competition has left a legacy of decrepit African political leadership crisis with inbuilt strategic elasticity of form, style, and character, most times quite inimical to the survival of state, peace, security and stability, thus generating the clamour for a ‘Reinvention of a new leadership’.

RE-INVENTING A NEW AFRICAN LEADERSHIP: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

The European explorers that visited Africa were imbued with purely commercial endeavor couched in civilizing
mission, using known, and at times unprintable strategies directed at exploration, exploitation, outright domination and slavery aimed at subjugating 'uncivilized natives', with an ecumenical mission targeted at the strategic assimilation of people, polities and territories (Anderson, 1995). As we had earlier demonstrated, different classes of leadership emerged across the ages, all fashioned at the then (and even now) prevailing standard of global geo-strategic polity, with the main aim of evolving highly qualified and competent interlocutors capable of pulling Africa to a ripe and modern age of science and technology. The story so far, giving the debilitating African geo-polity, largely comforts the premise of previous analysis. The questions are: what has been the purpose of our successive leadership commitment all along? Is Africa and/or the system not nurturing incompetent political leadership? Is the public system of recruiting national leadership not threatened by a zero-transfer syndrome: old wines/old hands vis-à-vis new polity, new challenges and prospects? (Moore, 1996) Is the time not ripe to re-invent a new Africa or at best re-possess the continent’s strategic potentials? (Danfulani, 1997). With the failure of most, if not all, of anything Government, can we explore a paradigm shift, intently crafted along corporate political engineering using the parameters of private enterprise? To all this, a new thinking is imperative. We intend to dissect a few points summarily as it concern the importance of re-evaluating another leadership strategy in the 21st century.

Socio-economic and political dynamics

(1) The scholar is faced here with the embarrassing reality of leadership deficit: hopelessness, joblessness, democratic deficit and illegitimate political leadership. The need for succinct analysis dispensed us from extensive breakdown of these dynamics (Afia, 2012; Ifidion, 1996). It suffices however, to present a few highlights germane to our concern about the urgent need for leadership paradigm shift, given the imperatives of our present democratic order. In the aspect of the current socio-economic reality, it is quite evident that there is increasing poverty, multiplicity of juvenile and adult anti-social behavior, drugs’ trafficking, drug consumption, new slavery and human trafficking, venerable and common communicable diseases, Ebola, AIDS, drunkenness and delinquent behavior, arising from want. There is the increasing anti-government and non-conformist attitude to the state, resulting in thuggery, electoral malpractices, political terrorism, political hijack, oppositional arms twisting, whitewash, blackmail, rebellion, divisionism and secessionist tendency, armed robbery, widespread kidnapping, executive and legislative recklessness, voter apathy, among others (Ross, 1993; Oyelaran and Adediran, 1997; Imobigbe, 2006).

(2) On the socio-political aspect, the question of decrepit political leadership create another tension, outright citizen and general political apathy resulting from the criminalization of the political process, undue political grandstanding reminiscent of the terrible starvation of our cultural and socio-political environment. In societies where the difficulty of governance, as well as the outright poverty of the mind, the system based on the manipulative character of the leadership, it is very much obvious that in addition to the stifling of the gradual democratic growth of the citizenry, there will equally be the negative economic growth inimical to the survival of the polity (Abonyi, 2010). In Nigeria for instance, as we had previously experienced in the cases of Cote d’Ivoire, Senegal, and as it was witnessed in Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya and the CDR, there was a terrible voter apathy during the 2011 and the 2015 elections, the same in 2017 elections in Kenya – October 2017, demonstrating the now generally acknowledged reality of our suffocating polity and political space (2008), making a strong case for a paradigm shift in favour of corporate political governance.

PRIVATE, PUBLIC CORPORATE POLITICAL ENGINEERING

The thrust of our conviction all along has been centered on the abject poverty and the failure of the democratization of the political space in line with what is commonly referred to as international best practices. If we admit that African Nations have been cut and sewn together like a Quilt (Soyinka, 1998); if we admit that colonial and post-colonial experience in all African Nations was ‘democratically’, crafted to ensure the golden principles of the defence of ‘Vital Strategies Interests’: men, polities, territories, politics and system (Nwoke, 2007; Danfulani, 1993; Huttington, 1993), and if we admit that there is obvious failure of the different democratization initiatives in the different regions of the continent (Sithole, 1994), the scholar today may be at a loss to deny that the major problem of the continent is purely that of a deficit, and quite unfortunately, retrograde political leadership.

One significant deduction is that, given the nature and magnitude of the legacy of imperial power and the attendant ills of the post-colonial state, the absence of modernised economy and civic culture poses significant danger to the development and survival of democracy, while at the same time, complicating the organisation and management of national security, in the absence of a strong, self-sustaining democratic polity (Nyag'oro, 1992). Put differently, the communal collective character of the post-colonial state and frankly speaking, of the moribund independent states that emerged from the bipolar ideological East-West confrontation and rivalry - the Cold War, makes it ill-suited for the enthronement of freedom, equality and individualism all under the rule of law, hence the submission that the unfortunate legacy of colonial rule favours authoritarianism (20).
incontrovertible need for the consolidation of the civil society and it is this singular socio-strategic imperative that encourages the conviction that, the existence of such a society without the proper restructuring of the apparatus of the state, the forms and means of production as well as the socio-cultural and the political systems, would portend greater risks of fragmentation and instability, and therefore will pose danger to the very life of the state, as it ascends through the rough steps of democratization and nationhood (Jackson and Resberg, 1982).

Our major challenge is today been brought to the fore by the related issues of election in Kenya (Kenyatta versus Odinga (July/August 2017 to January/September 2017: Court cancellation of elections) products of two independent heroes that have been governing Kenya since independence in 1961! Rerun elections 24/11/17 and victory of Uhuru Kenyatta. This scenario is practically been replicated in the phenomenon of sit-tight dictators (so called civilian benevolent leaders: Cameroon, Gabon, CDR, Rwanda/Burundi, Equatorial Guinea, etc) or in the form of former military leaders (Nigeria, Egypt, Congo, CDR) where the citizenry have been subjected to the abject lack of choice and the intricacies of competent political leadership41.

In sum, and based on the arguments canvassed along this article, African problem is purely and cruelly about evolving a system, or better still, ensuring a new untainted leadership strategies capable of thrusting the continent into its rightful place in the comity of democratic nations (Nnoli, 1998; Moore, 2007). If our challenges are about how to evolve a credible, committed, altruistic and servant political leadership (France, Britain, Germany, examples among others), the outcome and prospect for such a feat is equally an important national security and diplomatic endeavour, the prospect of which, even though gargantuan and daunting could not be beyond our dedicated and foresightful, man and woman of all classes, stations and intellect, that could powerfully posit on a new leadership paradigm shift. A person with an important status like Obasanjo (2017) has posited that: “Nigeria – we are a leader in Africa and we must continue to lead by example, both in Africa and the world*42. Going by Obasanjo’s antecedent, a military leader and who twenty years later, emerged as democratically ‘elected’ President, to again rule the most powerful African nation – such is not the wish of Africa intellectual class and his emergence confirm the dearth of serious political leadership in Africa: Burundi, Rwanda, Egypt, Uganda, Angola, Kenya, to mention some current and obvious ones. The scholar is constrained to admit, once again with Soyinka W. (1997) that African continent (and leadership) “must turn homewards, confront itself and reflect” on the question of serious indispensable political leadership; to what another military President IBB (1992) sophisticatedly refer as “our tomorrow must be greater than today” (Danfulani, 1993; Yoroms and Aning, 1997).

On the imperatives of socio-economic dynamics vis-à-vis the public sector, Okonjo-Iweala (2010) had submitted: How does one begin to tackle poverty in this circumstance without a comprehensive framework that integrates the domestic and global agenda? In essence, eradication of localized poverty traps around the world is not just a humanitarian concern (as it is currently couched) but an economic imperative. Apart from sustainability of the entire system, poverty eradication allows more than two thirds of humanity increasingly left behind to contribute to world economic prosperity, and everyone benefits from such prosperity. If basic capability – education, health, and nutrition – is central to productivity and democracy at the national level, it is even more so for the global economy. Empirical estimates of the potential impact of productivity improvements of the world’s poorest populations on global output/income are needed to strengthen the context and content of democracy in Africa 43c.

In Africa, the most urgent foreseeable prospect lies in the creation and nurturing of a model African Institution that will be committedly involved in modeling another set, form and modern African leadership – whose recruitment process will be based on the current African reality, completely devoid of the colonial, post-colonial and unfortunately the corrupted current ‘ademocratic’ order. In other words, given the inherent and retrogressive debilitating woeful failure of the public sector (political parties, left/right/centre right pattern) (Obasanjo, 2019), there is need to re-engineer, repossess and recreate a new factory (corporate political engineering) from where Africa (North and South) could evolve its dependable, specialized supra-national leadership.

NATIONAL AND SUPRANATIONAL POLICY PERSPECTIVE: SAVING AFRICA FROM SELF-DESTRUCT

So far, the tenets of our submission has been solidly and unequivocally in favour of a compulsory emergence of another leadership paradigm, a new strategic thinking focused on repossessing the ‘new African’ political leadership, by ‘new set of corporately grown’ (from within and outside) ‘modern highly trained technocrats’ capable of combining mechanisms of private enterprise with the intricacies of public policy45. At every point of any strategic discuss in Africa is the fundamental imperative of another approach to competent political leadership (Mutuullah, 2015).

A few questions have been on the card deliberated targeted at asking for which sort of leadership could we evolve to produce required change in the continent of Africa? What sort of another system, since scholars and other policy actors have agreed that the current one has failed, could we develop to ensure that the continent can withstand the competitive market driven socio-economic
and socio-political realities of the international geo-strategic system, built on "the assertive, highly educated entrepreneurial capabilities of the leadership"? (Knoli, 1998; Beckman and Jega, 2005). Could we develop or establish a supra-national educational "factory", with a democratic market-economic curricula, spread across the different regions in collaboration with the IVY Leagues, Citadel of learning in Europe, America, China, Japan among others that could rapidly churn-out tomorrow's set of African leadership, forged on the principle of probity, selflessness, stringent accountability and dedicated statesmanship?46 Could we? Yes, we can!

If we admit that there is greater future in this onerous leadership production methodology, could we morally and philosophically criminalize the entire African political leadership and at what cost: human, material, financial and technical, would we achieve this new ambition directed at "repossessing Africa?" The critical point of reference is that, as we move further into the substance of political democratization in the 21st Century, the "African condition"47 needs clear evaluation as to the different needs and realities of member countries, with particular emphasis on the quality and character of political leadership (Danfulani, 1997; Aili, 2007).

Characteristically as it were, and in the light of the different political transitions, leadership failure, opposition and authority confrontation, insecurity and instability, attendant to most elections, where mostly the 'gladiators' (Gaubatz, 1991) are more of political renegades, largely from the "flawed leadership production process", there is a dire need, even an imperative to "repossess the continent, by the elaboration of new approaches for which we thus put forward some suggested strategies:

1) Exploring the strategic utility value of International organizations: UN, AU, EU, ECOWAS, ADB, IMF and World Bank, etc: There is an undeniable culture of probity, dedication, commitment to international best practices, greater exposure and a high standard of modesty in these Agencies (Danfulani, 2015). Our new leadership recruitment can duly be fertilized by exploring the strategic utility value of these international technocrats as part of our leadership drive with new set of Africans that have made their mark at the international diplomatic level (Lockey, 1986).

2) International humanitarian donor agencies/ Strategy and criteria: In the complex network of international cooperation, there are certain/several philanthropic Agencies specifically concerned with Africa/ Third World development, involving huge amount of financial, technical and material assistance. At times, some of these NGOs pass through UN Agencies like WHO, UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF, etc, where a huge amount of money, running into millions of Euros/Dollars, etc, which sometimes is even more than the Budget or GDP of some of these African countries49a. We consider this as 'international global strategic funding Agencies', having specific interests like Water/ Environment/ Vaccines/Illiteracy, etc. We posit that in order to avoid, forestall, checkmate, control and adequately manage these huge amount of money, often misused as the basis of corruption and decrepit political leadership, such funds should come/be given based on performance criteria absolutely linked to credibility of governance. No aid, no fund, no assistance to dictatorial regimes, corrupt, discredited political governments perpetrating untold and exploitative misery to the citizenry49b (Kelly, 1978; Ani, 1991). This might be a hard nut to crack, given the abject misery and deprivation of millions of peoples (IDPs, etc) but instances have been recorded where external loans, foreign financial and technical aid etc, have been wickedly diverted to foreign accounts of politicians used to pursue elephant projects of no relevance to the citizenry, resulting heavy foreign debt (Sulolo, 2006; Ikejiaku, 2009). A team of local and foreign experts could be engaged to delve in greater details about this proposal which is of greater value to the stability of the political system50.

3) International capital market: Our previous concern is related to philanthropic agencies and private NGOs that provide technical and financial assistance to Africa and other developing countries. In the context of foreign loans where huge amount of money is made available for a "so called state/national" development, there is a multitude of research demonstrating that such loans from the international capital markets were mostly used for dubious exploits serving as precursors to the socio-economic and socio-political ills, undue exploitation, blatant corruption, derailment of democracies and institutionalized dictatorship51a (Ajayi and Khan, 2000; Helleininer, 1989). What is suggested here is that those that provide finance capital, should insist on ensuring better, result oriented and transparent utilization of public funds, if not, they should be held accountable to whatever evil committed with such loans51b. It has of course been established that the dictates of profit, the 'rich versus the poor' in the value chain of debt peonage, political domination, diplomatic slavery and outright technical dictatorship, too well known to Experts in the international economic and political relations constitute the major ingredients fuelling this complex rapport between the haves and the have-nots52 (Baylis, 1995). Our concern here is that, international finance capital, an 'unavoidable diplomatic delicacy' have become the major instrument for the production and perpetuation of debt peonage and decrepit political leadership (in Africa/Nigeria, etc53). According to Iweala (2003):

The 1980s borrowing was fraught with problems. There are maturity mismatches with some short to medium loans directed to long term development projects such as public hospitals and clinics. Loans for directly productive projects were also contracted on commercial terms, and then went to waste owing to lack of monitoring,
incompetence and outright corruption. In some cases, contracted shipments of equipment arrived, but were never installed nor utilized. In others, loans were contracted, drawn down, and simply disappeared without the projects materializing. There was no guidance on projects follow-up, or monitoring of loans utilization by the states or FGN, as could have been provided for through a debt strategy or policy guidance. There were hardly any sanctions and no accountability – a situation that exacerbated the governance problems surrounding the country’s debt.

Consequent upon this, it is our conviction that we need a paradigm shift to ensure a new modernized mechanism and strategy in the “re-possessing” of serious and highly committed Africans to power the envisaged “new dynamism”, and corporate culture in line with international best practices, leading to our conclusion.

CONCLUSION

In a two part script, we have attempted a syllogised presentation of analysis with particular focus on the survival of state in Africa, putting emphasis on the political and geo-strategic intricacies of the post-colonial, post-independence and the different democratization efforts covering 1960 to date; and the point of our discourse is the vital imperative of the need for committed political leadership.

The first part examined the dynamics of post-colonial order, with issues connected to militarization, militarism and global dictatorship, concluding that Africa’s independence came at a time of East-West ideological divide, based on competition and rivalry within the zones of Vital Strategic interests: men, territories, raw materials, politics and polities. The subsequent conflicts, confrontations, coups, counter coups, rebellion, armed insurgency and warfare across the continent largely affected the emergence of serious political leadership capable of turning the continent into a serious and competent partner in the comity of democratic nations. The logic of our submission touched extensively on the vagaries of political transition, leadership and democratic deficit, failure of the system occasioned in some cases by poverty of ideas, men/leaders, policies and the material wherewithal, all constituting serious impediment to the processes for a regeneration/re-engineering of committed political leadership, invaluable to the continent in this global age of science and technology.

The second part is based purely on the analysis of the logicty of the need for serious and competent leadership, we delved briefly on the socio-economic and socio-political dynamics of democratization, with special emphasis on the negative indices of development: joblessness, illegitimate political leadership, voter apathy, democratic deficit and the destruction of the socio-political space occasioned by religious and ethnic fundamentalism, hopelessness and insecurity of the polity—the Al sabab and Boko Haram examples (Danfulani, 1998).

We here acknowledge that there is greater and better opportunity for a new set of responsible leadership when the private sector corporate management techniques and dynamics could be brought to bear on the public political space, implicating the issues of probity, transparency and better accountability, akin to what is obtained in Europe, the USA, Japan and China, including the Asian Tigers.

Exploring the utility of corporate management, we suggested new leadership recruitment process whereby the Agencies of International System, UN, EU, IMF, ADB could become part of the leadership political bakery for Africa, as a stakeholder in the global balance of power, force and influence at the international level. Africa: Nigeria/Ghana/Egypt/SouthAfrica/Kenya/Senegal/Ethiopia, etc, all have what it takes to become respected, powerful and committed partners at the global geo-strategic level, where the only currency of exchange is power: economic, technologic, scientific and diplomatic — itself a derive of political leadership. Evidently, there is an invaluable, extremely generous international strategic willingness, coming from the public and private sector of the International Community in favour of a more serious and exemplary African leadership, indispensable to the emergence of the continent (its leadership and citizenry) in the comity of democratic nations, as we advance in the 21st century.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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