

A Predatory West, Africa's Postcolonial States, International Trade Relations and Underdevelopment in Africa: A Survey of Centre/Core-Periphery Issues

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines a predatory West and Africa's postcolonial states international trade relations and underdevelopment in Africa to divulge how centre-periphery issues evoke underdevelopment in postcolonial African states. It argues that, historically, be it a core or peripheral, in whatever mode of production, the state is the dominant laboratory for all human activities, as it plays ever-dominant roles in domestic and international politico-economic and socio-cultural affairs, being the primary vector for development or underdevelopment is society. However, international trade relations have conditioned these roles and capacities of the state, in terms of strengths or weaknesses in service delivery to its citizens. Having been incorporated and monetised into the West's capitalism, the postcolonial Africa's state, has despite these roles, subjectively occupied a debilitating peripheral capitalist position in global wealth production. Today, like yesterday, the postcolonial African state, exhibits excruciating and traumatising underdevelopment, incarnated by uncivilised political, social, economic infrastructures, which incubate citizens' apathy to governance, while enhancing insecurity, poverty, conflicts and fragmentation of nationalities. Using Raul Prebisch's (1949) dependency theory, I argue that, the weaknesses and fragilisation of the postcolonial African state accrue from the despondent peripheral capitalist position it occupies in the international capitalist division of labour. Via Wallenstein's (1930-2019) Modern World System theory, (MWS), I seek reawakening the gratuitous Africans' slumbering consciousness towards overcoming underdevelopment; impelled by a predatory West's instigated peripheral capitalism.

Keywords: Postcolonial, international trade relations, underdevelopment, centre/core-periphery issues.

INTRODUCTION

Conceptualising and Contextualising the Research Problem

In nearly two decades, I have researched, and taught - POS 311: The State and the International System – Centre/Core-Periphery Issues in the Department of Political Science and Comparative Politics, at the University of Buea, Cameroon. Therefrom, I have reaped exciting and sordid experiences about the intrigues impelled by multifaceted actors in international relations and most importantly, international trade relations, particularly within the so-called centre/core-periphery issues, which constitute the bulk of the phenomenal underdevelopment that haunts, ravages and despairs the psychic of the people of postcolonial African states today.

Thereof, rather than get despaired, it became unescapable for me to explore, divulge and write my experiences for wider national and international multifaceted political, economic, social and psychological human landscapes around the world. Indeed, as Elwyn Brooks White (1899-1985) an American essayist notes, "Despair is no good – for a writer, for anyone. Only hope can carry us aloft, can keep us afloat. Only hope, and a certain faith that the incredible structure that has been fashioned by this strangest and ingenious of all mammals (man) cannot end in ruin and disaster. This faith is a writer's faith, for writing itself is an act of faith, nothing else."

Herein, my faith in writing about the undermined but hardcore issues of underdevelopment in postcolonial African states surges in my mind like fire in a burning bush, with the hope that, my writing could quench this fire and would be useful in attracting the much needed and cherished human and material development in this region. It is within this faith and hope that, I am confident in several persuading intellectual passages to seek achieving three things. First, it is to theoretically and empirically reveal that, the prevailing character of international trade relations spearheaded by the West (Europe, US, Japan, including China and other advanced countries) involving the postcolonial African states is essentially predatory, malicious, subjugating, exploitative and degrading. Thus, this irking character of predaciousness obviously evokes very dire consequences of total economic annihilation of humanity in this part of the world. Second, it is to reawaken the docility imbued into undue unconsciousness of postcolonial Africans towards extricating themselves from another session of brutal slavery and beggar humanity in this modern world. Third, it is to avert the fast surge into total economic annihilation; and to end the ongoing characteristic aversion and exploitation by an irritant predatory character of the West, incarnated by its incessant and excessive resource search which relegates and negates the spirit of self-determination, emancipation and human development of people in postcolonial African states.

Herein, I argue that, any further plunging of millions of people in postcolonial African states, whose livelihood surges in piercing impoverishment into what I call, 'advanced underdevelopment', would henceforth be met with strong individual and collective resistance by the people of postcolonial African states against the West. Further, I assert that, should this character of livelihood besieged upon this region persists, it would undoubtedly instigate very disastrous and negative radicalisation of postcolonial Africans against the West given the typically existing acerbic international trade relations, and by extension, political relations. Thus, the West must remember its slave trade and colonialism misdeeds against Africans; to avert the ongoing neo-colonial avarices against this very African today. The West must re-define its relations with postcolonial Africans in order to ensure a peaceful and stable West. This might appear a strong threat, which of-course it is, because, according to the Holy Scriptures, "It is an iron that sharpens an iron." As Mentan (2004), Combs (2010), agree, it is essentially the razor-sharp negative public and foreign policies from the West that prodded and continue to prod international terrorism. While not being an advocate of terror against any part of the human nature, the West must not pretend being a development partner with the so-called developing countries, whereas, this partnership is the pretext for gaining access to resources from these countries at these countries' dire detriment. Note, a common British adage which holds, "A hungry man is an angry man."

The West must eschew imperialism and instill win-win trade relations with postcolonial Africans. It is baseless, implementing foreign policy thrusts in the West for chasing immigrants

from its shores, because, the West created conditions, which favour people fleeing from poor African to rich Western countries. If, in the United States and Europe today, immigrants from Latin America, Africa and Asia, throng at the borders of the West, it is because, essentially, the United States and Europe were built through cheap labour and other forms of pilfering of wealth from the lands and forefathers of the congregating immigrants from Latin America, Africa and Asia (Akimbo 2023, Batting 2023, Zima 2023). Thus, no height of Walls built against immigrants will prosper, after-all Donald Trump, the ignoble apostle of walls building is an immigrant from Scotland, not a Native America (Hebei 2022, Jacks 2022). Thus, rather than build walls, it is logical to abandon Western imperialist designs meted unto developing countries, and cause the wholesome development of what the West calls, “peripheral capitalist states in Africa, Latin America and Asia” (Wallerstein 1974). As Dumont (1988), Batougi (2023) observe: One can witness the massive land mass occupied by the French Embassy in Yaoundé, Cameroon - over twenty hectre of land in the heart of the City of Yaoundé, whereas, the indigenes hole into tiny pieces of land for their homes and family’s livelihood. France, in the characteristic predatory West, has confiscated this massive land at the detriment and impoverishment of Cameroonians. Today, from this massive acreage, Yaoundé appear to serve as the beehive of all French exploitative instincts to keep a grip upon its docile ex-colonies with devastating colonial and neo-colonial military, political, economic and social negating pacts and deceptive agreements; through which the French economic, political, social and psychological establishments, subjugate, exploit, dominant and perpetuate their predaciousness character against Cameroonians, nay the postcolonial African states, especially those of French language expression, with the exception of the rising and assertive Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Guinea.

As Batougi (2023:11) adds: “Is this not provocative in every ramification of human essentialism and existentialism? Apparently, the French believe that, if Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea slip out of their neocolonialism, there is Cameroon, Senegal, Gabon, the Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, Tchad, Togo, Benin Republic and Ivory Coast from where enormous natural resource must still be exploited to feed French national interests. What a bizarre thinking? I believe the French are rambling in the misleading belief that their grip on these countries is as long as France wants or simply eternal.”

As Deutsch (1988:109) opines, “The Nobel Prize winning physicist and philosopher, Percy W. Bridgman once said: The Future of mankind is a project, not a programme. Every scientific prediction is based on the extrapolation of some earlier events or observations. Man derive his guesses and actions about the future by projecting ahead of some time series of events and experiences from the past.” The obvious implication of the foregoing is that, France must early enough start re-defining its relations with its postcolonial African states, since nothing in humanity lasts forever, because, change is the most certain that death. As Pulaski (2022) observed, “If the Roman, Othman, British and other empires could witness obscurity, what would stop the demise of a predatory French’s grip on postcolonial African states? Time and mental growth are better and evitable mediators in every aspect of human life.”

The Underpinning Intellectual Context for this Study

Essentially, the issues under survey here are those, which define the character of political, social, economic and psychological relations and differences between the developed and developing countries, characterised by unrivalled deceptions, arising from the West’s

imperialistic seizure, use, consolidation and control of real political power and economic/wealth, even inside the postcolonial African landscapes. For instance, take a study of the neo-colonial degrading trade, political, military, economic and social relations between France and its over fifteen postcolonial African states. In fact, in any of these states, anything having to do with a Frenchman is sacrosanct. Obviously, the African landscapes are naturally endowed to Africans but intruded and confiscated by the West through imperialism.

Arising from this deception and description, I question with a heavy dose of vexation, 'Why exist the persisting nexus between the West (Europe, the US, Japan and even China), on one part; and postcolonial African states on the other part; in terms of how the West extract, price, sell, derogatively and cheaply purchase postcolonial African states' abundant natural resources - gold, iron ore, uranium, bauxite, cooper, magnesium, timber, cocoa, coffee, hides and skins, and so on? Who actually controls the mechanisms leading to the mobilisation and consumption of these resources. To what degree are postcolonial African states involved and actually benefit from these mechanisms? If this wealth is the product of postcolonial African states, where come the character of excruciating impoverishment of the people of this region, in terms of low graded their cognitive prowess to harness their political, economic and social infrastructures arises?

Essentially, can the West not survive economically, and then, politically, without the massive pilfering of postcolonial Africa's resources? As Palmer, Colton and Kramer (2002:1) put it, "Researchers have found persuasive materials evidence to show that human beings originated from Africa, [not from Europe]." They add, "However, ...Europe has undoubtedly shaped much of the modern world history – partly because of its overseas expansion [imperialism], partly because of what it borrowed from other parts of the world [imperialism], and partly because of its decisive economic and cultural influence on the emergence of an increasingly global civilisation [imperialism through skewed globalisation fraught with imperceptibly and massive exploitation of resources from other lands]. Thus, it is very important to leap from the foregoing to understand how the prevailing character of international trade relations and the ensuing character of political, economic, social and psychological implications of these historical facts, vis-à-vis the annoying political, economic, social and psychological underdevelopment of postcolonial Africans, whose historical passages have witnessed, brutal slave trade, colonialism and now neo-colonialism. Certainly, the West is just one of the spheres of human history, but its negative contributions in Africa, is crucial to the issues in this study.

Hereafter, the opposing and vexing issues revolve on centre/core-periphery relations in the international trade and division of labour, spearheaded by West's capitalist paradigms. In this, centre/core states refer to the developed countries, while the periphery states refer to the developing countries. Immanuel Wallerstein (1970) used the term 'core' to suggest a multicentric region, which contain a group of states rather than the term centre, which implies a hierarchy with a single and highest range of steps. To the periphery, he suggests the dependent countries, whose economic survival is fashioned to depend upon the core states. Accordingly, imbuing from Karl Marx, Wallerstein, like many of his free-minded colleagues in the West, further suggests that, this characterisation of centre/core-periphery relations represent the epicentre of all imperial schemes designed to economically and even politically perpetuate the negation and annihilation of other regions of the world into eternal economic subjugation, exploitation and domination.

Actually, Wallerstein (1970:45), developed the best-known version of world-systems analysis, which scholarly ties with Prebisch's 1949 dependency theory. In fact, Wallerstein's Modern World Systems Theory, which is characteristics of Hans Prebisch's Dependency Thesis suggest that, core countries, which are industrially rich, with superior science and technological capacities, extract, exploit and underprice the abundant natural resources from countries, which through skewed international trade relations have been positioned as peripheral capitalist states, given their poor capacities to industrialise their economies. Accordingly, the rich countries, mostly in the West, continue increasing their wealth and political power through this unequal international trade relationship, while the poor countries remain impoverished, weak and failing in providing the basic necessities to their citizens.

Therefrom, Wallerstein traces the rise of the capitalist world economy system within the length and breadth of the 16th century (c. 1450–1640), which in his view was an accidental outcome of the protracted crisis of feudalism (c. 1290–1450). Surreptitiously, with extensive and intensive bad-faith against Africa, the West used its advantages of advanced scientific and technological capabilities to gain control over most of the world economy and presided over the underdevelopment, rather than development of parts of the world, through the centre/core-peripheral capitalist mental deconstruction. With these mentalities, the West spread the capitalist mode of production in characteristic core capitalism into Europe and other parts of the Western world; while typically spreading impoverished peripheral capitalism into other parts of the world; with the attendant skewed mechanisms for the subjugation, exploitation and marginalisation; particularly in what is now referred to as postcolonial African states.

Accordingly, this study is premised on, premeditated on, and mounted to expound and divulge a blatantly vexing hypothesis. It is that, the postcolonial Africa's states' characteristic incessant declining, debilitating and failing from gainfully harnessing its human and material conditions, including its vast economic resources is a direct function of Western predatory mindsets. Thus, despite its ever-dominant roles and obligation to uplift its citizens out of this endemic underdevelopment, the underdevelopment phenomenon perpetuates, because of the despondent peripheral capitalist position occupied by the postcolonial African state in the prevailing avaricious character of international trade relations, orchestrated by the West's propelled capitalism and globalisation. Apparently, it is this Western capitalism, which Karl Marx (1818 – 1883) had earlier referred to as “a vampire and monstrous system; incarnated by the exploitation of man by man, within a mode of production that negates all historical processes of human self-determination, emancipation and dignity of man before another man; for instance, between the Whiteman and the Blackman in the world.” Most importantly and equally worrisome and certainly exasperating to every right-thinking African is the foisted incorporation, monetisation, including the unwarranted conscription of the pre- and postcolonial African landscapes, into the West's propelled 1648 Westphalian Treaty, which birthed the current world state system. Irrefutably, given West's caprices for insatiable wealth accumulation as the core capitalist establishment base; this system presently and disdainfully incapacitates, weakens, fragilises and cripples every attempt at wading off the surging underdevelopment saga from the postcolonial African continent (Frobel 1981, Amin 1981, Mesta 2018). Boughen 2016, Akiko 2020).

Thus, the domineering grip upon the political, economic, social, cultural and even psychological cognitive landscapes of the postcolonial Africans by the West's political, economic, social, cultural and psychological science and technological wherewithal is extensively and phenomenally irking, because, this grip maliciously thwarts the development of human and material conditions, including all sorts of economic factors in postcolonial Africa. Most irking is the thesis that, the African's gratuitous servitude unto the West, which was foisted by this very West, through the Scramble and Partition of Africa in 1884 Imperial Berlin Conference in Germany must remain at the centre of all West's aggrandisements for the callous and illegitimate sapping of Africa's resources (Ake 1981, Cohen and Daniel 1981, Nnoli 1986, Palmer, Colton and Kramer 2002).

Essentially, it is from this profane grip that, Raul Prebisch (1949) emerged with the dependency thesis. He reasoned that, this grip ensures the perpetuation of underdevelopment, since, developing states must depend upon the West; including indeed, the preservation of all the associated difficulties that attenuate the survival of the postcolonial African state as political, economic, social and psychological strands. This is irrespective of the inevitable status of the state as a core player in international relations. In fact, according to Thompson and Clinton (2006:3) quoting Hans J. Morgenthau (1948), "In the conduct of international relations, a state is irrelevant, if it cannot exert and use its own power to the maximum satisfaction of its own national interest." Consequently, within the prevailing character of international political, trade and economic relations, postcolonial African states are virtually irrelevant in the conduct of contemporary international relations, insofar as they are unable to exert real power (political and economic) within the international state system, wherein and wherefrom, they can; and must elk out good standards of living conditions for their teaming populations, currently surged by incessant hunger, poverty, disease, and underdevelopment crisis.

Contextually, the postcolonial African state should have overcome underdevelopment, given that, it obtained self-rule over sixty years ago from European colonialism (Boughen 2016, Akiko 2020). Thus, the malicious umbilical cord between the West and postcolonial African states is a historical disaster which thwart the emancipation of Africans. The study examines this hypothesis in the light of the current character of massive impoverishment of Africans, being as they are miserable partakers and occupants of peripheral capitalism. The paper, thus, argues that, with the continuous stay in this peripheral capitalist position, the postcolonial Africa state cannot gainfully and conveniently participate in any equal and meaningful conduct of international relations nay globalisation. Thus, these are the centre-periphery issues herein under a critical survey.

In the absence of this real power, (Morgenthau 1948:56), it is even useless to talk of gaining from the ravaging contents of globalisation, which demand the use of hard power politics to galvanise and harness libertarian resources at the national and international levels for forging and avalanche of highly skilled autochthonous inspired and propelled politically, economically, socially and psychologically motivated science and technological capabilities for causing real human development within the postcolonial African state. On the contrary, the predatory West's persistence grip on the postcolonial African might not be totally questionable by every ramification, because, even the powerful West still requires to continue using that real or hard power to ensure its own survival in a world inundated with real power interplays and competition (Osage 2021, Wellis 2022).

However, according to Afolabi (2023), “Given that, the human development capacities of the postcolonial African states have been confiscated and estranged by Western capitalism for the purposes of surging and perpetuating underdevelopment in this region, the postcolonial African must surge radical severance of this umbilical cord through the imbue of what Machiavelli calls “*realpolitik*,” to facilitate the gainful participation in the conduct of international relations; particularly in trade relations and globalisation.” Definitely, staying in unwarrantedly enervating slumber only renders the African into what in 1984, a former Governor of Imo State in Nigeria, Samuel O. Mbakwe once called, “The docility-imbued, ridden and corruption-prone mental constructs of the African, who were not ripe to gain self-rule but needed another fifty (50) years of colonial rule.”

Thus, it is sumptuously no crime for Africans to redefine their position in the contemporary international division of labour, by radically reawakening themselves towards self-determination, and quit their slumber in the imperialist armpits of the West (Ake 1996, Lukas 2022). Consequently, this paper advocates a postcolonial African state, with a determinant surgical and radical redefinition imbued from unwavering political disciplined character for acquiring new status and role in the prevailing Western propelled international relations and globalisation. The ambition is for postcolonial African states to remove themselves for the tasteless peripheral capitalist positioning in the international division of labour mechanisms. Herein, I assert that, it is only the postcolonial African state itself, which can and must reasonably guarantee for itself, any absolute sense of self-determination towards its political, economic, social and even cultural emancipation, especially in terms of the social relations of production of wealth; and sound knowledge acquisition in science and technology at the domestic and international stage (Afigbo, 2006, Ikejiani 2007, Adele 2009). Weyers 2023, Gayen 2023). This paper unequivocally asserts that, the historical amount of wealth bestowed in Africa – huge mineral resources, which cheapened and extracted by the West, using the cheap postcolonial African states’ teaming youthful work force, cheaply priced raw materials, land mass, the legendary Africans’ hospitality, all of which are contributed by the postcolonial African state into the West’s fashioned but skewed international division of labour. Unfortunately, has for several centuries, the West has taken all of these for undue sheer granted. In these exploitative senses of indecency, this predatory West has incubated, grown and expanded its political, economic, social and psychological bases through the impoverishment of the postcolonial African state (Masumbe 2019, Agige 2022, Nkledwa 2022). Given this, the postcolonial African states have become, what Niccolo Machiavelli refers to as “banana republics or principalities”. Today, like yesterday, the postcolonial African states continue to dwindle into underdevelopment, with devastating low senses of selflessness capacities to cater for the welfare of their every-teaming populations, within the brutish ranks of extenuated, proliferated and highly orchestrated ethnicity and discarded national identities.

Whereas, in the West, the term and concepts of ethnicity and tribalism have no fit in their political, economic, social and psychological lexicons in their quest for human development and their peoples’ individual and collective emancipatory zeal. Nevertheless, in the postcolonial African state, ethnicity and tribalism were constructed, implanted and perpetuated as governance tools for the segregation, marginalisation, balkanisation and derogation of the cognitive capacities of the African. These have greatly impeded all efforts at human development neither through the Africans’ industrial bases nor through their individual and collective wellbeing in terms of owning the patriotic sensible for fighting subjugation and

exploitation. The West has made the African to believe that, he must not be his brother's keeper, and that, obtaining employment in the public or private services demands being connected to the wielders of state power, who the African must regard as his own tribes or ethnic compatriot not on merit but on demerit (Afigbo, 2006, Ikejiani 2007, Adele 2009). In postcolonial Africa, the concepts of ethnicity and tribalism have ensured the retrogression of any sort of collective emancipation, human development and restoration of the stolen dignity of the African human nature.

As Obasi (2023) opines, "In Africa, the African would say, I am a Nigerian, I am a Cameroonian, I am a Congolese, I am a Malian, I am a Kenyan, I am a Zambian, I am a Chadian, I am a Ghanaian, I am a Togolese, I am a Gabonese, and so on. Whereas in the West, the French, Belgian, German, and so, would say, I am European or Whiteman, anywhere, except for the imperial British, who would egoistically refuse to lose the autonomy of its currency - the British Pound Sterling and thus, would withdraw from the EU for the purposes of self-aggrandisement over the continuity of its imperial pound sterling within the imperial and mercantilist old Londoner mentalities (MOLM). Consequently, the current trend in self-determination, through the automatisisation, fragilisation and disunity of the African continent must never be the dream of any right-thinking African. The ongoing disunity and fragmentation in the continent certainly represent the worst mistake which the postcolonial Africans are constructing for themselves in the continent. It diminishes the energization of the African identity. For instance, rather than disintegrate, Europe continues to reinforce its unity, while creating disintegrative states, entities and structure in Africa; the goal of which is to render contemporary African to weak against its own development and growth. Africans must note that, for the West, allowing Africa to unite is to challenge Europe's power, wealth and cohesion against the African. This explains why France had to mobilise the West against dissenting former African colonies, which expelled all French interests in their countries in 2023 – Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Niger actions against France are illustrative. So African must not reunite, integrate and must not emerge as a strong United States of Africa; and that exactly is the West's callous ambition. Certainly, a US of Africa might be a mere normative and utopian desire in the context of the saturated and myopic search for self-aggrandisement over political power reminiscent to centre-periphery issues of underdevelopment.

Thus, to continue fragmenting the African continent into micro states is the most palatable project of human underdevelopment in all the ramifications. The concept of development in Karl Marx's philosophy falls within the realm of the reawakening of human consciousness towards human material conditions and economic factors (including national cohesion and unity) as the essential basis of livelihood. Paradoxically, this declining, debilitating conditions and failing character of the postcolonial African state is essentially orchestrated by the West's unconstructive international division of labour mechanisms based on the West instinct for its development and survival at the detriment of the African and its quest for human development. Human development is not the mere acquisition of good road networks, good potable water, good haulage system, good hospitals, schools, theatres, music and so on. Human development is the capacity of man to provide the afore-mentioned artifacts for himself, rather than obtaining them from other people's cognitive capacities (Rist 2007, Frangis 2009). Historically, the state, be it in the centre or peripheral has been the laboratory for all human activities radiated from the social or natural sciences. In addition to its ever-dominant role in domestic and international politico-economic and socio-cultural relations, the state is also the primary

vector for all societal development or underdevelopment. So gratifying is the recent awareness by some postcolonial Africans in Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea to smash West's imperialism by chasing and severing colonial and neo-colonial politico-economic and socio-cultural ties with their monstrous erstwhile colonialist – France, (Weyers 2023, Gayen 2023, Afolabi 2023). For over sixty years, France had maintained colonial politico-economic and socio-cultural grip through excruciating pacts epitomized by callous domination, subjugation and imperialism on all its so-called 'ex-territories' (if these territories at still not the bona fide properties of France) at the detriment of political, economic, social and psychological growth, development and self-determination and emancipation of these over fifteen (15) African states (Weyers 2023:45, Gayer 2023:13).

Regional Trends in African-Ness: An Overview of Intra-Postcolonial African Trade:

In 1994, I sent three letters abroad through the central post office in Yaoundé. One of the letters was sent to Nigeria with the cost of postage stamp affixed at 750 francs cfa about \$2.10. One was sent to France with the cost of the postage stamp affixed at 250 francs cfs representing about \$0.55 cents of the US dollar. Yet, the third letter was sent to Australia at the cost of 1,350 francs cfa, representing almost \$4.00. What could be responsible for this large disparity in the cost of posting a letter to Europe at less the cost of posting a letter within Africa, I quibbled. Again, it was astonishing that, the letter to Australia had a higher tariff. A more striking thing happened concerning the letter to Australia, when the counter clerk admonished me. "Please, if you want your letter to get to Australia and perhaps get replied, you must write your address, as: Cameroon, c/o France. However, that did not overwhelm my thinking compared to the high cost of sending the same weighted letter to Europe and Africa from Africa at highly exorbitant costs. One clear explanation, I obtained is that, the letter destined to Nigeria, will first arrive in France, then, it would be sent to Nigeria from France, hence the high cost of sending intra-African correspondences through the post office.

Secondly, intra-African trade, defined as the average of exports and imports, movement of people and goods, availability of enticing political, economic and social opportunities in variously maliciously and imperially segregated Africa's states is still a nightmare. Thus, intra-African trade is abysmally very low standing at around 14% of the total, which is conditioned by the nature and character of intra-African system of haulage infrastructure, by air, sea or land (Afolabi 2022, Klange 2022). In fact, it far more expensive and dangerous travelling from one part of Africa to another than a horse passing through the whole of a needle. Thus, colonialism and neo-colonialism created intra-African barriers, which are fostered till date and which the imperialist designs of the West. Understandable, then, intra-African state is generally regarded as the lowest intra-regional trade in the world, when compared with other areas, such as intra-Europe, intra-Latin America or intra-Asia. Despite the proliferation of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) since African countries gained self-rules, the volume of intra-regional trade remains sluggish (Gayer 2023:45, Weyers 2023:78). However, a closer look reveals some dynamic behaviours in this regard in certain areas for instance, amongst members of the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the CEMAC, the Economic and Monetary Community of Central African States (Gayer 2023:55, Weyers 2023:18). As observed in the continental trend, most regional economic communities (REC)'s main trading is with Europe, as it is with the Southern African Development Coordination (SADC) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). The disruption in international supply chains

that the coronavirus pandemic had caused particularly with China, but also with the EU), has shown the importance of regional African producers to fill these gaps and the need to increase intra-African commercial relations, granted the imperialism spearheaded by the EU would permit (Bestin 2023, Gayer 2023:89). Thus, given the severity of the high cost and low volume of intra-African trade relations, the European Union member states enjoy field days and unprecedented boom, which would hardly reduce, expect, travelling by road, air or sea from one postcolonial African state to another is made feasibly fast and easy. This explains an important part of this paper thesis that, a predatory West opts for master-imperialist designs to subjugate, exploit and dominate the postcolonial states into economic downturns perpetuity.

Trends in Foreign Direct Investment from Europe into Postcolonial African States

Certainly, except in bourgeois politico-economic thinking, foreign direct investment is not a panacea for development of a people. To say the least, it is a reinforcement of imperialism, intended to destroy any blossoming libertarian cognitive capacities of self-reliance through self-determination of a people within their autochthonous environment and aspirations. As Karl Marx notes, "it is essentially unwise allowing people to use one's land, cheap labour and wealth for the benefit of other people." In the same vein, the Chinese believe in teaching someone to catch a fish, rather than perpetuating offering him a fish on a daily basis. So, until the spread of coronavirus worldwide, Africans were given the deceptive impression that, it had escaped the global decline in foreign direct investment (FDI) and flows to the continent were rising steadily. Off-course, although the total investment remained small in global terms, these were significant in relation to Africa's economic size – a size fashioned by imperial policies from the predatory West (Ake 1996:98, Bade 1990:56, Aluko 2010). Thus, the top five recipients of the so-called foreign direct investments according to (UNCTAD, 2019) are: (i) Egypt, (ii) South Africa, (iii) Congo, (iv) Morocco and (v) Ethiopia are mere showcases of brute imperialism. As Europe would project through its figment of imperialist designs, through foreign direct investment (FDI) in some large economies, such as in Egypt and Nigeria, this is being balanced by a surge in other African countries, with best examples being South Africa and Ethiopia. However, in absolute terms, this surge is informed by the safety of capital in these countries, and the unsafety of this very Europe's investment in countries like Nigeria, which poses a lot of political uncertainty. In terms of top investor countries (in capital), France, with a huge number of ex-colonies is the largest, albeit with no stock increases since 2013. The Netherlands, the United States, The United Kingdom (UK) and China follow on the top of this opaque investor list. Following Brexit, of significance was the recent UK-Africa Summit, and the first after the Brexit, held in January 2020, which looked towards strengthening trade and investment for British companies after leaving the EU. In terms of intra-African investment, South Africa has been the major African country investing in other African economies, followed by Morocco, which is increasing its investment in the continent quite rapidly (Yosef 2022, Babs 2023, Manalo 2023).

A Predatory West, Imperialism and Underdevelopment in Africa: An Overview of the Roles of USA and EU

The US, Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and Postcolonial African States:

As an imperialist capitalist tool, the US formulated the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which according to its founders, would facilitate, guide and ensure that trade between the US and African countries takes place. This was even necessary, because, the United States would not accept anything imported into the US from Africa with meeting the standards of the

people of this first world, given the underdog capacity of Africans in science and technological development. In this direction, African states, already relishing at the West's orchestrated peripheral capitalist position, could be allowed to export only raw materials and natural products into the US, while the US exports finished goods into the postcolonial African state.

Consequently, since its enactment in 2000, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) has been at the core of U.S. economic policy and commercial engagement with Africa. AGOA provides eligible sub-Saharan African countries with duty-free access to the U.S. market for over 1,800 products, in addition to the more than 5,000 products that are eligible for duty-free access under the Generalised System of Preferences Programme (GSPP). To meet AGOA's rigorous eligibility requirements, countries must establish or make continual progress toward establishing a market-based economy, the rule of law, political pluralism, and the right to due process. Additionally, countries must eliminate barriers to U.S. trade and investment, enact policies to reduce poverty, combat corruption, and protect human rights. By providing new market opportunities, AGOA has helped bolster economic growth, promoted economic and political reform, and improved U.S. economic relations in the region. 36 countries are eligible for AGOA benefits in 2022. In 2015, Congress passed legislation modernizing and extending the program to 2025.

Thus, the United States Trade Relations Office, (USTRO) develops and coordinates U.S. trade and investment policy for the 49 eligible sub-Saharan African countries. It leads the negotiation and implementation of U.S. trade and investment policies and objectives in the region. The Administration seeks both to expand markets for U.S. goods and services in sub-Saharan Africa and to facilitate efforts to bolster African economic development through increased global, regional, and bilateral trade. Sub-Saharan Africa presents many opportunities for U.S. businesses as an emerging market for American exports. Many of the fastest growing economies in the world are in sub-Saharan Africa, according to the International Monetary Fund. The office oversees implementation of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), a trade preference program enacted in 2000 that has been at the centre of U.S.-African engagement on trade and investment. By providing duty-free entry into the United States for almost all African products, AGOA has helped expand and diversify African exports to the United States, while at the same time fostering an improved business environment in many African countries through the application of eligibility requirements. In 2015, the U.S. Congress extended AGOA through 2025.

The Africa Office works closely with other U.S. agencies that support capacity building to increase utilization of the AGOA program. More information on the AGOA programme can be found somewhere in the United States. On July 14, 2022, Ambassador Tai and her Kenyan counterpart issued a joint statement launching the U.S.-Kenya Strategic Trade and Investment Partnership, or STIP. The joint statement listed as mutually agreed areas of initial focus: (i) agriculture, (ii) anti-corruption, (iii) digital trade, (iv) environment and climate action, (v) good regulatory practices, (vi) micro, small, and medium size enterprises, (vii) protecting worker's rights and protections, (viii) supporting the participation of women, youth, and others in trade, (ix) standards collaboration, (x) trade facilitation and customs procedures, and (xi) services domestic regulation. In addition, the office is coordinating United States' Government support or the negotiation and implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

The U.S.-Kenya Strategic Trade and Investment Partnership

During a virtual meeting held on 14th July 2022 in Washington, D.C., the United States Trade Representative, Katherine Tai, and Kenya's Ministry of Industrialisation, Trade and Enterprise Development, Cabinet Secretary, Betty Maina, launched what the countries, (core and a periphery capitalist) call "the United States-Kenya Strategic Trade and Investment Partnership (STIP)." Building on their June 13, 2022 meeting in Geneva, Ambassador Tai and Cabinet Secretary Maina agreed that their governments will pursue an engagement enhancement, which would eventually lead to high standard commitments in a wide range of areas with a view to increasing investment; promotion of sustainable and inclusive economic growth; which would benefit workers, consumers, and businesses (including micro-small-and medium-sized enterprises); and to support African regional economic integration. Consequently, they identified the following initial issues where the United States and Kenya will develop an ambitious roadmap for enhanced cooperation with the goal of negotiating high-standard commitments in order to achieve economically meaningful outcomes:

- a) Agriculture: The United States and Kenya will consider measures to facilitate agricultural trade and enhance transparency and understanding of the application of science- and risk-based Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures. The two sides share an interest in fostering sustainable agricultural practices, as well as creating an enabling environment for innovative agricultural technologies that would help achieve food security goals, increase farm productivity, and improve farmer livelihoods, while addressing climate change concerns.
- b) Anti-Corruption: The United States and Kenya share a commitment to prevent and combat bribery and other forms of corruption. The two sides will engage in information sharing of best practices to prevent and combat bribery and corruption and will explore negotiating specific commitments.
- c) Digital Trade: The United States and Kenya share an interest in fostering consumer, business, and worker trust in the digital economy, ensuring access to information, promoting the development and use of resilient and secure digital infrastructure, promoting competition and the participation of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and addressing discriminatory practices. The two countries will discuss measures to support digital inclusion, including accessibility, and online consumer protection. The two countries will also monitor global discussions on emerging issues in digital trade which are of mutual interest.
- d) Environment and Climate Change Action: The United States and Kenya share common values with respect to environmental protection, a commitment to conservation, pursuing measures to support climate change adaptation and mitigation, and the importance of the sustainable use and management of each country's natural resources as they strengthen their trade and investment relations. The two sides will engage on strengthening these efforts, including with respect to climate adaptation and mitigation practices. The two sides will also consider opportunities to strengthen their respective commitments in this area, including through cooperation.
- e) Good Regulatory Practices: The United States and Kenya will explore negotiating high-level commitments on topics such as: ensuring adequate time for public consultations on proposed regulations; posting of proposed regulations for review by interested stakeholders; basing regulatory decisions on best available information, science, and evidence, including undertaking risk analysis and regulatory impact assessment as

appropriate. The two sides will also explore negotiating provisions on services domestic regulation.

- f) **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs):** The United States and Kenya believe that the success of MSMEs are key elements to promote sustained economic growth, including for women-owned enterprises. The two countries will discuss approaches to integrate MSMEs into international trade. The two sides will initiate periodic technical best practices exchanges and roundtables on micro, small and medium enterprises.
- g) **Promoting Workers' Rights and Protections:** The United States and Kenya share a desire to work together to advance and protect labour rights through: enforcement of and compliance with labour laws, promotion of social dialogue, and cooperation in other areas of mutual interest on labour and employment priorities, including with respect to forced labour in global supply chains.
- h) **Supporting Participation of Women, Youth, and Others in Trade:** The United States and Kenya are committed to promoting economic opportunities for women and youth and continue to examine how to develop and adopt trade policies that promote and facilitate the participation of women and youth in international trade and to promote good paying, high-quality jobs and sustainable livelihoods. The two sides will work to identify resources to support the economic empowerment and participation of women, youth, persons with disabilities, other vulnerable populations, and the African Diaspora in trade to promote equitable and inclusive development.
- i) **Standards Collaboration:** The United States and Kenya will discuss the role of standards, conformity assessment procedures and technical regulations that have a significant impact on trade, including opportunities to reduce impediments to trade due to differences in their respective systems. The two sides intend to engage on and discuss in depth their respective processes for the preparation, adoption, and application of technical regulations, standards and conformity assessment procedures based on mutually agreed best practices.
- j) **Trade Facilitation and Customs Procedures:** The United States and Kenya recognize the pandemic's impact on supply chains and the demonstrated benefits of streamlining border procedures and accelerating WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement implementation for trade in goods during this challenging time. The two sides will discuss opportunities to simplify procedures, especially those that allow new entrants to engage in trade. In this regard, the two sides will consider various customs practices, transparency and cooperation on customs enforcement to inform mutual understanding, including the Agreement between the Government of the United States and the Republic of Kenya Regarding Mutual Assistance between their Customs Administrations, signed at Washington on August 6, 2014, as well as explore other topics of engagement, including trusted trader benefits for demonstrated low-risk importers, particularly those that participate in their respective country's Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) programme.

The U.S. and Kenyan governments agreed as at 14th July 2022 to begin working within three months to develop a detailed roadmap for engagement in each of these areas. However, irrespective of this gloomy picture, the on-the-ground commitment in terms of international trade relations between the US and Kenya, is basically that of servant-master relations, because, Kenya like the US does not possess the high science and technology for producing heavy industrial goods which the US can import. Thus, Kenya trades only specific primary goods, such

as hides and skins, forest product, seafood, while Kenya imports automobile products, heavy duty earth moving equipment, aircrafts and so on. Thus, it must be understood that in this relationship, it is the US which benefits more than Kenya does (Mushili 2018, Gango 2019).

The European Union

An Explicatory Note on Source of Data on The European Union - Postcolonial African Trade Relations:

European Union (EU) data is taken from Eurostat's COMEXT database. COMEXT is the reference database for international trade in goods. It provides access not only to both recent and historical data from the EU Member States but also to statistics of a significant number of third countries interests. International trade aggregated and detailed statistics disseminated via the Eurostat website are compiled from COMEXT data according to a monthly process. Data are collected by the competent national authorities of the Member States and compiled according to a harmonised methodology established by EU regulations before transmission to Eurostat. For extra EU trade, the statistical information is mainly provided by the traders on the basis of customs declarations. EU data are compiled according to Community guidelines and may, therefore, differ from national data published by the Member States. Statistics on extra-EU trade are calculated as the sum of trade of each of the 27 EU Member States with countries outside the EU. In other words, the EU is considered as a single trading entity and trade flows are measured into and out of the area, but not within it. The EU-27 data reflect the political change in the EU composition. Therefore, the United Kingdom is considered as an extra-EU partner country for the EU-27. However, the United Kingdom is still part of the internal market until the end of the transitory period, meaning that data on trade with the United Kingdom are still based on statistical concepts applicable to trade between the EU Member States. As a consequence, while imports from any other extra-EU-27 trade partner are grouped by country of origin, the United Kingdom data reflect country of consignment. In practice this means that the goods imported by the EU-27 from the United Kingdom were physically transported from the United Kingdom but part of these goods could have been of other origin than the United Kingdom. For this reason, data on trade with the United Kingdom are not fully comparable with data on trade with other extra-EU-27 trade partners. Data from the perspective of Africa (as used in figure 1) is based on statistics from UNCTAD, combining data from UN Com-trade, IMF, Eurostat, UNCTAD-stat and UNCTAD secretariat calculations (Yeniel 2011, Franky 2013).

Empirical and Exploitative Trends in EU and Postcolonial International Trade Relations

So, as a practical demonstration of our vexing thesis in this paper, the tables and figures bellow amply justify this study's intellectual premise upon which we meditated and mounted this study for clearer elucidation and edification of the callous imperialist nature and character of international trading relations, into which postcolonial African states have been incorporated, monetised, conscripted, fragalised, subjugated and dominated by a few European Union member states (28) over (54) postcolonial African states, with enormous material and natural resources. Thus, (agree with several scholars who opine that, if international trading relations must continue existing, the postcolonial African states must gainfully assert themselves to its radical redefinition (Dumont 1988, Ake, 1996, Bade 1996). Wallerstein (1970:55) argues that Europe moved towards the establishment of a capitalist world economy in order to ensure continued economic growth in Europe than in other countries. Thus, this entailed the expansion of the geographical size of the world in question, the development of different modes of labour

control and the creation of relatively strong core state machineries in the states of Western Europe. In response to the feudal crisis, by the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the world economic system emerged with the periphery and core capitalist states emerging in the process. Consequently, the core regions benefited the most from the capitalist world economy. For the period under discussion, much of northwestern Europe (England, France, Holland) developed as the first core region. Politically, the states within this part of Europe developed strong central governments, extensive bureaucracies, and large mercenary armies. Below is the contemporary results of the emerged centre-periphery trade relations that ensued (Bade 1996, Jugal 2000).

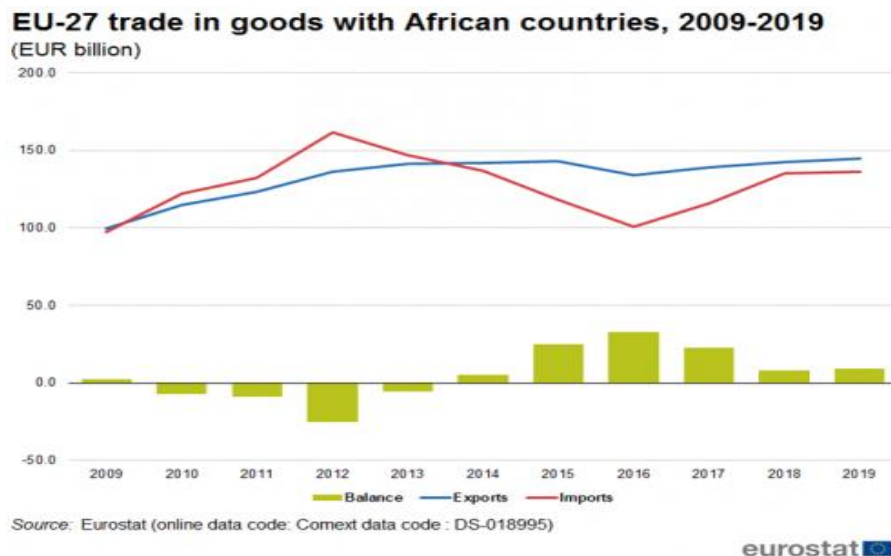


Fig. 1: European Union trade in goods with postcolonial African states 2009-2019

Source: euro-statistics

Essentially, manufactured goods from Europe dominate exports to Africa. For instance, In 2009, 77 % of goods exported from the European Union (EU) to postcolonial African states were manufactured goods (see Figure 1). This share fell to 70 % in 2019, while the share of primary goods rose from 20 % to 28 %. The declining share of manufactured goods was mostly caused by the declining share of machinery and vehicles, from 42 % in 2009 to 36 % in 2019, a declining share of machinery and vehicles is 'the almighty Europe' speaks to amplify the philosophy of retributive justice in favour of postcolonial African states.

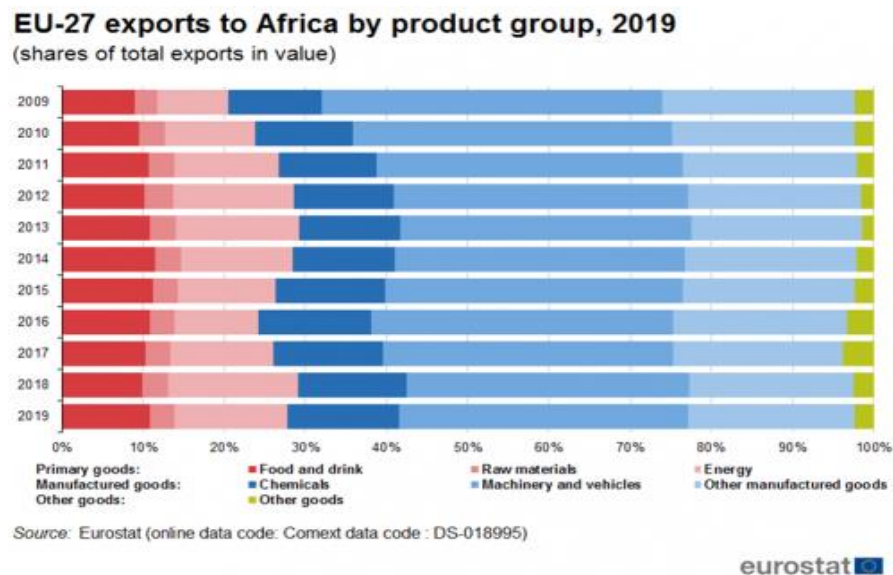


Fig. 2: EU member states exports (secondary goods) to postcolonial African states by nature of product group in 2019

Source: euro-statistics

Herein, primary goods (raw materials) dominate imports with Africa. Thus, as for imports from Africa, mostly they primary goods, which are in the largest group (see Fig. 2 above). However, between 2009 and 2019 their share decreased from 77 % to 66 % mainly due to the decreasing share of energy, which is partly explained by falling oil and gas prices. In the same period, the share of manufactured goods rose from 21 % to 32 %. This was mainly due to increasing imports of machinery and vehicles from 7 % to 15 %.

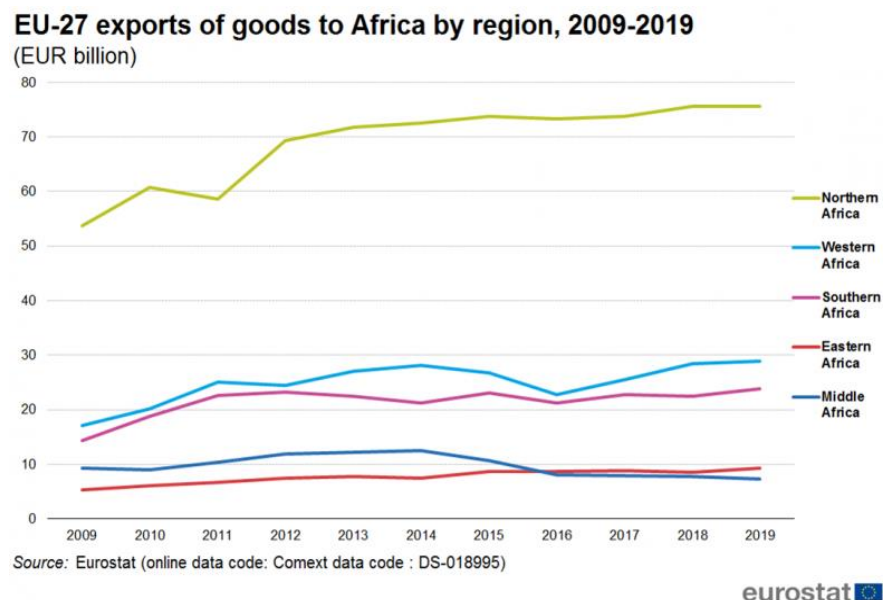


Fig. 3: Northern Africa's largest trade in goods with member states of the EU in 2009-2019.

Source: euro-statistics

The European Union's (EU) exports of goods to Northern Africa rose from EUR 54 billion in 2009 to EUR 76 billion in 2019 (see Figure 3), equivalent to an average annual growth rate of 3.5 %. The growth rate was highest in Eastern Africa (5.7 %) followed by Western Africa (5.4 %) and Southern Africa (5.2 %). Exports of goods to Middle Africa (-2.3 %) declined in this period.

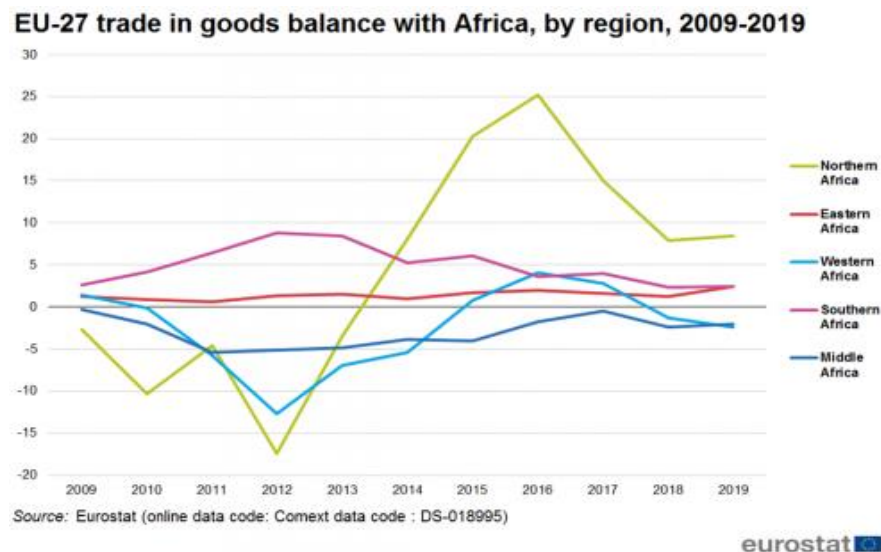


Fig. 4: European Union trade mostly in secondary goods with Africa, by region, 2009-2019.
Source: euro-statistics

Exports of goods to Africa by Member State, 2019 (EUR million and %)

	EUR million	% of Africa in extra-EU
France	26 910	10.9
Germany	23 809	3.8
Spain	18 625	15.5
Netherlands	17 393	7.9
Italy	17 305	7.4
Belgium	13 296	9.5
Portugal	3 700	21.1
Poland	2 867	4.6
Sweden	2 702	4.0
Romania	2 356	12.8
Estonia	2 325	14.4
Austria	2 026	3.9
Czechia	1 906	5.2
Greece	1 699	1.8
Denmark	1 504	3.2
Finland	1 483	5.0
Bulgaria	1 194	11.2
Hungary	758	3.2
Slovakia	673	4.2
Slovenia	548	4.9
Lithuania	511	3.8
Cyprus	461	25.3
Latvia	282	5.4
Malta	232	18.6
Croatia	198	3.8
Luxembourg	156	5.3
Ireland	129	2.8

Source: Eurostat (online data code: Comext data code : DS-018995)

eurostat

Fig. 5: European Union member states' exports of goods (secondary goods) to African in 2019
Source: euro-statistics

From the above graph, it is discernable that, Spain, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Italy are the highest European Union (EU) member states so-called trading or better still development partners in goods with Africa. Paradoxically, mostly these good are in the form of raw material exported to these voracious European imperialists, who front as savours and messiahs to the incessantly unassertive Africans. For instance, France (EUR 27 billion), Germany (EUR 24 billion), Spain (EUR 19 billion), the Netherlands and Italy (both EUR 17 billion) were the largest exporters of goods to Africa in 2019 (see fig 4 above). Cyprus (25.3 %), Portugal (21.1 %) and Malta (18.6 %) had the highest shares for exports to Africa in their total exports to countries outside the EU. From the tables and figures shown above, it is plausible to discern the size, expanse and quality of the market open to Europe within the African continent. Since trade is the most single instrument *par excellence*, through which sensible countries are built and empowered. Thus, it behooves upon Africans and their sympathisers, to weigh into understanding the core reasons why Europe cannot stop perpetuating imperialistic designs in African. Again, this confirms Nyerere's assertion and belief about the character of relations, which Europeans create, keep and foster with Africans – the quest for primary goods.

METHODOLOGICAL DISPOSITIONS AND DECEPTION IN DATA ANALYSIS

According to the European Union (EU), concepts and definitions, extra-EU trade statistics (trade between EU member states and non-EU countries) do not record exchanges involving goods in transit, placed in a customs warehouse or given temporary admission (for trade fairs, temporary exhibitions, tests, and so on. This is known as 'special trade', probably because, the trading expedition remains to be accomplished, to net into Europe the required and intended financial and material benefits to its citizens. The partner is the country of final destination of the goods for exports and the country of origin for imports, certainly. Product classification Information on commodities exported and imported is presented according to the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC). A full description is available from Eurostat's classification server RAMON. Unit of measure trade values are expressed in millions or billions (10) of euros. They correspond to the statistical value, i.e., to the amount which would be invoiced in case of sale or purchase at the national border of the reporting country. It is called a free on board (FOB) value (free on board) for exports and a cost insurance and freight (CIF) value (cost, insurance, freight) for imports.

MERCANTILISM, THOMAS MUNN AND THE HISTORICAL AND FOUNDATIONAL CONTEXT OF EU-AFRICA INTERNATIONAL TRADE RELATIONS

Mercantilism, was a trading foreign policy, which insinuated and continue to so, that, Europe must export more and import less, in order to guarantee the (gold bullion) economic and by extension the political prowess of Europe over other world regions (Singh 2022, Harkins 2023). Mun (1571 – 1641) was one of the first mercantilists, who believed that a nation's holdings of gold are the main measure of its wealth and that governments should regulate trade to produce an excess of exports over imports in order to gain more gold for the country. Mercantilism, economic theory and practice common in Europe from the 16th to the 18th century that promoted governmental regulation of a nation's economy for the purpose of augmenting state power at the expense of rival national powers represents the process of perpetuating imperialism (Palmer and Colton 2010). Thus, mercantilism was basically an imperialist economic thought, which birthed today's capitalism.

Thus, mercantilism was the economic counterpart of political absolutism. Its 17th-century publicists that is most notably Thomas Munn in England, Jean-Baptiste Colbert in France, and Antonio Serra in Italy never, however, used the term themselves; it was given currency by the Scottish economist Adam Smith in his famous book: *An Inquiry into the Wealth of Nations* (1776). Mercantilism contained many interlocking principles, which guided its progression. For instance, things such as precious metals, in the form of gold and silver, were deemed indispensable to a nation's wealth. If a nation did not possess mines or have access to them, as were abundantly found in Africa, precious metals should be obtained by trade. It was believed that trade balances must be favourable, meaning an excess of exports over imports. In this direction, colonial possessions (colonised territories) should serve as markets for exports and as suppliers of raw materials to the mother country. Manufacturing was forbidden in colonies, and all commerce between colony and mother country was held to be a monopoly of the mother country (Palmer, Colton and Kramer 2002:341, Agu 2018).

Therefore, trade – prosperous trade, is an important indicator – a most dependable panacea for Europe's prosperity and place of honour and supremacy in the world, hence, Europe's grip on postcolonial Africans' political, economic and social landscapes (Agu 2013:87). Indeed, trade, anywhere in the globe represents the moving wealth of nations, hence, its importance to politics, economics and social wellbeing of statesmen, such as Thomas Mum of the 16th century England, who laid the groundwork for the emergent capitalist designs against postcolonial African states. The EU as a political and economic block is deeply concerned and sumptuously integrated into global markets both for the products it sources (cheap labour and raw materials from postcolonial African states) and the exports of secondary goods it sells at exorbitant prices to postcolonial African states, hence its huge profits or what Marxist's call 'surplus' (Prebisch 1949, Wallerstein 1970). The EU trade policy is an important element of the external dimension of the 'Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth' and is one of the main pillars of the EU's relations with the rest of the world. Because the 28 EU Member States share a single market and a single external border, they also have a single trade policy. EU Member States speak and negotiate collectively, both in the World Trade Organisation (WTO), where the rules of international trade are agreed and enforced, and with individual trading partners.

This common policy enables them to speak with one voice in trade negotiations, maximising their impact in such negotiations; a very costly situation, which tends to impoverish postcolonial African states perpetually. This is even more important in a globalised world, in which economies tend to cluster together in regional groups. The calculated openness of the EU's international trade regime has meant that the EU is the biggest player on the global trading scene and remains a good region to do business with, even with its imperialistic trading insinuations. Thanks to the ease of modern transport and communications, it is now easier to produce, buy and sell goods around the world which gives European companies of every size the potential to trade outside Europe, at the detriment of science and technological disadvantaged postcolonial African states, who, forming a single trading bloc is not an agenda in their scheme of global livelihood.

According to the mercantilist philosophy, a strong nation or region, was to have a large population, for a large population would provide a supply of (cheap) labour, a ready and viable market, and numerous men and men for recruitment as soldiers. Thus, human wants were to be minimized, especially for imported luxury goods, for they drained off precious foreign

exchange. Domestic or international laws, which affect food and drugs, must be sumptuary in their nature and character, and must be promulgated to ensure that, human wants were basically held low. Accordingly, thrifts, savings and even stinginess were regarded as virtues, not at all vices, for, essentially, only through these means could national wealth and political prowess be created. In effect, mercantilism provided the favourable climate for the early development of capitalism, with its promises of over-profiteering (Aluko 2011, Masumbe 2019, Jega 2020).

SOME CRITICISMS OF MERCANTILISM

However, as time and space increased, mercantilism was severely criticised. Advocates of laissez-faire economic policies emerged to argue that there was really no difference between domestic and foreign trade and that all trade was beneficial to all parties concerned, namely, the trader, the buyer and to the public. Propagators of laissez-faire further argued that, the amount of money or treasure that a state needed would be automatically adjusted and that money, like any other commodity, could exist in excess. They equivocally refuted the preceding idea that a nation could grow rich only at the expense of another insisting that trade was in reality a two-way affair. However, even with its contours which appear beneficial to the traders in postcolonial African states, laissez-faire thesis, was like mercantilism challenged by other emergent economic ideas (Luculia 2012, Aguste 2013, 2016).

Consequently, couched within the ravaging Western values, otherwise called globalisation (Asobie 2002, Ritzer 2008), globalisation, a Western instrument of domination has become an international relation's flagship and harbinger of drumming theatre, with drummers operating at deceitful ends against the dancers. In this theatre, such ends benefit the drummers – the West through economic resources extracted at very cheap circumstance; and at the detriment of the dancers – the Africans. Herein this paper seeks to divulge how predatory the West is to Africa's postcolonial state, as the West uses international relations through tongues-in-check foreign policies and globalisation to achieve, perpetuate and reinforce imperialist designs that promote underdevelopment in Africa. The paper essentially undertakes a survey through a Marxian view of centre/core-periphery issues, such issues, which galvanise despondency, poverty, hunger, disease, wretchedness, dependency, inhuman material conditions and economic factors and the annihilation of the people of postcolonial African states, through the foisted usages of franc cfa, the US dollar, the Chinese Yuan, the Japanese Yen against the development of own currencies by postcolonial African states (Ake 1978, 1981:198, 1996:61).

In this discourse, the postcolonial African state, is the prey for West predatory mechanisms. The state in postcolonial Africa is endemically underdeveloped because, the prevailing nature and character international relations has maliciously evolved as the avowed opium of postcolonial African state's development. Consequently, the concept of development for the African state has no agenda for players of international relations in the contemporary world. The West, which predator against all development interest in postcolonial African states, symbolises this nature and character of international relations that galvanise underdevelopment in African. The ambition is to deter any competitive production of precision forces of production in Africa, which can challenge the monopoly of industrialisation in Europe, but which can facilitate the African state to participate on equal terms in the scientific and technological evolution of the modern world, where globalisation trends ravage underdeveloped people unimpeded (Dumont 1988, Ankie 2007, Saget 2010).

Thus, in spite of its presence in the international state system, the role of the postcolonial African state has been very insignificant in matching the powerful mutational forces of human development spurred by the core capitalist state in the West. Consequently, this paper divulges the ravaging and misleading theories and empiricisms, which foist the state in postcolonial Africa into the sordidly entangled and estranged peripheral capitalist position in the conduct of international relations and international trade relations, with its quick options for primary and raw materials extraction from the periphery capitalist states in Africa, Latin America and part of Asia. In return the wretched of the earth states are forced to procure the secondary industrial goods from the West at very exorbitant pricing mechanisms (Bade 1996, Venn 2013, Foodie 2022).

The paper examines the malicious and enervating Ricardian concocted international trade relations through the 'comparative advantage theory,' which assigned the state in postcolonial Africa a peripheral capitalist position. It questions how and why should the state in postcolonial Africa be relegated as a peripheral capitalist partaker in the prevailing international trade relations in spite of its huge deposits of natural resources, which are vigorously sought and cheaply obtained by the West, China, and the so-called core states. Herein, as we set to critically explore the state in postcolonial Africa, international relations and globalisation vis-à-vis underdevelopment in this region, the paper asserts that, there is great malevolently constructed scheme to foist, perpetuate and ferociously upsurge human underdevelopment rather than human development in the postcolonial Africa.

It argues that, through imperialist designs and subjective connivances arising from Western political, economic and social establishments, the state in postcolonial Africa has been declining, weakening and failing in its mission to cater for its teeming population. The paper undertakes a critical survey of centre/core - periphery issues through a Marxist view to reveal how these nefariously calculated and Western framed imperialists' designs and collusions promote underdevelopment rather development of the postcolonial African state, several years since the state in this region gained self-rule from the very Western so-called erstwhile colonialists, who today are strong Africans' neo-colonialists. It contends that, in whatever mode of production, ideologically-inclined-descriptions, and the prevailing political system, the state, which is the hob and laboratory of all human political, economic, social, scientific, technological, cultural and psychological activities remains the core purveyor of development or underdevelopment everywhere not only in Africa. Hence, any deliberate estrangement of the state in whatever form, is the estrangement and annihilation of its citizens, and their autochthonous aspirations, especially their cognitive possibilities, essence and existence (Ake 1981:176, Nnoli 1983:116, Iyana 2020).

EMPIRICISM, THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND ITS ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Thus, the entry point is this survey of centre/core-periphery issues is through an empirical anchor is based on Immanuel Wallenstein's (1930 – 2019) Marxian theory of Modern World System (MWS). The relevance of this theory in this paper, which actually, is one of the three central theories in the political economy of international relations, namely, (i) the dual economy theory, (ii) the modern world system theory, and (iii) the hegemonic theory, (Gilpin 2007); is that, the MWS offers amply clarity to empirically demonstrate the understanding that, it is impossible for the postcolonial African state to develop, as long as it occupies the despondent peripheral capitalist position in the international division of labour, dominated by the West.

Given the West rapacious eagerness for cheap raw materials, it is absolutely certainly, this imperialist grip on the postcolonial African state can be detached only through the radically supported consciousness.

However, although a Western scholar, Immanuel Wallerstein, like Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci and a host of other world humanists with Marxian leaning, washed their hands to free themselves from Western imperialism. In doing so, they illuminate the deceptive character of other Western scholarships in the works of people like David Ricardo's 'comparative advantage theory,' William Rostow's 'Five Stages of Economic Development...', and a host other works, which negate and condemn the postcolonial African state into perpetual peripheral capitalism, with its attendant underdevelopment incarnated by lopsided prices of primary or raw materials produced by postcolonial African states to service West states' development.

Thus, using Wallerstein's MWS theory, this paper theoretically and empirically dismisses the Ricardian politico-economic imperialist misleading and exploitative 'comparative advantage theory' as a point of departure for fostering human development in postcolonial African states. So far, Ricardo's comparative advantage theory has proved deceptive in the conduct of international trade relations between the West and postcolonial African states (Amin 2010, Todaro and Smith 2010). To say the least, this theory is essentially an epicentre, a ready imperial tool arrogantly, nurtured and perpetuated by the West to deconstruct the in-depth cognitive, affective and psychomotor senses and capacities of postcolonial Africans. Arising from the political and economic thinking of Thoman Mun, the English mercantilist, who held the selfish opinion that, "English nay Europe must engage in more exportation rather than importation of goods and services, for the growth of their internal political economic bases." He believed that importing goods from other countries, no matter their necessity, must be avoided by engaging into indigenous industrial production of such necessary goods, so that other countries, would not be politically and economically richer and stronger than England nay Europe."



Fig. 1: Immanuel Wallerstein giving a talk at a seminar at the European University at St. Petersburg in May 2008.

Consequently, the prevailing assertion ascribed by the West unto the postcolonial African state as declining, weakening and failing state; must be eschewed by all senseful postcolonial Africans. Through the excrement of the colonial mentality, postcolonial Africans would re-establish themselves as strategic partakers and unavoidable competitors in international trade relations. Given that, in postcolonial African states, there exist abundant large deposits of human and material wealth of natural resources, postcolonial Africans just need to acquire self-disciplined character to imbue libertarian education, through public and foreign policies, which would galvanise and garner the enhancement for extracting these resources and turning them into secondary products. Certainly, it is to stop the African from attaining this feat, that encourages the West to predatively anchor its imperialist senses of perpetual dominance.

Thus, the realisation of real political, economic, social and psychological independence of African must be a twenty-first and the next century's task, which must be won. Consequently, the conduct of international relations, especially in ensuring its rightful position in international division of labour must be Africans primary concern in dealing with the West. The paper argues that, it is completely absurd for the postcolonial African state to continue to be besotted by the behest of the West into the production of massive raw materials or primary goods and services that feed to energise the gigantic and monstrous industrial military and civilian complexes in Europe, the US, China and Japan at the detriment of the development and growth of postcolonial African states.

Incarnated by unconstructive, intractable and controversially dehumanising peripheral capitalist position occupied by postcolonial African states in the international division of labour, this poverty-propelling and hunger-ridden relations, constructs and prods the dependency of the postcolonial African state upon the Western, resulting into massively debilitating and excruciating underdevelopment in Africa (Jang 2020, Aya 2020, Kaladan 2021). Essentially, David Ricardo (1772 – 1823) a Western economist, believed that international trade should be governed by the comparative cost advantage thesis, rather than the absolute cost advantage thesis. Accordingly, a country will specialise in that line of production of goods and services, in which it has a greater relative or comparative advantage in the production costs than other countries and will depend upon imports from abroad of all such commodities in which it has relative production costs disadvantage.



Fig. 2: A Portrait of David Ricardo – A Western precursor/epitome of imperialist policies, which fashioned the centre-periphery international trade relations.

Basically, it is upon this thesis that the conduct of international trade relations, especially trade between the West and African has mischievously relied, propelled and perpetuated. Going by this thesis, suppose Japan, US, Germany, England, France, China, and so on, for instance, have the cognitive capacities to produce, cars, aircrafts, computers, beverages as secondary commodities; while, Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana, Gabon, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, can produce timber, uranium, gold, crude oil, coffee, cocoa, cotton, rubber as primary commodities at a low cost, it means that, those producing commodities at low cost should continue doing so. This is because, Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana, Gabon, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso for instance do have the cognitive capacity to produce cars, aircrafts, computers, beverages as secondary commodities. Thus, Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana, Gabon, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, should rely upon Japan, US, Germany, England, France, China, and so on, to produce and supply them cars, aircrafts, computers, beverages as secondary commodities, which these countries can hardly produce and vice versa.

The political, economic, social and psychological and ideological implication here is that, since, Cameroon, Nigeria, Niger, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Mali do not have the mental capacity to produce cars, computers, aircrafts, beverages, they should contend with producing timber, uranium, gold, crude oil, coffee, cocoa, cotton, rubber as primary commodities at a low cost, which would be sold to Japan, US, Germany, England, France, China, and so on, which has the mental capacities for producing these commodities, which should sold to Cameroon, Nigeria, Niger, Ghana, Mali, Burkina Faso. Another implication of the Ricardian theory is that, the prices of the commodities sold by Cameroon, Nigeria, Niger, Ghana, Mali, Burkina Faso are determined by Japan, US, Germany, England, France, China, and so on; and not by Cameroon, Nigeria, Niger, Ghana, Mali, Burkina Faso; while the prices of the cars, aircrafts, beverages computers sold Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso should be determined by Japan, US, Germany, England, France, China and so. However, for the purposes of imperial benefits, the theory contains some exceptions, which portends how less it is not important that, it does not mean that Japan for instance will specialise in both rice and computers and Cameroon will have nothing to export. If Japan can produce rice at a relatively lesser cost than computers, it will decide to specialise in the production and export of computers and Cameroon, which has less comparative cost disadvantage in the production of rubber, cocoa beans or timber than computers will decide to specialise in the production of rubber and export it to Japan in exchange of computers and motor types. Consequently, the Ricardian comparative costs thesis is based upon the following assumptions:

1. There is no intervention by the government in economic system.
2. Perfect competition exists both in the commodity and factor markets.
3. There are static conditions in the economy. It implies that factors of supply and demands, techniques of production, tastes and preferences are given and constant.
4. Production function is homogeneous of the first degree. It implies that output changes exactly in the same ratio in which the factors' inputs are varied. In other words, production is governed by constant returns to scale.
5. Labour is the only factor of production and the cost of producing a commodity is expressed in labour units.
6. Labour is perfectly mobile within the country but perfectly immobile among different countries.

7. Transport costs are absent so that production cost, measured in terms of labour input alone, determines the cost of producing a given commodity.
8. There are only two commodities to be exchanged between the two countries.
9. Money is non-existent and prices of different goods are measured by their real cost of production.
10. There is full employment of resources in both the countries.
11. Trade between two countries takes place on the basis of barter.

According to Ricardo, this two-country, two-commodity model can be analysed through the Table below.

TABLE 2.3. Labour Cost of Production

Country	Labour cost per unit of commodity in man-hours	
	Commodity X	Commodity Y
A	12	10
B	16	12

Fig. 3: This table demonstrates the labour cost of production per unit of commodity according to Ricardo

Source: Adapted from Blaffer (2015) Theories of development and underdevelopment in postcolonial Africa, Lagos: PAN Press, p..49

Consequently, the foregoing table indicates that country A has a deceptive absolute advantage in producing both the commodities through smaller inputs of labour than in country B. In relative terms, however, country A has comparative advantage in specialising in the production and export of commodity X while country B will specialise in the production and export of commodity Y.

In country A, domestic exchange ratio between X and Y is 12: 10, i.e., 1 unit of X = 12/10 or 1.20 units of Y. Alternatively, 1 unit of Y = 10/12 or 0.83 units of X. In country B, the domestic exchange ratio is 16: 12 such as 1 unit of X = 16/12 or 1.33 units of Y. Alternatively, 1 unit of Y = 16/12 or 0.75 unit of X. From the above cost ratios, it follows that country A has comparative cost advantage in the production of X and B has comparatively lesser cost disadvantage in the production of Y. In algebraic terms, let labour cost of producing X-commodity in country A is a_1 and in country B is a_2 . The labour cost of producing Y-commodity in countries A and B are respectively a_3 and a_4 .

The Absolute Differences in Costs Can Be Measured As:

$a_1/a_2 < 1 < a_3/a_4$ It shows that country A has absolute advantage in producing X and country B has an absolute advantage in commodity Y. The comparative variances in costs can be measured as: $a_1/a_2 < a_3/a_4 < 1$.

According to Ricardo, figure 3 above satisfies the condition specified for comparative difference in costs; $a_1/a_2 < 1 < a_3/a_4 < 1$. $12/16 < 10/12 < 1$. In case $a_1/a_2 = a_3/a_4$, there are equal differences in costs and there is no possibility of trade between the two countries. In Fig. 4 below, AA_1 and BB_1 are the production possibility curves pertaining to countries A

and B. Given the same number of productive resources, A can produce larger quantities of both the commodities than the country B. It means country A has absolute cost advantage over B in respect of both the commodities.

If the curve BC_1 is drawn parallel to AA_1 ; the curve BC_1 can represent the production possibility curve of country A. If country A gives up OB quantity of Y and diverts resources to the production of X, it can produce OC_1 quantity of X, which is more than OB_1 . It means the country A has comparative cost advantage in the production of X-commodity. From the point of view of B, it can produce the same quantity OB of Y, if it gives up the production of smaller quantity OB_1 of X. It signifies that country B has less comparative disadvantage in the production of Y commodity. Accordingly, country A will specialise in the production and export of X commodity, while country B will specialise in the production and export of Y-commodity.

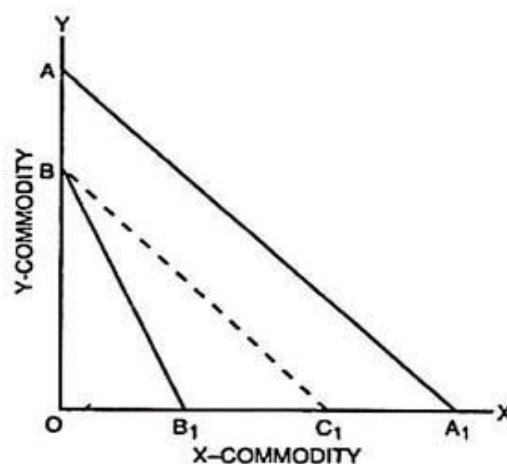


Fig. 4: This table demonstrates the production possibility curves pertaining to countries A and B

Source: Adapted from Blaffer (2015) *Theories of development and underdevelopment in postcolonial Africa*, Lagos: PAN Press, p..48

Gain from Trade

The comparative cost principle underlines the fact that two countries will stand to gain through trade so long as the cost ratios for two countries are not equal. On the basis of Table 2.3, country A specialises in the production of X commodity, while country B specialises in the production of Y commodity. Obviously, this position does not all serve the interest of postcolonial African states, which have been foisted to produce only primary goods and services, whose prices are cheaply determined by the core states, who buy these African raw materials to produce secondary goods and services, which are latter sold at exorbitant prices, which are actually determined by the Western industrial producers. Thus, according to this Ricardian deceptive theory, in the absence of international trade, the domestic exchange ratio between X and Y commodities in these two countries are: Country A: 1 unit of X = $12/10$ or 1-20 units of Y. Country B: 1 unit of Y = $12/16$ or 0-75 unit of X.

Thus, should trade take place between two states, and the two states agree to exchange 1 unit of X for 1 unit of Y, the gain from trade for country A amounts to 0.20 units of Y for

each unit of X. In case of country B, the gain from trade amounts to 0.25 unit of X for each unit of Y. Thus, the belief that the comparative costs principle confers gain upon both countries at the periphery is basically false, as we shall demonstrate through the Marxian view postulated in Wallerstein's Modern World System Theory (MWS).

PRAGMATISM, IMMANUEL WALLERSTEIN'S MODERN WORLD SYSTEM (MWS) AND CENTRE/CORE-PERIPHERY ISSUES

The modern world system theory was developed by an American sociologist, Immanuel Wallerstein in 1970, as an alternative to the then popular modernisation thesis and comparative advantage global wealth processes. Actually, Wallerstein's world system theory is a socio-economic theory that, views the world as a single system made up of a core, periphery, and semi-periphery. The core consists of technologically advanced and industrialised capitalist nations and regions characterised by higher incomes, large tax bases, and high standards of living. The periphery consists of poor countries that primarily subsist by exporting primary products or raw materials such as agricultural produce and natural resources to the core countries.

Deceptively, the semi-periphery consists of countries that are made to act as the periphery to core countries and as a core to the countries on the periphery. The theory essentially argues that surplus value is usually transferred from the periphery to the core at the detriment of the so-called imperially coined term peripheries. The world systems theory was proposed by the American sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein in the 1970s as an alternative to the then-popular modernisation hypothesis. Wallerstein made a profound critique of the modernisation thesis alongside the comparative advantage thesis in international trade relations on perhaps, four related grounds, namely:

1. The Ricardian theory was built using only the nation-state and more of core states' interests as the unit of analysis.
2. It stood as opposition that, there existed only one path to development of all states.
3. It was believed that poor countries of today are simply primitive versions (periphery) of the rich (core) countries.
4. If these so-called primitive countries – the peripheral postcolonial African states, were strictly obey without questioning, the same trajectory as that of the rich countries, these countries would eventually become developed. Consequently, even as fake, deceptive and conceivable this path is, the so-called core countries persisted in foisting this doctrine in the political, economic, social and psychological landscapes of the so-called peripheral countries just satisfy imperialists' designs of exploitation (Ake 1978, Onimode 1988, Dumont 1988). Below is an empirical scheme demonstrating the nature and character of the modern world system, internal division and analysis of the imperialist mental structure of the West, which partitioned international trade relations according to definitions and regions to correspond to what Ricardo called core, periphery and semi-periphery countries or regions.

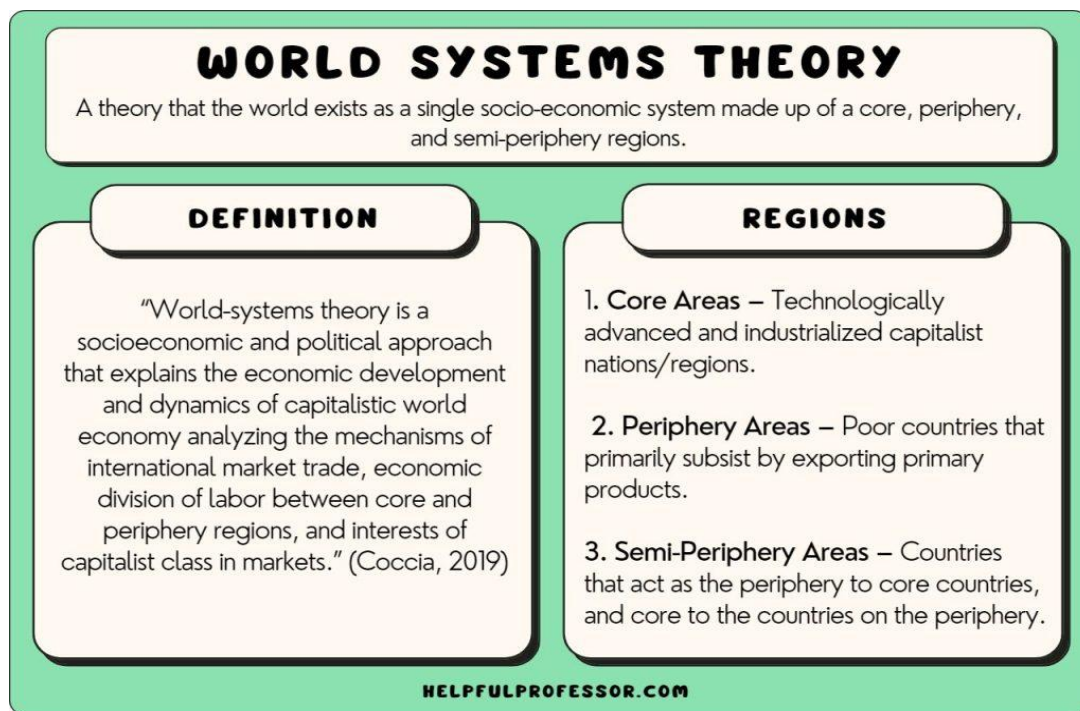


Fig. 5: A schema of the Modern World System by Immanuel Wallerstein, demonstrating its definition and regions of operation

Source: Adapted from Blaffer (2015) *Theories of development and underdevelopment in postcolonial Africa*, Lagos: PANA Press, p.78

Accordingly, the world systems theory states that, the world exists as a single socio-economic system made up of a core, periphery, and semi-periphery. In this system, surplus value obtained at extremely cheap labour and investment conditions is transferred from the periphery to the core, in what is commonly referred to as capital flight. To better understand the world systems theory, it is helpful to begin with its thrusts and components. First, we begin with the thrusts of the modern world system and its relationship to dependency thesis.

EXPLAINING CENTRE/CORE - PERIPHERY ISSUES, THROUGH MODERN WORLD SYSTEMS ANALYSIS (TAKE THESE MATERIALS)

Centre/core and periphery issues represent the typically abominating and misleading political, economic and social issues of wealth production relations, in the practice of international relations, which tend to regard the modern world system as constituting relations of core, semi-periphery and periphery states. The issues then attempt to imperially apportion specific character of wealth production to either the periphery, semi-periphery and core states. In this process, the production of raw materials or primary goods, wealth accruing from cheap labour, oversimplification of raw materials pricing mechanism in terms of low costing and acquisition by semi-periphery and core states, without the consent of the postcolonial African producers, who are perpetually stationed as the peripheral position, capital flight and blatant exploitation all of human resources in very meagre wages from huge investment ploughed in the periphery by the core states; all of which arise from the deceptive character of international relations between the core, semi-periphery and peripheral states are key in terms of understanding the nature and character of the dependency theories propounded by Prebisch and his colleagues in the dependency school. in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Most importantly, understanding of these issues is pertinent for the student of politics in postcolonial Africa, because, from here he or she would grasp the nitty-gritty of penury of material conditions; and would enable him or her explain how underdevelopment is planted, germinated and grows in the postcolonial African state. A common feature of these theories is the opinion that, capitalist development in Western Europe and North America puts countries in these Western continents into the centre of the world market; while other countries in South America, Asia, and Africa must become and remain the bona-fide part of the poorer periphery. The centre/core and periphery implications for explaining and understanding the dependency theory contend that, the development of capitalism into a world system has a geographical structure, which must be respected and kept intact. The centre/core-periphery model is thus, useful not only on a global explanatory level but even from a mere local standpoint, especially in understanding interdependency between the rich cities and the poor countryside or the domestic political, economic, social and cultural, even psychological relations. So, both the centre/core and the periphery of the world system include other centres. /cores and peripheries in their structures.

Second, we look at the components of the centre/core-periphery issues as demonstrated by the modern world system's thinking, which explains, the division of the world into three international trading areas, namely:

- a) **Core Areas:** A small set of technologically advanced and industrialised capitalist nations/regions characterized by higher incomes, large tax bases, and high standards of living. In the 21st century, the developed countries that form the G-7 group, along with China can be considered the core of the world-system.
- b) **Periphery Areas:** Poor countries that primarily subsist by exporting primary products such as agricultural produce and natural resources to the core countries. The periphery is characterized by a small tax base, low incomes, and low levels of human development index. In the 21st century, much of sub-Saharan African, parts of Latin America and Central Asia can be considered the periphery.
- c) **Semi-Periphery Areas:** These countries act as the intermediary periphery to core countries, and as a core to the countries on the periphery. Typically, such countries are regional powers with moderate levels of development indices and growing capitalist economies. In the 21st century, countries such as India, Brazil, Turkey, Mexico, Israel, Nigeria and so on can be considered the semi-periphery of the world-system.

UNDERSTANDING THE DESCRIPTIONS AND DELINEATIONS OF THE MODERN WORLD SYSTEMS THEORY

Stated below are the classic descriptions of the modern world system by Wallerstein (1974). A modern world system theory signifies a multicultural territorial division of labour in which the production and exchange of basic goods and services such as raw materials is necessary for the everyday life of its inhabitants of industrial states, is a burden for under or non-industrialised states" (p. 87). According to Coccia (2019) the modern world systems is a "World systems theory, which is a socio-economic and political approach that explains the economic development and dynamics of capitalistic world economy, and which makes analysis of the mechanisms of international market trade relations, economic division of labour amid cores and peripheries, and interests of capitalists in markets" (p. 212). The world systems theory was proposed by the American sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein in the 1970s as an alternative to the then popular modernisation thesis, which Wallerstein identified its shortcomings as built

using only the nation-state as the unit of analysis. It debunked the proposition that, there existed only one path to development for all states – the one followed by the developed countries. It was believed that the poor countries of today are simply primitive versions of the rich countries, and if they were to follow the same trajectory as that of the rich countries, they would eventually become developed too. However, this thinking failed to take into account the transnational structures such as large business corporations and inherent economic and financial interests that influence the development of core states against peripheries.

Obviously, in identifying these shortcomings, Wallerstein believed that the bearings of the modernisation theory, embedded in Western theories of economic and political development, such as the comparative advantage and other such models were the product of nineteenth century ways of thinking by imperialists, who believed in compartmentalisation of human knowledge, particularly in the world's production of wealth. Actually, this meant that such an approach could only look at the problems of human development and underdevelopment through the lens of either developmental economics or political science churned by the West. Definitely, Wallerstein rather proposed a unified system approach, which according to him did not limit itself to any one subject or approach for analysing global political, economic, social, cultural and even psychological issues but combined the spheres of society, economy, and politics for human development for the benefit of global economic, political and social enterprise. Hence, Wallerstein's apt criticisms, which he had against the modernisation thesis.

Some Examples of World Systems Theory

Herein, we present some of the examples for the acquisition of specific and adequate nature and character of libertarian knowledge of economics and political economy of development and underdevelopment, which demonstrates a complex but harmonious application of the world-systems theory.

The Knowledge Economics and Political Economy:

Knowledge of economics and political economy is a term used to describe economies marked by a high level of technical and scientific innovation within competing forces in societies, in which employment supply and demands attract high levels of technical and scientific knowledge. Such economics and political economy stand in contrast to primary economies based on agriculture or resource extraction, including manufacturing economies that are based on skilled or unskilled manual labour in capitalist politico-economic formations. Jobs in a knowledge economy tend to be weighted towards the finance, scientific innovation, technology, and services sector. In the present world-system, the developed countries have a predominant position in the knowledge economy, with almost all leading technology and financial sectors corporations located in developed countries or the core of the world-system such as the US, Canada, France, the UK and so on. The markets for knowledge economy products often tend to be located in the peripheral or semi-peripheral countries.

For instance, companies such as Facebook and WhatsApp, Michelin, automobile production, hardware industrial tools, and so on, have most of their ready users in countries such as India, Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Ghana, Togo, Ivory Coast, Gabon and so on. This global knowledge economy is not solely based on classification by nation-states alone, for within the peripheral and semi-peripheral countries there exist regions that are integrated within the global capitalist system. For instance, cities such as Bangalore and Mumbai in India

are recognised as global hubs of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and finance, even though they are located within a semi-peripheral capitalist country. Thus, rather than there existing a simple dichotomy of core and periphery countries, the application of the world-systems theory to the knowledge economy reveals a far more complex and interrelated world-system.

The Politics of Climate Change and Carbon Emissions:

The politics of climate change are characterised by an unequal exchange. The core countries have historically extracted more of the earth's natural resources including fossil fuels that contribute to global warming and have used more of the earth's capacity to act as a heat sink. For example, we now know that the USA's CO₂ emissions are greater than that of all of the African continent combined, or that India has one of the lowest per capita levels of CO₂ emissions in the world at 1/19th of those in Canada. The world-systems theory provides theoretic and pragmatic accounts relating to countries or regions that form the core of the world-system have higher CO₂ emissions and must consequently have a greater share in the global responsibility to combat climate change, compared to countries or regions that fall in the periphery. Herein, it becomes very important to understand how the world systems theory relates to the responsibility of carbon emissions and climate change, and this amply confirms Wallerstein fundamental concerns of a unified world system.

Hidden Hunger and The Packaged Food Industry:

Hidden hunger is a form of malnutrition in which populations suffer from deficiency of micronutrients and vitamins, even though there may not appear to be any evident starvation. Hidden hunger mostly results from consumption of empty calories found in packaged food and sweetened beverages. While the global packaged food giants concentrated in the "core" countries, their products find big markets in the "periphery" countries. It has been documented that 18 of the 20 most severely affected countries by hidden hunger are in sub-Saharan Africa, while the remaining two are in the South Asian nations of India and Afghanistan (Muthayya et al., 2013).

First, Its Presumed Strengths:

These Explain Internal Inequalities:

Since the world systems theory does not take the nation-state as the primary unit of analysis, it helps explain internal inequalities within nation-states better than other development theories such as the modernisation theory or the dependency theory. For instance, India, a country in the semi-periphery of the world system is home to more than 200 million people living in poverty as defined by the World Economic Forum, while at the same time having the third highest number of billionaires in the world (177), after only the US and China. Application of the world systems theory helps us understand that there are several regions within the peripheral and semi-peripheral countries that are deeply integrated with the global capitalist structure. The regional hubs within nations serve as the core to the peripheries located within the same countries. The implications and demonstrates is that, a much more complex and nuanced model of global inequalities exist than the mere simple classifications of first world and third world countries or developed, developing, and underdeveloped countries that other models provide. Exploitation of a periphery by a core does not happen at the level of nation-states alone; a core within a country can also exploit a periphery within the same country leading to sharp regional inequalities.

Human-Centric Rather Than System-Centric:

The world systems theory conceptualizes the entire world as one unified system rather than made of different systems and structures. In the words of Frank & Gills (1993) it allows us to see 'a common river and unity of history in a single world system [that is] multicultural in origin and expression.

Cross-Domain Applicability:

The world systems theory can be applied to a number of fields including gender studies, ethnic and racial discrimination studies, political geography, international relations to name a few. For instance, a gender studies analysis of the world system reveals the manner in which women's labour is exploited within a capitalist system controlled by men. Nash (1988), in an analysis of the Iranian carpet making industry has shown how carpet making households led by men were located in a periphery relative to the core regions of the developed world to which these carpets were exported. Within the household however, much of the carpet-weaving work was carried out by women while the men controlled the finances, replicating the core-periphery relationship, this time within the household, and with a highly gendered aspect to it.

Second, It Is the Weaknesses of The World Systems Theory:

Insufficient Grounding in Empirical Data:

Because of its wide scope, empirically grounded studies justifying the hypotheses of the world systems theory are still emerging. The theory has been critiqued for presenting too many broad generalizations and not presenting a falsifiable hypothesis.

Overemphasising The Role of Globalisation and Capitalism:

The world systems theory, in putting forward the notion of a unified world connected by networks of global capital, makes two assumptions that do not always hold true – one of globalisation and the other of the inevitability of capitalism. For instance, Balkilic (2018) has shown how local dynamics in the coffee plantations of the Caribbean developed independently of any global influences. Similarly, some countries such as Bhutan still remain outside the purview of the global capitalist system (Balkilic 2018:67).

Ignores Socio-Cultural Causes of Underdevelopment:

Even though the world systems theory claims to be a unified approach combining the spheres of economy, politics, and society, it ends up relying too heavily on economic causes of underdevelopment while ignoring others such as culture, religion, tradition, and so on. For instance, the Indian caste system does not have any economic basis, being grounded in scriptural and traditional origins. Yet, it is widely acknowledged to be a system that kept millions oppressed and deprived. (Fuller 1973). In fact, one of the reasons Marxist theories failed to find much support in India was their insistence upon class as the primary system of oppression, when in fact, caste played an equally important, if not greater role, in India's underdevelopment.

Third, It Is Some of The Disadvantages of the MWS:

The MWS is a big concern alone, because the concept of system is the one tool, and tool does not exhibit physical artifacts, except narratives. So anytime you introduce a tool, it does not give power to the project, but the system gives power to the one controlling it. Take a complete day starting at 4.00 am anywhere, make a system just for a day, and I can guarantee that the system

in place bucks against your own. Maybe you want to go and get a place for you and your family today in a holiday resort, but the banking system, which is regulated and controlled to keep people's money says you and your family have to remain homeless, because our modern system of banking says your homelessness does not qualify you for assistance (Kesse 2022, Jinto 2022). As Kesse (2022:38) opines, "Chevy heads to the grocery store to buy bread for you and your family, and you get registered somewhere losing money in the process.

Now you are perhaps short of money, because of the money you lost it; thus, you have to put back the bread in the grocery store, because, you cannot pay for it, having lost some money; and this is systematic - money." In another instance, you are told that you do not have enough pay packet in a particular month, which is also systematic, money. You leave and you realise that there is a trash in your car, which you must dispose in a near trash dumpster. So, you go to the stores' dumpster and there are tons of food thrown out in there, because expiration dates are also systematic. You are then forced to go around finding an appropriate place to dump your trash, that is also systematic. A ten years old boy finds no public toilet to empty his bowls, he pees on the public place, he is arrested that is also systematic.

For instance, as you go home, you immediately discover that you have run out of gas just as you are on the way, and paradoxically, civil servants usually only stop when they meet suspicious situations, which is also systematic, that is operating in accordance with the systematic inculcation of things in society. If a policeman – a civil service agent, stops you he uses policy over better sense, and interrogates you. This is because, that policy is also systematic. I see you get the picture now, because, everything we do has become systematized and that is the absolute. In fact, Max Weber claimed that the modern world system is trapping us, especially us in the postcolonial African states, in an iron cage of rationality. Perhaps, before the advent of the modern world system, people lived in an enchanted world of magical gardens. Nowadays, our perception of the world changed from an enchanted world inhabited by magical creatures, saints, and miracles, where the line between reality and imagination is non-existent, to a mechanical industrialised grey world of reason, where capitalist materialism putting, which puts a monetary value on everything and Protestant work ethic and cold rational bureaucracy rules our lives. Is there a world system, and in relation to what? In fact, politics, wealth, civil rights, food, clean water and a warm, dry place to sleep? Is that a true picture of what we call a modern world system? Is there some authority that makes all these things readily available in for instance in the US, England as well as in Nigeria, Cameroon, Gabon on equally terms? If there is such a world system, it seems to have created some serious disadvantages for some people, and indeed, the people in what is called the postcolonial African states. Too many really comprehend, whether you are in Chicago, Iowa or Yaoundé, Bamako, Lagos, Libreville or Accra. One thing is veritably clear, there are many different local systems that are very different, one from the other. Is it logical to assume one world system could reduce the disadvantages of some without the advantages of others being reduces as well? Maybe a better course would be to convert the disadvantaged ones into the advantaged ones by helping them to help themselves with a better local system theory. Some of the advantages could include: good healthcare system with medicine that can actually cure you of formerly incurable diseases, the availability of abundant good road network, telephone, food security, education, entertainment, safe travel, education, an eighty plus percentage increase in the number of people who do not live-in grinding poverty. Lack of privacy, environmental problems of waste disposal difficulties,

regular traffic congestion, a lack of sense of common courtesy, poor roads network, insufficient food production, marginalisation of minority groups, poor governance.

THE MODERN WORLD SYSTEM REVISITED - WHAT IS IT AND WHAT IT IS NOT.

The clueless, the careless, the myopic, the ignorant, the selfish, the cowardly, the duplicitous and the guileful, the sellouts, coupled with the disenfranchised, the marginalised and silenced majority, the co-opted and neutralised, the atomised and impoverished masses, who are mostly found in postcolonial African states, are controlled by the reins of the ostensibly powerful protégés, who are in turn manipulated by the empty promises of the West's fraudulent economic and political predators, who are deceive through deceptive political, economic, social and cultural theories. Certainly, the world is as it has always been. Life is living as life has always lived. Of-course, the three difference nowadays are (i) People have increased in populations, (ii) people have developed several news ways of doing things, and (iii) people have aggregated themselves into larger manifest, latent and over-lapping groups. Consequently, in several ways, these multifaceted groups continue as largely independent entities within their agreed geographic boundaries. Relentlessly, they continue fighting with each other over the location of those boundaries, and these groups tend to compete with each other more fiercely than they actually cooperate with each other. Finally, all the groups tend to ignore the effects of growing populations, growing resource use and exhaustion.

Growing toxic trashes of all sorts and quantities, and growing toxic environments oozing its effects of the first three. In all of these, very few leaders, especially in postcolonial African states, either as individuals or institutions, are interested in using their positions of power to better the lives of those they lead, or even to pay attention to effects positive changes to the issues listed above. However, how much and how many postcolonial Africans believe and realise are involved in the comparative advantage thesis with its structurally manipulated and skewed international division of labour in terms of world trade, modern world system and the dependency thesis? Do the people of postcolonial African states ever ponder on the advantages and disadvantages accruing from their involvement or not in the modern world system? Nevertheless, it is time for postcolonial African states to quit underdevelopment by fixing their cognitive capacities towards understanding their failures in addressing their content-revenue gap and to switch to interactive content formats that sellers and buyers gainfully engage strictly in understanding the negative terms of centre/core-periphery relations. Quite often, the West float some of the obvious modern values such as:

1. unimpeded political rights,
2. democracy, imbuing strengthened and strong three-tier constitutionally decentralised and transparent state organisaion;
3. promoting mass literacy and education for the girl child;
4. promoting private, state-controlled or mix ownership of the means of production, including acquiring high tech precision forces of production;
5. enhancing the use of the scientific methods in public policymaking processes;
6. disengagement from middle class Western value systems
7. the emancipation of the women and indigenous peoples.

The Dependency Theory

Essentially, the dependency theory is broadly based on a Marxian philosophy of development. According to this philosophy, man uses his cognitive power to exploit another man. In this

sense, the erstwhile colonies suffer economic exploitation through the caprices of their former colonial powers. In fact, Andre Gunder Frank (1971) Rodney (1972) argue, the developed West massively and perpetually underdevelop the developing countries effectively by relegating them to a state of dependency. Thus, for the student of political science in the postcolonial African state, undertaking in-depth studies of the dependency theory is a very profitable academic venture. Actually, the dependency theory originated in 1949 in the work of Hans Singer and Raul Prebisch. These two economists described how the terms of trade for developing countries had deteriorated over time: they were able to buy lesser and lesser manufactured goods from developed countries in exchange for their raw materials. The dependency theory grew as a reaction to modernisation theory, which stated that all societies progress through similar stages of development; developing countries are in a stage similar to that of developed countries from an earlier period. So, by accelerating the (supposed) common path of development through investment and technology, poor countries can develop. Dependency theory rejected this view by stating that poor countries are not simply primitive versions of wealthy ones. Instead, they have their own unique structures and features. Moreover, the theorists highlighted how developing countries are exploited in the global economic system, which is responsible for their poverty.

Some Examples of the Dependency

- a. **Colonial Exploitation and Imperialism:** The earliest example of dependency is colonization when European nations made colonies through their superior military technology. They exported natural resources from other places to Europe. They then manufactured these materials and sold them back into colonies, creating an economic system of exploitation.
- b. **Developing World Debt Traps:** Dependency makes poor nations accumulate large amounts of debt and interest. For example, Africa has received massive loans from wealthy nations in the past few decades. The huge debt and interest repayment make it difficult for the nations to invest in their own economy and development.
- c. **Lack of; or Unequal Technology:** Developed countries usually have a monopoly on advanced technology. Their multinational corporations often establish operations in developing countries, and while these provide some benefits (like jobs) to the hosts, it also forces them to be dependent on the technology and expertise of the developed nation.
- d. **Reliance on Natural Resource Exports:** Since poor countries lack the technology to fully utilize their resources, they are forced to export their natural resources. This creates a “resource curse”, as the economy becomes too dependent on it and is unable to diversify. Plus, the benefits of resource exports are often not distributed equally.
- e. **Imbalanced Growth:** In periphery countries, despite some short-term spurts of growth, the long-term growth is imbalanced and unequal. This is because they are stuck in producing a narrow range of goods for exports, while other areas of the economy are underdeveloped. They also have high negative current account balances.
- f. **Aid Dependency:** Aid dependency refers to the reliance of a country on foreign aid, which reinforces economic dependency on developed nations. It often creates a dependency mentality, in which the developing nations become reliant on external aid instead of developing their domestic resources. Aid dependency is prominent in Africa.
- g. **Political Dependency:** Economic dependency often comes with political dependency, as developed nations are able to use their assistance to influence the political landscape.

This is especially worse in countries suffering from corruption and lack of civil rights, like Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

- h. **Economic Shocks:** Dependency makes developing countries more vulnerable to economic shocks. They are often dependent on exports in a narrow range of industries. This lack of diversity, along with weaker institutions, makes them vulnerable to sudden changes, like a trading partner going through a recession or natural disasters.
- i. **Manipulation of Trade Policies:** Dependency allows developed nations to shape the terms of trade in their favour. They may employ protectionism to limit developing countries from accessing their markets and making it difficult for them to compete. They can also use their power to influence international organisations such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in their favour.
- j. **Lack of Autonomy:** Ultimately, economic dependency never allows developing nations to become self-sufficient. They are forced to depend on developed nations for financial assistance, technology, infrastructure, etc. This creates a perpetual cycle of poverty & underdevelopment, making poor countries poorer & rich countries richer.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DEPENDENCY THEORY IN EXPLAINING UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN POSTCOLONIAL AFRICAN STATES

Definitely, according to Prebisch (1949), the global capitalist system emerged as we know it today in the sixteenth century. Through its processes, countries in Latin America, Asia, and Africa became involved in a web of unequal relationship of exploitation and dependency with the more sophisticated and economically, politically and socially powerful European countries. Thus, this global capitalist structure is organised so that the rich core countries, such as the USA, UK, Japan and China are at the other end of the essentially economic spectrum, using their political and military wits to circumvent the primary goods from underdeveloped countries. Fundamentally, the core exploits the periphery through its economic and military dominance. So, based on Frank's idea of dependency, world history from the 1500s to the 1950s can be understood as a systematic process, where core countries accumulated wealth from extracting natural resources organic and inorganic, from the peripheral countries. This then left the peripheral countries in poverty-stricken conditions with sordid economic weaknesses and stagnations.

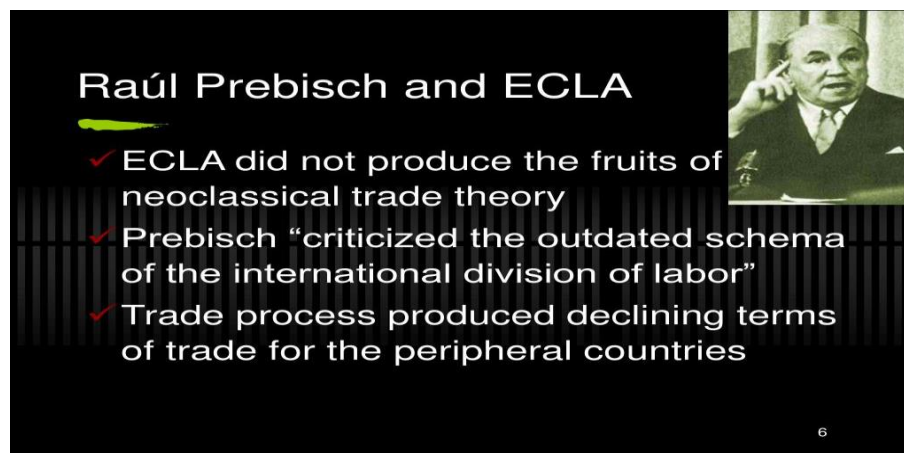


Fig. 2: Raul Prebisch an Argentinian Economist at the Economic Commission of Latin America (ECLA) emphasizing dependency setbacks to developing countries

Source: Free download: ID – 1220752. Retrieved on 14th December 2023 at Buea, Cameroon, 5pm



Fig. 3: An empirical schema of centre/core-periphery issues of Singer and Prebisch, explaining the underdevelopment relations arising from the peripheral position occupied by the postcolonial African state in the conduct of international trade relations.

Source: Free download: ID – 1220752. Retrieved on 14th December 2023 at Buea, Cameroon, 5pm.

For instance, in poor or peripheral countries, raw materials are sold at lower prices, and workers are forced to work for lower wages than in developed countries with higher living standards. Accordingly, developed countries, actively fear losing their dominance and prosperity to the development of poorer countries. Thus, under colonialism, powerful countries of the West took control of the territories in Latin America, Asia and Africa for their own benefits at the detriment of Latin Americans, Asians and African. In order to scoop vast portions of illegal resources from the colonies, the colonisers, using colonial rule, mesmerised the colonised countries to essentially became part of the colonising country. That is why colonisation is viewed as a fundamental abuse of human rights, acts of empire building and imperialism.

Actually, the dependency theory is a theory in economics that is a predecessor and an immediate influence on the world systems theory. The theory took birth in 1949 from the work of the Argentinian economist Raul Prebisch. It directly critiqued the postulate of the modernization theory which stated that the underdeveloped countries of today are just a primitive version of the developed countries, and provided enough stimulus in the form of investment and technology transfer, can be put on the path to development. Prebisch challenged this hypothesis by claiming that such investments and infusion of capital into underdeveloped countries only serve to further their dependence on foreign capital. Prebisch was the first to use the terms core and periphery to describe this relationship – a terminology that Wallerstein later built upon for his own world systems theory. Prebisch was particularly interested in the curious case of Argentina, that, beginning the 20th century as one of the richest countries in the world on account of its strong agrarian exports, failed to keep pace with other rich countries of Europe and North America, eventually sliding into a seemingly interminable cycle of economic stagnation and political crisis. However, the world systems theory differs from the dependency theory in that it rejects Presbisch's formulation of nation-states as the primary unit of analysis. As Wallerstein explained, core and periphery can exist within the same country too. Wallerstein also devised a three-tiered model comprising a core, semi-periphery, and a periphery as opposed to Prebisch's binary division. Finally, Wallerstein intended his

formulation to be an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the world, whereas Presbisch's work was a theory in macroeconomics.

APPRECIATING THE MARXIAN NOTION OF ALIENATION VIS-A-VIS UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN POSTCOLONIAL AFRICA STATES

In order to strengthen this paper's envisaged theoretical framework of analysis, we set to divulge the senses of the recent upheavals which characterised the state in parts of postcolonial Africa, precisely, in the Sahelian states of Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Guinea. Herein, we argue that the increasing tensions between the core states (France and its Western counterparts and the impoverished peripheries (Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Guinea), may be related to an increasing alienation arising from changes within the political economy that affects these resource-rich but impoverished areas and peripheries in postcolonial Africa vis-à-vis the volume of the wealth extracted from their states by the West. From a Marxian point of view, somewhat remarkably, within the abundant studies, we usually try to derive our notion of alienation, subjugation, domination and exploitation primarily from Karl Marx's *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, (1884), in which he applied the Hegelian and Feuerbachian concepts of alienation on the commodification of labour, (Marx 1988, 1932). Rather, most often we must base our explanation and understanding of the West's down-sized the pre-and postcolonial African state, on Marx's later works, such as the *Grundrisse* and the first volume of *Capital*, in which the theory of alienation is fundamentally explained to its in-depth and, in fact, more firmly within Marx's critique of the capitalist political economy. Certainly, from this writing, one would appreciate without blinking of the eye, the reasons which forced the forging of this Alliance of Sahelian States (ASS) to chase France away from their incessant exploitation.

To begin with, the starting point of alienation theory is Marx's concept of production of wealth, and its centrality for individual and societal development is that man is closely linked to his material conditions and economic factors for his essence and existence. Marx argued that during the productive process we set in motion our mental and physical capabilities in order to alter external reality of Nature, converted according to our senses, needs, interests, and desires. Production is therefore both an expression of our human subjectivity, as well as the primary mechanism through which we interact with the world outside us (Marx 1990, 1867:283). Consequently, through production we also enter into and develop social relationships with other people, either through direct cooperation, perhaps within skewed production relations with unequal forces of production or through the establishment of a division of labour, from which we produce for each other serviceable goods and services (Marx 1993, 1939:256). Thus, the outcomes of production are hence not limited to use values, but further include the human subjects themselves, their relationship with nature and to the society to which they relate, belong and contribute according to their atom of energy, otherwise called labour power (Ngozi 2022, Jabari 2023).

Regrettably, under capitalism, labour is meanly regarded, and thus, sold like a commodity over the counter, which is purchased and put to work by capitalists who, due to their ownership over the means of production, obtained from precision forces of production, generally initiate and control the productive process (Marx 1990, 1867:278). The commodification and exploitation of labour gives rise to alienation, which we define as a process in which the results of production are appropriated and transformed into capital. The concept of alienation highlights the tendency of capital to revolutionise continually the productive process in order to fit with

its own imperatives, for example through reorganization of the labour process, the concentration of property, the introduction of machinery, and the development of increasingly complex and specialised divisions of labour, leading to historically unprecedented rates of productive and thus social development.

In *Grundrisse*, (Marx 1990, 1867), argues that productive development in general tends to increase vastly the power of the social collective relative to the individual worker, while also making people more interconnected and mutually dependent. However, due to the alienation of labour, the social power created by advances in science, technology, and the division of labour does not accrue to the workers directly, but rather strengthens capital as a social force (Marx 1993, 1939:308). Workers are thus estranged from the process and results of production, which creates an economic system that confronts the individual as an alien, quasi-natural, and antagonistic order. The central argument of alienation theory is thus that productive development under capitalism tends to produce a social order that appears to become more independent of us the more we become dependent on it, engendering subjective feelings of powerlessness, nihilism, and isolation, which paradoxically increase as people objectively become more powerful and interconnected (Sarge 2021, Betony 2022).

An important implication of alienation theory is that capitalism does not only produce material inequalities in income and wealth, but also limits people's capacity to influence, identify with, and comprehend the societies in which they live and contribute. Thus, alienation theory broadens the question of economic inequality, which has unwittingly comprised questions of meaning, self-determination, democratic participation, and identity as we lately witness the reactions of the Alliance of the four Sahel states in postcolonial Africa. Empirically thus, alienation theory predicts that alienation will disproportionately affect workers in industries characterised by rapid changes in production, for example through technological development, the concentration of property, and the replacement of democratic institutions by bureaucratised systems, if the owners of the means of production fail to consider their humanistic selves. As it is possible to recognise all of these processes in the relationship between the West and postcolonial African states. Certainly, alienation theory provides both a fitting and innovative perspective from which to analyse the recent upheavals in the decades old exploitative international relations of trade and commerce mostly between France and its former colonies in Africa. Very significant for this paper, the theory of alienation also suggests that these apparatuses do not operate relatively independently of inequalities in wealth or income. Consequently, this guarantee us the latitude to make sense of the presence of discontent and social conflict among the relatively economically unprivileged populations in the Sahel region of postcolonial African states within the years 2021 and 2023, with surging forceful military take-over of political power from what was known as democratically elected, but France sponsored national compradors in Africa's highly impoverished peripheral capitalist postcolonial states.

THE POSTCOLONIAL AFRICAN STATE AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT: A CRITICAL OVERVIEW

Thus, the issue of underdevelopment in the postcolonial Africa has remained intense, having been subjected to penetrating but intentionally unfinished contentions. Though highly pernicious, these contentions are fraught with great perplexity given that, these contentions occupy the cognitive constructs of several political scientists, economists, sociologists and

anthropologists, particularly with the so-called demise of colonial rule from the African continent some sixty years and over (Boughen 2007, Palmer, Colton and 2002:321). Within these unambiguous debates, the postcolonial peripheral African state, has unavoidably been characterised as declining, weak and failing in the conduct of international relations, because according to the numerous participants in these contentions, the postcolonial African state appears unfit to cater for its citizens talk of causing the development of their political, social, economic and psychological landscapes (Ake 1981:176, Bade 1993, Bayart 1993). As Dumont (1988:98) "There is abundant evidence suggesting that, the postcolonial African states is heavily saddled with perpetuated underdevelopment, with obvious implications for contemporary practice of international relations." In this regard, a range of questions arise, namely:

1. Has Africa really gone past the colonial into postcolonial era or it is still under colonialism?
2. Is postcolonialism an act or a process of passing a movement from one point to another? Alternatively, is it repetition or regeneration of something through other means? Is Africa actually caught between a postcolonial and neocolonial moment? (iii) Are African presently experiencing multiple postcolonialism? These questions arise against the backdrop the somewhat great character of industrial production, whose impulsion is capitalism, yet African remains at the verge of inconsequential human beings, in international trade relations, characterised by skewed division of labour (Aluko 2011, Akasha 2014). Consequently, this paper argues that until the penchant for Western mimicry is discarded, postcolonial development in Africa will remain largely dependent and subordinate to Western dictates, experiences and characterisation. While this holds perfectly true, it continues to make the theory and practice of postcolonial African states' development in Africa very contradictory and sometimes irrelevant.

From social to economic and political thought, there is abundant evidence to suggest that even in the postcolonial moment, Africa is still saddled with the perpetuation of the colonial phenomenon, with obvious implications for contemporary political thought and practice. This chapter undertakes a systematic critique of "post-colonialism," its historical evolution, specific deployments, theoretical foundations and relevance to contemporary African politics. It does this through a range of questions. Has Africa really gone beyond the colonial into the postcolonial? Is post-colonialism an act or process of passing, a movement from one point to another? Or is it the repetition or regeneration of something through other means? Is Africa actually caught between a postcolonial and neocolonial moment? Or are we presently experiencing multiple post-colonialism(s)? These questions are asked against the backdrop of Africa's uncertain and unpredictable post-colonial democratic experiment.

THE ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK - THE 1949'S RAUL PREBISCH'S DEPENDENCY THEORY

The dependency theory as an analytical framework is linked to the postcolonial African state's underdevelopment because it is an approach that explains the underdevelopment of certain countries by emphasising the constraints imposed by the global political, economic and social order. Essentially, this theory pushes the argument that, resources flow from poor and underdeveloped states to wealth states, enriching the latter is at the expense of the former. It also suggests that developing states depend on developed states for their economic growth, while the wealth of the developed states is built on the exploitation of developing states. The

explains reasons for the research and academic relevance of the nexus between the usage of this theory as an analytical tool for the problem in this paper.

Essentially, thus, the dependency theory is an approach to understanding economic underdevelopment that emphasizes the putative constraints imposed by the global political and economic order. First proposed in the late 1950s by the Argentine economist and statesman Raul Prebisch dependency theory gained prominence in the 1960s and '70s. According to dependency theory, underdevelopment is mainly caused by the peripheral position of affected countries in the world economy. Typically, underdeveloped countries offer cheap labour and raw materials on the world market. These resources are sold to advanced economies, which have the means to transform them into finished goods. Underdeveloped countries end up purchasing the finished products at high prices, depleting the capital they might otherwise devote to upgrading their own productive capacity. The result is a vicious cycle that perpetuates the division of the world economy between a rich core and a poor periphery.

While moderate dependency theorists, such as the Brazilian sociologist Fernando Henrique Cardoso (who served as the president of Brazil in 1995–2003), considered some level of development to be possible within this system, more-radical scholars, such as the German American economic historian Andre Gunder Frank, argued that the only way out of dependency was the creation of a non-capitalist (socialist) national economy, more particularly, the abandonment of the predatory peripheral capitalist position, the West apportion unto developing countries, through the skewed conduct of international relations, especially international trade relations.

Dependency Theory: Some Examples and Descriptions

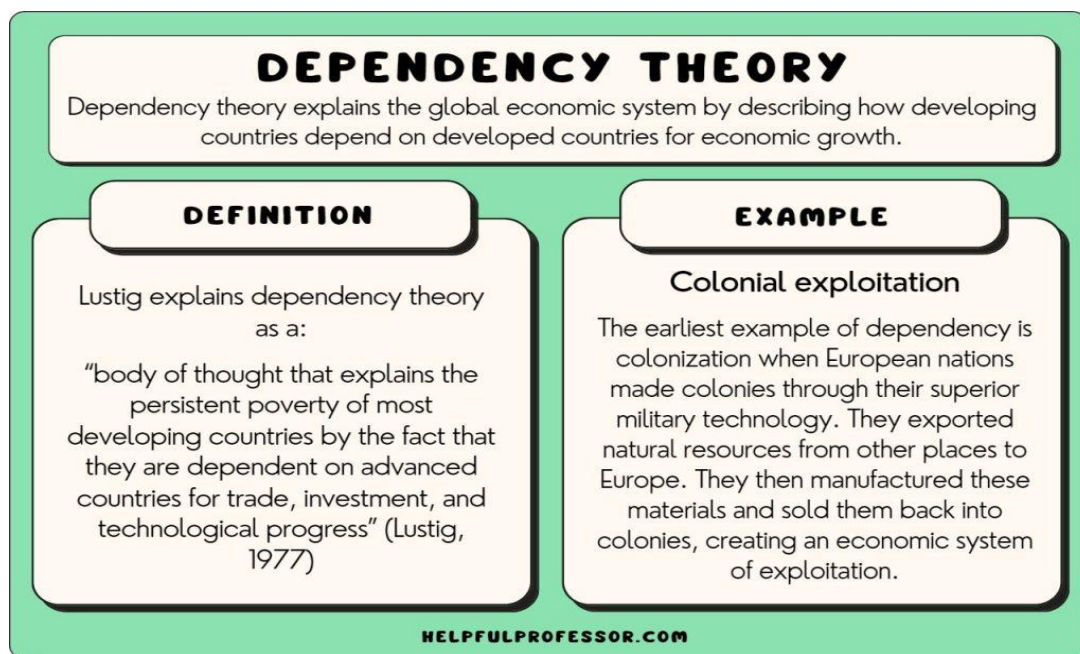


Fig. 4: A schema of dependency theory indicating definitions and examples.

Source: Adapted from Blaffer (2015) Theories of development and underdevelopment in postcolonial Africa, Lagos: PAN Press, p..66

The above schema, attempts to reinforce explanations offered by the dependency theory on how the global economic system evolves to perpetuate the dependency of the developing countries upon the developed countries for their economic growth. At the same time, the wealth of developed countries is built on the exploitation of developing countries, portraying this through a model of “peripheral” and “core” economies. Resources flow from poor “peripheral” states to a “core” of wealthy states in the form of cheap labour and raw material. This movement enriches the latter while exploiting the former. It forces the poor countries to become dependent on exports to wealthier countries, hindering their industrial growth and not allowing them to become self-sufficient. In short, dependency theory argues that the global economic system works in a way that benefits wealthy countries at the expense of poor ones. Dependency can take various forms, such as the transfer of technology, financial aid, trade policies, and so on.

THE DEPENDENCY THEORY AND THE IMPOVERISHMENT OF THE POSTCOLONIAL AFRICAN STATE

Lustig defines dependency theory as a: “body of thought that explains the persistent poverty of most developing countries by the fact that they are dependent upon advanced countries for trade, investment, and technological progress in what the developed countries call globalization or technological transfer” (Lustig, 1977). Essentially, Lustig’s definition emphasises how poor states depend on wealthy ones for the three crucial necessities of growth, international trade relations, investment, and technology. Thus, dependency perpetuates a cycle of poverty and underdevelopment among the poor states, not because, the postcolonial states lack resources to cause mass development in their areas, but because, the world economic and political order has so fashioned the process of production in favour of developed countries.

Some Case Studies in The Instances of Underdevelopment

In order to brighten the academic horizon of this paper, it is pertinent to provide some empirical case studies concerning the dependency theory vis-à-vis underdevelopment in the postcolonial African state.

Technology at the Centre of Dependency:

While schools within the dependency theory differ in some ways, they all agree that technology lies at the crux of dependency. As Matias Vernengo (2004) opines, “The inability of the peripheral state to develop its autonomous and dynamic process of technological inventions and innovations, is the chief cause of the dependency upon technology developed by the core state”. He adds that, “...foreign capital only leads to a limited transmission of technology, not the process of innovation itself.” For instance, Armenia an emergent East European state, and the postcolonial African states of Niger, Tchad, Mali and so on, are all rich in mineral, such as iron ores, gold, uranium, bauxite, magnesium and so on but lack the technology to turn these into high-value consumer goods. As such, they have to export these to other nations, such as Russia, China, France, the US, Japan and so on.

Is Europe Underdeveloping Africa?

In his book *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972) Walter Rodney describes the mechanisms used by Europe as the global economic and trade relations put in place as a system, which is essentially intended to exploit and underdevelop African states. The process began

with the transatlantic slave trade, which forcefully removed millions of Africans from their continent, disrupting their individual and collective family ties, economies and societies. Then, came the European colonialism, which first deconstructed the mental structure of the Africans, then exploited Africa's natural resources, for selfish purposes of growing Europe's industrial bases. Even after the end of colonialism, exploitation continued because Africa remained dependent on Europe and the global economic system for financial aid, trade, and other forms of malicious support.

Surplus Extraction and Primitive Accumulation of Capital:

Batur, (2014) considered unimpeded surplus extraction and the primitive accumulation of capital as the two key components in understanding dependency, as it prevails in the postcolonial African state. These two are essential for development. The country needs to produce more than it needs for subsistence, that is, a surplus. Some of these surplus needs were used for capital accumulation and the purchase of new means of production - machineries. The problem with poor countries is that they are unable to undertake these two, not because, they lack the mental structures to do so, but because, initially, the character of international division of labour has forcefully been foisted unto them by imperialist forces. Previously, they relied on agriculture, where the surplus went to landowners. These landowners spent the surplus value on luxury items, so very little was invested in real capital accumulation. Recently, poor countries do try to create and have their own industries, but these often rely on foreigners to manage, direct, organise, control and manipulate. Thus, the surplus value now goes to foreign shareholders as profit or is spent on massive personal consumption like it was previously. So, with this cycle, there remains little or again no capital for investment. Batur (2014:56) argued that a political, economic and social revolution spearheaded by the periphery state ultimately needed to break this cycle. Certainly, I vehemently agree.

THE CRITICISMS AGAINST THE DEPENDENCY THEORY

Dependency theory has had a significant impact on the way economists and political science with bias in public policymaking approach, the issue of development, but it has also faced criticisms, especially from the free-market economists and political scientists. For example:

Oversimplification

Petras and Veltmeyer (2001) point out that the theory oversimplifies the complex factors that contribute to economic development. While it takes into account external factors like trade and investment, it downplays internal factors such as cultural values, domestic policies, and so on.

Determination

Other scholars like Gindis consider the theory deterministic (and pessimistic) because it suggests that poor countries are doomed to depend on wealthy ones, which does not take into account their agency & potential in shaping their economy.

Its Economics is Questionable

Free-market economists like Peter Bauer and Martin Wolf (2009) also criticise economic policies based on the dependency theory. They argue that such measures (such as subsidising domestic industries) cause monopoly, unsustainability, and wastage of government money. Allen (2010) substantiates this with the example as illustrated in Latin America, where protectionism failed badly, leading the economist to call dependency theory "debatable" (p. 23).

On the other hand, India's economy improved significantly after it shifted from a state-controlled to an open market. Overall, these criticisms emphasize the need to consider a range of factors (both internal and external) in understanding and addressing economic development. Thus, dependency theory portrays the world economy in terms of the flow of resources from periphery to core economies, which exploits the former and enriches the latter. As Batur (2014) observes, "...the theory highlights the importance of the global economic system in shaping a country's economic development, emphasising how poor countries must break out of their dependency on wealthier ones to achieve growth. It has also been a subject of much debate and criticism."

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has been premised, premeditated on, and mounted with the conscientious desire to contribute to the search for the eradication of underdevelopment in postcolonial African states, given that, underdevelopment causes terrible weaknesses and bizarre failures in every state system and negates human progress, not only in Africa but elsewhere. Using Raul Prebisch's (1949) dependency theory, I argued that, the weaknesses and fragilisation of the postcolonial African state accrue from the despondent peripheral capitalist position it occupies in the international capitalist division of labour. Via Wallenstein's (1930-2019) Modern World System theory, (MWS), I seek reawakening the gratuitous Africans' slumbering consciousness towards overcoming underdevelopment; impelled by a predatory West's instigated peripheral capitalism. I became very dismayed by the devastatingly and permeating presence of highly primitive political, economic, social and psychological infrastructures, very unreliable haulage, health, education, agricultural and security systems, which blindfolds the people of the postcolonial African state from getting immersed into dialectic thinking about their international trade relationship with the West. Consequently, I decided to directly accuse the West, which I hasten referring to as a predatory West, because of its vampire and monstrous capitalist insatiable politico-economic mode of production, which segregates the world into core, semi-periphery and periphery zones for the selfish purpose of amassing cheap natural resources from the peripheral regions. I discerned from thorough investigations that, the partition of the world into three types of political and economic zones, is politically, economically and socially deliberate and gainful to the West core capitalist state. In this global construction, I discovered that, the West spearheads this zoning for its malicious and rapacious needs for the selfish acquisition of postcolonial Africans cheapened natural resources, necessary to feed and sustain Western large complexes of civil and military industrial hardware factories and laboratories. Then, I realized through my decade-long research and lectures on POS 311: "The State and the International System: Centre/Core-Periphery Issues, that the West is definitely predatory, and would want to continue being so, except strengthened radicalisation is imbued by the people of postcolonial Africa in a bid to re-define their currently skewed and callous international trade relations.

Through a critical survey of the centre/core-periphery issues, I borrowed Raul Prebisch (1949) 'dependency theory,' and Wallerstein (1974) 'Modern World Systems analysis', to debunk and dismiss the imperial and misleading Davis Ricardo's political and economic comparative advantage theory, which insinuates and instills the centre/coe-periphery relations between the underdeveloped and developed states. From the analysis of the surfacing centre/core-periphery issues, I demonstrated that, should the postcolonial African states, continue relishing in its current despondency incarnated by weak trade relations with the West,

underdevelopment in postcolonial African states would never be overcome. Thus, this paper advocates the resurgence of strongly committed liberation struggles, spearheaded sharp cognitive capabilities to cause the total political, economic, social and psychological liberation of postcolonial African states, their burgeoning states system and docile leaderships from the region's underdevelopment saga. Underdevelopment colossally impedes the imbue of nationalistic self-determination mental structure, thwarts autochthonous aspirations for individual and collective human and material development. Certainly, the recommended liberation struggles have become so necessary today, because, this represents the only pathway to guarantee the patriotic catering of the welfare of postcolonial Africans teaming populations, as the Sahelian peoples of Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Guinea are illustrating to the rest of postcolonial African states. The paper insists that, historically, the state, be it a core or peripheral, in whatever mode production, is the central laboratory for all human activities. In addition, it plays ever-dominant roles in domestic and international politico-economic and socio-cultural relations, as the primary vector for development or underdevelopment in society. However, international relations have always conditioned these roles and capacities of state in terms of strengths or weaknesses in service delivery to its citizens. Having been incorporated into the West's capitalist system, the postcolonial Africa's state, has despite this role subjectively occupied a debilitating peripheral capitalist position in global wealth production. The paper asserts that, evidently, today, like yesterday, the postcolonial African state exhibits excruciating and traumatising underdevelopment, incarnated by uncivilised political, social, economic infrastructures, which incubate citizens' governance apathy, insecurity, poverty, conflicts and nationalities fragmentations. Consequently, after using Raul Prebisch's (1949) dependency theory, this paper argues that, these weaknesses and fragilisation of the postcolonial African state accrue from the despondent peripheral capitalist position it occupies in the international capitalist division of labour. Further, via Wallenstein's Marxian Modern World Systems Theory, (MWS), the paper recommends unwavering and radically conceived awakening of the Africans' consciousness towards overthrowing and overcoming underdevelopment impelled in Africa, by a predatory West's instigated peripheral capitalism. As we conclude this discourse, we say Kudos to the African Development Bank, (AfDB's) sponsorship of the 2023 Investment Forum (AIF). Postcolonial Africans envisage this forum represents a thorough path for chasing away the phenomenal underdevelopment from their region.

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