

**Institutional Development as a Paradigm For African Development: A  
Hermeneutical Study of Olusegun Oladipo**

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**FEBRUARY, 2016**

**APPROVAL**

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## **CERTIFICATION**

**Ambrose Igwubor (NAU/PG/2008087007F), a student of the Department of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Arts of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, has satisfactorily completed the requirements for course and research works for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in Philosophy.**

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**FEBRUARY, 2016**

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## ABSTRACT

This work sets out to interrogate the challenge of African development. Africa is endowed with colossal potentials in natural resources, human capital, and cultural heritage, among others. It has been, and is still, significant in retailing solutions to the problems of the Western world – for during the trans-Atlantic slave trade Africa served as the supplier of human capital for the West; in the colonial period, Africa provided the raw materials for the industrialization of the West; while in the post-colonial era, Africa is still the target for marketing of goods and imposition of imperial policies by the Western world. Ordinarily, one would think that before being so resourceful to the West, Africa would have at least benefitted from her vast potentials and made a giant stride at development. On the contrary, a cursory glance at Africa reveals a land with conspicuous indicators of underdevelopment that are probably the most alarming in the world today, for example, failed or fragile states, high rate of poverty, lack of infrastructures, collapsing economy, etc. These are clear indications that we have not yet found the right way to solve or resolve the challenge of African development. Given the above indices, the challenge of African development implies an urgent pursuit of rapid socio-economic progress. The purpose of this study therefore, is to proffer a solution to the crisis of African development. In its interest to ferret this out, this study examines Olusegun Oladipo's argument that the problem of African development is one of failure of or weak social structures defined as institutions. Thus, Oladipo proposes social reconstruction as a well-thought out plan of social change and recommends national dialogue since it would create a forum for the people to agree on the common good and the set of values and institutions, which can facilitate its pursuit. The study adopts the hermeneutic method which refers to theories and methods of interpretation of all texts and systems of meaning. The novelty of this study is that, unlike Oladipo himself who advocates social reconstruction of the institutions and other works that have interrogated Oladipo's proposal, it goes further to derive institutional development from Oladipo's theory of development and also propose it as a paradigm for African development. This study also seeks to identify, in clear terms, the steps or procedures for institutional development so as to present a more comprehensive paradigm for African development. Thus, the study concludes that the post-colonial states were drafted on the social institutions which were introduced by colonialism and which were weapons of exploitation and so these institutions are weak because they are alien ways and reasons for social action which are irrelevant to the African needs and realities. The study submits therefore that institutional development involves strengthening these weak institutions.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of Study

There is the general notion that Africa is a great continent, a land that holds the promise of a better future for the whole of humankind. A glance at international issues seems to further confirm this belief as Africa is a recurrent theme. But daily experiences seem to conflict with this belief especially as we learn about such events as slave trade and colonialism; though, the causes and effects of such events are not immediately visible.

However, as one becomes aware of the conditions and standards of living in other lands beside Africa, particularly in the Western world, it immediately becomes suggestive and perhaps clear that the much eulogized Africa, which was thought to be doing well among the committee of nations, is actually tottering on the brink of catastrophe. It becomes clear also, that the features of poverty, illiteracy, diseases, insecurity, political instability, military coups, corruption, unemployment, lack of infrastructures, collapsing economy, etc that characterize Africa are abnormal and are symptoms of underdevelopment.

Thus, there is the realization that Africa is underdeveloped while the Western world with its features of infrastructures, security, good governance,

literacy, working economy, good health care, etc is developed. Upon this realization, the questions that become recurrent are: why is Africa not developed? Why is Africa left behind in the global trend of development that is in vogue? In the quest for answers to the above, one discovers that much of what has been offered as solutions to the problem of African development are simply conceptual responses having much to do with theories and counter-theories of development whereas the rigour of theoretical analysis cannot be sustained without more commitment to practical relevance. The concern, therefore, is that these theoretical efforts are yet to translate to the realization of the practical essence of development in Africa.

Indeed, the problem of development appears to be the most fundamental of the problems confronting Africa today. Although this may suggest that the problem of development is being privileged over other problems, there is no suggestion that it exhausts the range of problems facing Africa today. However, once we can solve the problem of African development, then we can easily solve the other problems like African cultural identity, promoting the African well-being, etc.

In pursuing the question of how the problem of African development can be tackled with practical recipe, the instances of South Korea, China, Malaysia, Singapore, Iran, and other Newly Industrializing Countries, often referred to as NICs, come to the limelight. At a point in history, these countries had nothing to

offer themselves let alone offering the world due to heightened underdevelopment. But they sought practical measures of breaking out of the shackles of underdevelopment. Today, these countries are very relevant in many perspectives not only to themselves but to the world at large because they searched for measures to combat underdevelopment and they got it right.

The interest of this research is further animated with the evidence of the above instances. The knowledge that development challenges have been tackled in other places before, therefore, both gives verve and provides a background for this study which seeks a practical solution to the problem of African development.

In spite of the freedom from colonial rule, African states are still “desperately poor and underdeveloped”<sup>1</sup> because of the incompleteness of the process of liberation. Political independence had brought no visible change in economic conditions and very little social change, if any,<sup>2</sup> because of the failure to match political independence with social development. The consequences of this are more devastating than the crisis of the dwindling resources which is not proportionate to the growing population. Robert Mugabe presents a clear picture of this devastation when he declared that: “Africa is now home to the world’s largest number of Least Developed Countries...it is a theatre of endless conflicts, civil strifes and gross human right abuses....[which] appear to be the only legacy the continent is capable of passing from one generation to the other.”<sup>3</sup>

It becomes obvious that the inchoate euphoria of the independence has long phased out for the pessimism, uncertainty and despair that lurk around in the continent today. There is “a crisis of development”<sup>4</sup> in Africa. In fact, “Development has broken down, its theory is in crisis, its ideology the subject of doubt.”<sup>5</sup> There is an urgent need to iron out the warps in the programme of African development. Many scholars and African government, to no avail, have made efforts in this direction, yet it has remained a mirage. These efforts have garnered different theories of development that are operative today in any discourse of development. But why is it still difficult for Africa to achieve development despite the leverage of different theories?

The deepening crisis of development has continued to beleaguer Africa and her chance of success has been obscure primarily because the attempted solutions so far have not been knitted in the right perspective. Thus, it is clear, as indicated by the myriad problems confronting Africans, that we have not yet found the right way to resolve the crisis of African development. Kwasi Wiredu puts it succinctly that “It is clear...that we have not yet found the right way to arrange or rearrange our social and political interactions.”<sup>6</sup> What is not yet clear is what that right way is. The search for this right way has preoccupied contemporary African philosophers and intellectuals.



Olusegun Oladipo stands somewhat apart in the annals of African philosophers and intellectuals. While others are dissipating energy thinking around the conventional theories of development and subscribing mainly to the dependency theory, Oladipo philosophizes in a different fashion. He wonders why Africa is left behind in the global rapid transformation and makes a critical attempt at determining the set ideas and values that can serve as the theoretical compass for the achievement of development for Africa. His interest is “to engage the dominant positions on what Africa today is and the various possibilities of change, with a view of determining their relevance to, or adequacy for, the achievement of the goal of African restoration.”<sup>7</sup>

Consequently, he tries to formulate the theoretical construct for the sort of society Africa wishes to be and the direction to which her efforts at social reconstruction should go. His conviction is that the problem of African development is one of failure of or weak social structures defined as institutions; political, economic, cultural, educational, and religious etc. Since development entails achieving a significant balance amidst the challenges posed by the dynamics of human existence, these social institutions, according to Oladipo, are the instruments for the achievement of this balance.<sup>8</sup>

Institutional frameworks govern people’s access to the society’s system. Put differently, the institutions are regulators of social life in its various

dimensions. Thus, where they function properly, a society is developed because they aid social cooperation but where they are pathological, a society is underdeveloped because they become obstacles to social cooperation. Therefore, significant development resources have to be focused on trying to change the way these institutions operate. Invariably, there will be limited or no development without change in the institutional framework and mechanisms.

From the foregoing, institutional development would imply an institutional reform. It is about changing the formal and informal rules of the game, which govern the relationships between policy-makers, service providers and the people, both as consumers of services and as citizens with voices. In this circumstance, Oladipo makes an argument for social reconstruction of the institutions as an antidote to resolve the crisis of African development. His argument is premised on the fact that, being the visible “expression of the scale of values in the society, the institutions provide the conditions for the enactment of social norms,”<sup>9</sup> which are “the authoritative principles of social action.”<sup>10</sup> Thus, it is required that they are solidly established. But his trepidation is: how strong are these institutions in Africa? A cursory glance at the spreadsheet of the African nation reveals weak institutions. No doubt, then, Oladipo sees the problem of African development as one of weak institutions.

The above considerations present an insight into Oladipo's institutional development as a solution to the African problem of development. Thus, it forms the background of this study because in its consideration of the challenges of African development, this study puts forward Oladipo's theory as a paradigm for African development.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

The discourse on the African development project is a complex one. It is frustrating that African countries with a few exceptions are worse off today than they were at the beginning of independence. The condition of underdevelopment—particularly political and economic underdevelopment continues to plague much of the continent to the chagrin of many African observers. The late Claude Ake notes: “Three decades of preoccupation with development in Africa have yielded meager returns. African economies have been stagnating or regressing. For most Africans, real incomes are lower than they were two decades ago, health prospects are poorer, malnourishment is widespread, and infrastructure is breaking down, as are some social institutions.”<sup>11</sup> Julius Ihonvbere concurs and adds: “Program after program and development after development plan...failed to cover up the glaring realities of poverty, crisis and conflict.”<sup>12</sup>

The situation in which Africa finds itself therefore is one of anxiety on whether the dreams of development would ever be realized. Thus, there is a dilemma premised on uncertainty. A crucial factor in the explanation of this situation is what Oladipo has called “the failure of the state in Africa”.<sup>13</sup> However, Wole Soyinka’s “Redesigning a Nation”<sup>14</sup> offers a deep diagnostic review of what is structurally wrong and it calls for a redesign before the entire structure actually crumbles. Ordinarily, the viability of a state depends on its capacity to achieve a balance between its regulative and beneficent functions. The regulative function of the state is to enforce its orders while the beneficent function is to ensure the good of the people over whom it has power. Oladipo believes that the African state has not been able to achieve this balance, and so, it has not been able to generate the kind of public support it requires to thrive.<sup>15</sup>

The problems of this study therefore include the following: First, the African state has remained weak, with resultant inefficiency and instability with their attendant social effects – a clear negation of the promise of independence as a means to the restoration of the dignity of the people who had suffered a lot of degradation during colonization. Second, the present socio-economic conditions do not seem to promise development for Africa because it is constructed on weak institutions. Third, there is the declining capacity of the state to serve as an agent of development. Fourth, underdevelopment is continuously advancing because

Africans have merely been administering the institutions of the state which they inherited from their erstwhile colonial masters without realizing that the contrivance of the African state evolved not as an instrument for the provision of public benefits, but as a weapon of exploitation. Oladipo argues poignantly that: “Since the colonial state was essentially an instrument of control and dispossession, it could not enhance the capacity of the people for self-action and self development. Neither could it generate the institutional framework that could nurture the values that would sustain a process of significant social development.”<sup>16</sup>

Thus, it would be unrealistic and pernicious to undermine the structural and normative conditions that are natural to the Africans. Social structures are created through individual actions and desires, and are made up of social institutions through which social norms are made to become an aspect of everyday life.

A solution lies in Oladipo’s postulation of social reconstruction, which provides a more holistic view of why Africa is a society of missed opportunities and unfulfilled expectations and what can be done to create a better society. It is a process of institutionalizing the appropriate values and attitudes for the sustenance of the process of social transformation. Nevertheless, any attempt to develop Africa must be done with the awareness that “Only the reconstruction of civil society is sufficient to transform society meaningfully.”<sup>17</sup> As a result, it is not

sufficient to talk about the imminent threat to development – poverty, illiteracy, et cetera – without crafting authentic regimes that are likely to tackle the problem – in this case, creating the programme for social reconstruction through institutional development.

Finally, the basic problems of African development include:

- The declining capacity of the state to serve as an agent of development.
- The present socio-economic conditions are constructed on weak institutions.
- Africans have been administering the institutions of the state which they inherited from their erstwhile colonial masters without realizing that they are weapons of exploitation and not instruments for the provision of public benefits.
- The inability to make incremental change.
- Continuous exploitation by the global capitalists.
- Most of the development theories and strategies are not rooted in African values.

### **1.3 Purpose of Study**

Although the challenge of development has a universal relevance, it is highly excruciating in the African context. Of the many problems facing the African states, the problem of development is more devastating. It has amounted to a crisis of development leaving many African countries in severe difficulties. Surprisingly, Africa has remained immobilized in a milieu marked by rapid transformation, for the better, in other parts of the globe. African and non-African scholars alike have, in the search for a solution to the problem of African development, constructed various theories which have failed or are yet to deliver the expected development.

The purpose of this study therefore, is to proffer a solution to the crisis of African development by looking beyond the limitations of the existing theories and determining the theoretical compass for the achievement of development for Africa.

### **1.4 Scope of Study**

This study focuses on the African development project; a central theme in contemporary African studies and African philosophy of development. It is a critical evaluation of Olusegun Oladipo's philosophy which propounds philosophy

and social change, social transformation or social reconstruction. It deals primarily with the quest for a solution to the problem of African development.

### **1.5 Significance of Study**

This study responds to the current quest for a solution to the crisis of African development. Many theories have been paraded in this direction with little or no result. The problem deepens on a daily basis, especially in the face of contending theories claiming to offer a schema for the development of Africa. Thus, attention is fast being transferred to defending individual theories against external attack.

In this circumstance, this study argues that the fundamental problem is how to transform Africa, and gleaning from the submissions of Oladipo, it offers institutional development as a paradigm for African development. As a result, this study is significant for the following reasons: Firstly, it is a contribution to the current quest for African development. The problem of African development appears to be the most fundamental of the many problems confronting Africa today. Thus, this study is both timely and relevant. Secondly, it is an attempt to redirect attention to the fundamental but largely unaddressed issues of development such as the foundations of social order in our society, the value system appropriate to a neo-colonial society, etc, rather than preoccupying



ourselves with artificial issues such as the duration of tenure for political office holders, rotational presidency, etc. Finally, since Olusegun Oladipo is a recent scholar, this work is an intellectual response which attempts to harness his ideas to the academic world.

## 1.6 Methodology

The philosophical method employed in this study is the hermeneutical method, which has been practiced over the centuries as the process of interpretation.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, hermeneutics is commonly conceived as the theory of interpretation, that is, the theory of achieving an understanding of texts or utterances. Thus, hermeneutics may be described as the development and study of theories of the interpretation and understanding of linguistic and non-linguistic expressions.

The traditional etymology of hermeneutics is derived from the Greek word ἑρμηνεύω (*hermeneuō*, 'translate' or 'interpret'), and is of uncertain origin.<sup>19</sup> It was introduced into philosophy mainly through the title of Aristotle's work ἑρμηνεία (*Peri Hermeneias*, 'On Interpretation', more commonly referred to by its Latin title *De Interpretatione*). It is one of the earliest extant philosophical works in the Western tradition to deal with the relationship between language and logic in a comprehensive, explicit, and formal way.<sup>20</sup>

Also, the folk etymology suggests that hermeneutics relates etymologically to Hermes, the mythological Greek deity whose role is that of messenger of the gods,<sup>21</sup> and is believed to be involved in transmitting and interpreting the communications of the gods to their fortunate or often unfortunate recipients.<sup>22</sup>

Although hermeneutics was originally conceived as the theory and method of interpreting the Bible, it later on came to include the study of ancient and classical cultures. However, in the wake of the Reformation in the modern period, new focus was brought to bear on hermeneutics with its displacement of responsibility for interpreting the Bible. This new focus on hermeneutics occurred especially in Germany.<sup>23</sup> Thus, hermeneutics developed into a general theory of human understanding through the works of Friedrich Schleiermacher, Wilhelm Dilthey, Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, and Jacques Derrida.

Unlike in religious studies where hermeneutics refers to the study of the interpretation of religious texts, in philosophy it denotes the study of theories and methods of the interpretation of all texts and systems of meaning.

The hermeneutic principle entails that thought must be derived from language according to the same law which regulates the expression of thought in language, the process alone being inverted. Thus, language ought to conform to the code in which it was written. The writer of any text commonly uses the code of his

day and of his own peculiar circumstances; he employs language in line with its peculiar usages and its grammatical rules. In the expression of his thought, he follows the sequence of logic, and his words are the reflection of both his mental, physical and social conditions. Thus, for the interpreter to fully understand the writer, he must be guided by the author's language, train of thought or the context as well as psychological and historical condition at the time of writing.

According to Schleiermacher, hermeneutics is “a principle, embracing the interpretation of all texts, regardless of genre and doctrines”.<sup>24</sup> He maintains that the interpretation of a text must proceed by framing the content asserted in terms of the overall organization of the work.

The process of understanding a text hermeneutically encapsulates the hermeneutic circle. It entails the idea that an understanding of a text as a whole could be achieved by reference to the individual parts, while the understanding of the individual parts by reference to the whole. No part of a text or the whole text could be understood without reference to each other; this is why it is referred to as hermeneutic circle. This circular character of interpretation stresses the necessity of taking into consideration the cultural, historical and literary contexts of a text in order to derive its meaning.

The hermeneutic method is relevant to this study because it is required to interpret Oladipo's theory of development. This is because Oladipo, who is a

recent scholar, made a lot of contributions in pieces but not in a volume pointing clearly to a theory of development. Thus, since hermeneutics involves cultivating the ability to understand things from somebody else's point of view, and to appreciate the cultural and social factors that may have influenced their outlook, this work adopts hermeneutics to interpret or inquire into the meaning and import of Oladipo's theory of African development. Thus, this work makes an attempt at understanding the point of view of Oladipo and to apply this understanding to interpreting the meaning of his written works.

Nevertheless, this work is a product of an intensive research based on library and electronic information, and personal interest. Notable among the sources of materials employed in this work are Olusegun Oladipo's personal library in his residence at Ibadan and also the archive of Hope Publications, Ibadan – a publishing company owned by Olusegun Oladipo.

The work is presented in six chapters. Chapter one is the general introduction, which provides a vivid background for understanding the content and extent of the work. Chapter two is the literature review which peruses different literature that have engaged Oladipo's idea of African development. This is an attempt to provide basis for the relevance and thus, originality of this work. Chapter three focuses on situating the challenge of African development. It seeks to present in clear terms what the challenge is all about. It examines the theories of

development and analyses the different attempts made at proffering a sustainable solution to the challenge of African development. Chapter four engages Olusegun Oladipo's social philosophy. It examines the underpinnings and mechanisms of social reconstruction in Africa – the central theme of Oladipo's social philosophy. Chapter five argues from Oladipo's social philosophy that institutional development is a paradigm for African development. Finally, chapter six is a critical evaluation and conclusion of the work.

## **1.7 Definition of Terms**

### **1.7.1 Development**

The term 'development' occupies a common place in our day to day vocabulary. It is so frequently used that its actual meaning is not often contemplated. At first glance, it seems as if the term refers directly to a precise idea, thus, seeming to derive the same meaning from a range of different usages or applications. It becomes more puzzling, however, realizing that a good number of those who use the term lack a precise conceptual or a factual grasp of its entailment. Could development be employed to refer to different circumstances or phenomena with the intent of a common referent? Or could one use development to imply different things at different circumstances? Is development a universal or

a relative concept? These questions cogently point out the nebulous nature of the term ‘development’ and the expediency of a conceptual elucidation.

Also, there appears to be a fundamental conceptual misunderstanding of the notion of development. As such, there is need to be clear on exactly what it is that we actually mean when we use it, especially in reference to a people’s or a nation’s development. The question, what is development, no doubt, is a philosophical question, as it is a question of quiddity. As such, as Kwasi Agyeman noted, “epistemological quest is, at once, registered in it; for a successful response to it, should have to necessarily help one know, understand and be clear of, what “development” is; and because of its epistemological entanglement, ... ontological considerations and implications are already trapped in it as well.”<sup>25</sup>

This is because it is impossible to claim knowledge of a thing, and not know as well what sort it is, what it is for, what it is made up of, and not believe in one’s knowledge-claims of it as well. Thus, every epistemological claim of anything is an ontological claim as well. So, a philosophical question of quiddity in respect of development is naturally a search for the essence of development. Consequently, raising the question of development was necessary because it provides both conceptual and pragmatic grounds that enable one do a better job at doing justice to the omnibus issues of development confronting mankind today.

Besides, there is need to answer the question “what is development?” because, as Kwame Agyeman observes, “the issues of development are fast becoming an “African problem”, as though Africans are the only human beings on earth with whom the issues of development must be associated, synonymous, and consume them, or must claim their utmost attention and sole designation”.<sup>26</sup> This position is fallacious because the issues of development are human issues, and Africans are not the only human beings in existence.

However, the need for a theoretical analysis of the concept ‘development’ is not a recent preoccupation, rather it has been the focal point of academic interest for a long time. As far back in 1946 when the world was not as enamoured of the term as it is today, ‘development’ was recognised as one of the fifty words most frequently used by historians.<sup>27</sup> But today, in politics, economics, technology, education, and various other aspects of human endeavour, the term ‘development’ stands out as a primary icon. The wide currency of the term notwithstanding, most definitions of development are deficient, partly due to the attendant assumption by most people that they have a fair idea of what it means. Indeed a survey of contemporary literature on development suggests that most people subscribe to the commonsense concept of development<sup>28</sup>, which according to Henry McGurk involves that development: “...implies not only a change in time but also change which has direction; development frequently implies advancement or improvement

over some more primitive status.”<sup>29</sup> What can be gleaned from this commonsense concept of development is that even though development involves some change, not every change is developmental because for any change to be developmental it must be directional, that is, it must proceed towards a certain end which is an improvement upon an earlier stage.

In a more elaborate attempt, Ernest Nagel defines development as “a sequence of continuous changes eventuating in some outcome.”<sup>30</sup> What this adds to McGurk’s position is that a developmental change is not an isolated incident. It must be part of a process emanating from the past and gradually building up to the present and the future.<sup>31</sup> Thus, developmental change cannot be accidental but must emanate from perceptible capacities, which exist in a well structured medium. Nagel captures this stating that development has as its essential components: “the notion of a system possessing a definite structure and a definite set of pre-existing capacities; and the notion of a system yielding permanent but novel increment not only in structure but in its modes of operation as well.”<sup>32</sup>

Furthermore, Sidney Hook conceives development as:

Any change which has a continuous direction and which culminates in a phase that is qualitatively new. Hence the term] should be used to characterise any series of events in thought, action or institutional arrangement which exhibits a directional cumulative change that either terminates in an event marked off by a recognised qualitative novelty or which exhibits in its course, a perceptible pattern of growth.<sup>33</sup>



More so, development has had a career of shifting meaning, understood variously by various people at various point in time. But in virtually all conceptions of the term development there are some common indices; features that can be said to be shared by virtually any conception of development. This includes the fact that development denotes, usually, though not necessarily always, “a rise in the standard of living of a people”.<sup>34</sup> The rise could be in various, but usually, complimentary, forms. As such, we can talk of political development, economic development, cultural development, religious development, etc.

Until recently, development has been identified with economic and industrial growth. There is now, however, a broadened concept of development<sup>35</sup> which puts man at the very centre of the development effort. Now development implies that there must not be disparities within a developed society and the citizens of such a society must have their basic human needs satisfied. In his *The Unexamined Life*,<sup>36</sup> Kwame Gyekye dismisses a narrow conception of development measured solely in economic terms as both inadequate and unwarranted. He insists that development is a behavioural concept and must be distinguished from growth which is a physical concept. He concludes that:

...for human society, development is to be seen in terms of adequate responses to the environment in all its complexities to the existential conditions in which human beings live, move and have their being. Thus, as regards human society, development is a behavioural concept, which can express itself politically, socially, economically, culturally, morally, psychologically, etc.<sup>37</sup>

Gyekye's conception seems to foreshadow Olusegun Oladipo's elaborate submission that development is nothing but human development:

Development... has two broad dimensions – namely, the tangible or technical aspect; and the intangible or moral aspect. The tangible aspect of development is concerned with material progress.... The primary goal of this process of course, is human well-being.... The intangible or moral aspect of development, on the other hand, has to do with improvement of “the quality of human relations between people”.... Although the tangible aspect of development is the most visible, the intangible is very crucial.<sup>38</sup>

### **1.7.2 Institutional Development**

Of all the predicaments that befell Africa, colonialism has been the most decisive in generating the crisis of development. The colonial experience led to “the introduction of new social institutions, new ways of doing things, and new reasons for doing them.”<sup>39</sup> With the achievement of independence, the post-colonial states were drafted on the same colonial institutions, thus, they became like or even worse than the colonial states. Consequently, Africans have merely been administering the institutions of the state which they inherited from their erstwhile colonial masters without realizing that the contrivance of the African state evolved not as an instrument for the provision of public benefits, but as a weapon of exploitation.

Given this situation, it becomes clear that the foundations of a free society have not been built, and so the state can hardly function. Thus, institutional

development involves strengthening the weak institutions, with a view to enhancing its capacity for social reconstruction.

From the foregoing, a fundamental foundation has been constructed to point out the direction and focus of this study. The study proceeds therefore, in the succeeding chapter to the literature review.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> J. Nyerere, “An address presented on the occasion of the convocation ceremony of the University of Ibadan, November 17, 1976,” in Onigu Otite (ed), *Themes in African Social and Political Thought*, (Enugu: Nigeria Fourth Dimension Publisher), 1978, p.335.

<sup>2</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>3</sup> R. Mugabe, “Africa in the New World Order: Europe 1992 and Beyond,” *Daily Times*, Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> January, 1991, p.22.

<sup>4</sup> C. Uroh, “Introduction: Situating the Challenge of Development in Africa,” in C. Uroh (ed.), *Africa and the Challenge of Development: Essays by Samir Amin*, (Ibadan: Hope Publications), 1998, p.1.

<sup>5</sup> S. Amin, *Maldevelopment: Anatomy of Global Failure*, (Tokyo, London, New Jersey: United nations University Press and Zed Books Ltd.), 1990, p.1.

<sup>6</sup> K. Wiredu in his Foreword to O. Oladipo, *Philosophy and Social Reconstruction in Africa*, (Ibadan: Hope Publications), 2009, p.viii.

<sup>7</sup> O. Oladipo, *Philosophy and Social Reconstruction in Africa*, (Ibadan: Hope Publications, 2009), p.xi.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.41-42.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p.42.

<sup>10</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>11</sup> C. Ake, *Democracy and Development in Africa*, (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution), 1996, 1.

<sup>12</sup> J.O. Ihonvbere, “The ‘Irrelevant’ State, Ethnicity, and the Quest for Nationhood in Africa,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 17 (1994). p. 48.

<sup>13</sup> O. Oladipo, “Introduction: Africa’s Challenge,” in O. Oladipo (ed.), *Remaking Africa: Challenges of the Twenty-First Century*, (Ibadan: Hope Publications), 1998, p.2.

<sup>14</sup> W. Soyinka, “Redesigning a Nation,” *The Vanguard*, Saturday, 17<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> October, 1998.

<sup>15</sup> O. Oladipo, “Introduction: Africa’s Challenge,” p.2.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p.3.

<sup>17</sup> D.A. Reidy, Jr., "Eastern Europe, Civil Society and the Real Revolution," *Praxis International: A Philosophical Journal*, 12 (1992). p.169.

<sup>18</sup> W. Dilthey, "The Development of Hermeneutics", in H.P. Rickman (ed), *Selected Writings*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1976, pp. 246-63.

<sup>19</sup> K. Ernest, *A Complete Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, (Oxford: Elsevier), 2000, p.344.

<sup>20</sup> Wikipedia, "Hermeneutics," <http://en.wikipedia.org>, (05/02/2012).

<sup>21</sup> D. Couzen-Hoy, *The Critical Circle*, (California: University of California Press), 1981.

<sup>22</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>23</sup> On the history of hermeneutics in general, and on the role of the Reformation in particular, see W. Dilthey "Schleiermacher's Hermeneutical System in Relation to Earlier Protestant Hermeneutics" (1860) and "The Rise of Hermeneutics" (1900), both in W. Dilthey, *Hermeneutics and the Study of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 1996.

<sup>24</sup> *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Vol. 4, (New York: Routledge), 1998, p.385.

<sup>25</sup> K. Agyeman, *What is Development?* p.8.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p.12.

<sup>27</sup> I. Ikpe, "The Culture of Development and the Development of Culture," *Viewpoint: A Critical Review of Culture and Society*, 1 (1999), p.2.

<sup>28</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>29</sup> H. McGurk, *Growing and Changing*, (London: Methuen & Co.), 1975, p.28.

<sup>30</sup> E. Nagel, "Determinism and Development," in D.B. Harris (ed), *The Concept of Development*, (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press), 1957, p.15.

<sup>31</sup> I. Ikpe, p.2.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p.17.

<sup>33</sup> H. Heaton, "CLIO Puts the Question," in D.B. Harris (ed.), p.205.

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<sup>34</sup> C. Uroh, p.2.

<sup>35</sup> The Secretary-General of the UN Conference on Science and Technology for Development, “Science, Technology and the Concept of Development”, 81 (1979). pp.4-5.

<sup>36</sup> K. Gyekye, *The Unexamined Life*, (Accra: Sankofa Publishing Co. Ltd.), 1996, p.16.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.16-17.

<sup>38</sup> O. Oladipo, *Philosophy and Social Reconstruction in Africa*, pp.94-95.

<sup>39</sup> W. Abraham, “Prologue: Crisis in African Cultures”, in K. Wiredu and K. Gyekye (eds.), *Person and Community*, p.27.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The primary task of this chapter is to carefully analyse related and relevant literature that have engaged the discourse of African development project. However, this attempt is primarily focused on the theory of African development which Olusegun Oladipo seems to have constructed.

In his contributions to the social reconstruction of Africa, Oladipo is convinced that the problem of African development is one of failure of or weak social structures defined as institutions namely; political, economic, cultural, educational, legal and religious etc. These social institutions, according to Oladipo, are the instruments for the achievement of development. This is because the institutions are regulators of social life in its various dimensions.

Thus, Oladipo advocates social reconstruction of the institutions. According to him, being the regulators of social life in its various dimensions, where the institutions function properly, a society is developed since they aid social cooperation. But where they are pathological, a society is underdeveloped because they become obstacle to social cooperation. With this, Oladipo makes a critical attempt at determining the set of ideas and values that can serve as the theoretical compass for the achievement of development for Africa.

Oladipo is an influential figure in African philosophy whose thoughts and works have influenced the thoughts of many of his contemporaries and successors. His theory of African development has sufficient clout and has exerted enormous influence in the intellectual space. Although Oladipo is a very recent scholar and consequently there is paucity of information on his views, surprisingly, within a very short while after he postulated his position, he has received so much attention which still lingers on today in any discourse on African development. Thus, our interest here therefore is to peruse the different literature that has engaged Oladipo's theory of development, either as responses, critiques, contributions or reactions.

The method employed here is the thematic method of literature review. As a result, the materials to be reviewed will be classified into three themes and follow this sequence – those that assent to Oladipo's theory of development, those that react to it, and those that are revolutionary being that they suggested something new to the theory.

Ololade Bamidele's "Rekindling the Afrocentric Essence"<sup>1</sup> assents to Oladipo's proposal for African development. The work hinges on Afrocentricism and the pursuit of a logic and paradigm for African development. It argues that the current paradigm that has populated the world at the close of the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries is a product of a consolidation of the culture issuing from Western capitalism with its modernity. This paradigm portrays the notion of



unlimited self-realization for the individual in society, the guarantee of a space for civil law in the polity, the participation of the individual in the formation of political will, and related conditions serving the ends of freedom.

Bamidele notices that this paradigm is a contrary logic of unfreedom, siege and scarcity. He further points out that the translation of this paradigm evolving from earlier incursion of European interests into Africa, results in “the narrow and often self-seeking implementations of the idea of modernity, the insularism of one party autarkies, separations along primordial/ethnic cleavages, nepotism, economic plunder, disintegration of social utilities, want and other corresponding pointers signifying the collapse of the state.”<sup>2</sup> Bamidele agrees that if the translation of this paradigm of development and social cohesiveness/intelligibility has turned retroactive in Africa, then “the collection of essays Olusegun Oladipo puts together and titles *Remaking Africa: Challenges of the Twenty-First Century* has as its incisive raison d'etre, a project aimed at the enthronement of a newer paradigm taking an hard analytical contemplation of the factors resolving into the failure of an African modernity.” (sic)<sup>3</sup>

Bamidele is convinced however, that Oladipo’s *Remaking Africa* “proposes ways out of the mush, toward a more fulfilling turn in the new millennium.”<sup>4</sup> This is because, according to him, a piece of conventional wisdom seeming to mark its round in this collection of essays traces the crests and trough of the defaulting

paradigm to the doors of a narrowly-seeking and insidious state, that is, when ethnicity is not reified to the position of antagonist extraordinaire.

Furthermore, while Bamidele takes cognizance of the fact that the concept and construct of the state is a received opinion given to us, he however noticed that its basis is problematised to suggest its re-view as a moral construct.<sup>5</sup> He noted that Olusegun's *Remaking Africa* boldly spawns out that the failure of a translated paradigm is further compounded by the intricate machinations of Western capitalism and its institutions which though coerces the world around its own image, destabilizes its effective participation in a commonwealth. Such subtle manipulations operate through delimited terms of trade, trade barriers, foisted perspectives on development (deregulation, SAP etc.), a global "poverty trap" where exchange values between the north and south, the west and the rest are discrepant and unequal; and an asphyxiating external debt burden. These have been prominently facilitated through the West's institutional interactions with the African 'state'.<sup>6</sup>

Interestingly, Bamidele noted that finding a leeway out of this malaise is integral to the Oladipo-inspired re-thinking of Africa, and this necessarily demands the reconceptualization of the notion of sustainable development, regarded as a

crucial interlinkage between the irreducible ‘givens’ of tradition and modernity striving toward a newer sense of being.<sup>7</sup>

Bamidele discredits the affirmation of democracy as a system for the ordering of social relations and the state because it often enabled the tyranny of the majority at the expense of numerous ethnic configurations. He also noticed that the essential requirement of joining up the universal quest for science and technology as lever for the promotion of sustained welfare impels the desire to revise traditional ideas on development, which have erstwhile been construed as hinging solely on science and technology. He submits that rather than science and technology, despite their significance, being the essence of development in Africa, a more crucial element which is the requisite foundation for the evolution of sustainable technology/science is in the development of a human resource base or capacity crucial to the empowerment of an African future.<sup>8</sup> In this sense, he concurs that Oladipo’s

attempt to initiate a new paradigm for twentieth century Africa is anchored onto the formation of a new moral framework of co-operation centered on identity, self-help and dignity; the privileging of repressed modes of thought within the traditional archive marking a looking back into the heritage for alternative forms of rationality in experience. Also, the reformulation of concepts of security to include poverty alleviation, the re-appraisal of conditions for continental economic integration; the re-alignment of education to the total ideals of democracy and the general breaking away from dangerous stereotypes in order to envision a newer Africa.<sup>9</sup>

From the foregoing, it is lucid that Bamidele's work is a support and contribution to Oladipo's theory of development. This position is aptly expressed in the statement that "while Oladipo's project cuts its ground in the implication of knowledge formation or epistemology with peculiarities of history and geography, its thesis advocates the empowering of a new 'paradigm' seeking to retract to memory the gory spectacle of unfreedom and scarcity defining much of twentieth century Africa."<sup>10</sup>

However, Bamidele's emphasis that Oladipo's effort is an attempt to initiate a new paradigm for African development in the twentieth century is an inchoate idea of one major argument of this study that Oladipo's theory of development could be re-presented as a paradigm for African development. However, Bamidele's rejection of science as the lever for sustainable development and his alternative desire for the revision of traditional ideas on development is questionable, especially taking into cognizance that the paradigms on which the traditional ideas on development were founded are no longer compatible with the new world order.

Also, in "Knowledge Management and Capacity Building for Sustainable Development"<sup>11</sup>, Modestus N. Onyeaghalaji and Dorcas E. Igberaese employed Olusegun Oladipo's conception and analysis of development in deducing sustainable development. Thus, they assent to Oladipo's proposal for development.

They identified knowledge management and capacity building as the two basic factors necessary for sustainable development. In other words, knowledge management and capacity building have enormous propensity to aid sustainable development.

However, in attempt to put the notion of sustainable development in perspective, the work seeks the entailment of the concept of development as a process that involves major changes in various aspects of human and social life. It borrows Olusegun Oladipo's contention, in his analysis of "Society and National Development"<sup>12</sup>, that to define development "focus should be on the extent to which the institutions of a given society enhance the capacity of the people, as individuals and as a social collective, to ensure the conditions for the persistence of social life"<sup>13</sup>.

The authors noted that Oladipo developed this point further by highlighting the idea of freedom and social decency as major factors and indication of the level of development. This implies that, for there to be development in a nation, there should be a concerted effort to establish institutional frameworks that would guarantee individual and social creativity, fulfillment, and provision of social amenities, education, health services, security, shelter, and food for human healthy existence and fulfillment. It also implies that development necessitates an

establishment of social framework for institutionalization of social values for social cooperation.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, the authors contend that Oladipo's view on development reflects Walter Rodney's conception of development as increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, external well-being, and societies' capacity to regulate both internal and external relationships. This implies that development is an increase in material and social life of the society. The material life is expressed in the economy, infrastructure, health services, electricity, telephones, transportation, housing, etc. The social life reflects in individual autonomy, freedom, creativity, self-discipline, knowledge, skill, and capacity. So a society develops to the extent that there is an increase, or improvement, on the material and social life of the society.<sup>15</sup>

These analyses, according to the authors, show that development is not limited to material improvement in the social life of the society – moral, intellectual, and psychological social relations. In fact, for them, development depends largely in these aspects of the social life. This is precisely because, without social coordination and cooperation in the society, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to socially engineer human development. In a situation where there is lack of freedom, peace, and mutual relations, it will be difficult to have both

adequate social planning and strong social institutions that would direct the affairs in the society for social growth. In other words, the authors agree with Oladipo that there is the need for the establishment of strong social institutions and social values that would empower the citizens for social building and growth. That means there is the need for development of skills, knowledge, creativity, social cooperation, and morals for adequate human development.<sup>16</sup>

From Oladipo's analyses of development therefore, the authors deduced sustainable development as the development that is stable, enduring, and consistent. It is a development that lasts and does not crumble in the face of formidable problems. It is development that can guarantee the protection of the environment and resources today and tomorrow. Sustainable development, therefore, implies interdependence of various strata of the society in the realization of stable economic, social, political, technological, and cultural development. Sustainable development is indicated by certain components, such as general human comfort, increase in educational level of the polity, high degree of economic comfort, low level of poverty, high level of equality, freedom, adequate management of economy, and so on. Thus, sustainable development indicates a harmonization of the values, powers, natural, cultural, and social resources for human well-being, both for the present and the future.<sup>17</sup>

They conclude therefore, that these characteristics of development are indications of two factors that are necessary indices of sustainable development of which their maintenance and endurance are necessary for sustainable development. The factors are knowledge management and capacity building.<sup>18</sup>

Although Onyeaghalaji and Igberaese seemed so much in support of Oladipo's theory of development, they likewise differed from Oladipo as they so much emphasized the material aspect over the social aspect of development. However, their emphasis on the material aspect of development seems to betray Oladipo's proposal of social reconstruction and value system from which they derived sustainable development.

“A Philosopher Amongst Us: Tribute to the Late Prof. Olusegun Oladipo” by Tunji A. Olaopa<sup>19</sup> is another important work that assents to Oladipo's theory of development. It describes Oladipo as a prince in the academic community and a philosopher extraordinaire. Olaopa is proud to note that Oladipo was engrossed with “the struggle to utilize the force of ideas and intellection to create the climate for igniting beyond reflection the transformative catalyst badly required by the Nigerian Project.”<sup>20</sup> He insists that Oladipo possessed philosophical hopefulness and optimism that reached to his understanding of Nigeria's national predicament, and rather than being an abstract consolation for mankind trying to escape the



vicissitude of existence, philosophy for him was the historic mission of being pragmatic compass for achieving meaningfulness and understanding.<sup>21</sup>

Olaopa observed that in *Thinking about Philosophy* (2009), his penultimate academic effort, Prof. Oladipo set forth his reflection about the relevance of philosophy beyond its academic disguise. According to him, understanding what the philosophic spirit is, is very crucial to understanding what philosophers do:

This involves the conscious and sustained application of critical and reflective thinking to various aspects of human life and experience. This spirit seeks to evaluate, reevaluate and reconstruct ideas and experiences that would go into (a) the construction of worldviews which are visions of the world created by individuals or groups as a means to perceiving, feeling, coping with and ultimately transforming reality and existence; (b) the adoption of critical thinking which ensures that we do not take our worldviews, which are at best partial understanding of our situations as human beings, for granted, but rather examine them in a critical light to see the extent to which they are tenable as means of coping with the challenges thrown at us by our reality.<sup>22</sup>

This thinking about philosophy also reinforced his intervention in the debate surrounding the identity and responsibility of African philosophy in the context of postcolonial underdevelopment. Olaopa observed thus, that in his seminal work, *The Idea of African Philosophy* (1992), Oladipo adumbrated an idea of African philosophy that departed radically from its conception in the controversy involving those he called the traditionalists and the analytic philosophers. He noted that while both are involved in the attempt at resolving the problem of anything meeting the criteria for being both African and Philosophy, Oladipo on the contrary, argued that

the real problem is that of finding ways in which African philosophers can make their works relevant to human interests in their societies.<sup>23</sup>

According to Olaopa, Oladipo's optimistic philosophy is captured in his idea of the task of social reconstruction not only of the state in Africa but specifically of the Nigerian sociopolitical framework. He states that in his work,

*Beyond Survival: Essays on the Nigerian Condition* (1999), Oladipo

queried the socio-political foundation of the Nigerian nation as well as the irrationality of the Nigerian leadership that failed to come to term with the question of fashioning an enabling society that would ensure the good life for the citizenry. He warned that unless we take urgent and critical steps to seek new modes of political and social organisation through which we can remake Nigeria, then the survival of the country may be at risk.<sup>24</sup>

Olaopa seems to suggest that Oladipo's theory of development was ensconced in his last book, *Philosophy and Social Reconstruction in Africa* (2009) where, for him, Oladipo consolidated his thinking by outlining what such a reconstructive effort at fashioning new modes of socio-political organization would look like, and the role of philosophy in such a process:

For him (Oladipo), post-independent states in Africa require an urgent task of national reconstruction that propounds national philosophies which answer the question of how best to organise our society and political interactions for achieving the good life. In this regard, for Oladipo, philosophy possesses a social purpose which is to raise the political consciousness on the continent as well as maximizing the political wisdom and ethics of African governments.<sup>25</sup>

Olaopa concludes that Oladipo represents a pragmatic thinking on the African and Nigerian predicament and advocates a practical mission for African philosophy in the contemporary world. It is obvious that Olaopa is an ardent

subscriber to Oladipo's development theory. This is evident as Olaopa eulogized Oladipo by pointing out his proposal for African development as reflected in the many works of Oladipo referred to by Olaopa.

Godwin Azenabor's "Odera Oreuka's Philosophic Sagacity: Problems and Challenges of Conversation Method in African Philosophy" agrees with Oladipo's theory of development as it employs Oladipo's 'Method of Relevance' in arguing that Odera Oruka's idea of philosophic sagacity is a victim of the contemporary African philosopher who derives his/her education from cultural sources that are distinct from African culture. The work examines the different methodologies that have been formulated and advanced in answer to the question: what is the appropriate method to follow in order for African philosophy to be valid or authentic? Although Azenabor acknowledges Olusegun Oladipo's "Method of Relevance", C.S. Momoh's "Canons of Discourse in African Philosophy", Barry Hallen's "Cultural Thematic", William Abraham's "Cultural Essentialism", Kwasi Wiredu's "Renewal or Reconstruction", Peter Bodunrin's "Universal Philosophy", Paulin Hountondji's "Scientific Philosophy", he however emphasises and focuses on Odera Oruka's "Philosophic Sagacity".

According to Azenabor, "the term "philosophic sagacity" was coined by Odera Oruka to describe a reflective evaluation of thought by an individual (not

collective) African elder who is a repository of wisdom, knowledge and rigorous critical thinking.”<sup>26</sup> Though Azenabor’s work examines the implications and challenges of Odera Oruka’s conversation approach to the study of contemporary African philosophy as enunciated in his “Philosophic Sagacity”, it first gives an outline of various approaches to African philosophy proposed by African philosophers before proceeding to engage an exposition of Oruka’s method of philosophic sagacity.

In response to the methodological problem posed by contemporary African philosophy, Azenabor examines an array of approaches presented by different scholars. Olusegun Oladipo’s method of “Relevance” is closely related to the views of William Abraham and Kwasi Wiredu. Azenabor notes that William Abraham’s “Cultural Essentialism” makes philosophy pragmatic by emphasising the usefulness of philosophy to African societies, based on African mind and cultural paradigm. On the other hand, Kwasi Wiredu’s method of “Renewal or Reconstruction” implores us to examine the intellectual foundation of our cultures for possible reconstruction or renewal.<sup>27</sup> He, however, notes that Olusegun Oladipo’s method of “Relevance” “hinges on the reminder that African philosophers should have as their primary task how to be relevant to their societies – both physically and socially – in order to contribute to self knowledge in Africa.”<sup>28</sup>

From the foregoing, Azenabor contends that there seems to be the emergence of two main approaches to the methodological question in African philosophy – One advocates a sovereign methodology to be situated against the back drop or context of Western philosophy, and the other advocates African philosophy simply as a variant of western philosophy. Sequel to this, Azenabor holds that “the methodological problem in African philosophy has its roots in the various schools of thought.”<sup>29</sup> He also notices that philosophy has become urbanised and institutionalised since we have an orientation in contemporary African philosophy which is taking into consideration the socio-economic transition entailing the impact of scientific and technological development, and the form and content of modern education.

Azenabor concludes by referring to Olusegun Oladipo that “the contemporary African philosopher derives his/her education from cultural sources that are distinct from African culture”<sup>30</sup> and this development has affected the traditional African way of life as demonstrated in making Odera Oruka’s idea of philosophic sagacity in contemporary African philosophy to become vacuous.

In “Religion, Morality, and the Realities of the Nigerian Experience”<sup>31</sup>, Agulanna Christopher employs Oladipo’s theory of development in explaining what he refers to as the core objectives of religion. Thus, he borrows Oladipo’s concepts of self-realization or capacity for self-action and social harmony or social

transformation in this regard. He begins by worrying that there appears to be no correlation between Nigerians religious avowals and their moral life because the more religious Nigerians are, the more immoral they seem to become. As a result, Agulanna points out that were we to score the various religions in Nigeria on the level of their impact on the behaviour and moral lives of their members and the society at large, they will score an overall low in the moral score sheet.<sup>32</sup>

Agulanna, however, contends that two questions are of significant interest in assessing the role and impact of religion on the social life of Nigerians. The first, “What are the *core objectives* of religion? The second, “Have Nigerians been able to fulfil those “core objectives” that define the *raison d’être* of religions? He relies on Olusegun Oladipo in answering the first question. Thus, he observes that Olusegun Oladipo identifies what he considers two “core objectives” of religion as “self-realisation” and “social harmony”.<sup>33</sup> He adds that “self-realisation is not to be understood as referring merely to a state of economic, social or cultural well-being; rather it refers to a condition of existence or a state of being, which is guided by a longing or a desire for the discovery of the ideal possibilities of human life. “Social harmony”, on the other hand, refers to that element in the make-up of the individual that enables him or her to act towards other individuals in a spirit of care, brotherhood and love.<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, Agulanna argues that although morality is not the only objective of religion, it is nevertheless a necessary condition without which the values of religion would hardly be realised. This is because the people who truly have faith in God are those who live with moral integrity within their lights. This means joining in the important task of helping to create the conditions for a decent life for oneself and for other members of society. He states further that, according to Olusegun Oladipo, it would mean to be engaged in the crucial task of helping human beings enhance the “capacity for self-action and social transformation”.<sup>35</sup>

Again, Agulanna employs Oladipo’s view in articulating the social nature of religion. He says one simple way to characterise religion is to see it as a search for the meaning and purpose of life, hence Oladipo describes religion as a belief as well as an attitude.<sup>36</sup> He says religion is the belief that God or the gods created the world and everything in it and that it is on Him (or them) that human beings are dependent for their being and substance. Then as an attitude, religion expresses devotion, a sense of dependence on God or a relationship between persons and God or the gods.

Agulanna also points out that believers often fall into conceiving religion as a purely transcendental affair to the neglect of its social dimension and content. But when religion is conceived in this narrow sense, believers tend to accept the existing order as a *fait accompli* without as much questioning its relevance or the justice of it. He refers to Oladipo saying that when believers accept without

question the existing order, they unwittingly make themselves “unconscious collaborators in their own oppression”.<sup>37</sup> Thus, consciously or unconsciously, the ingratiating believer enters into what Oladipo describes as a “covenant of silence” with the established order.<sup>38</sup>

Furthermore, Agulanna notes that:

To demand that religions fulfill the requirements of morality is to ask that they be at the vanguard of those institutions that help create an environment conducive to the achievement of the legitimate desires of all members of society. But in the case of Nigeria, religions have failed to live up to this ideal of promoting order in the social setting. Rather than doing this, they (that is, religions in Nigeria) have often been manipulative instruments in the hands of self-serving miscreants who are out to serve their own self-interest.<sup>39</sup>

He argues that it is for reasons such as the above that Oladipo declares that “there has been no correlation between the growth of religions in Nigeria and the extent to which Nigerians have been made to realize their human potentials.”<sup>40</sup>

In conclusion, Agulanna reiterates that the highest value and achievement of religion is to help enhance in believers the capacity to flourish by creating in people the capacity for freedom and self-realisation. He however, refers to Oladipo who calls on different religious organisations in Nigeria to “be actively and collectively involved in the struggle for the establishment of a humane society”.<sup>41</sup> This is imperative, he says, because according to Oladipo, by pursuing this, religions in Nigeria would have lost nothing “except their progressive drift towards social irrelevance”.<sup>42</sup>



Although Agulanna's piece primarily focuses on religion and morality, it is obvious from the foregoing that Olusegun Oladipo's theory of African development pervades the discourse. Agulanna's work both hinges on and it is articulated with Olusegun's ideas of social relevance, social reconstruction, social transformation, social harmony, self-realisation, and self-action, which constitute the fundamental doctrines of Olusegun Oladipo's theory of African development.

Adebayo A. Ogungbure in "The Possibilities of Technological Development in Africa: An Evaluation of the Role of Culture"<sup>43</sup> completely agrees with Oladipo's theory of African development and it is on it he builds his work as he interprets Oladipo to mean that Africa is backward in the development of technology because the early Western explorers interfered with the traditional or cultural practices within Africa at that time.

Thus, he sets out to examine the vital role culture plays in human scientific and technological explorations, and especially how the viable aspects of a people's culture can be explored for technological development in Africa. He argues that culture is a phenomenon that constantly propels the human instinctive attempt at technological innovation, scientific exploration, and holistic development within society, consequently, any group of people that is capable of evolving a culture is also capable of evolving technology. He contends above all, that the existence of

culture within Africa is an accentuation that there is a huge possibility for the development of technology in Africa.

Ogungbure observes that Africa has not achieved much progress in the development of technology, and he connects the reason for this to the vagaries of the African historic experience that is, colonisation, enslavement, resource depletion, etc. He notes that:

While some scholars traced the root of this problem of African cultural loss on technology to the colonial and to the post-colonial era, others are of the view that African people are solely liable to the paths taken to growth and development which has seriously marginalised its attempt at mechanistic expressions of aspects of its cultural identity.<sup>44</sup>

He presents Olusegun Oladipo's view as an example, where he says that:

A careful look at the African situation, since the period of the continent's encounter with Europe, is likely to show that the African predicament can be attributed to a major gap in the African developmental process. Whether our reference is to the slave trade, to the colonial era or even to the post-colonial era, it is clear that African oppression and exploitation by others have been a function of her technological underdevelopment. In other words, the possibility of slave trade and colonialism was largely due to the underdevelopment of the African technological capacity.<sup>45</sup>

Ogungbure interprets Oladipo's comments to mean that if the early Western explorers had not interfered with the traditional or cultural practices and ways of doing things within Africa at the time they did, it is possible that Africa will not be backward in the development of technology. He states that Oladipo further maintains that in post-colonial times, the evidence of the gap created by the cross-cultural interference is that of a yawning technological gap that has made it

impossible for Africans to record any appreciable advancement in the competitive sectors of culture, which include things like military strength, industrial capacity, economic viability and technological prowess.

Based on Oladipo's view that knowledge is the means by which human beings master and control their environment, Ogungbure argues further that biotechnology is another aspect of technology that can be richly explored within African culture for development. Since biotechnology entails the use of living organisms or their products to modify human health and human environment, according to him, such knowledge is made possible by culture which embodies the totality of human experience and the tendency for survival within a social environment.<sup>46</sup>

From the foregoing, Ogungbure relies primarily on Oladipo's concept of development in building up his work which dwells on the role of culture in technological development in Africa. He completely agrees with Oladipo's theory on the (technological) development of Africa as contained in his *Philosophy and Social Reconstruction in Africa*.

However, perhaps, Ogungbure's gullibility towards Oladipo's ideas makes him misinterpret Oladipo's comment which he quoted in his piece. He interprets Oladipo to mean that the early Western explorers are responsible for African backwardness in the development of technology whereas the submission of Oladipo

in that comment, as Ogungbure rightly quoted, is that “the possibility of slave trade and colonialism was largely due to the underdevelopment of the African technological capacity.” Therefore, while Oladipo is saying that it was the underdevelopment of technology in Africa that made slave trade and colonialism possible, Ogungbare is misreading Oladipo instead that it was slave trade and colonialism that caused underdevelopment of technology in Africa.

Jonathan Okeke’s “Africa’s Restoration: Rediscovering the Place of African Cultural Values in an Ichabodded History”<sup>47</sup> agrees with Oladipo’s theory of development and in fact adopts Oladipo’s theory of cultural renewal and overall development as a framework. The work investigates how the elements of African culture might be useful in founding a new continent from the debris of Dark Continent. He asserts that before the coming of the Whiteman, Africa was home to Africans; Africans had their own culture not until the Whiteman arrived with his own did everything change. He argued that what we have now as an African history is an *ichabodded* history – a history without glory. This is because the modern African history and culture were forced upon the African by the Whiteman. Thus, he opines that to restore the dignity and identity of the Blackman has become the foremost existential exercise and philosophy in our time.<sup>48</sup>

Okeke infers that the existential identity problem of an African will not yield any positive result unless it is discussed within the context of African cultural

traits and values. Given that the African cultural values roughly implies the aggregate of cultural heritage and moral principles which characterize the African and shape his life, Okeke raises the question of the constituents of African cultural values. He sees this as a task of discovery of authentic African ideas or thought systems uninfluenced by alien accretions. He notes also that this does not mean that rediscovering the place of African cultural values in contemporary dynamics implies purification or purgation of any useful foreign ideas.<sup>49</sup>

Okeke further employs Oladipo's view to buttress his argument for the need for the rediscovery of African cultural values. He avers that:

Oladipo explains that the reappraisal and of course the rediscovery of the place of African cultural values have the potential of promoting the kind of self-understanding that would provide some basis for determining the kind of socio-cultural reconstructions that would enable Africans to come to terms with the challenges of contemporary life...this attitude does not denigrate African cultural values as the framework of authentic African history yet it fortifies it to be able to meet the challenges of building a true African civilisation in the contemporary times.<sup>50</sup>

It becomes evident from the above that Okeke's thesis is a call for the rediscovery of African cultural values. He however, made his argument significant by adopting Oladipo's theory of cultural renewal and overall development as a framework. It is impressive however, that Okeke notes that the rediscovery of the place of African cultural values in the contemporary times does not imply rejection of any useful foreign ideas. This distinguishes his work among the works that agree with Oladipo's theory of development.

G.O. Ozumba's "African Traditional Metaphysics"<sup>51</sup> is an attempt to reconstruct African traditional metaphysics. Using Nigeria and Ghana as representative cultures, Ozumba assumes that all Africans are bound to have more in common than with people of other continents. Consequently, he attempts to demonstrate the difference in the conception of 'Being' and its ontological appurtenances between African traditional metaphysics and western conception. He however, concludes that: "African traditional metaphysics includes and transcends the western explanatory indices. While the west limit their enquiry to experience and reason, the African go beyond that to employ extra empirical and extra-ratiocinative means often called extra-sensory perception (ESP)."<sup>52</sup>

Ozumba acknowledges that the subject of African metaphysics is a very broad one and thus, attempts carrying out some intellectual stock-taking. However, "to allay the fears of scholars like Paulin Hountondji who smell a rat any time attempt is made to talk of African philosophy as a static, collective and ideological set of beliefs which lie in the immutable sail of the African people"<sup>53</sup>, Ozumba decides to define the focus of his work. He observes that in his *African Philosophy – Myth and Reality*, Hountondji decried the vogue of perceiving African philosophy as a collective of immutable and definitive belief which are abstracted from history

and progress; that our ideological definition of philosophy is what is normally called to use when examining African philosophy.<sup>54</sup>

The consequence of this, for Ozumba, “leads to our seeing philosophy as any kind of wisdom, individual or collective, any set of principles presenting some degree of coherence and intended to govern the daily practice of a man or people.”<sup>55</sup> He maintains that though his attempt is not directed at speculating on the ideological roles of philosophy that is immutable, homogenous and hidden in the consciousness of the African people, the unanimity question is not totally baseless.<sup>56</sup> He explains this point further by pointing out that Wiredu and Oladipo have noted that, ideology can be perceived both in a degenerate sense as “a set of ideas about what form the good society must take”.<sup>57</sup> This, implicitly, expresses an aspect of Oladipo’s ideas of a developed society.

Of the works that react to Olusegun Oladipo’s theory of development, on the other hand, Moses Oke’s “Cultural Nostalgia: A Philosophical Critique of Appeals to the Past in Theories of Re-Making Africa”<sup>58</sup> is remarkable. He argues that in response to the grim contemporary realities, many African leaders and theorists have advocated a return to ‘African roots’ and indigenous cultures of Africans for new social and political theories and practices to solve Africa’s problems. He, however, proffers a theoretical refutation of the validity of such

appeals to the past, and rejects a return to certain traditional African structures and institutions as advocated in some contemporary theories of re-making Africa.

Moses Oke employs ‘cultural nostalgia’ to imply the longing for the return to some supplanted cultures or cultural patterns. He asserts that in either relative or absolute terms, the tendency to degenerate has already become a reality in the human situations in Africa such that no one is in doubt, as Oguejiofor puts it, that much of Africa is in a precarious state. He is convinced that most Africans are very deeply concerned about how to halt the fast degeneration of the human condition and how to bring about some worthwhile improvement, though there are differences in ideas of how best to understand and deal with the situation.<sup>59</sup>

Moses Oke described the present African situation as “the crisis of post-colonial Africa”<sup>60</sup> and noted that it has often been pointed out that the root cause of the post-colonial continental failure is the erosion of basic African values that have helped to promote stable social existence over the ages. According to him

This erosion is then traced to the advent of colonialism and the consequent introduction of European socio-political systems, values and structures of capitalist economy. The net effect of all these cultural incursions, it is suggested, is that while emphasis was placed on political and economic developments to the detriment of social development, Africans’ basic human values were suppressed or totally obliterated by the largely ‘inhuman’ Western values. Ironically, Africa, as things have turned out, has lost on all fronts of development – political, economic, social, psychological and social – presumably because the indigenous social culture was superimposed upon by the alien colonialist social cultures.<sup>61</sup>



He quotes Oladipo as saying that “the inherited colonial institutions have been inadequate for the achievement of the goals of postcolonial development”.<sup>62</sup> He further implies from Oladipo’s position that the explanation for contemporary African reality can be traced to the fact that majority of Africans have either forgotten or ignored their cultural roots and have assimilated foreign cultures and ideas. These foreign cultures and ideas are said to have done an incalculable damage to the social and economic reality of Africa and is responsible for the experience of the moment. The author, thus, identifies the longing for the lost “cultural roots” as central in some theories of re-making Africa but questions what these cultural roots are, and how relevant and effective they are or could be in addressing the present predicament of Africa.<sup>63</sup> He therefore critiques the return to African traditional institutions and ways of life, which the theories of re-making Africa advocate as the ultimate solution to the African crisis. He argues that given the context of the African present, the past seems to be a wrong direction in which to seek the way forward for Africa, for the following reasons:

- (1) Strains of history and the frictions of intercultural contacts have fatally weakened the traditional culture for which nostalgia is being expressed.
- (2) Following from the foregoing, it follows that there may be nothing that could be called “the indigenous African traditions, values and ways of life” to which we may return.

(3) The failure of the traditional institutions to withstand the onslaught of slavery and the threat of direct colonialism does not make it appear viable to cope with the extraordinarily complex issues of governance and social co-existence in this age of globalization.

(4) The 'de-monetisation'(trade by barter?) of exchange that is recommended to solve Africa's economic problems is totally out of tune with current realities.

(5) The paradigms on which the demolished traditional institutions stood are no longer compatible with the new world order: they are thus best abandoned.

(6) Continued entertainment of the past as a viable path to the solution of contemporary problems can do nothing but keep us away from realistically confronting our historical duty of salvaging our continent from further deterioration.

As was rightly perceived by Osundare (1998: 234), "There is a lot to be done in giving Africa a new lease on life. Nothing can be achieved by papering over her cracks or by pretending (as is customary in sickening diplomatic circles) that the problems do not exist."

(7) It is an escapist approach to the problem. Rather than realize that our problems are caused directly by our own actions and inactions, we are being urged to look away from reality to some obscure sources of redemption. The approach is nothing but an undesirable diversion from the serious task of re-making Africa.

(8) Given the failure of our indigenous cultural arrangements and institutions to repel the attack of other cultures in the past, there is no reason what so ever to think that they will be able to bail the continent out of its present predicament. As the Yoruba people say, “What makes the lazy man’s farm to be small is the same thing that makes it to be overgrown with weeds.”

(9) The flowery descriptions of the African past cannot be sustained in empirical facts. There appears to be nothing so much to valorize in the African past relative to the contemporary realities. The communalism that is often so much praised in that past also harbored practices and principles that cannot move contemporary Africa further in the path of growth, progress and development.

(10) It is also doubtful if there are any existing ‘experts’ (or elders) from who lessons about the traditional institutions could be taken. Assuming that there still exist some persons who were once such experts, the experiences of colonialism and its aftermath must have changed them radically that they can no longer be taken to still be grounded in the ‘good’ old cultures. Besides, how are they to be introduced into the current non-traditional educational and socio-political arrangements?

(11) The same traditional principles to which we are being urged to return have been used by many African rulers in the past, and even now, to oppress their peoples and to rob their countries. This is especially very prominent in the self-perpetuation syndrome that is prevalent among Africa’s ruling elites – traditional and

contemporary. In a tone of lamentation, Osundare (1998: 234) asks: “why are patriotic, purposeful, honest and visionary leaders in Africa always so short-lived? What or who is responsible for the murderous longevity of sit-tight despots and dictators with their corrupt, corrupting courtiers and depraved dynasties?”<sup>64</sup>

In all, Moses Oke argues that the remedy for the recovery of the deplorable state of postcolonial Africa does not lie in its past traditional cultures; the solution rather must be consciously sought in the present. He insists that

the rational thing to do is to step back from routine activities and try to fashion out a genuinely African blueprint of social, political and economic life. Such a blueprint will be largely analytical of our experiences. It will also have to be sufficiently comprehensive to take cognizance of the various cultural influences that have now become integral parts of the African life.<sup>65</sup>

Although Moses Oke did not agree with the appeal to the past, which is central to Oladipo’s theories of remaking Africa, he however observed that the structures and institutions of the African past are weak, and since independence the African leaders have not made the required efforts to strengthen them. Consequently, he strongly agrees with Oladipo’s theory of institutional development and recommends the need to strengthen the weak institutions. According to him,

The banes of the African past were the weak structures and institutions that were the enduring legacies of colonialism and slavery. At the inception of self-rule, African leaders, generally, did not make any tangible efforts to strengthen those structures and institutions. Rather, they successively exploited the structural and institutional weaknesses for selfish private enrichment and base self-aggrandizement. The consequence of the structural and institutional neglect and exploitation is that individual, sectional, private interests and

agenda have continued to take precedence over national interests in most of the countries....<sup>66</sup>

Therefore, Moses Oke is convinced that the structures that we have at present, which are products of the amalgam of indigenous African cultures, our colonial experiences and foreign religious impacts, are inherently generative of greed and consumption rather than production, and hence, mass impoverishment and continental recession. He is of the opinion that, by remaining uncritically attached to these deficient and inefficient economic and socio-political structures and institutions, carried forward from our past, to which we are been urged to return, we would only be perpetuating Africans' underdevelopment of Africa. To make his point clearer, he quotes Oguejiofor saying "The hard fact is that in the failure of African political institutions to withstand the threat of direct colonization, and again, by cooperating with the new order (i.e. the colonial order), the paradigm on which the old institutions stood was destroyed for good".<sup>67</sup>

Furthermore, Kolawole A. Owolabi's "Review of The Idea of African Philosophy"<sup>68</sup> is a direct attack on Olusegun Oladipo's theory of development and his entire philosophy. In his seminal book, *The Idea of African Philosophy*, Oladipo had argued that the problem of African philosophy is not simply a conceptual problem having much to do with the meaning of cross-cultural concepts. Rather, he insists that the problem is one of practical relevance, that is, how African

philosophers have been able to put their intellect in the service of the aspirations and struggles of African peoples. This clearly suggests that the mission of African philosophy in the contemporary world is a practical one.

Reacting to the above position, Owolabi made a fundamental objection that Oladipo “over emphasizes the need for social and practical relevance without ever once considering the fact that philosophy qua philosophy is supposed to be a theoretical enterprise.”<sup>69</sup> Owolabi believes that if philosophy in Western society is the attempt of the society to mediate in a theoretical manner on baffling questions of life<sup>70</sup>, then African philosophy should do the same. As such, to over emphasize the practical relevance of philosophy as Oladipo did would be to water-down or derail from the mainstream of philosophy. According to Owolabi, “Much as we agree with the author that such a reflection is for the society, we still believe that the rigour of theoretical analysis cannot be sustained if we are too committed to the issue of practical relevance.”<sup>71</sup>

Although Oladipo himself has responded to Owolabi’s objection in the third edition of *The Idea of African Philosophy* that Owolabi’s assumption is untenable, it is pertinent to notice that Owolabi who was criticizing Oladipo for over emphasizing practical relevance, ended up over emphasizing theoretical analysis. In other words, since his objection is an implicit appeal to *Ockham’s Razor* – “not to over multiply reality beyond necessity” – he would have made his point clearer by

not breaking the same rule he is invoking. However, Owolabi's objection is significant as a quick caution to stay within focus yet there is need to mix theory with practice to achieve a more comprehensive result since they both interrogate the same reality.

Among the revolutionary works that attempted to reconstruct Oladipo's theory of development, Omoregie Jerome's "Book Review: The Idea of African Philosophy"<sup>72</sup> is outstanding. Omoregie systematically punctures Oladipo's theory of development. Although he began by acknowledging some of the strengths of the theory, he however, spotted a loophole which raises a serious question on the theory. He argues that Oladipo's brilliant argument in favour of social relevance is strongly reinforced by the care he takes to address issues and questions that might arise as a result of his postulations<sup>73</sup> in *The Idea of African Philosophy* (2000), which emerges out of the crisis of relevance that rocked African philosophy. This crisis has its roots in the dispute over the nature of African philosophy by the traditionalist trend and the analytic trend. Omoregie noted that Oladipo points out that both criteria are inadequate, and adds that African philosophers should create a tradition of thinking and discourse over issues that affect the felt needs of their people.<sup>74</sup>

Omoregie notes further that while other chapters of the book are concerned with an analysis of the trends therein in the dispute over the nature of African

philosophy, chapter five focuses on “the social dimension of scholarship in which he advocates that philosophy should be used as a vital tool of social reconstruction in Africa.”<sup>75</sup> Omoregie asserts that Oladipo insists that African development must be central to the business of African philosophers, and so they are faced with some specific tasks: “The reappraisal of African culture, the critique of ideology and a careful projection of social theories constitute the task of African philosophers who have African development at the centre of their scholarship.”<sup>76</sup>

Omoregie concludes that although Oladipo’s analysis is as critical as his prose is elegant, he however, “fails to acknowledge the contributions of the Nationalist-Ideological Philosophers to African development”.<sup>77</sup> This is a grave oversight of which any good proposal for African development ought not to commit. This observation demonstrates that Omoregie’s piece is very critical and is not absorbed by the clout and glamour of Oladipo’s postulate as many works of its nature would do.

More so, Ojo Abiodun Peter’s “Oladipo’s Concept of African Philosophy: An Appraisal”<sup>78</sup> agrees with Oladipo that the mission of African philosophy is a practical one of developing Africa but it deflates Oladipo’s argument by spotting some inadequacies. The work is an attempt to present Oladipo’s response to the demand that philosophy must have a bearing on a people’s life. As such, it considers the position of Oladipo as regards the need for African philosophers and



scholars to perform their role and function in such a way that it will positively affect the life of the average African person.

Ojo contends that besides Oladipo's critique of the trends in African philosophy and his identification of two broad dominant orientations in contemporary African philosophy as the "Analytic" and "Traditionalists", he emphasized the role of philosophy in Africa linking it directly to African development: "The primary task of African philosophers should be to begin to create a tradition of thinking and discourse whose main focus would be on issues affecting their interests and aspiration of their peoples."<sup>79</sup>

He says that Oladipo is of the view that African development would be initiated by African renaissance, which could be seen as "the socio-economic and cultural reinvention (or transformation) of Africa with a view to enhancing the capacity of our peoples for self-directed improvement in their material conditions and social relations".<sup>80</sup> He notes further that Oladipo outlined some possibilities to be taken in order to bring a genuine renaissance into actualization, and the first step he gave is to dispel our ambivalence to the philosophical project of modernity, realizing that modernisation is not westernisation, rather it is "the advancement of a culture and civilisation in the competitive sector...which includes those aspects of a civilisation which people can compare, determining which is superior or inferior".<sup>81</sup>

On development proper, Ojo avers that:

Oladipo optimistically shared the opinion of Professor Ade Ajayi that development is not simply an activity in which the old is replaced by the new in a mechanical manner. Rather, it is a process of social reconstruction in which the past survives in the present, though in a modified form and this is exactly what Oladipo is advocating for.<sup>82</sup>

Ojo, however, added that development in this sense can be classified into social development, economic development, political development, intellectual development, and science and technology development.<sup>83</sup>

From the foregoing, Ojo agreed with Oladipo that the mission for African philosophy is a practical one of making Africa a continent where everyone would be happy to live in. Hence, Ojo observed that Oladipo opined that the commitment of African philosophers should be “to what extent they have been able to put their intellect in the service of the aspirations and struggles of the African people”.<sup>84</sup> He asserts that African development would require the necessity and urgency to draw a programme of how to utilise or bring into realisation the ideas of Oladipo on development, if not we are likely to remain stagnated economically or we may even descend lower than this status quo.<sup>85</sup>

However, Ojo noticed that Oladipo’s idea is a one sided view in the sense that it concentrates more on what is to be done without considering those steps to be followed in order to realise this mission.<sup>86</sup> Also, Ojo noted that Oladipo failed to realise in his theory that the political unrest in most African countries due to the fact that most Africans have not been able to adopt a befitting political system of their

own, is the most fundamental obstacle to the development of Africa as it has lots of consequences on the development in all ramifications.<sup>87</sup>

A defect of Ojo's critique however, is that just as he rightly observed of Oladipo's theory, he likewise failed to suggest the steps to be followed to realise African development. It would have been more appropriate for him to suggest steps to fill in Oladipo's omission.

The above has been an exploration of the views of different scholars on Olusegun Oladipo's theory of development. While some of the works assented to Oladipo's position, others reacted to it, and some others tried to reconstruct or contribute to it. Indeed, the scholars' works are strongly reinforced by the care they took to address issues. However, this study is novel because, unlike most of the works reviewed above, it directly implies from Oladipo's theory of development that institutional development is a paradigm for African development. It is therefore the interest of this study to provide a fresh look at Oladipo's theory of development with the hope of enlarging our vision towards a more comprehensive paradigm for African development.

The succeeding chapter shall therefore discuss the challenge of African development by examining the history of the challenge, the idea of development, theories of development, the current state of the challenge of African development, and the search for a solution to the crisis of African development.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> B. Ololade, “Rekindling the Afrocentric Essence”, *Issue*, Vol. Six, Glendora Books Supplement, 2001, pp.34-36.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.34.

<sup>3</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.35.

<sup>6</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p.36.

<sup>9</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>11</sup> M.N. Onyeaghalaji and D.E. Igberaese, “Knowledge Management and Capacity Building for Sustainable Development”, *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, Vol. 12, No.2, (Clarion, Pennsylvania: Clarion University of Pennsylvania), 2010, pp.268-283.

<sup>12</sup> O. Oladipo, *Thinking About Philosophy: A General Guide*, (Ibadan, Nigeria: Hope Publications), 2008.

<sup>13</sup> M.N. Onyeaghalaji and D.E. Igberaese, p.269.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.269-270.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p.270.

<sup>16</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.270-271.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p.271.

<sup>19</sup> T. A. Olaopa, “A Philosopher Amongst Us: Tribute to the Late Prof. Olusegun Oladipo”, *Viewpoint*, 2009, December 24.

<sup>20</sup> *Loc. cit.*

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<sup>21</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>22</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>23</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>24</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>25</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>26</sup> G. Azenabor, "Odera Oruka's Philosophic Sagacity: Problems and Challenges of Conversation Method in African Philosophy", *Thought and Practice*, A Journal of the Philosophical Association of Kenya (PAK), Premier Issue, New Series, Vol.1 No.1, June 2009, p.69.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp.71-72.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p.72.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p.84.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p.85, quoting O. OLadipo, ed., *The Third Way in African Philosophy*, (Ibadan: Hope Publications), 2000, p.336.

<sup>31</sup> C. Agulanna, "Religion, Morality, and the Realities of the Nigerian Experience", *Lumina*, Vol.21, No.2, October 2010, pp.1-15.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p.4.

<sup>33</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>34</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>35</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p.5.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p.6.

<sup>38</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p.7.

<sup>40</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>41</sup> Loc. cit.

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<sup>42</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>43</sup> A. Ogunbure, “The Possibilities of Technological Development in Africa: An Evaluation of the Role of Culture”, *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, Vol.4, No.3, March 2011, pp.86-100.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p.92.

<sup>45</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p.94.

<sup>47</sup> J. Okeke, “Africa’s Restoration: Rediscovering the Place of African Cultural Values in an Ichabodded History”, <http://unical-ng.academia.edu/jonathanokeke/Papers/478031/> Retrieved on 14/09/2011

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p.3.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p.17.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p.18.

<sup>51</sup> G.O. Ozumba, “African Traditional Metaphysics”, *Quodlibet Journal*, Vol.6, No.3, July – September, 2004.

<sup>52</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>53</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>54</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>55</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>56</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>57</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>58</sup> M. Oke, “Cultural Nostalgia: A Philosophical Critique of Appeals to the Past in Theories of Re-Making Africa”, *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 15(3): 332–343 (2006).

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p.332.

<sup>60</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., pp.332-333.

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<sup>62</sup> O. Oladipo, “Modernisation and the Search for Community in Africa: Crisis and Conditions of Change”. In: O. Oladipo (ed.), *Remaking Africa: Challenges of the Twenty-First Century*, pp.106–123. (Ibadan, Nigeria: Hope Publications), 1998, p.111, quoted in M. Oke, Op. Cit., p.333.

<sup>63</sup> M. Oke, “Cultural Nostalgia”, p.333

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., pp.336-338.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p.338.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p.339.

<sup>67</sup> J.O. Oguejiofor, *Philosophy And The African Predicament*, (Ibadan: Hope Publications), 2001, p.33, quoted in M. Oke, p.339.

<sup>68</sup> K.A. Owolabi, “Review of the Idea of African Philosophy”, *Quest: An International African Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. VII, NO.2, 1993.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p.125.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p.126.

<sup>71</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>72</sup> J. Omoregie, “Book Review: The Idea of African Philosophy”, *NAPSSEC Journal of African Philosophy*, Vol. 1, 2001, pp.109-110.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p.110.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p.109.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p.110.

<sup>76</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>77</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>78</sup> A.P. Ojo, “Oladipo’s Concept of African Philosophy: An Appraisal”, (An Unpublished B.A. Philosophy Thesis, Seminary of All Saints, Ekpoma), 2003.

<sup>79</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p.45.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p.46.

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p.48.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p.47.

<sup>84</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p.59.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p.60.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p.62.



## CHAPTER THREE

### THE CHALLENGE OF AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

#### 3.1. The Idea of Development and its Challenge in Africa

Any consideration of development and its challenge in Africa is likely to begin with the wild wonder whether anything is inherently wrong with Africa that the continent has remained immobilized in a milieu characterized with rapid transformation in other parts of the globe. In fact, the subject of development in Africa has been categorized clearly as a crisis of development which is multi-dimensional since it is economic, political, socio-cultural and moral, etc. More importantly, this crisis of development is a product of Africa's history, and so it has its origin in the African past history.<sup>1</sup>

However, it is imperative to be clear on the idea of development at least because the world currently revolves around development since the need for development occupies a primary place today at all levels. But it is pertinent to note that "a people's concept of development is ... determined by the values of the society and the values of any society are determined by the accumulated experiences, which the people have had over a period of time."<sup>2</sup> Thus, it becomes obvious that development has always been a feature of the African societies, but that Africa is left out in the race for development today because the meaning of development applicable today is construed from cultures other than the African. In

short, Ibanga Ikpe captures this aptly that: “In the race for development, the African is already disadvantaged by the fact that, today’s concept of development emanates from outside his culture and this makes him a late starter.”<sup>3</sup>

Given this background, it is important that in pursuing development in Africa therefore, aspects of the African culture should be selectively developed and introduced into what is emulated from the West because it will make the Africans feel more at home. With this, culture will become part of the mainstream of the developmental process and the African would also be psychologically prepared to face the task of development.

Furthermore, the primary goal of development is human well-being, both in its material and moral dimension but not essentially in physical infrastructures. Hence, Julius Nyerere, for example, sees physical things as mere tools of development whereas the main development is development of the people. Thus, he makes a significant distinction between development and the tools of development, and contends that development should neither be mistaken for modernization which involves catching up with the more developed societies nor such rating of growth in terms of GDP per capita. Nyerere puts it clearly that:

Roads, buildings, the increase of crop output, and other things of this nature, are not development: they are tools of development. A new road extends a man’s freedom if he travels upon it. An increase in the number of school buildings is development only if those buildings can be, and are being used, to develop the minds and the understanding of the people. An increase in the output of wheat, maize or beans is only development if it leads to the better

nutrition of the people. An expansion of the cotton, coffee or sisal crop is development only if these things can be sold, and the money used for other things which improve the health, comfort and understanding of the people. Development which is not development of the people...is irrelevant to the future which is being created.<sup>4</sup>

It is evident that Nyerere's submission on development is founded on his realization that "development of the people can only be effected by the people"<sup>5</sup> as initiators of plans and programmes for their own well-being.

From the above, it becomes necessary to emphasize that development implies improving the quality of people's life and not a mere improvement of the environment. This perhaps is why scholars like Ade Ajayi have lamented that the development plans for Africa centered on the physical environment and not the people, hence he recalls Harry Truman's famous inauguration address to the American people: "We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefit of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas."<sup>6</sup>

Regrettably, the plan of development in Africa is one targeted at creating dependence. This is because the plan of the European nations in Africa was exploitation for foreign interest; hence their activities in Africa were geared towards developing the areas like roads, for the ease of exploitation, and not developing the peoples. It becomes clearer that it has been impossible to achieve development for Africa because the people have been generally excluded. In line with this, Ajayi argues that our development plans, processes and

conceptualization have been externally driven, and it is a type of development that either leaves behind, or in some ways even creates large areas of poverty, stagnation and marginality.<sup>7</sup> Even if there must be external assistance, it must begin by inquiring into the nature of the Africans. This implies that external agenda for development cannot be imposed on Africa.

Again, it is pertinent to raise the question whether Africans are really interested in development or whether we do act like people who care for a future or people who even have one. In response, Claude Ake for instance, believes that the leadership in Africa has been remarkably bad with a misplaced hope of an improvement in successive leaders and the only option left now is to act fast.

According to him, it was

...hoped that national leadership like every historical process would be a learning experience and eventually improve. We know now that this hope was misplaced, for successive leaders have proved maddeningly uneducable, and they have compounded our problems to the point where we are now tottering on the brink of catastrophe. Can we avoid the fatal plunge? I cannot say. But time is definitely not on our side.<sup>8</sup>

Ake points out that since independence, our leaders often take perfunctory interest and make elaborate pretence of being in charge whereas they encourage “our colonial masters to manage our economy so they could concentrate on survival in the face of the antipathies unleashed by their betrayal of the nationalist movement.”<sup>9</sup> He further laments the practice of borrowing or importing development strategies because the kind of development strategy a country applies

depends on the dynamics of social forces in its particular historical conjuncture. Thus, development strategies are “concrete products of specific historical conjunctures.”<sup>10</sup>

In addition, the myriads of problems facing Africa have taken perennial crises proportions, though Africa’s current problems arose partially from the crises of development, decay of social institutions, etc. The crises of development implied here cover both political and economic development. While the challenges of state and nation building, unity, participation and distribution face political development, economic development on the other hand is faced with different forms of economic paralysis.<sup>11</sup>

Besides, the decay of social institutions in Africa has become heightened as educational institutions are crumbling, health services have decayed, roads which used to be motorable now have ‘lakes’ called potholes, power is intermittent and affects industries, urban areas have acute shortage of water. In essence, social services are decaying.<sup>12</sup> It becomes lucid that although the causes of Africa’s crises and challenges are multidimensional, the crisis of development is salient among the causes of Africa’s plight.

### **3.2. Situating the Challenge of African Development**

Africa is an urgent development challenge in the world today. Africa bears conspicuous indicators of underdevelopment that are probably the most alarming

in the world today, for example, high rate of poverty, lack of infrastructures, high rate of illiteracy, collapsing economy, low technical growth, political instability, human rights violation, and disregard for the rule of law, etc. In fact, Africa is “a development disaster for it implies a high level of poverty, deprivation, low living standards and high human vulnerabilities.”<sup>13</sup> The puzzle that the African dilemma presents is well articulated in the assertion that “The global development index categorises Africa as lagging behind every other continent in development and economic growth. Quite a number of states in the continent have in recent development reports been classified as failed or/and fragile states.”<sup>14</sup>

The African peoples recognize that the misery, poverty, unemployment and insecurity of life that characterise the African countries are not inevitable, yet the seriousness and the size of the problem continue to confront the Africans directly, whereas there is the tendency of the people in the developed countries to assume a distant attitude instead of being thoroughly concerned. Thus, the challenge of African development can be summed up as “that of rapid economic and social progress of the underdeveloped nations for the benefit of their populations.”<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, despite the efforts the African countries are making towards development, the yawning gap between them and the rich nations is increasing. Tom Mboya observed that while some of the so-called developing countries of Africa have not been developing, rapid growth rates have been recorded in the

industrially developed nations. According to him, “As a matter of irony, it is the developed nations which are the developing nations. The lot of the underdeveloped countries has been stagnation, although there are a number of notable exceptions. Consequently, it is only euphemistic to refer to them as the developing countries.”<sup>16</sup> Given this circumstance, we have to be reminded that “Africa is many years behind the rest of the world and ... we cannot afford the luxury of wasting time.”<sup>17</sup>

The origin of the challenge or crisis of African development is traceable to some external factors or elements of developmental dislocations brought about as a result of Africa’s contact with the outside world. Some of these factors, according to Chris Uroh, include: “Slave trade with its dehumanisation of the African, direct colonisation and all its contradictions major among which was the delegitimisation of the traditional values and dislocation of the African economy and after it neo-colonisation with its weakening of the African states.”<sup>18</sup>

First, the slave trade has grave effects on development in Africa in many ways – It took away the active labour force of the continent causing a massive loss to agriculture and all other economic sectors in general; it led to a lot of socio-cultural dislocation of the people on the continent; it affected group solidarity and human relations as a result of slave acquisition through raids and kidnaps leading

to social disintegration. As such, development, even at that rudimentary stage in Africa, became arrested.<sup>19</sup>

The halt on African development continued with direct colonisation which opened another page of disorganisation of the economy of the African people to suit the economic interests of the colonial powers at the peril of Africa.<sup>20</sup> Colonialism led to a disorientation in African agriculture as attention was shifted to the production of cash crops, leading to the consequent neglect of food crops production. Obviously, the African countries have been reduced to producers of commodities they do not consume and consumers of products they cannot produce. This led to the rise in the bill for imported food items.<sup>21</sup> This disorientation in agriculture has a direct effect on African development as expressed by Basil Davidson that “A continent so (dis)organised as not to be able to feed from its own resources will thus have to live by the world’s charity as well as buying foreign food with the annual surplus that it should be spending on its own development.”<sup>22</sup>

Also, the introduction of cash crops has made the African economy almost permanently dependent on the economy of the West. This is because African countries had to search for market of their cash crops in Europe since these cash crops could not easily be processed into consumable finished products in most African countries. As a result, the African economy is almost completely tied to



Western capitalism. Thus, development stimuli for Africa is externally induced and Africa may not be able to develop beyond the stage dictated by the West.<sup>23</sup> This condition of the Africans is aptly expressed by a former president of Uganda, Milton Obote, thus: “Our economy is the economy of a poor country that must look for market abroad, and the commodities that we produce we sold mostly abroad in Western Europe. And when we want to buy raw materials and plants from Western Europe, they also fix the price. So heads we lose, tails we lose.”<sup>24</sup>

Besides, the challenge of African development was further heightened by internally generated obstacles, all pointing to the notion of politics in the continent. The notion of politics in Africa has transformed, for the worse, into “the struggle to control and exploit the offices of the state.”<sup>25</sup> As a result, those in government do not even contemplate development as a goal rather all their interest is how to steal from the public fund and then remain in office for as long as possible.

Consequently, since premium is placed on power in African politics, the military which has the monopoly of power has taken over and misgoverned many African states. Thus, the military, becoming political soldiers, moved the seat of government of many African countries from the State House to their barracks. They further complicated the development challenge already heightened by the civilians. With an unusual measure of looting, “*political soldiering* with its characteristics absence of consultations with the governed by those in authority,

general high handedness, budgetary indiscipline, absence of accountability and so on, has in fact, compounded the problem and further deepened the crisis....”<sup>26</sup> Thus, Africa has had a long experience of military dictatorships that dominated its political landscape and simply saw the state as an instrument of social and political control without a plan for development.

Two critical issues that can be gleaned from the above as the internally generated obstacles which have halted development in Africa, as pointed out by Anya O. Anya, are “the continuing state of underdevelopment of African economies and a tragic sense of misgovernance of African societies.”<sup>27</sup> However, both the externally induced factors and the internally generated obstacles have jointly orchestrated the malaise of African development. In response or reaction to the dilemma of African development, many attempts have been made to achieve African development. A historical survey will, in fact, highlight the contours of the challenge of African development.

### **3.3. Historical Survey of the Challenge of African Development**

The interest here is to interrogate the different contributions or attempts that have been made towards resolving the challenge of African development. Although the challenge of Africa has not always been called development, there has always been the realization that Africa has a basic problem why things are not

right. The ‘African problematic’ has been conceived differently depending on what is perceived as the cause of the problem. The problem is basically that of “Africa’s weakness and humiliation in the contemporary world.”<sup>28</sup> This points to the fact that Africa is left behind in the massive global development, and as a result, Africa is relegated in the global scenario. But why is Africa still tottering in underdevelopment? Many answers to this question have been advanced pointing to the source of Africa’s weakness and humiliation as the cause of its developmental challenge. These answers constitute different approaches in solving the African problem.

### **3.3.1 The Cultural Approach**

The cultural approach has argued that the African problem is one of culture and identity. It asserts that the African problem began with the assumption that the European culture was superior to the African culture. Thus, the problem of self-definition became the fundamental concern of solving the African problem. The inkling of the cultural approach is in Garveyism – the philosophy of Marcus Garvey – which is the development of the African consciousness and a sense of dignity and self-worth by the Negroes. Due to racism in America, Garvey proposed the colonization of Africa by the black race. As far back as 1914, Garvey had thought that the Africans have battered themselves physically and psychologically

for long in the hands of European hegemony and domination. Garvey's ideas deeply influenced the birth of the Pan Africanist movement which culminated into the Organisation of African Unity (O.A.U.), the forerunner of today's African Union.

Furthermore, the desire of the African to be in rapport with himself and his culture led to the movement called Negritude represented by Leopold Sedar Senghor (1906-2001) though Amie Cesaire claims to have used the term Negritude first in a poem "Cahier d' in Retour" (Notebook of a Journey Home) in 1939: "I used the term first, that's true. But it's possible we talked about it in our group."<sup>29</sup> Negritude is a literal and cultural movement of social action and a philosophy of collective action developed by black intellectuals studying in Paris in the 1930s in response to a situation that alienated them and their cultural values. It has a lasting influence in African history because it constituted a dream and a philosophy of action for black people as a race of discriminated and exploited humanity.

Observing the effects of the Western world, especially the French assimilation policy, on Africa it was clear that "the black man's cultural identity and personality were completely dominated."<sup>30</sup> Hence, with Negritude, the blacks were "determined to free themselves from their state of dominated obscurity and racial humiliation to assert the truth of their being and culture."<sup>31</sup> Thus, as a

movement, Negritude was “a resistance to the politics of assimilation”<sup>32</sup> and “a reaction to the racist colonialist ideology of white superiority.”<sup>33</sup>

In spite of its effect of generating an overwhelming African consciousness, the cultural approach to the African problem “suffered a crucial limitation, which undermined its significance as an ideology of liberation.”<sup>34</sup> Being a post-colonial era, the Africans required an anti-colonial “agenda for African self-retrieval”<sup>35</sup> but the lack of such agenda in the programme of negritude “was partly responsible for the entrenchment of neo-colonial relations with their erstwhile colonizers by many African countries on the achievement of independence.”<sup>36</sup> Thus, the major problem with the cultural approach is that “the definition of the African predicament as one of cultural inauthenticity, which required the search for an African essence, was too idealistic and one-sided.”<sup>37</sup> The shortcoming of the cultural approach to the African problem emphasized the need for African political liberation as a *sine qua non* for African development.

### **3.3.2 The Liberationist Approach.**

It became evident at a point that political liberation was essential and, in fact, the key factor in solving the African problem. Consequently, the quest for political liberation was adumbrated by the African liberation struggle which translated into and became ensconced as revolutions and nationalists movements

that would crystallise in constitutional de-colonisation. This led to a liberationist approach to the African problem spearheaded by notable figures like Kwame Nkrumah, Senghor, Sekou Toure, Nnamdi Azikiwe, etc.

The quest for political liberation incited in the Africans an expectation of “a new era of basic rights and freedom long denied under foreign or settler rule.”<sup>38</sup> Thus, Kwame Nkrumah, for example, was convinced that Africans should first seek the political kingdom as a precondition for every other desire. Nkrumah avers that “the whole solution to this problem...lay in political freedom for our people, for it is only when people are politically free that other races can give them the respect that is due to them.”<sup>39</sup> With such conceptions, the need for the independence of African nations became paramount and this occasioned African nationalism or nationalist struggle which primary goal was African liberation from the clutches of the colonial masters.

The quest for African liberation and the activities of the African nationalists in this direction led to the Pan-African movement which, George Padmore, a prime mover of Pan-Africanism, has described as “a dynamic political philosophy and guide to action for Africans in Africa who were laying the foundations of national liberation organizations.”<sup>40</sup> Thus, Pan-Africanism was applied as a vision of hope and liberation as well as a philosophy of social action for the black man or the African.

Having realized the long-sought political liberation with the emergent independence that caught across the entire Africa, the African problem still persists. Thus, Africa sinks into disillusionment, disappointment and utter despair. Since independence, Africans have taken as their own task, that of building a great continent out of their colonial experience. But unfortunately, efforts to achieve this goal in most countries have failed. Africans have been unable to rise up to their responsibilities. Tsenay Serequeberhan expresses the disappointment of the pursuit of political liberation as a key to development thus: “When the future looks back on...our immediate post-colonial past it will register a rather harsh disillusionment and disappointment regarding the promise and the actuality of the immediate post-colonial African situation.”<sup>41</sup> He traces the origin of this situation to the exercise of the first act of freedom that the Africans engaged in by attempting to violently disrupt the ‘normality’ which European colonial society presupposes.<sup>42</sup> Consequently, Africa, since independence, has been preoccupied with being confused rather than charting the course for development.

For Samir Amin, the situation of Africa even after the political liberation is one of disillusionment as there is clearly a crisis of development: “If the 1960s were characterized by the great hope of seeing an irreversible process of development launched throughout what came to be called the Third World, and in Africa particularly, the present age is one of disillusionment. Development has

broken down, its theory is in crisis, its ideology the subject of doubt.”<sup>43</sup> It becomes obvious, from the foregoing, that political liberation alone cannot solve the African crisis of development since many African countries have been long independent yet they remain underdeveloped. Indeed, the African crisis of development requires more than political liberation. It equally requires economic, socio-cultural as well as moral liberations.<sup>44</sup>

Some scholars, like Julius Nyerere, believe that African independence was a compromised one and so the end of colonialism “was no liberation for Africa.”<sup>45</sup> This is because although most of Africa is now free from colonial rule, all independent African states are still desperately poor and underdeveloped. Thus, Nyerere states that “independence has brought no change in economic conditions and very little – if any – social change.”<sup>46</sup>

Olusegun Oladipo stated that the African developmental challenge is composed of a myriad of interlocking elements but emphasized the relevance of economic growth in African development stating that the fact that African independence is compromised is an unfortunate reality which is reflected more in the economic sphere. Describing the African economic sphere, Oladipo states thus:

the pattern of relationship with the industrialized countries of the West remains basically the same as it was in colonial times. This is a pattern of unequal exchange, largely arising from Africa’s lack of capacity for self-directed action in economic matters. This has bred a culture of dependency, which has denied African countries one of the key ingredients of genuine



liberation – namely, the right “to be treated as equals”, to be allowed to function as nations that are in no way inferior to others.<sup>47</sup>

Oladipo further insists that the African condition of lack of economic freedom has not only fostered a culture of dependency, which limits her capacity for conscious, self-directed change, but also has some socio-cultural implications which include the denial of Africa of the material basis for cultural renewal, a situation of general intellectual and scientific dependence of Africa on the industrialized countries of Europe and America, among others.<sup>48</sup>

### **3.3.3 The Military Intervention Approach**

Military interventions in politics are very common in world political history, although the involvement of the military in politics is completely out of place considering the fundamental duties of the military. A military is an organization authorized by its greater society to use lethal force, usually including use of weapons, in defending its country by combating actual or perceived threats. Though the military may have additional functions of use to its greater society, such as being a form of internal social control, the main role of the military as a bureaucratic organization is to defend the country against external threats. The military bureaucracies are therefore expected to carry out defense policies formulated by legislative and executive branches.

However, in developing countries, particularly Africa, the military has had some other functions like contributing to development, and protecting the regime from internal and external sources, etc. The distinctive characteristic of military bureaucracy from civilian bureaucracy with more hierarchic, authoritative, and a legitimate source of coercion makes it easy for them to influence political institutions and in most cases, seize power.

The National Guard function of the military makes it very powerful, and sometimes unquestionable. Thus, in the underdeveloped countries, especially, although the military is restricted to national defense and obedient to the civil authority, it still has significant influence on the governmental policies. In fact, in some developed countries like the USA, the military poses a unique set of problems for presidents.<sup>49</sup> It is such that the military has almost complete discretion in their specialisation or professional area, and this is accepted as normal in a certain extent even in developed countries.

However, it has been observed that the military has become a major institutional interest group, especially in third world countries. Thus, as an interest group, military interventions in the form of a coup or military regimes are the most extreme forms of the military having an impact on the policy process.<sup>50</sup> A coup refers to an irregular transfer of the state's chief executive by the regular armed forces or internal security forces through the use or threat of the use of force.<sup>51</sup> By

means of military interventions therefore, the military wants to control the policy process largely. Hence, the military uses either legislative or executive power or in some cases judiciary power. With military interventions, the military not only changes the executive or legislative powers of government but also tries to exert strict control over other interest groups or society. That points to the fact that military regimes are often tantamount to dictatorship.

All over Africa, shortly after the massive independence, the African nationalists – the likes of Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah, Nnamdi Azikiwe – stepped into the feet of their erstwhile colonial masters and continued the exploitation of their own people for self aggrandizement. This scenario ushered in the military to the political seats of many African countries.

The political history of Africa has witnessed an indelible experience of military intervention in politics. Military intervention in African politics dates back to 1952 when Colonel Gamel Abdel Nasser overthrew King Farouk on July 23, 1952. The second military coup took place in Africa in 1958 in Sudan when General Ibrahim Abboud overthrew the civilian government. Then military coup got into the West African coast in 1963 in Togo when a military coup was staged against the government of Sylvanus Olympio and he lost his life in that process. In the same 1963, on October 28, Colonel Christopher Soglo overthrew the government of Herbert Maga, the Premier of Dahomey, in the Republic of Benin.

In Nigeria, the first military intervention took place on January 15, 1966 when Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu and other six majors organised a military coup against the government of Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa the first prime minister of Nigeria. Although the coup brought shock and pain to the entire population of Nigeria, it was felt that the politicians had let the nation down, and it was hoped that the military would set things right. But the many years of military rule in Nigeria has shown that the military's role as an impartial umpire in the Nigerian political game has failed. Thus, as Ojo E.O. and Adebayo P.F. stated

The Nigerian army until 1966 was a normal professional force. The officers and men occupied themselves with training, peacekeeping efforts in foreign lands, and other sundry military activities. But that changed when Major Kaduna Chukwuma Nzeogwu and his cohorts struck in January 15, 1966. That coup apart from sounding the death knell of the First Republic effectively brought the men in "khaki" into the murky waters of Nigerian politics.<sup>52</sup>

In liberal tradition or a normal circumstance, the military is insulated from politics and subject to civilian control. But in Africa, as well as most developing countries, there is a disruption of the civil-military equilibrium usually assumed in liberal democracies. Thus, in several developing countries, the military has not only intervened in the political process and overthrown the constitutional civilian authority, but it also often has established its supremacy over elected politicians.

However, even in those countries where the military has become almost a permanent feature of politics, military rule is still considered an aberration and

symptomatic of a malfunctioning political system. In Nigeria, for example, military rule was usually seen as a “rescue” operation necessary to save the country from civilian ineptitude. And so, military rule was not expected to last long; once the rescue operation was complete, the military should return to the barracks where they belonged and leave the governing to civilian politicians. The problem, however, was that although military officers accepted this rationale, military rule usually became self-sustaining. This is such that from the onset of independent government in Nigeria in 1960 to the end of 1990, the military had ruled for twenty-one years with about five coups d’état involving changes of government and only two, those of January 1966 and December 1983 were against civilian governments.<sup>53</sup>

Several reasons have been offered for military intervention in Africa. These include economic mismanagement and corruption by politicians, lack of efficient change of leadership, breakdown of law and order, lack of independence of the judiciary, the continuation of ethno-regional politics by military means, personal ambitions of military officers etc. However, the impact of the military on African underdevelopment cannot be over emphasised.

Somehow, the military intervention has been construed as an approach or attempt to African development. The granite truth, however, is that the coming of the military into the political scene in Africa marked a watershed in the

development of Africa. Although the military purportedly came in to correct the supposed ills in the society and contributed to the development in several ways, the military rather than solve the problem of Africa have compounded it. Precisely, through the abuse of power, corruption, and blatant abuse of fundamental human rights of the citizens created political instability.<sup>54</sup>

Even though the military has contributed to African development with its seemingly impressive achievements in terms of state creation, defending of national unity and sovereignty amidst violent moves for secession, establishment of secondary and tertiary institutions, change of currency from British pounds, shillings and pence, the African experience of military rule has shown that the military has been incapable of resolving the crisis under which civilian regimes crumbled, rather they have compounded the problem they claimed they came in to resolve. For example, since the military rule by decrees, it is repressive, the rights of the people are trampled upon, innocent citizens are brutalised and dehumanised, freedom of speech is impaired and the press censored.

Furthermore, from the records, military intervention has been a major source of political instability in Africa. Also, in the area of fighting corruption which was often one of the reasons for military intervention in Africa, the military has not succeeded. The military is as corrupt if not more corrupt than their predecessors they overthrew. Successive military regimes in Africa abused power and human

rights, and were dictatorial. It is clear from the above, therefore, that military regimes are not the best for the development of Africa. However, although militocracy, whether benign or malign, has no legal binding and it is not the people's best choice the military will remain the people's hidden choice as long as truncated elections and constitutional panel beating gag democratic avenues and as long as civilian leadership in Africa thrives by grotesque routine instead of by grandiose reform.

Above all, Olusegun Oladipo implicated the involvement of the military in politics as having made matters worse. This is because it has turned arbitrary rule into a norm and has led to the overconcentration of power at the centre, thereby making nonsense of the principle of federation on the basis of which a multi-ethnic society like African states could flourish. Also, it has denied us the opportunity to learn from our past errors as we try to institutionalise political or constitutional rule in our society. Generally, therefore, the military have not only made political rule impossible, their predominance in our national affairs has weakened considerably the foundations of our social and public life.<sup>55</sup>

### **3.3.4 Democracy as an Approach**

Many have argued that only a genuine enthronement of democratic rule can ensure development of Africa. Democracy has become widely realised as a

prerequisite for sustained development. This is because democratic governance fosters transparency, accountability, the rule of law, respect for human rights, civic participation, and civic inclusiveness – all of which are necessary for securing economic productivity, equitable distribution and state legitimacy.

Consequently, most African countries are in a hurry to imbibe and enthrone democracy as a *sine qua non* for development. On the contrary, however, democracy has been practiced in most African countries; in fact it has become a world political culture without still occasioning the much desired African development. This questions the credibility of democracy as a recipe for African development. Thus, the quest for African development has not been satisfied in the democratic approach to development, and so the search continues.

The complex nature of the problem of African development has resulted in the contemporary concern of the search for a theoretical compass to resolve the crisis. This search has led to the postulation of different theories of development, each claiming to have the correct answer to the African problem.

### **3.4 Theories of Development**

Generally, a theory is a conjecture or proposition accepted in view of a given operation. Thus, a theory is an assumption or a system of assumptions, accepted principles and rules of procedure based on limited information or knowledge



devised to analyse, predict, or otherwise explain the nature of a specified set of phenomena or abstract reasoning.<sup>56</sup> Theories of development, therefore, refer to the divergent views regarding the nature and status of development.

Seen in a broad sense, as an advancement or improvement over some more primitive status, there is hardly any disagreement about the nature of development. But different considerations from different schools of thought abound when development is conceived particularly in reference to human society in terms of adequate responses to the environment in its complexities and the existential conditions in which human beings live. Thus, these divergent views about the paradigm of development are what we refer to as theories of development. M.L. Igbafen presents a concise description that theories of development are:

models of theoretical understanding which seek to answer the following interrelated questions. What are the root causes of the wealth and poverty of nations? Why have some countries advanced further than others? What account for the underdevelopment or backwardness of some countries and the presence of sustained development in others? Why are some countries developed and others underdeveloped?<sup>57</sup>

Furthermore, theories of development refer to a conglomeration of theories about how desirable change in society is best to be achieved. Such theories draw on a variety of social scientific disciplines and approaches. Thus, the theories of development represent the cumulative ideas, views and discourses of development.

In the discourse of development different theories abound. However, the most significant of these are two competing or diametrically opposed theories –

Modernisation and Dependency theories – which are often referred to as historical or traditional development theories. Other development theories include World Systems Theory, Cultural Theory, State Theory, Hegel and Marx Theory, Theory of Uneven and Combined Development, etc.

### **3.4.1 Modernisation Theory**

The term modernisation conjures images of social change in the direction of general improvement over the past. Modernisation refers to a model of an evolutionary transition from a ‘pre-modern’ or ‘traditional’ to a ‘modern’ society. The teleology of modernisation is described in social evolutionism theories, existing as a template that has been generally followed by societies that have achieved modernity. While it may theoretically be possible for some societies to make the transition in entirely different ways, there have been no counterexamples provided by reliable sources. Thus, it is a common practice to link modernisation to the processes of urbanisation and industrialisation.

Furthermore, modernisation is a process of socio-cultural transformation. It is a thorough going process of change involving values, norms, institutions and structures. Political dimensions of modernisation involves creation of a modern nation state and the development of key institutions political parties, bureaucratic structures, legislative bodies and a system of elections based on universal franchise

and secret ballot. Cultural modernisation involves adherence to nationalistic ideology, belief in equality, freedom and humanism, a rational and scientific outlook. Economic modernisation involves industrialisation accompanied with monetisation of economy, increasing division of labour, use of management techniques and improved technology and the expansion of service sector. Social modernisation involves universalistic values, achievement motivation, increasing mobility both social and geographic increasing literacy and urbanisation and the decline of traditional authority.<sup>58</sup>

However, in contemporary discourse on development, the notion has been the basis of a theoretical orientation variously referred to as modernisation theory, approach, paradigm, or framework to the study of the development of Third World or underdeveloped societies. Modernisation theory is, therefore, a grand theory encompassing many different disciplines as it seeks to explain how society progresses, what variables affect that progress, and how societies can react to that progress.

Modernisation theory focuses specifically on a type of modernisation thought to have originated in Europe during the 17th century, which brought social mores and technological achievements into a new epoch. The foundations of modernisation theory go back to the Age of Enlightenment, when a number of philosophers began to look at how society changed and progressed. Theories were

laid out as to how technological advancement necessarily led to social advancement, which in turn led to an examination of how different facets of advancement were connected. The basic premise of this phase of modernisation theory was that humans were able to change their society within a generation, and that this change was often facilitated by advancements in technology, production, and consumption.

In the modern age, modernisation theory looks at how new technologies and systems are leading to a more greatly homogenised world. Modernisation theory encompasses the world of globalisation, where cultural mores and ideas are easily spread throughout the world, leading to a sort of universal culture that serves as a baseline for all cultures.

This theory presumes that development is basically economic growth and as such, it is a product of development economics. As a theory of development, it holds that development can be achieved through following the processes of development that were used by the currently developed countries. Thus, it is a theory used to explain the process of modernisation within societies. Therefore, the modernisation theory presents the Western capitalist societies, that is, the developed countries of the West as a paradigm for the underdeveloped countries especially Africa and other Third World countries. And so, the “developing or underdeveloped nations must as a matter of deliberate effort follow the steps or

mimic the developmental capabilities of the developed nations of the world in order to experience development.”<sup>59</sup>

Furthermore, modernisation theory is a theory used to explain the process of modernisation within societies. The theory looks at the internal factors of a country while assuming that, with assistance, “traditional” countries can be brought to development in the same manner more developed countries have. Thus, the underlying idea of modernisation theory is that transformation in the developing countries could be achieved through the ability to generate sustained economic growth.<sup>60</sup> With such an idea, modernisation theory conceives development as a one way process of structural change, involving industrialisation, in which a society moves from the stage of underdevelopment to the stage of development.

The modernisation theorists argue that rather than blame the impoverishment of the underdeveloped countries as a consequence of imperialism or neo-colonialism, in a relationship between the centre and the periphery, underdevelopment is as a result of certain inhibitory characteristics or factors which are basically internal.

In the light of the above, these theorists argue further that African and other Third World countries have remained underdeveloped due to low division of labour and specialisation, ineffective orientation, lack of entrepreneurship, lack of capital, political instability, etc.<sup>61</sup> David Miclleland, for instance, have argued that

Africa and other Third World countries are poor and backward because of certain inhibitory factors, which include superstition, traditional kinship values, high illiteracy rate, ignorance and disease, extended family system and geo-ethnic interest.<sup>62</sup> Thus, what is inherent in modernisation theory is that for the underdeveloped countries to develop they must transit from traditional to modern and this modernity is typified by the Western capitalist states.

More so, modernisation theory attempts to identify the social variables which contribute to social progress and development of societies, and seeks to explain the process of social evolution. Scholars such as Walt Rostow postulated stages of development applying to every country, and this is one of many such attempts to arrive at a stages theory of development. The Marxist dialectical approach holds that society had already passed through the cycle – primitive communism, the ancient slave trade, feudalism, and capitalism – and the German historical school argues that development takes place in such stages as “the household economy, the town economy, and the national economy.”<sup>63</sup>

Rostow, for example, enunciated such familiar development terms as the traditional society, the preconditions of take-off, the take-off, the drive to maturity, and the age of mass-consumption, as five categories within which all societies, in their economic dimensions, lie.<sup>64</sup> Rostow’s recipe, however, seems to be in praise of capitalism. Also, Samuel Huntington, thinking in the modernisation perspective,

considered development to be a linear process which every country must go through.

Modernisation theory viewed the state as a central actor in modernising "backward" or "underdeveloped" societies. The Action theory of Talcott Parsons, for example, defined qualities that distinguished “modern” and “traditional” societies.<sup>65</sup> It identified education as key to creating modern individuals, while technology as playing a key role in this development theory because it was believed that as technology was introduced to lesser-developed countries it would spur economic growth.

One key factor in modernisation theory is the belief that development requires the developed countries to aid developing countries to learn from their own progress. In addition, it was believed that the lesser developed countries could then grow faster than developed countries and catch up; and that it is possible for equal development to be reached.

However, the globalisation process and the fall of communism provided a new impetus for modernisation theory, gradually leading to the formulation of dominant development policy prescriptions. Thus, modernisation theory with its modified versions emerged as a victor out of the theoretical impasse on development as the theory maintains that contact with the North is necessarily beneficial for the developing world and that adopting the “good policies” of

openness and liberalization will inevitably lead to linear development through several discrete stages. According to modernization theory, it is the “traditional” element of society within the underdeveloped countries that prevents development. It also claims that the widening gap between rich and poor countries is simply an anomaly caused by a defective implementation of its prescriptions.<sup>66</sup>

Although modernisation has many advantages, some are concerned about the long term effects it has on countries and people. As a result, it is important to outline some limitations and/or weaknesses of the modernisation theory. Modernisation theory has been accused of being Eurocentric as modernisation began in Europe with the Industrial Revolution, the French Revolution and the Revolutions of 1848<sup>67</sup> and has long been regarded as reaching its most advanced stage in Europe. Anthropologists typically make their criticism one step further generalized and say that this view is ethnocentric, not being specific to Europe, but Western culture in general.

A loss of culture may result from modernisation since the spread of the Western culture has caused young people in non-Western countries to abandon traditional customs and values. Even languages begin to disappear as urbanisation encourages people to learn a country's dominant language. Also, modernisation spawns new technology which has revolutionised the speed and accuracy of production. This occasions increased global trade which allows businesses to sell



their products anywhere. But increased global production may hurt domestic business when international companies can offer products at cheaper prices. Thus, the mass production of goods in foreign countries, where labour laws are more relaxed, amounts to exploitation in some people's view.

Furthermore, natural resources such as wood, water and oil are often processed in modernised society, and skyscrapers and factories begin to transform the landscape. Thus, in many underdeveloped or poorer countries, the discovery of oil, the extraction of natural resources and the adoption of new technologies are welcomed for the financial opportunities they present without considering the environmental problems such as climate change that they create.

Above all, modernisation theory argues that the traditions and pre-existing institutions of primitive societies are obstacles to modern economic growth. As such, modernisation which is forced from outside upon a society might induce violent and radical change. Critics, therefore, point out the fact that through modernisation, traditional societies are being destroyed and slipping away to a modern form of poverty without ever gaining the promised advantages of modernisation.

### **3.4.2 Dependency Theory**

The dependency theory was developed in the 1950s and it shared many points with Rosa Luxembourge's and V.I. Lenin's earlier, Marxist, theories of imperialism; and dependency theory was embraced by many Marxists and neo-Marxists. The dependency theory conceives development and underdevelopment not as a result of internal conditions which differ between economies, as thought by modernisation theory, but as relational. The theory argues that the crisis of development facing underdeveloped or developing nations is not a stage in the evolutionary process of nations but a created one. A high point of this theory is its conviction that neo-colonialism and imperialism are the bane of development in the Third World countries. Thus, it argues that the wealth of nations or the poverty of nations is the end result of a global process of exploitation unleashed on the Third World during the colonial era.<sup>68</sup>

Dependency thinking starts from the notion that resources flow from the 'periphery' of poor and underdeveloped states to a 'core' of wealthy countries, which leads to accumulation of wealth in the rich states at the expense of the poor states. Contrary to modernisation theory, dependency theory states that not all societies progress through similar stages of development. Primitive states have unique features, structures and institutions of their own and are the weaker with regard to the world market economy, while the developed nations have never been

in this follower position in the past. Dependency theorists argue that underdeveloped countries remain economically vulnerable unless they reduce their connectedness to the world market.

The theory sees the world's nations as divided into a *core* of wealthy nations which dominate a *periphery* of poor nations whose main function in the system is to provide cheap labour and raw materials to the core. It held that the benefits of this system accrue almost entirely to the rich nations, which become progressively richer and more developed, while the poor nations, which continually have their surpluses drained away to the core, do not advance.

Furthermore, dependency theory states that poor nations provide natural resources and cheap labour for developed nations, without which the developed nations could not have the standard of living which they enjoy. Also, developed nations will try to maintain this situation and try to counter attempts by developing nations to reduce the influence of developed nations. This means that poverty of developing nations is not the result of the disintegration of these countries in the world system, but because of the way in which they are integrated into this system.

In addition, some dependency theorists like the famous Immanuel Wallerstein have rejected the notion of a Third World, claiming that there is only one world which is connected by economic relations. Wallerstein argues that this

system inherently leads to a division of the world in core, semi-periphery and periphery.<sup>69</sup>

One claim that seems to permeate the dependency theory is that the very contact between the developed and developing world within the world capitalist system is what hinders growth and causes poverty in the latter. Thus, dependency is often described as a situation in which the economy of certain countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy to which the former is subjected. Dependency theorists, however, consider the gap between the underdeveloped and the developed nations to be an inherent part of the system, effectively siphoning wealth from the South to the North.

With the above background, the dependency theorists argue that the phenomenon of underdevelopment has continued unabated even after colonialism through the activities of neo-imperialist institutions and agents who masquerade as leaders in developing countries. The period of transfer of political power to the indigenous bourgeoisie by the western colonialists witnessed the promotion of class and power relations which ensured the continued domination of Third World countries by international capitalism.<sup>70</sup> Thus, the dependency theorists hold that for underdeveloped nations to develop, they must break their ties with developed nations and pursue internal growth. Put differently, as Samir Amin argues, the solution to the crisis of development lies in de-linking developing or

underdeveloped countries from the global order and thus from western hegemony.<sup>71</sup> Thus, the dependency theory insists that development can only occur if there is a deliberate or conscious effort by the Third World countries to de-link from the world capitalist order.

Nevertheless, dependency theory has been rendered “obsolete”, disappearing from the theoretical radar and leaving some of the crucial epistemological questions about development and poverty unanswered. One of the reasons why dependency theory lost its place in the normative universe and fell from currency is because its fragmented nature prevented it to develop a grand narrative that would provide a more robust framework of analysis.

Therefore, there is no one unified dependency theory. Depending on the ontological and causal focus, different authors come up with different interpretations and prescriptions. One of the more important distinctions is between Marxist and Latin American structuralist version of dependency theory. Their views diverge when it comes to issues of determination and possibility of development. The former version claims that development within the global capitalist system is impossible and focuses almost exclusively on external factors of determination. The latter theory is perhaps more optimistic when it comes to prospects of development, but it mainly tends to address internal factors of progress.

Also, policy recommendations of dependency theorists vary greatly. For instance, Andre Gunder Frank claims that causes of underdevelopment are explicitly historical, with recognition of internal class struggles, and solutions must be global, political and ultimately revolutionary, with necessary delinking of dependent economies. On the other hand, authors like Cardoso and Faletto believe that ‘associated dependent development’ is possible within the capitalist framework. They also focus on financial relations between countries, framing their theory in the terms of “bankers and clients.”<sup>72</sup>

Furthermore, the ideological impact of certain historical events, such as the failure of Import Substitution Industrialisation (ISI) in some Latin American countries and the fall of communism, rendered dependency theory “outdated” compared to the vindicated policy prescriptions of neo-liberalism.

### **3.4.3 Structural Theory**

Structural theory of development focuses on structural aspects which impede the economic growth of developing countries. Its fundamental consideration is the transformation of a country’s economy from, mainly, a subsistence agriculture to a modern, urbanised manufacturing and service economy. As a result, policy prescriptions resulting from structuralist thinking include major government intervention in the economy to fuel the industrial sector, known as Import

Substitution Industrialization (ISI). Thus, the structural theory of the development is applied in order to create an economy which in the end enjoys self-sustaining growth, and this can only be reached by ending the reliance of the underdeveloped country on exports of primary goods like agricultural and mining products, and pursuing inward-oriented development by shielding the domestic economy from that of the developed economies.

Also, structural theory advocates for a minimised trade with advanced economies through the erection of all kinds of trade barriers and an overvaluation of the domestic exchange rate; in this way the production of domestic substitutes of formerly imported industrial products is encouraged. The logic of this theory rests on the Infant industry argument, which states that young industries initially do not have the economies of scale and experience to be able to compete with foreign competitors and thus need to be protected until they are able to compete in the free market.

Finally, the structural theory argues that the only way African and other Third World countries can develop is through action by the state. Thus, Third World countries have to push industrialisation and have to reduce their dependency on trade with the First World, and trade among themselves.

### **3.4.4 Basic Needs Theory**

The basic needs theory was introduced by the International Labour Organization in 1976, primarily in reaction to the prevalent modernisation and structuralism development theories, which were not achieving satisfactory results in terms of poverty alleviation and combating inequality in developing countries. As such it tried to define an absolute minimum of resources necessary for long-term physical well-being, and argued that the poverty line which follows from this is the amount of income needed to satisfy those basic needs. This approach has been applied in the sphere of development assistance, to determine what a society needs for subsistence, and for poor population groups to rise above the poverty line.

The proponents of basic needs theory have argued that elimination of absolute poverty is a good way to make people active in society so that they can provide labour more easily and act as consumers and savers. However, there are many criticisms of the basic needs theory which include that it lacks theoretical rigour and practical precision, it is in conflict with growth promotion policies, and it runs the risk of leaving developing countries in permanent backwardness.



### **3.4.5 Neo-Liberalist or Neo-Classical Theory**

Neo-Classical development theory has its origins in classical economics which is its predecessor. Classical economics was developed in the 18th and 19th centuries and dealt with the value of products and on which production factors it depends. Some early contributors to classical economics are Adam Smith and David Ricardo. Like the Classical economists, the Neo-Liberalists or Neo-Classicalists argued in favour of the free market, and against government intervention in those markets. Thus, the ‘invisible hand’ of Adam Smith makes sure that free trade will ultimately benefit all of society.

Neo-classical development theory, however, became influential towards the end of the 1970s, fired by the election of Margaret Thatcher in the UK and Ronald Reagan in the USA. More importantly, from the beginning of the 1980s when the World Bank shifted from its Basic Needs approach to the Neo-Classical approach, the Neo-Classical theory of development really began to roll out.

Notably, one of the implications of the neoclassical development theory for developing countries was the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) which the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund wanted them to adapt. Important aspects of those SAPs include: (1) Fiscal austerity, that is, reduction in government spending; (2) Privatization – which should both raise money for governments and improve efficiency and financial performance of the firms involved; (3) Trade

liberalization, currency devaluation and the abolition of marketing boards, in order to maximise the static comparative advantage the developing country has on the global market; (4) Retrenchment of the government and deregulation in order to stimulate the free market.

### **3.4.6 Post-development Theory**

The Post-development theory emerged in the 1980s and 1990s and argues that the idea of development is just a 'mental structure' which has resulted in an hierarchy of developed and underdeveloped nations, of which the underdeveloped nations desire to be like developed nations. The central thesis of the post-development theorists therefore, is that the goal of improving living standards leans on arbitrary claims as to the desirability and possibility of that goal. In other words, they notice that development thinking has been dominated by the West and it has been very ethnocentric whereas, the Western lifestyle may neither be a realistic nor a desirable goal for the world's population. As a result, development is being seen and pursued as a loss of a country's own culture, people's perception of themselves and modes of life, not minding that things like notions of poverty are very culturally embedded and can differ a lot among cultures. Thus, since the concern over underdevelopment is very Western-oriented, the post-development theory calls for a broader cultural involvement in development thinking.

Consequently, Post-development theory proposes a vision of society which removes itself from the ideas which currently dominate it. And so, post-development theory is interested instead in local culture and knowledge, a critical view against established sciences and the promotion of local grassroots movements. As such, post-development argues for structural change in order to reach solidarity, reciprocity, and a larger involvement of traditional knowledge.

### **3.4.7 Sustainable Development Theory**

Sustainable development theory conceives economic development in such a way that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Thus, its focus is the carrying capacity of the earth and its natural systems and the challenges faced by humanity. As a result, sustainable development theory chiefly considers environmental sustainability, economic sustainability and socio-political sustainability etc. Besides sustainability, global warming issues are also problems which are emphasised by the sustainable development theory.

### **3.4.8 Human Development Theory**

Human development theory uses ideas from different origins, such as ecology, sustainable development, feminism and welfare economics. It wants to avoid normative politics and is focused on how social capital and instructional

capital can be deployed to optimize the overall value of human capital in an economy. Amartya Sen and Mahbub ul Haq are the most well-known human development theorists. Amartya Sen, for instance, focused on capabilities: what people can do, and be. According to him, it is these capabilities, rather than the income or goods that they receive, that determine their well being.

This core idea also underlies the construction of the Human Development Index, a human-focused measure of development pioneered by the UNDP in its Human Development Reports. However, the economic side of human development theory can best be categorised under welfare economics, which evaluates the effects of economic policies on the well-being of peoples.

### **3.5 The Search for a Solution to the Challenge of African Development**

The challenge of African development has petrified into a major plague in the African experience. While the awareness of this problem has been increasingly propagated and broadcasted, little or nothing significant has been done in the right direction to seeking a solution to ameliorate the challenges posed by this problem. The thrust here, however, is to interrogate the search for such a solution. Thus, it is the interest of this study, at this juncture, to critically highlight some attempts at a solution to the problem of African development.

No doubt, the challenge of African development is a complexity in itself, perhaps, because “it is a product of Africa’s chequered history.”<sup>73</sup> In other words, the origin of the problem is traceable to the African past history. However, building on the above, many thinkers have opined that the developmental dislocations in Africa were as a result of the convergence of both external and internal factors. The external factors refer to those resulting from Africa’s contact with the outside world like slave trade and colonisation, whereas the internal factors include the activities of African leaders and national politics within African states. It is obvious, as Chris Uroh had observed that both the external and internal factors have serious implications for African development. For instance, “with direct colonisation, which followed almost immediately after slave trade, the ‘rape’ of Africa continued in a rather disguised but equally dislocating and plundering form,”<sup>74</sup> while on the other hand, whereas the people expected independence to bring about a qualitative change to their lives, the African nationalists

Were more interested in ‘replacing Europeans in leading positions of power and privileges’, a project which they pursued at the expense of the desperately needed ‘radical transformation of the state and society’ they had inherited. Therefore the masses of the people became captive just as it was the case under colonial rule, to their own *leaders*, who then marginalised as well as manipulated them for their own selfish ends.<sup>75</sup>

Consequently, the present condition of the African states is one in which the question of development is definitely in crisis. In short, “development has broken down, its theory is in crisis, its ideology the subject of doubt.”<sup>76</sup>

In response to the search for a solution to the problem of African development, Ibanga Ikpe argued that there is always a cultural context to development and as such “a people’s concept of development is ... determined by the values of the society and the values of any society are determined by the accumulated experiences, which the people had over a period of time.”<sup>77</sup> He emphasised that development has always been a feature of the African societies, and indeed, the African societies are more receptive to developmental change than most other societies, far from the misconceptions that they are unreceptive to developmental change. For him, Africa is left out in the race for development today obviously because the meaning of development applicable today is construed from cultures other than the African. He relays this succinctly that “in the race for development, the African is already disadvantaged by the fact that today’s concept of development emanates from outside his culture and this makes him a late starter.”<sup>78</sup>

Given this background, Ibanga Ikpe recommends that in pursuing development, aspects of the African culture should be selectively developed and introduced into what is emulated from the West because it will make the Africans feel more at home. If this is done, according to him, then, not only that culture will become part of the mainstream of the developmental process, the African would also be psychologically prepared to face the task of development.

More so, asserting that there are many problems facing Africa, J.I. Elaigwu noticed that the different forms of the technological revolution in the 21<sup>st</sup> century “bring into sharper focus Africa’s precarious position vis-a-vis the rest of the world.”<sup>79</sup> He argued that though the myriads of problem facing Africa have taken perennial crises proportions, Africa’s current problems arose partially from the crises of development, decay of social institutions, etc.<sup>80</sup> The crises of development which he implied cover both political and economic development. While the challenges of state and nation building, unity, participation and distribution face political development, economic development on the other hand is faced with different forms of economic paralysis.

Besides, Elaigwu emphasises the decay of social institutions. For instance, he observes, educational institutions in Nigeria are crumbling, health services have decayed, roads which used to be motorable now have ‘lakes’ called potholes, power is intermittent and affects industries, urban areas have acute shortage of water, in essence, social services are decaying.<sup>81</sup> Although the causes of Africa’s crises and challenges are multidimensional, Elaigwu suggested that the crisis of development is salient among the causes of Africa’s plight.

In response to the problem of African development, Tom Mboya makes it clear that “ultimately the job of developing this continent is entirely ours.”<sup>82</sup> He regrets that the many development objectives existing in Africa remain visions of

intellectuals and promises of politicians. As a result, he seeks to propose a programme of action for African development.

Although Mboya is convinced that the initiative and job of development should come from Africa, he insists that “truly rapid development will also require the advanced countries to increase their assistance to Africa and to carry out some obviously necessary reforms in their aid programme.”<sup>83</sup> Following this line of thought, Mboya claims that the developing countries are in the greatest danger of not developing at all because hampered by bare subsistence-level incomes, domestic capital can scarcely be accumulated, and foreign capital is drying up at a time when the wealthy nations are achieving unprecedented rates of growth, with undesirable side effects on the developing countries.

Consequently, Mboya suggests a Marshall Plan for Africa – a massive infusion of manpower and capital. According to him:

It is for us in Africa to identify our problems, to prepare a comprehensive, coordinated and integrated programme suited to the specific needs of Africa, and to interest the advanced nation in the implementation of that programme.... The belated achievement of independence status by so many African states is a major reason why a massive development programme in Africa is so essential today. It also explains why development needs in Africa differ in so many ways from requirements in other developing parts of the world.<sup>84</sup>

Mboya concludes by proposing that we in Africa should take the lead in planning and coordinating a programme for the economic development of our continent. He contends that this programme will require a massive inflow of



technical assistance, personnel and the close co-operation and full support of all independent developing African nations. He suggests, however, that such a programme should include the following four critical aspects: (a) the construction of a continental infrastructure; (b) the collection and analysis of economic information; (c) the expansion of food production, storage and marketing; (d) the development of human resources.<sup>85</sup>

From the foregoing, it is clear that a lot of meaningful attention and responses have been directed towards solving or resolving the problem of African development by different scholars, yet the problem remains and even increases on a daily basis. The hub of this study, therefore, is to proffer a remedy to the problem of African development which seems to be devoid of all solutions. The focus of this work therefore is to argue from Olusegun Oladipo's theory of development that institutional development is a paradigm for African development. As a result, the next chapter shall engage the social philosophy of Olusegun Oladipo as a background for the argument of this work.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> C. Uroh, "Situating the Challenge of Development in Africa," in Chris Uroh (ed), *Africa and the Challenge of Development: Essays by Samir Amin*, (Ibadan: Hope Publications, 1998), pp. 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> I. Ikpe, "The Culture of Development and the Development of Culture," *Viewpoint: A critical Review of Culture and Society*, I: 1&2, 1999, 1-8, p.3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> J. Nyerere, *Man and Development*, (Dar Es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1974), p.26.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.28.

<sup>6</sup> A. Ajayi, "Development is About People," *Viewpoint: A critical Review of Culture and Society*, I: 1&2, 1999, 9-17, p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>8</sup> C. Ake, *Development Strategy for Nigeria after the Structural Adjustment Programme*, Development Policy Centre (DPC) Lecture Series, Number 2, (Ibadan: Development Policy Centre, 1996), p.1.

<sup>9</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p.4.

<sup>11</sup> J.I. Elaigwu, "Africa – Crises and Challenges: Towards a Causal Analysis" in *Governance*, A Journal of the Institute of Governance and Social Research, Vol. 1, Number 1, Jos: Institute of Governance and Social Research, 1998, p.33.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p.43.

<sup>13</sup> Fondad, *Africa in the World Economy - The National, Regional and International Challenges*, (The Hague, December 2005), [www.fondad.org](http://www.fondad.org), p. 46.

<sup>14</sup> M. Anyiam- Osigwe, "Philosophy and Development Paradigms: Towards a Requisite Synthesis for Africa's Socio-Political and Economic Transformation" Being a speech delivered at the eight session of the Emmanuel Onyechere Osigwe Anyiam-Osigwe lecture series held at the Nigerian Institute for International Affairs (NIIA), Lagos, Nigeria, November, 2006.

<sup>15</sup> T. Mboya, *The Challenge of Nationhood: A Collection of Speeches and Writings*, (London: Heinemann Educational Books), 1970, p. 266.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 267.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

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- <sup>18</sup> C. Uroh, "Situating the Challenge of Development in Africa," p. 8.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 9.
- <sup>20</sup> A. Irele, "The Crisis of Legitimacy in Africa," *Dissent*, (Summer, 1992), p. 299.
- <sup>21</sup> C. Uroh, "Situating the Challenge of Development in Africa," p. 9.
- <sup>22</sup> B. Davidson, *Can Africa Survive?* (Canada: Little Brown & Co.), 1974, p.23.
- <sup>23</sup> C. Uroh, "Situating the Challenge of Development in Africa," p. 10.
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- <sup>25</sup> R. Joseph, *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria*, (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.), 1991, p. 3.
- <sup>26</sup> C. Uroh, "Situating the Challenge of Development in Africa," p. 16.
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- <sup>36</sup> Loc. cit.
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- <sup>43</sup> S. Amin, *Maldevelopment: Anatomy of Global Failure* (Tokyo, London, New Jersey: United Nations University Press and Zed Books Ltd.), 1990, p. 1.
- <sup>44</sup> Chris Uroh, "Situating the Challenge of Development in Africa," p. 1.
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## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY OF OLUSEGUN OLADIPO**

#### **4.1 A Brief Biography of Olusegun Oladipo<sup>1</sup>**

Olusegun ‘Teju Oladipo, a renowned Nigerian philosopher, was born on August 23, 1957 at Accra, Ghana, to the family of Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Oladipo of Faji, in Odo-Otin Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria. He had his primary and secondary education in both Ghana and Nigeria. He was admitted to the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria in August, 1979 and graduated in July 1982, with a B.A. First Class Honours Degree in Philosophy. With this excellent achievement, he put in for his Master programme on November 11, 1983 in the same University.

After completing his Masters Degree in Philosophy in 1984, he joined the Department of Philosophy, University of Ibadan, as an Assistant Lecturer. On December 11, 1984, he started his Doctoral programme in the same University. He was promoted to Lecturer II in 1987 and rose to the position of Lecturer I two years later. He completed his PhD in Philosophy in 1988, exactly at his 31<sup>st</sup> birthday. He was promoted Senior Lecturer in Philosophy in 1993 and became a full professor in October 2000. As a philosopher, he specialised in African philosophy and Kwasi Wiredu stimulated his interest.<sup>2</sup>

During his life, he served the University of Ibadan in various capacities. He was from 1991 to 1993 the sub-Dean, Faculty of Arts, and Acting Head, the

Department of Philosophy, University of Ibadan, between 1995 and 1997. Until his untimely death, Oladipo was the representative of the Faculty of Arts on the Central Appointments and Promotions Committee of the University. He supervised numerous PhD dissertations in Philosophy in the Department of Philosophy, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Oladipo was a member of many professional associations and served as external examiner to many academic departments. He was the chief examiner for Logical Thinking for the Public Service Examination of the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON) from 1993 to 2007. Oladipo was also Vice-President of the Nigerian Philosophical Association (NPA) from 2004 to 2008. He had more than 50 publications to his credit, including 10 books. One of the books is the celebrated *The Idea of African Philosophy*. He died after a brief illness, on December 11, 2009, at the University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan, Nigeria, at the age of 52. He was buried on December 18, 2009.

#### **4.2 A Background to Olusegun Oladipo's Philosophy**

Olusegun Oladipo stands somewhat apart in the annals of African philosophy. Against the usual debate whether there is African philosophy or not, he looked beyond the theoretical aspect of philosophy towards practicalizing this noble and exciting profession.<sup>3</sup> Thus, he proposed that African scholars, particularly philosophers, should concentrate on using their



God-given intellect or knowledge to help humanity by developing our society. This is because his basic concern was how far African philosophers, as scholars, meet their responsibilities to African needs.

Oladipo seeks to establish that the mission of African philosophy is a practical one. As such, he argued that philosophers and scholars in Africa should make their work relevant and useful to human interest in their various societies in order to make Africa a continent where everyone would be happy to live in. Thus, he asserts that: “The primary task of African philosophers should be to begin to create a tradition of thinking and discourse whose main focus would be on issues affecting the interests and aspiration of their peoples.”<sup>4</sup> It becomes obvious that Oladipo’s philosophy centres on the practical relevance of philosophy, particularly African philosophy, and so, he calls on African philosophers to put their ideas to work for the redemption of Africa. Oladipo clearly understood that philosophy cannot afford to be just an abstract consolation for mankind trying to escape the vicissitudes of existence. Rather, philosophy has the historic mission of being a pragmatic compass for achieving meaningfulness and understanding.<sup>5</sup> One of the reasons that Oladipo puts forward for the importance of the role of the African philosophers is that the fluidity of the socio-political condition on the continent, of some one-party, or military dictatorship and other factors needs an urgent attention from scholars.<sup>6</sup>

Taking the argument for practical relevance further, Oladipo makes a case for African development. He argued that since development calls for a total realization by the utilization of the natural resources at man's disposal, perfecting and co-ordinating them toward the ends of both the individual and the community, then authentic development is required from the African scholars. He insists, however, that development is not simply an activity in which the old is replaced by the new in a mechanical manner. Rather, development is a process of social reconstruction in which the past survives in the present, though in a modified form.

This clearly points out the thesis of Oladipo's philosophy. The synopsis of Oladipo's philosophical posits is basically social reconstruction. Social reconstruction proposes social change. For Oladipo, there is the urgent need for social change in Africa in order to resolve the inertia in the African socio-political space. This is because social reconstruction describes a development agenda that is aimed at social recovery of a nation from shambles or challenge of development. Thus, it identifies many ills that need to be addressed in order to create a healthy society. Oladipo implicates social institutions as the hub of the African malaise. He argues that these institutions are weak and so do not serve the required purposes. As a result, he calls for social reconstruction of the institutions by strengthening them.

Social reconstruction becomes the main thrust of Oladipo's philosophy

and he proposes conscious and sustained application of critical and reflective thinking to various aspects of human life and experience as pathway to social reconstruction. This feature seems to be the background of Oladipo's philosophy and he applies it in arguing for the identity and responsibility of African philosophy in the context of postcolonial underdevelopment. Also, the proposal for social reconstruction is evident in his major academic works. For instance, in his groundbreaking and seminal work, *The Idea of African Philosophy* (1992), Oladipo proposed an idea of African philosophy that departed radically from whether or not there is African philosophy. Rather, he seeks the relevance of philosophy beyond its academic disguise.

As a way of stimulating African philosophers towards their responsibility of applying critical and reflective thinking to various aspects of the African life and experience, Oladipo engaged in analysis of the African predicament in *Remaking Africa: Challenges of the Twenty-First century* (1998) and *Beyond Survival: Essays on the Nigerian Condition* (1999) respectively. He finally consolidated his ideas in his last book, *Philosophy and Social Reconstruction in Africa* (2009) by outlining the role of philosophy in social reconstruction. With this, he contends that African philosophy possesses a practical mission, a social purpose of raising the people's consciousness on the one hand, and on the other hand, maximizing the African value, wisdom and ethics.

### 4.3 The Idea of African Philosophy

At a time when the issue of the possibility of African philosophy constituted a great debate in the surge of the development of African philosophical scholarship, Olusegun Oladipo advanced a proposal that the debate on the idea of African philosophy was, more than anything else, “a debate on the position of philosophy in a society in search of a new beginning.”<sup>7</sup>

He noted that there have been various attempts in contemporary writings in African philosophy to locate the focus of the problem surrounding the idea of African philosophy. While some of these attempts argued that it is the problem of fashioning an authentic African philosophy that will be true to African cultures and traditions,<sup>8</sup> some others hold that it is simply a conceptual problem, having to do with the meaning of cross-cultural concepts.<sup>9</sup> Oladipo advanced a different explanation arguing that the real problem “is that of finding ways in which African philosophers can make their works relevant to human interests in their societies.”<sup>10</sup> With this, Oladipo suggested that there is a crisis of relevance in contemporary African philosophy.

Furthermore, Oladipo noted that there are two dominant positions in contemporary debates on the idea of African philosophy – first, a predominantly Western position that philosophy is a theoretical discipline which is universal in character and has its methodology, and second, the position that philosophy is not primarily an academic discipline but a cultural activity.<sup>11</sup> Oladipo posits that

these two positions are problematic. According to him, “clearly lacking in both positions is a concerned effort to link philosophical research to contemporary African realities. Hence, their inability to make significant contributions to self-knowledge in Africa.”<sup>12</sup> This presents an imperative for Africans to break away from an order of knowledge which does not take sufficient account of their history and experience, but seeks to understand pressing human problems from its own perspective and at the same time claims that this perspective is universal.

Oladipo diagnosed that, going by what we have as contemporary African philosophy, philosophy has not been able to grapple with the African experience. Rather, the problematics in terms of which the African philosopher defines his preoccupations are externally derived. As a result, the African philosopher is busy promoting an order of knowledge which is largely informed by a socio-economic experience that is not African.<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, Oladipo avers that the question for contemporary African philosophers is the question of what it means “to be African and a philosopher today.”<sup>14</sup> Responding to this question is actually the main focus of Oladipo’s seminal book, *The Idea of African Philosophy*. According to Oladipo, “this is the question of what is African in African philosophy.”<sup>15</sup>

Some African philosophers have projected a geographical criterion for defining the adjective “African” in African philosophy. For them, it is sufficient

for a philosophical work to qualify as African that its author is an African. Thus, in this scheme, African philosophy is defined as the “contributions of Africans practicing philosophy within the defined framework of the discipline and its historical tradition.”<sup>16</sup> Oladipo objects to the geographical criterion arguing that it raises some problems we cannot wish away. For example, it fails to consider whether African philosophers deal with issues that have anything to do with African concerns or not. This consequence is unacceptable because it truncates the link between philosophy and the historical process and also underplays the need for African philosophers to perform their intellectual duties as responsible citizens. Also, the geographical criterion is unsatisfactory because it forecloses the possibility that non-Africans can contribute to African philosophy.<sup>17</sup>

Another criterion provided for defining the “African” in African philosophy is the cultural criterion, which holds that a philosophical work is African if it directs its attention to issues concerning the theoretical or conceptual underpinnings of African culture. Kwame Gyekye expresses this position when he said “philosophy is a cultural phenomenon...philosophical thought is grounded in a cultural experience.”<sup>18</sup> Oladipo discards the cultural criterion as well. According to him:

To say that a philosophical work is African simply because it deals with African cultures and traditions is to accept a criterion that is at once too narrow and too broad. This criterion is too narrow because it does not take into account matters that are not culture-specific, but are quite crucial to a proper understanding of the contemporary African experience.... The cultural criterion is equally too broad. To accept it is to accept as African even such patently unAfrican works as the report of the

early European travellers, missionaries.... After all they deal with matters concerning African cultures and traditions.<sup>19</sup>

Considering the aforementioned, Oladipo dismissed the preoccupation with the definition of philosophy in contemporary debates on the idea of African philosophy as misguided because it seeks to dangerously strait-jacket the development of African philosophy in a manner that denies the freedom of a dynamic interaction with its environment. Thus, granting the preoccupation with the definition of philosophy as distracting, Oladipo makes it clear that the problem surrounding the idea of African philosophy is not the problem of anything meeting the criteria for being both African and philosophical.<sup>20</sup> Rather, it is:

The problem of the extent to which African philosophers have been able to put their intellect in the service of the struggles and destiny of their peoples.... The primary task of African philosophers should be to begin to create a tradition of thinking and discourse whose main focus would be on the issues affecting the interests and aspirations of their peoples.... Unless they do this, they are likely to remain, as they appear to be now, hostages to alien (not in terms of origin, but in terms of relevance) conceptual paradigms, and what is worse, collaborators in the ongoing process of the material impoverishment and spiritual enslavement of African peoples.<sup>21</sup>

#### **4.4 The Tasks of African Philosophers**

Oladipo emphasized the tasks of African philosophers to the extent that it is integrated in his theory of development. He is convinced that the primary preoccupation of African philosophers, and in fact, all African intellectuals is to ask themselves how they can contribute their own quota to the development of

Africa. He argued that some fundamental functions must be played by African scholars in order to remove Africa from the perceived nasty, brutish or backward condition. P'Bitek gives a rather apt expression of the duty of African philosophers stating that they should “begin to do original thinking with the interests of African peoples at heart.”<sup>22</sup> It seems very clear to Oladipo that philosophy primarily should breed development, hence he strongly argued for the social relevance of philosophy so that African philosophers can, with the aid of philosophical thinking and analysis, chart a course for the development of Africa.

According to Oladipo, one of the major (if not the primary) preoccupations of African intellectuals should be to strive to meet the challenges of their times, by exposing the forces that keep our continent and its peoples in the prison of underdevelopment. In doing this, their goal should be to seek “the way for a new and higher form of social life that will expand the possibilities for a free and creative life.”<sup>23</sup>

Oladipo asserts that “the expertise of the philosopher lies in the conscious and sustained application of critical and reflective thinking to various aspects of human life and experience,”<sup>24</sup> what W. Dilthey has aptly called “the philosophic spirit.”<sup>25</sup> According to Dilthey, this philosophic spirit, “leaves no valuations and aspirations unexamined and no piece of knowledge isolated; it seeks the grounds for the validity of whatever is valid.”<sup>26</sup>



Oladipo believes that there is a lesson for us in Africa to learn. This lesson, for him, is that this philosophic spirit is at the core of major developments in human civilizations, particularly the Enlightenment in Europe and the dominance of Western culture in the contemporary world. Therefore, he argues that this spirit and the development and sustenance of the culture of inquiry are core ingredients without which an African Renaissance would be impossible to achieve.<sup>27</sup> He further defines the culture of inquiry as a culture of “systematic investigations of natural and social phenomena and the use of reason to conceive of possible explanations for what we observe. In other words, this culture involves seeking and attempting to create a better world.”<sup>28</sup>

It becomes evident that philosophy as well as philosophers have, or should have, reference to everyday life, that is, having a practical mission which Oladipo has called “elevation of mankind.”<sup>29</sup> He however, defines elevation in terms of enlightenment, open-mindedness, broadening of sensibilities, sensitivity to human principles or ideals, such as trust, tolerance, cooperation, compassion, etc. This justifies Oladipo’s conviction that “the primary duty of the philosopher is not to *instruct*, but to *prod*, or to be more precise, to stimulate people to think about the basic problems of existence as they affect them as individuals and as social collectives.”<sup>30</sup>

To clearly appropriate the tasks of African philosophers, especially with regards to African development, Oladipo points out the need for African

philosophers to re-appraise some fundamental aspects of the African life and experience, which include culture, ideology, value, and history, etc.

#### **4.4.1 The African Philosopher and the African Culture**

Culture is generally considered as a common heritage or a package of experience shared by all in a given society. Thus, it is often granted that human beings are the product of their culture. This is also because culture makes people what they are or almost what they are. However, culture is no such a simple concept as it seems, perhaps stemming from its wide currency of usage in daily language. On the contrary, culture is as complex a term as it is fundamental. Kwasi Wiredu observed that culture is a complex phenomenon with a wide ranging character. Thus, the meaning of culture is beyond art, song and dance since it concerns a people's way of life in its entirety. For obvious reasons, therefore, Wiredu argues that re-appraisal of African culture is necessary and important in the light of the current cultural transition in contemporary Africa.<sup>31</sup> He further justifies the task of re-appraising the African culture by providing insight on the current cultural transition in contemporary Africa:

Contemporary Africa is in the middle of a transition from a traditional to a modern society. This process of modernization entails changes not only in the physical environment but also in the mental outlook of our peoples, manifested both in their explicit beliefs and in their customs and ordinary daily habits and pursuits.<sup>32</sup>

Given the above, Oladipo reiterates that the task of the African

philosophers is to bring about a critical reconstruction, which will enable Africans to separate the backward aspects of their culture from those aspects that are worth keeping. For this reason, he believes that philosophy has a lot to contribute to the cultural development of Africa. Thus, he argues that there is a link between philosophy and culture, which can be located in two broad areas – Firstly, philosophy has a crucial role to play in the production, clarification and propagation of the ideas and values that guide the thought and life of a people. Secondly, philosophy has a critical role of challenging a people's established views of themselves and their condition as a precondition for defining or redefining who they are and what they can be.<sup>33</sup>

Furthermore, Oladipo maintains that given the nature of culture as a dynamic phenomenon, which is constantly shaped and reshaped by the activities of human beings in history, it would be wrong for African philosophers to restrict themselves to the task of defining African culture through the demonstration of the coherence of their underlining beliefs and concepts. Thus, he cautions that it would be wrong to define the task of African philosophy with P.O. Bodunrin's description of the position of the traditionalists in the debate on the idea of African philosophy as "the discovery of authentic African ideas or thought systems uninfluenced by alien accretions."<sup>34</sup>

Therefore, Oladipo makes a clear case for the re-appraisal of African culture as a philosophical imperative. He insists that what is required of African

philosophers is not the task of defending African culture, but, on the contrary, a critical engagement with this culture with a view to identifying its strengths and weaknesses.<sup>35</sup> On the effect of these re-appraisals, Oladipo states that:

The point here is not that these reappraisals would have a direct or immediate effect on the thought-habits, world-views and conceptions of the people in such a way as to propel instant corrections of their defects. Rather such reappraisals have the potential of promoting the kind of self-understanding that would provide some basis for determining the kind of socio-cultural reconstructions that would enable the Africans to come to terms with the challenges of contemporary life.<sup>36</sup>

Oladipo is quick to notice that this is the significance of the critical and reconstructive studies of African traditional conceptions of man, society and nature which African philosophers like Kwasi Wiredu, Kwame Gyekye, Uzodinma Nwala, Segun Gbadegesin and others, have been trying to undertake. However, for Oladipo, such studies not only provide opportunities for understanding the intellectual foundations of African culture, they are also required for self-conscious cultural change.<sup>37</sup>

Moreover, the task of the African philosopher regarding the African culture, Oladipo makes it clear that criticism is not enough. He however, prescribes that for the African philosopher to fulfil his or her mandate of promoting African cultural development, he or she has to also take seriously the task of producing and promoting those ideas and values in terms of which the new African can be moulded. With this, Oladipo is convinced that African philosophers can reshape the attitude of Africans to their culture, and so, there

would be rapid changes in our environment, both physical and social.

From the foregoing, Oladipo seems to be arguing that for Africa to be liberated from cultural crisis, and then usher in cultural development, African philosophers and scholars must begin to recognise the necessity of the connection between cultural renewal and creativity. This is because, for any search for valid and pragmatic solution to cultural crises, there must be a contribution of creativity and serious cultural renewal. As Oladipo puts it,

There can be no cultural renewal in Africa through a single-minded, nationalistic commitment to African culture or through some kind of unalleged difference to science and technology and its achievements. The attainment of cultural renewal in Africa...requires that we unfetter human relations through a process of social reconstruction designed to achieve freedom from injustice and oppression, and mental freedom.<sup>38</sup>

Above all, the need for African development implies a more urgent need for a change in African thought and life. As a result, Oladipo thinks that African philosophers can contribute to the achievement of this change only if they seriously consider the reappraisal of African culture as a philosophical imperative. This task, for him, is nonnegotiable for the development of Africa.

#### **4.4.2 The African Philosopher and the Critique of Ideology**

Generally, an ideology is taken to mean a complex system of ideas for

instituting or justifying a given set of political interest and goals.<sup>39</sup> Thus, an ideology, especially in politics, refers to a set of ideas, a comprehensive vision, a way of looking at things and several tendencies proposed by the dominant class of a society to all members of this society. As a result, ideology is a central concept to politics because it is a system of abstract thoughts applied to public matters. However, political ideology is a set of ideals, principles, or doctrines of an institution or class that offers some political or cultural blueprint for a certain social order.

The word ideology was coined by Destutt de Tracy in 1796<sup>40</sup> from the words 'idea' and 'logy' with which he referred to the study of ideas. In practice, an ideology is a coherent system of ideas that is neither right nor wrong, but only is a relativistic intellectual strategy for categorising the world. Ideology is an almost ideal way of life for society and some individuals, political organisations or other groups try to influence the ideology of a society to become closer to what they want it to be by broadcasting their opinions. Thus, dominant ideologies often hold to assumptions that are largely unchallenged.

Oladipo's concern about ideology hinges on the fact that an ideology consists of a set of fundamental values, which a society is implored to strive to imbibe, and so, it can be said to be prescriptive and normative. Thus, Oladipo observes that in the surge of the African society, different ideologies have been proposed. From the philosophical discipline, for instance, Nkrumah's

Consciencism,<sup>41</sup> Awolowo's Democratic Socialism,<sup>42</sup> and Azikiwe's Neowelfarism,<sup>43</sup> have all been proposed with each claiming to best suit the African condition. Taking into cognisance, the role of the philosopher as "a self-conscious critic of the way society is organised, particularly its underlying principles, and the ideas and ideals people live by,"<sup>44</sup> Oladipo argued for the need for a critique of ideology by the African philosophers so as to expose "the untenable, the irrational and the fantastic"<sup>45</sup> in societal beliefs.

Nevertheless, Oladipo noted that the critique of ideology would distinguish between ideology in the good sense and ideology in the bad sense, though he relies on Kwasi Wiredu's definitions of these two senses of ideology. Ideology in the good, best or desirable sense, according to Wiredu, is "a set of ideas about what form the good society should take, and any such set of ideas needs a basis in first principles."<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, ideology in the bad or undesirable sense, for Wiredu, is "a ready-made set of ideas meant to be adopted by governments as the exclusive basis for the political organisation of society."<sup>47</sup> Given this distinction, it becomes clear that ideology in the bad sense is, to quote Wiredu again, "a set of dogmas to be imposed by the government, with force if necessary."<sup>48</sup> Also, it becomes even clearer to notice that this bad notion of ideology dominates in African political practice and it has, to quote Oladipo,

Stifled the development of a democratic tradition in Africa, shortly after independence and for a long time thereafter. For what it did was to make

politics a clash of passions to which the core socio-political (democratic) values of debate, tolerance, cooperation and compassion were irrelevant. In short, this pernicious sense of ideology bred nothing but dogmatism and authoritarianism.<sup>49</sup>

Furthermore, Oladipo insists that Wiredu's distinction between good and bad senses of ideology is still very relevant for the development of our society today. He, however, maintains that the importance of the distinction is to point out that "to oppose ideology in the bad sense is not necessarily to reject it in the good sense."<sup>50</sup> In other words, a critique of ideology does not amount to an absolute rejection of all ideologies; it spares or even supports the good ones whereas it wrestles with and rejects the bad ones. Wiredu puts this expressively that "the philosopher has the obligation to combat with ideology in the bad sense just as he has the obligation to promote ideology in the good sense."<sup>51</sup>

Besides, while Oladipo berates ideology in the bad sense as not only untenable, but, also, quite counter-productive, he seems to implicate philosophy as an ideology in a sense much more plausible. Oladipo regrets the obvious divorce between philosophical activities in Africa and African socio-political reality. He complains that philosophy has not been able to perform the task of raising political consciousness in Africa, simply because "philosophy is seen primarily as a research discipline.... This has denied philosophy of its social purpose and, consequently, marginalised African existential concerns in African philosophical practice."<sup>52</sup> As a result, Oladipo recommends that African philosophy should become more ideological, and so transcend mere intellectual



work in the school and dwell more on the issue and meaning of social phenomena in the society so as to occasion development in Africa.

To further strengthen his argument for philosophy as an ideology, Oladipo quotes Ngoma-Binda who argues that African philosophy should become more ideological in order to make it come alive, that is, to make it “capable of acting in an efficient way on consciences and on social life.”<sup>53</sup>

According to Ngoma-Binda,

Philosophy can obtain power only if it is conceived as an ideology, namely, a thought transmitting a message of wisdom, an ethics seeking to infuse itself into the heart and a social body of a targeted community.... Ideology is here understood in the positive sense of a cluster of ideas with the political and ethical aim of the triumph of a valuable case.<sup>54</sup>

Oladipo, however, pointed out that the valuable case, for us in Africa, is simply the transformation of society in a manner that will maximise the possibilities of life and joy for the African.

Also, while Oladipo agrees that much of philosophy is social philosophy, he however, sees as problematic, the suggestion that unless a philosophy has an explicit social purpose, or it is readily available for policy formulation or social action, then it is relevant to society. He argues, therefore, that the power of philosophy derives not so much from the philosophers’ interest in immediate phenomena, but in the capacity to see beyond them and to identify and analyse their intellectual foundations.

#### **4.4.3 The Socio-Historical Process of African Society**

Oladipo holds the view that if any meaningful social change is to be achieved in the African society then the African philosophers and scholars must understand and operate upon its socio-historical process. Thus, while African scholars must continue their intellectual pursuit in all spheres of academic discipline, they also need to realize that the sheaves of problems called philosophical problems are not any perennial or universal, but “problem which arose within a given context, history, time and place.”<sup>55</sup>

Oladipo argues, therefore, that the movement of ideas of which these problems constitute a part, is socio-historically determined. Thus, African scholars need to understand properly this socio-historical process in order for them to make significant contributions to the current challenge of African development.

It is only when African philosophers and scholars make significant contributions to the African problem that they will become relevant. As such, African philosophers and scholars must, as a matter of necessity, engage in studying the socio-historical process of African society. Such an engagement will occasion the commitment to African culture and progress and eventually result to “a universal African consciousness.”<sup>56</sup>

#### **4.5 Freedom as a Fundamental Political Value for Development**

Today, many African scholars and leaders are differently engaged with the quest for African development with the hope that it would be possible to make development a permanent feature of our collective existence. But what is the substance of this development quest in which we are engaged? The answer to this question is that the quest for development is, essentially, a quest for freedom. Oladipo readily clarifies what freedom in this context means. According to him,

Freedom is a basic political value. It is basic in the sense that it requires no justification by reference to other values. In other words, it is desirable as an end in itself.... Freedom in this context means more than the absence of coercion. For it is possible to have a situation in which an individual (or group of people) is “unobstructed by others” in his activities while his wish “to be his own master” is violated in some other ways.<sup>57</sup>

Oladipo gives an example of this kind of constraint on self-actualisation in the failure of the African state to provide those public benefits – for instance, education, health and other basic infrastructure without which it is impossible to have a fulfilling existence in modern times.

In any case, freedom means more than the absence of coercion – from colonial rule or military despotism. For Oladipo, freedom also means freedom from want and insecurity through the creation of the conditions for the enhancement of human capacities, for instance, the capacity for independent thought and self-actualisation and the capacity for morality.<sup>58</sup> Given the above

considerations, therefore, it is clear that Africa is far from being a free society. For not only have the people been subjected to various kinds of coercive rule (colonial, military and civilian), they have not also been able to secure those conditions that would eliminate or at least reduce the incidence of want and insecurity in the society.

The granite truth is that Africans have, for too long, been subjected to the worst form of political alienation, and for Oladipo, “we have not been able to have much control over our political affairs. Consequently, our freedom to economic, scientific and cultural creativity has been mortgaged.”<sup>59</sup> Thus, a free society would be a humane society, namely, a society in which the people have full control over their political affairs; one in which the conditions for their fulfilment as self-actualising beings are not lacking, and respect for human dignity is entrenched as a measure of what is good and proper in individual and social action.

In addition, Oladipo states that the climate of freedom is one in which the people are free not only to choose those who govern them, but also are able to make effective demands on them. In other words, the climate of freedom makes it possible for the whims and caprices of rulers to be effectively moderated by the rule of law, and the chaos and misery of misgovernance replaced by a social order in which the daily struggle to stay alive is replaced by the redirection of energies to activities that are fulfilling and enabling, and there are better

opportunities for mutual cooperation. Thus, Oladipo argued that, in spite of the political independence, Africans are yet to be a liberated people because

political independence has not generated the climate of freedom, which is the only environment within which Africa today can pursue the onerous task of redressing the tradition of oppression, exploitation and misgovernance that has been the source of much of the suffering and injustice that characterise the African condition today.<sup>60</sup>

#### **4.6 African Renaissance**

As a concept, African Renaissance is a vision that bears the hope that African people and nations shall overcome the current challenges confronting the continent and achieve cultural, scientific, and economic renewal. As a concept, African Renaissance was first articulated by Cheikh Anta Diop in a series of essays which he wrote as a student from 1949 to 1960, charting the development of Africa. These essays are collected in his book, *Towards the African Renaissance: Essays in Culture and Development, 1946-1960*. However, the concept, African Renaissance, was made popular by former South African President, Thabo Mbeki, during his term in office.<sup>61</sup>

African Renaissance, according to Oladipo, implies the socio-economic and cultural reinvention (or transformation) of Africa with a view to enhancing the capacity of our peoples for self-directed improvement in their material conditions and social relations.<sup>62</sup> Oladipo emphasises a serious need for African renaissance in African countries. An example of African Renaissance that was widely proclaimed was the end of the unjust and repressive apartheid system in

South Africa. In this case, Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki were seriously involved because, for them, there was an indication that the time for Africa's social transformation has come. As a result, Mandela, Mbeki and their compatriots fought relentlessly for the transformation of South Africa from a segregated and repressive society to a multi-racial and democratic one.

The indication that the time has come for Africa's social transformation has taken the form of a democratic wind which has been blowing across Africa from the early 1990s to the present times. Testifying to the inescapable reality of African Renaissance, Mbeki said: "Those who have eyes to see let them see. The African Renaissance is upon us. As we peer through the loving glass darkly this may not be obvious. But it is upon us."<sup>63</sup>

Thus, Mbeki calls for an African Renaissance as a general response to the crisis in Africa. Mbeki's call is timely because he calls for the liberalisation of African states and their economies; the institution of values that must replace corruption and incompetence; as well as seeking the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and encouraging an Africa-centred engagement that will promote trade and sustainable development. In this guise, African Renaissance is a philosophical and political movement which seeks to end the violence, elitism, corruption and poverty that seem to plague the African continent, and replace them with a more just and equitable order.

Mbeki's call for an African Renaissance often highlights his famous "I

am an African” speech of 8 May 1996 to the Constitutional Assembly of South Africa where he said:

I am born of a people who are heroes and heroines.... Patient because history is on our side, these masses do not despair because today the weather is bad. Nor do they turn triumphalists when, tomorrow, the sun shines.... Whatever the circumstances they have lived through and because of that experience, they are determined to define for themselves who they are and who they should be.<sup>64</sup>

In this speech, Mbeki pointed out what the renaissance project symbolized. He said he was starting from the beginning, and that beginning was the affirmation ‘I am an African.’ Although Mbeki did not refer specifically to the African Renaissance in his speech, he did, however, make the emotional, ideological, and political connections necessary for his call for a renaissance. However, in April 1997, Mbeki articulated the elements that comprise the African Renaissance as including social cohesion, democracy, economic rebuilding and growth, and the establishment of Africa as a significant player in geo-political affairs.<sup>65</sup>

Advancing the crusade for African Renaissance further, Oladipo argued that for there to be renaissance in Africa, African philosophers and scholars have a role to play and that is the task of putting their intellect to use. Oladipo insists that, as a matter of fact, it is the responsibility of African scholars to bring about renaissance in Africa.

Consequently, Oladipo outlined two routes or steps to the achievement of genuine renaissance in Africa. First, is to dispel our ambivalence to the

philosophical project of modernity.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, modernisation is not westernisation, as many would think. Rather, in simple terms, modernisation means “the advancement of a culture and civilisation in the competitive sector...which includes those aspects of a civilisation which people can compare, determining which is superior or inferior.”<sup>67</sup> The second step to the achievement of genuine African Renaissance is an unwavering commitment to the creation and maintenance of the conditions for free inquiry and creativity in African universities.<sup>68</sup> This is important in order to enhance the capacity of African universities for the generation of ideas and the making of discoveries.

Regarding the issue of African universities raised above, Oladipo laments that these universities are beset with a number of problems. Using the University of Ibadan as an example, he points out that African universities are faced with the problems of funding, over centralisation of university administration, the sub-human conditions under which students live, lack of a conducive working environment, including staff development, etc.<sup>69</sup> With the cumulative effects of the above problems, Oladipo described the University (and this is applicable to all African universities) as an intellectual environment with the following negative characteristics: “A loss of spirit and confidence which has been very disabling; an atmosphere of instability and indiscipline; deep erosion of the foundation for intellectual excellence; and diminution of the culture of dialogue and debate without which no meaningful intellectual culture



can develop.”<sup>70</sup>

However, for Oladipo, the vision that African universities should seek should be similar to the vision of Professor Omoniyi Adewoye, the then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ibadan in an interview published in *The Guardian* of October 1, 1998. He quoted the Vice-Chancellor as saying that he would want a university that would be:

A centre of excellence; an avenue for scholastic discourse; a place for research feats and a university that produces an enabling environment for pure, sound and quality academic activities...an institution whose programmes would promote development activities...an institution that would be capable of mobilising the students, preparing them as prospective responsible and productive citizens... and institution that would be at the cutting edge of technology as we move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century...<sup>71</sup>

Considering the above submissions, Oladipo noted that the University of Ibadan (as applicable to all African universities) “requires much more than material resources – important as these are – but also a lot of reorientation, among staff and students, to achieve the lofty vision articulated by the Vice-Chancellor above.”<sup>72</sup> He, however, listed some aspects of the reorientation which these changes in belief and attitude should affect to include the following things, among others:

The thinking that no gesture is significant unless it is grand; the belief that every order from above must be obeyed, however stupid and pernicious; intolerance of dissent and undue veneration of tradition, which discourages initiative and innovation; the disjunction between scholarship and social responsibility or social relevance, which has led to the development of the phenomenon of the scholar as a careerist or, at times sadly, as an opportunist; and related to the above, the disjunction between reason and conscience or between knowledge and moral integrity.<sup>73</sup>

With such reorientations, Oladipo is convinced that the ideal of a university will be met, where high premium is placed on the cardinal values of truth, goodness and beauty, and products of such universities would be at the vanguard of change and progress in Africa especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>74</sup>

From the above, therefore, Oladipo is unequivocal about the role of knowledge in African Renaissance. He submits however that development in Africa will result from the ability of scholars to make inquiry into the reconstruction of Africa, and this will be achieved via African Renaissance.

#### **4.7 National Rebirth**

One basic challenge of African development, according to Oladipo, is the problem of nation-building, a manifestation of which can be found in our failure to develop certain shared interests and values the cultivation of which can provide the bedrock for our mutual co-existence. By implication, Oladipo opines that Africa is faced with: “A crisis of community, the defining elements of which include political instability, ethnic suspicion and antagonism, religious intolerance... in short, all problems that are easily associated with the failure of political development in a society.”<sup>75</sup> Painfully, Oladipo observes that some indications of the problem of nation-building in Africa include civil wars, religious and communal clashes, the problem of political succession, etc. The point, then, is that since the independence experience which swept across Africa

in the 1960s, we have not been able to forge an African nationality, perhaps due to the several bifurcations caused by the colonial experience.

The question that is germane at the moment is: why have we not been able to forge an African nation after over fifty years of independence? This, obviously, is not an easy question. One thing however that is clear is that political independence in most African countries, “has not guaranteed economic freedom and development.”<sup>76</sup> Africa, to say the least, is underdeveloped, and this breeds the problem of material scarcity in the African society. Oladipo notes that: “Where there is material scarcity, it is very unlikely that it would be possible to conciliate interests “by giving them a share in proportion to their importance to the welfare and survival of the whole community,” which is what politics is all about.”<sup>77</sup>

In response, Oladipo argues that the national question is not one of how to balance ethnic interests neither is it one of ethnic self-determination. For Oladipo, the national question is one of how to create an appropriate socio-political framework for the conciliation of interests. The solution, for him, lies in the establishment of political framework in which every African is free and able to participate in the determination of issues of national importance. Thus, he recommends democracy and social justice as what we need to be able to come to grips with the national question. In any case, it was national rebirth he was canvassing for when he said what we need to do is to struggle to regain our

historical personality as a free people.<sup>78</sup>

What Oladipo is proposing is similar to what Pantaleon Iroegbu has described as a theory of a just society in which the community is the foundation of political life and in which the autonomy of the members of the community is assured.<sup>79</sup> Thus, in order to attain development in Africa, there must be a national rebirth which will be occasioned by the spirit of oneness, familyhood, and belongingness by all Africans.

#### **4.8 The Idea of Development**

Development, as Oladipo noted, is a core task of African philosophers and scholars. He agrees that development is not simply an activity in which the old is replaced by the new in a mechanical manner. Rather, it is a process of social reconstruction in which the past survives in the present, though in a modified form. However, Oladipo defined development as “a social concept standing for the process through which human beings strive to improve the conditions of their lives.”<sup>80</sup> As a result, Oladipo opines that the idea of development is nothing but human development. Hence, he conceived it as “a process whose primary goal is human well-being, both in its material and moral dimensions.”<sup>81</sup>

From the above conception, two broad dimensions are contained in the idea of development, namely, the tangible or technical aspect; and the intangible

or moral aspect. While the tangible aspect of development is concerned with material progress, the intangible aspect of development has to do with the improvement of “the quality of human relations between people.”<sup>82</sup> Thus, Oladipo explains that the tangible aspect of development involves “the control and exploitation of the physical environment through the application of the results of science and technology.”<sup>83</sup> He continues that the primary goal of this process is “human well-being, which involves, among other things: the eradication of certain human-demeaning social phenomena, such as poverty, illiteracy, and low-life expectancy....”<sup>84</sup>

On the intangible or moral aspect of development, Oladipo explains that “it involves, for instance, the reduction of social inequality, which globally is a major source of conflicts among people, and the promotion of positive social values, such as freedom, justice, tolerance, compassion, cooperation, and so on.”<sup>85</sup> He, however, emphasised that although the tangible aspect of development is the most visible, the intangible is very crucial because it is that which enhances the capacity of the individual to actually shape his or her own life without being insensitive to the common good.

Consequently, Oladipo argued that development is neither an abstraction, the integrity of which can be measured simply in quantitative terms, such as the rate of growth in GDP per capita, nor is it even the process of social change whose primary goal is to “catch up” with the more developed societies. Rather,

for Oladipo, “development is a process of social transformation which involves the replacement of these factors that inhibit the capacity of the individual for self-direction and the promotion of social cooperation with those which promote these ideas.”<sup>86</sup> In other words, development is a process whose essence concerns the quality of life, including the quality of social relations, of the people.

Furthermore, Oladipo posited that “people are the objects of development.”<sup>87</sup> This is because, as Nyerere has observed, “development of the people can only be effected by the people”<sup>88</sup> as initiators of plans and programmes for their own well-being. As such, the enhancement of the capacity of the people for self-expression and self-action becomes an important precondition of making development a reality. This expresses Nyerere’s observation that “development depends upon freedom.”<sup>89</sup> But Oladipo adds that development also brings freedom. This is so because it is the means of enhancing the capacity of the people to come to grips with the challenges posed to them by their natural and social environment.<sup>90</sup>

On the contrary, the predominant development strategy in Africa has several consequences, especially because it places greater emphasis on economic growth than human emancipation. As a result, we seem to be preoccupied with economic indicators of development, such as Gross National Product (GNP), Gross Domestic Product (GDP), average annual growth rate, debt-service ratio, etc., than socio-political indicators, such as life expectancy,

literacy rates, access to safe water, level of political participation, quality of social relations, etc. In addition, the predominant development strategy is elite-driven. In other words, it involves top-down processes in which the people are not active initiators of development programmes but are passive objects of these programmes.

Moreover, Oladipo observed that in the predominant development strategy in Africa, external factors dictate the logic of internal development, and they have in a large measure restructured African economies to what Dieter Senghas calls “appendages or enclave economies of more highly developed societies.”<sup>91</sup> Thus, for Oladipo, the outcome of such development strategy has been a general attenuation of the significance of political independence and, consequently, a loss of capacity for auto-controlled development, that is, a development process that is basically inward looking.

The consequences of all this, according to Oladipo, include:

A deepening crisis of political legitimacy in many African states; debilitating social conflicts generating an alarming refugee population, about the highest in the world; a crushing debt burden; high infant and maternal mortality rates, etc; in short, a dismal development experience, which makes the African condition today one that is suffused with a lot of disabling conditions of life and existence.<sup>92</sup>

Consciousness of these consequences raises the question of an appropriate development option in Africa today and this should make the search for an alternative development strategy an urgent African task.

Responding to the task of African development, Oladipo recommends

that two primary guides are required. The first one is to keep in focus the need to terminate the influence of imperialism. This implies a rejection of the view of independence as a compromise, which became the dominant view in the founding of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and has begotten the monster of neo-colonialism. The second guide is that no sufficient step can be taken on the path of development unless we learn to subordinate our external relations to the logic of an internal development.<sup>93</sup> Oladipo further draws three implications from the problem of African underdevelopment, and insists that to make African development a reality, these three implications are conditions that must be met. First, Africans have to be realists by making the reality of our time and place the basis of the choice of our development options. Second, Africans should be the architects of their own development. Third, African development will be impossible unless we secure conditions for political stability. This shows clearly the futility of focusing narrowly on the economy in pursuing the goal of social reconstruction in Africa.<sup>94</sup> The import of all this, according to Oladipo, is that “self-development is the best form of development and no significant social transformation can occur on the continent unless we break the yoke of culture of dependency.”<sup>95</sup>

From the foregoing, it is clear that Oladipo has shown that Africa today is faced with a difficult situation to which no adequate response has been given. And according to Tsenay Serequeberhan, “the most basic and fundamental fact



in Africa today is the misery in which the continent is immersed and the various struggles to overcome this wretched condition.”<sup>96</sup>

#### **4.9 Dialogue for Social Reconstruction**

In his social reconstruction, Oladipo underscores the need for postcolonial African societies to search for alternative routes for development to the ones they have been taking hitherto. He proposes his theory of social reconstruction as the search for these alternative routes as he quotes David A. Reidy Jr. that: “While the construction of democratic institutions may be necessary to meaningful transformation, it is not sufficient. Only the reconstruction of civil society is sufficient to transform society meaningfully.”<sup>97</sup> To emphasise the exigency of this search for alternative measures, probably beside the conventional capitalism-democracy and socialism-monarchy/democratic socialism paradigms as made popular by the Western and Eastern blocs, often referred to as the First World and the Second World respectively, Oladipo cites the words of the British economic historian and thinker, R.H. Tawney, thus:

The practical thing for a traveller who is uncertain of his paths is not to proceed with the utmost rapidity in the wrong direction; it is to consider how to find a right one. And the practical thing for a nation which has stumbled upon the turning points of history is not to behave as though nothing very important were involved, as if it did not matter whether it turned to the right or to the left, went up hill or down hale, provided it continued doing with a little more energy what it has done hitherto, but to consider whether what it has done hitherto is wise, and, if it not wise, to alter it.<sup>98</sup>

With this, Oladipo suggests a new beginning in Africa. But according to him,

“initiating the process of this new beginning has been a big problem in many African societies.”<sup>99</sup>

However, Oladipo opined that the search for alternative social directions requires reflection in order to pose fundamental questions on the nature and future of society. As a result, Oladipo proposes the need for reasoned and open-minded dialogue through which Africans can begin to find a new path to social development.

Thus, the action plan which Oladipo conceives as the means of achieving development in Africa through social reconstruction is national dialogue. His focus therefore, is a dialogue for social reconstruction. Hence, he argued that the process of social reconstruction in Africa would involve “a well-thought out plan of social change”<sup>100</sup> to which a national dialogue would be central in order to enable the people to agree on the common good and the set of values and institutions, which can facilitate its pursuit.<sup>101</sup> The kind of dialogue which Oladipo refers to here is not one of conversion or domination, which can only aggravate the differences between the participants. Rather, it is dialogue as “a reaching out”, indeed a voyage of understanding, whose destination is togetherness.<sup>102</sup>

Furthermore, Oladipo avowed that the required national dialogue should address the basic issues of social reconstruction which similar agenda for

attempted dialogue have failed to address. There is no gainsaying that where attempts have been made on few occasions in the past in some African countries to chart a way forward by means of dialogue, what was done at the end of day was merely attending to unnecessary issues like rotational presidency, tenure elongation, derivation formula, state creation, state police, etc., whereas the basic issues of social reconstruction include the following:

1. What sort of society do we desire? Is it a competitive that is, a capitalist society, or a cooperative, that is, a socialist society, or a reasonable combination of the two?
2. Which principles should guide social action in this society? What set of values are to be pursued as regulators of social life?
3. What kind of institutions – social, economic, political, educational, and so on – are required to activate and propel the process of evolving this society?
4. What would be considered as the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in this society?
5. What should be the form and substance of the structures of political power and the nature of the relationship between them?<sup>103</sup>

The opportunity of such a structured and open-minded dialogue on these

questions will enable the Africans have a thorough rethink of the foundations of their societies, while also making possible the creation of a new path to national survival and social development.

When properly done as conceived above, Oladipo is hopeful that such national dialogue will yield effective results which will include: (a) the establishment of a national consensus as a means of building the trust required for social reconstruction; (b) the creation of a sense of national purpose as a precondition for restoring faith in the possibility of positive change; (c) reinvigoration of leadership, that is, providing it with a sense of direction and strengthening its capacity and willingness to confront unequivocally the major anxiety of their people in their time.<sup>104</sup>

Moreover, the dialogue will not require, as a condition for its success, an ideal situation where, for instance, participants are ignorant of their particularising features. Thus, for the dialogue to be meaningful, it will have to begin from the recognition of the participants as historical and cultural individuals. As a result, to ensure that these particularising features, that is, the individual differences, do not impede the dialogue and its corresponding mutual understanding, the following conditions are required:

- i. Faith in dialogue as a means of consensus building.

- ii. Realisation that the destiny of society is a collective one, the shaping and direction of which is also a collective responsibility.
- iii. Consciousness of and respect for the humanity and forms of life of the parties constituting the community of discourse.
- iv. Readiness to give reasons for the positions being canvassed, and entertain questions about them.
- v. Awareness that the goal of dialogue is to arrive at reasoned agreement on issues that are transpersonal but mutually beneficial.

The first two conditions are initial conditions since they are required to ensure that the process of dialogue takes off in the first place, whereas the remaining three conditions are substantive conditions for without them the voyage of understanding could be too rough to be worthwhile. Oladipo refers to the last three conditions as the lubricants of the engine of dialogue or the ventilators of the house of dialogue.

On his part, Oladipo seems to have responded to this problem with his campaign for social reconstruction in Africa. Gleaning from his posits, this research points out that the thesis of Oladipo's social reconstruction is the social institutions. Oladipo argues that these institutions are weak and there is the urgent need to strengthen them in order to herald development for Africa. Thus,

this research proceeds in the succeeding chapter by making a case for institutional development as a paradigm for African development.

## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> “Transition: Professor Olusegun Teju Oladipo,” *Caribbean Journal of Philosophy*, <http://ojs.mona.uwi.edu/index.php/cjp/announcement/view/13>, Retrieved 10/05/2014.
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## CHAPTER FIVE

### INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AS A PARADIGM FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

#### 5.1 A Case for Social Reconstruction in Africa

Kwame Gyekye, the Ghanaian philosopher, has described the African condition as “a deep development crisis”<sup>1</sup> as manifested in social upheavals, economic dislocation, violence, state collapse, high mortality rate, etc. Yet, on the contrary, Olusegun Oladipo observed that there seems to be signs of the possibility of a change; a social and cultural renewal. According to Oladipo, this change can be observed in some developments which are visible indicators of a recovery process, such as:

The wave of democratisation in Africa, which began in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and is still spreading, in spite of the unsteady or difficult cases; the transformation of South Africa from an apartheid to a multiracial and democratic society; and the emergence of new initiatives in the search for continental socio-political frameworks for the resolution of pressing African problems, particularly the initiation and pursuit of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and the transformation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union (AU).<sup>2</sup>

This confirms the historical observation that periods of crisis “are often fertile grounds for change and new development.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, the need for the African state to respond to its predicament, that is, the challenge of development, is foretold in the claim that “a civilisation responds to the challenge of difficulty. If it is too easy, and no effort is called for, no advanced civilisation is likely to arise. If there is too much difficulty, the civilisations are those, which have encountered, and responded to, the optimum of difficulty.”<sup>4</sup>

Consequently, it is imperative that the African state responds to the problem confronting the African continent. It is anticipated that such a response should initiate a social change, whose overall effect will be social reconstruction, that is, to find the right way to arrange or rearrange our social and political interactions. The truth, however, is that, it is “not clear what the right way is”<sup>5</sup> but “it befits a philosopher to try to ferret this out.”<sup>6</sup> Still, one wonders if the philosopher truly has a genuine role to play in this case, since social change entails shaping of our societies and the philosopher, on the other hand, is, perhaps, engaged with philosophical considerations which are often conceived as isolated from empirical ones.

Olusegun Oladipo argued that philosophy, though he specified African philosophy, has “a direct bearing on the question of the sort of society Africa wishes to be and the direction to which her efforts at social reconstruction should go.”<sup>7</sup> Going by Abiola Irele’s broad definition of philosophy as reflective thought on issues of existence,<sup>8</sup> it becomes possible to recognise and appreciate the role of philosophy in the present African situation, for instance, the pursuit of the task of the radical criticism of values and institutions. A good and recent example of this philosophical practice can be found in Paulin Hountondji’s attempt “to identify some of the encumbrances, some of the occasions that must be removed – in terms of daily lives in our countries – if we want life here to be more agreeable, more productive, and more fruitful.”<sup>9</sup>

Hountondji highlights some of these encumbrances to include: the inertia of administrative systems, which wastes considerable time and energy on such minor matters as obtaining vehicle licenses and repairing faulty telephone lines; the trading of favours in order to ensure the delivery of public goods; the crippling fatalism manifested in the readiness of people to take things as they are and not to change them; a lack of regard by those wielding power for the people on whose behalf power should be exercised.<sup>10</sup> These encumbrances are the consequences of the problem of social coordination and national reconstruction, among others, which have ensured that daily life in Black Africa is an intricate web of drifts, losses and mazes. Hence the uncertainty with which we tackle today's tasks and envision tomorrow's possibilities.

Indeed, philosophy has a crucial role to play in the pursuit of the task of social reconstruction in Africa, but how? This question is not an easy one to answer, especially, given Oladipo's submission that philosophy is "a unique discipline in which discourse on its nature is an essential aspect of its practice."<sup>11</sup> However, this question, obviously, suggests a certain notion of relevance. In response, Oladipo argued that no philosophy operates in a vacuum, since every philosophy is a product of a certain socio-political configuration; therefore every philosophy has a social point. He presents it aptly thus: "Philosophy is not an abstract discipline unrelated to the social struggle of the

people in a given society. Rather, it is a weapon of social struggle, which either supports the status quo or rejects it.”<sup>12</sup>

Thus, there is a dialectical relationship between the social condition of a society and the content of the theories formulated by philosophers in that society, and also, philosophy either supports or opposes a social milieu. The point here is further expressed by Bertrand Russell that “philosophers are both effects and causes; effects of the social circumstances and the politics and social institutions of their time; causes...of beliefs which mould the politics and institutions of later ages.”<sup>13</sup> In fact, philosophy enjoys its autonomy as an intellectual practice, especially in its critical function, which has been described as “philosophy’s most majestic contribution to the common weal.”<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, Oladipo built on the foregoing as premises in making a case for an immediate need for social reconstruction in Africa. With the tools of critical thinking and reflection available to the philosopher and also given the volume of knowledge at the philosopher’s disposal, Oladipo made a call on African philosophers to initiate a social reconstruction as a key to African development. He, however, pointed out that philosophy will be relevant to the present African condition if only African philosophers take up their commitment as philosophers. The commitment in question, here, is not commitment to an ideological orientation, but commitment to a social purpose.



Thus, Oladipo is convinced that it is the duty of African philosophers to make African philosophy come alive to its social purpose.

From the foregoing, the central thesis is social reconstruction. Social reconstruction is here presented as a therapeutic response to the deepening crisis of African development. Social reconstruction is therefore a proposal for social change as a response to the African predicament. Social change entails shaping of our societies by finding the right way to arrange or rearrange our social and political interactions. Social reconstruction is Oladipo's proposal for the problem of African development. However, in pursuing his theory of social reconstruction, Oladipo observed that the social system, the regulators of social life, which he called the social institutions are weak and not functioning well due to the inertia imposed on them by some encumbrances which must be eliminated because they make the social institutions non-productive and non-fruitful.

It is clear to Oladipo that the problem of African development is a consequence of the problem of social coordination and national reconstruction. He explains that the encumbrances which make life in African less productive and less fruitful are the consequences of lack of social coordination and national reconstruction. Oladipo agreed with Russell that the social circumstances in which a people engage in a social struggle in a given social milieu contribute in moulding the politics and institutions of later ages.<sup>15</sup> This emphasises "the

moderating role of experience in envisioning and initiating development strategies.”<sup>16</sup>

With this, Oladipo argued that the roots of the encumbrances or elements which have weakened the social institutions of the African societies are found in the African past, especially the colonial experience. For him, therefore, “for a better appreciation of why Africa is what it is today and how this condition can be tackled and transcended,”<sup>17</sup> there is need to revisit the past in order to achieve “the historical break Africa requires to become an active participant in the general human quest for freedom and development.”<sup>18</sup>

Consequently, Oladipo proposed social reconstruction as a response to the need for new thinking and new initiatives in efforts to tackle Africa’s myriad problems. To achieve this, however, there is the need to get to the core of the problem which Africans could neglect at their own peril. As Oladipo has noted above, the African problem is in the African past, and to be specific, it is “the problem of the failure of post-colonial state in Africa to fulfil its mandate.”<sup>19</sup> The supposed mandate is the social coordination that should result to a harvest of unprecedented landmines of development and progress. But to proffer a solution to the problem of post-colonial African state, will necessarily require, as Oladipo has argued, a going back or revisit to the past. In this case, the past is the colonial legacy and experience. In fact, it is logical to infer that the problems of lack of functional efficiency that beset the post-colonial state in Africa are

constructs of the colonial legacy which was the immediate precedence of the former state.

Subsequently, there is need to extrapolate on the African colonial legacy and experience, especially from the purview of Oladipo who has, with panache, made a strong case for social reconstruction in Africa. This, at once, registers a second need to engage Oladipo's critique of the post-colonial realities and the African attitude to politics. These two needs are requisites and conditions for the proposal for institutional development as a paradigm for African development. This is because while the fact and effects of the weakness of the social institutions exist in the post-colonial era, the colonial era is implicated for the cause of the weakness. Thus, they both form a conjunction of the past which Oladipo recommends as precursor to a panacea for the problem of African development.

## **5.2 A Critique of the Colonial Legacy**

The African peoples disproportionately suffered and endured indescribable crisis in their tragic encounter with the European world. This encounter is indexed by colonialism, the imperial occupation of most parts of Africa coupled with the forced administrations of its peoples and the resilient and enduring ideologies and practices of European cultural superiority and racial supremacy.<sup>20</sup> So, it is misleading to adopt, for instance, Ali Mazrui's "episodic" theory of African colonialism which implies, inter alia, the attempt to limit the

colonial period to the brief interlude between the 1884 Berlin Conference that partitioned and legitimised European occupation of Africa and the early 1960s when most African countries attained constitutional decolonisation. Such theory argues that the European occupation of Africa has been shallow rather than deep, transitional rather than long-lasting, and thus had very little impact.<sup>21</sup>

Contrary to this theory, the colonial period in Africa is marked by horror and violence, spanning from the beginning of the fifteenth century into the first half of the twentieth century. In fact, colonialism involves “the direct and overall subordination of one country to another on the basis of state power being in the hands of the dominating foreign power.”<sup>22</sup> As such, it strives “to keep the colonial people in political subjection; and to make possible the maximum exploitation of the people and the country’s resources.”<sup>23</sup> Thus, the whirling vortex of commercial interests of individuals and institutions, aimed at the extraction of natural resources and raw materials, orchestrated the sporadic and systematic maritime commercial incursions into Africa by European fortune seekers.<sup>24</sup> In the sequel, the British government who initially kept a distance from these adventurers later adopted many of their earlier dreams and ambitions to justify colonial expansion. In this regard, Aijaz Ahmad observed that: “commercial developers and adventurers like Cecil Rhodes in Southern Africa, Frederick Lugard in Nigeria, and Hugh Cholmondeley Delamere in Kenya, played important roles in later British colonisation on the African continent.”<sup>25</sup>

Regrettably, however, colonialism in Africa unfolded in a successive chain of elements of dislocations which delegitimized the traditional values and dislocated the African economy, while neo-colonialism persistently weakens the African states. In short, for Abiola Irele, colonialism advanced the ‘rape’ of Africa in a disguised but plundering form, thereby severing the disorganisation of the colonised people to suit the interests of the colonial powers, at the peril of Africa.<sup>26</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that colonialism imposed on Africa its historic, cultural, political, and economic subordinate status, which to this day defines, in all spheres of life, the situation of the present.<sup>27</sup>

Oladipo opined that the quest for development best explains the African aspirations since the period of the first wave of independence in the 1960s as it involves, in part, the modification of traditional patterns of production and the forms of social relations associated with them. He, however, emphasised that these process have a colonial origin.<sup>28</sup> It becomes necessary to recognise the decisive role of colonialism in determining the peculiar characteristics of contemporary Africa. Oladipo quoted Peter Ekeh as saying that: “Colonialism is to Africa what feudalism is to Europe. They form the historical background from which Africa and Europe advanced to modernity. As such, they have determined the peculiar characteristics of modernity in each of these areas.”<sup>29</sup> This is why Oladipo insisted on the need “to re-examine our history with a view to finding the path we need to follow in order to achieve the goal of building a

free, united, self-reliant and prosperous nation.”<sup>30</sup> Indeed, the fact of African colonialism is a fact of our historical development whose implication we need to grasp.

One area of contemporary African life in which colonialism has played a decisive role is that of state formation which account for how the idea of “divide and rule” emerged as “a useful administrative instrument”<sup>31</sup> to the colonisers. In this regard, the colonisers combined “the territories of formerly distinct people” to form colonial territories with the aim “to demarcate the sphere of influence of different European rulers,”<sup>32</sup> rather than “to establish the framework of new states.”<sup>33</sup> Oladipo sees this as a deliberate action to ensure that colonial control and dispossession could be achieved without undue rivalry among the colonisers and at minimum cost to them. Hence, out of the two options that were open to the colonisers in the establishment of the colonial frontiers which they created, namely, either to go ahead to mould one citizenry from the many peoples they had brought together or entrench ethnic divisions in order to be in a better position to ensure their continued subjugation and dispossession, the colonisers, naturally of course, settled for the second option.<sup>34</sup>

In Oladipo’s opinion, the first option would have given rise to the formulation of policies whose implementation would gear towards the development of a new consciousness among the various peoples that were brought together to form new colonial territories. But to do this would have

been to create a unity of purpose and convergence and interest which easily could have undermined colonial practices and the assumptions on which they were based. However, since it was in the interest of the colonisers to ensure that the various peoples in the new territories they created were sufficiently disunited, they made the promotion of “ethnic divisions a matter of public policy” and the exploitation of these divisions easily became “the very heart of colonial rule,”<sup>35</sup> in many of these colonial territories.

It is evident, therefore, that the condition of the emergence of the modern African state was one in which no serious effort was made by the colonisers to ensure that the emergent multinational states evolved to become viable nation-states. In the view of Oladipo, the new states could not generate the feelings of support and loyalty which could promote national cohesion in Africa because they were primarily instruments of control and dispossession.<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore, some socio-economic components accompanied the political processes of the colonial legacy with direct effects on the economy of the colonised. Since the colony was simply a “place where the colonising power found it convenient to carry out some of its business,”<sup>37</sup> external orientation was then a major feature of the colonial economy. Thus, the colonial economy was essentially organised and managed to service metropolitan needs. Hence, economic relationship between the colony and the metropole was “conceived in terms of an exchange of African raw materials and markets, on the one hand,

and European industrial goods, on the other.”<sup>38</sup> This led to an exchange economy that unbalanced and upset the existing economic organisation and also put the colonised Africans in a dependent position, for they would not discuss as equals the terms of the exchange – they had the only option of accepting the products they needed from the coloniser to whom they had to sell their own products.

Also, the economic colonisation undermined the old economic institutions and structures without truly replacing them. This had a ruinous effect on many social processes which were connected with the people’s economic life. Land, also, was often confiscated by the colonisers and afterwards, through persuasion and force, used the colonised for workers for the plantations, mines, etc. It is pertinent to note too that colonisation gave a mortal blow to African skilled trades and embryonic industry, for example, textile and sculptural trades. This was because the colonisers pre-empted the market for their own products.

Analysis of the colonial economy reveals that the pattern of colonial economic activities and the needs they were designed to meet, the distribution of infrastructure, such as roads, ports and, railways, was done primarily to facilitate “overseas rather than internal or regional trade and communication.”<sup>39</sup> Walter Rodney exposed the intention behind economic infrastructure in African colonies stating that it had:

a clear geographical distribution according to the extent to which particular regions needed to be opened up to import/export activities. Where exports



were not available, roads, and railways had no place. The only slight exception is that certain roads and railways were built to move troops and make conquest and oppression easier.<sup>40</sup>

One glaring consequence of the characteristic features of the colonial economic activities is that it provided “the foundation of the external orientation that continues to characterise African economies today.”<sup>41</sup> Of course, the colonial administration was protective of colonial power and privileges. As a result, “it could not establish collective goals, the pursuit of which could generate feelings of loyalty and support for the larger unit so essential to the development of viable nation-states.”<sup>42</sup> Thus, the historical background of the African state was one that provided the basis for most of the unhappy crises which are now a familiar feature of the African socio-political landscape.

In terms of values, the colonised African was required to adjust to the structures of oppression and exploitation foisted on his society by the coloniser. Describing the colonial social order as discriminatory, oppressive and exploitative, Oladipo stated that the colonial situation was generally one of lack of freedom and injustice against the colonised who existed merely “as function of the needs of the coloniser.”<sup>43</sup> According to Oladipo: “Not only was the colonised not free to determine the conditions of his existence, his needs and welfare never featured in the calculations that determined the nature of colonial socio-economic policies. Indeed, he was hardly regarded as a person.”<sup>44</sup> Thus, the colonised not only lacked the opportunity to exercise his initiative as a

subject of history, he was also neither the subject nor the object of socio-economic development.

The foregoing clearly presents the characteristic features of the colonial legacy in Africa. It is from this point of view that Oladipo argued that the problem of African development has a colonial origin. It should be clear now why Oladipo insisted on the need to re-examine our past with a view to finding the path we need to follow in order to achieve the goal of building a prosperous nation. Thus, given the available information, one wonders why it has not been possible to subvert the colonial background and create a conducive environment for development in post-colonial Africa. It is in response to this worry that the succeeding section of this work argues that the colonial state and its institutions are inadequate in driving the tasks of post-colonial development.

### **5.3 The Inadequacy of the Colonial State and its Institutions for the Tasks of Post-Colonial Development in Africa**

Recall that colonialism achieved state formation in Africa leading to the emergence of multinational states crafted around different institutions. Recall also, that the colonial situation was one in which, as Oladipo puts it: “the state and its institutions were impositions by outsiders who were interested in the maintenance of law and order not as a way of creating a conducive environment for national development and self-fulfilment, but as a means of meeting their needs and protecting their interests.”<sup>45</sup> This was done not minding the old indigenous states, institutions and structures and without truly replacing them.

Today, Africans are totally free from colonial rule and racism through the achievement of independence. Yet, to be candid, there is a general discontent on the continent today given the precarious socio-economic situation and the hardship that has accompanied it in Africa which is contrary to the tall hope which the people were made to have in the post-colonial Africa during the anti-colonial struggle days – the dream of independence; a hope which has, from all indications, become shattered by the unfolding realities on the continent.

No doubt, independence in Africa has not fulfilled its promise. This is because, for the average African, independence was expected to “usher in a new era of basic rights and freedom long denied under foreign or settler rule.”<sup>46</sup> Very well, “it would amount to stating the obvious,” according to Chris Uroh, “to assert that this has not happened and in fact may not happen for a long time to come.”<sup>47</sup> Obviously, there is crisis of expectations or, what Abiola Irele has called “a bleak future,”<sup>48</sup> in today’s Africa. What these indicate is that Africans are yet to secure the freedom which they require as a precondition for making a sense of their collective existence and building genuine human development. Put bluntly, they are yet to be free from external economic domination, injustice and oppression.

One key factor that is responsible for the African predicament today is the interpretation of the nature of independence and its demands which African leaders embraced during the period of the struggle for independence. Oladipo

observed that “Most African leaders, in their struggle for colonial disengagement, had a limited view of independence as freedom from colonial rule and racism.”<sup>49</sup> No wonder notable African leaders, like Kwame Nkrumah, professed the assumption that freedom from colonial rule (that is, political kingdom) would bring with it, almost immediately, the solution to all of African problems. But today, neither a political kingdom nor economic and social development is feasible.

Furthermore, to strengthen the argument that the genesis of the African problem lies mainly in the inadequacy of the colonial state and its institutions for the tasks of post-colonial development, it is imperative to introduce one primary consideration – the decisions and actions of the African leaders immediately after independence. During the period of the struggle for independence, the African leaders spoke and acted “as if, given the opportunity to self-government, we would quickly create utopias in Africa, and peace throughout Africa.”<sup>50</sup> But they made a fundamental error at the inception of post-colonialism. According to Oladipo, “Rather than transform colonial institutions in a manner that would make them suitable for serving new needs and interests, they simply proceeded to use them, in many cases without significant changes in the means and methods used, to achieve the limited aims of colonial governance.”<sup>51</sup> This has proved disastrous to the achievement of the task of post-colonial development in Africa.

Clearly enough, the crisis of post-colonial development in Africa is as a result of the inherited colonial institutions. Oladipo puts it clearly that the inherited colonial institutions have been inadequate for the achievement of the goals of post-colonial development. He gave the example that the colonial state and its institutions were quite adequate for the maintenance of law and order and for taking care of colonial needs and interests but that, at independence, they could not serve as vehicles of social and economic transformation. Thus, for Oladipo, this is why today the socio-economic condition under which Africans struggle to meet their needs and protect their interests is even worse than it was at independence in the 1960s.<sup>52</sup>

What we have engaged in so far is an attempt to tell the story of the crisis of development in Africa. The substance of the story, however, is that “the historical background from which the advance to modernity began in Africa was not one that was supportive of...development.”<sup>53</sup> Unfortunately though, much of what has been done in post-colonial times has been to consolidate this background rather than subvert it. It is against this backdrop that Oladipo said, “all of Africa is now free from colonial rule and racism,” but “the African situation today is still largely a colonial situation.”<sup>54</sup> As a result, after such careful diagnosis of the African predicament, Oladipo strongly recommends social reconstruction as an efficient recipe for the African quandary.

However, a hermeneutical study of Oladipo's theory of African development, which he summed up in his proposal for social reconstruction, reveals that the central thesis of social reconstruction is the strengthening of weak institutions. This is the logic with which this study advances its deduction of institutional development from Oladipo's theory of development. In any case, what is immediately required at the moment is how to demonstrate that institutional development could be validly implied from social reconstruction. This is the primary concern of the next section of this work.

#### **5.4 Institutional Development as an Implication from Social Reconstruction**

Social reconstruction presupposes finding the path that is required to follow in order to achieve the goal of building a free, united, self-reliant and prosperous nation. Thus, the need to surmount the enormous challenges of human existence in contemporary Africa, justifies the role of careful consideration of what we are and what we might become which is played by social reconstruction.

There are opulent implications to be drawn from the fact that African states are colonial creations. The general impression, according to Oladipo, is that "the colonial masters were not interested in nation building; nor were they bothered about the need for economic and social development."<sup>55</sup> But to be precise, the purpose of such colonial creations was not to enhance the capacity of the people to achieve a better life for themselves. On the contrary, these states

were “invented to create the conditions for the maximisation of returns from the colonial enterprise. Essentially, then, the colonial state was an instrument of exploitation. And since it is not easy to exploit a normal people with their cooperation, the colonial state also had to be an instrument of oppression.”<sup>56</sup>

Unfortunately, at independence, African leaders simply inherited the structures left behind by the colonial masters, without giving much thought to the issue of their suitability for the task of national reconstruction. They all shared in the illusion popularised by Kwame Nkrumah when he said ‘seek ye first the political kingdom and everything shall be added thereto.’ In line with this, Oladipo noted that “although we were independent, no radical change in structures took place to ensure genuine independence or guarantee liberation.”<sup>57</sup> As a result, the post-colonial African state has remained an instrument of exploitation and oppression since it remained true to the image of its colonial precursor. The point being made here is that because of the failure of the post-colonial state and its institutions to fulfil the promise of independence, they became oppressive and alienating as the colonial state and its institutions.<sup>58</sup> Consequently, there was absence of transformation since they could not guarantee what was required for the transformation.

In the absence of this transformation, social struggle was replaced with struggle and competition for scarce national resources in post-colonial Africa. This replacement was to deny the African leaders the opportunity of effectively

performing their role, both in terms of motivating social and economic development and establishing a new kind of political system that would ensure the attainment of the independence dream. This replacement was also “to deny the ordinary people the freedom to establish those social relationships through which they could develop a sense of togetherness and evolve certain shared interests and values.”<sup>59</sup>

At this juncture, it is pertinent to point out that the inability of post-colonial African leaders to transform the state and its institutions with a view of making them equal to the enormous task of post-colonial development is central to the crisis of development in Africa today. The reason for this inability is to be found in the weakness of these leaders at independence.<sup>60</sup> Oladipo expressed this aptly, thus:

These leaders lacked “a strong material base” which could aid the development of a programme of radical institutional and structural change, the aim of which would be to realign the state with the needs and interests of the people. Hence, the acceptance, in many cases, of neo-colonial socio-economic arrangements which ensured that the substance of the interests and needs of the departing colonial powers were protected even when the formal control of the state and its institutions had been transferred to African leaders.<sup>61</sup>

Thus, the absence of any significant change in the relationship between post-colonial Africa and its former colonial masters is one of the important reasons for the inability of the African state to generate the economic surplus required to satisfy the needs of the ordinary people and protect their interest. In the absence of this expected change, “it became necessary for the new leaders to strengthen



themselves politically. This strengthening was required to guarantee their hold on power and protect them against possible agitations by ordinary people.”<sup>62</sup>

The idea of politics which has become dominant in post-colonial Africa is a consequence of the situation described above. In the view of Oladipo, “this is the idea of politics as a means of personal, family or group fulfilment, not as a means for the pursuit of public good.”<sup>63</sup> One thing which is clear, however, is that it is this conception of politics and conduct of political life based on it that has been responsible for our inability to attain development in Africa. In today’s post-colonial Africa, the rulers or politicians (as they are often called) do not see themselves as statesmen who should develop “a keen awareness of collective responsibility in the long term.”<sup>64</sup> Describing the post-colonial African leaders, Oladipo said:

they are, like colonial administrators, overseers who are in power to ensure that the people adjust to the structures of oppression and exploitation which they manage. In this kind of situation, the people and their needs and interests do not matter in the scheme of governance; their initiatives do not count in determining the goals of development and fashioning the tools for their realisation.<sup>65</sup>

Consequently, the state and its institutions became powerless to discharge their developmental functions, and also, became as oppressive and exploitative as their colonial precursors, to the extent that they served as avenues for capital accumulation and status attainment by the leaders.

This being the case, the post-colonial African state could not guarantee or provide “the essential foundation for the pursuit of public benefits,”<sup>66</sup> and so, it

became extremely difficult for the leaders to generate “a moral basis for government, which in turn could endow rulers with legitimacy or authority, rather than mere control of state machinery.”<sup>67</sup> A consequence of the absence of amoral basis for government and its lack of legitimacy or authority is that the leaders could only sustain themselves through a manipulative style of rule where the maintenance of power “in the name of ‘national unity’ constitutes the great or even sole priority.”<sup>68</sup> In this manipulative style of rule, according to Oladipo, “The state becomes an “avenue for the attainment of wealth and status,” rather than an instrument for the creation of the conditions of freedom which are required for human survival and national prosperity.”<sup>69</sup> Obviously, then, the weakness of African leaders is a crucial factor in the failure of development in Africa.

The important question now is this: how do we ensure that Africa is developed amidst these circumstances? An effective response to this question has been offered by Oladipo in his proposal for social reconstruction which is a call for a new socio-political order in Africa. This new order is one in which “the state no longer harbours its paternalistic pretensions, but can effectively serve as the motivator and facilitator of development.”<sup>70</sup> Thus, it becomes clear that the task of social reconstruction is to arrange or rearrange the inherited colonial state and its institutions in order to make them relevant to the post-colonial African milieu. This relevance, however, will only be reported or

accomplished when the state and its institutions become responsive as to take up the task of motivating and facilitating development. What this requires is, simply, strengthening these institutions, which this study has crafted as ‘institutional development.’ Thus, institutional development is, at once, implied by social reconstruction. Therefore, to get to the heart of Oladipo’s recipe for African development, it is important to take a cursory look at institutional development which is being put forward by this study as a paradigm for African development.

### **5.5 Institutional Development as a Paradigm for African Development**

The concept of institutional development is increasingly gaining a wide currency and increased attention in contemporary discourse on development. One major reason, *inter alia*, for this increased attention has been the increasing discontentment with the results of development efforts or agendas. Thus, traditional development theories which focus on factors such as labour, physical and human capital accumulation and technological change do not fully explain why some societies manage to develop more rapidly than others. Hence research interest is increasingly turning to institutional explanations.

The emphasis on institutional development within development discourse is far from new. What is new is that institutions are now widely considered to be central to sustainable development and poverty reduction. Thus, the campaign for institutional development signals a recognition that the process of

development needs to be turned around.<sup>71</sup> Thus, with institutional development, a considerable amount of development activity is concerned with helping the states to improve their performance because the states are themselves shaped by the institutions.

However, to effectively propose institutional development as a paradigm for African development as emerging from Olusegun Oladipo's social philosophy, it is important to begin by conceptually engaging institution, and thereafter present Oladipo's foundation of social life as a theoretical framework for institutional development. Then it will be logically plausible to propose institutional development.

### **5.5.1 The Idea of Institution**

From available literature, there is the absence of any unanimously-agreed understanding of what, precisely, is meant when we speak of an institution.<sup>72</sup> However, there is an emerging consensus around the idea that high-performing public institutions are central to socio-economic development as several publications over the past decade have underscored the deed institutional underpinnings of successful growth and development.<sup>73</sup>

From time immemorial, human beings living in the world have made arrangements for governing their lives. These arrangements are often referred to as institutions. They may be formal arrangements, such as legal systems and property rights, or informal arrangements, like moral standards. In some cases,

they take the form of implicit worldviews or mental maps, that is, cognitive frameworks for looking at the world around you. These arrangements or institutions operate at different levels, ranging from an international level (such as trade arrangements) to community and individual levels (for instance, the values that determine the way in which people interact with each other).

One of the famous definitions of institution was offered by Douglas C. North that institutions are “humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic and social interactions” or simply “the rules of the game”<sup>74</sup> in a society, the rules that facilitate human interaction and social life. From the above definition, an institution can be seen as a set of rules, compliance procedures and moral and ethical behavioural norms designed to constrain the behaviour of individuals in the interest of achieving a social balance in the society. Constraints, as North describes, are devised as formal rules (constitutions, laws, property rights) and informal restraints (sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions, code of conduct), which usually contribute to the perpetuation of order and safety within a society.

North’s definition, according to Natalia Boliari, suggests three fundamental elements of institution:<sup>75</sup> The first one is the formal or written rules – political systems, laws governing contracts, crime, product information, the imposition of taxes, tariffs, regulation of banks, universities, etc. As such, they can be created by governments as well as within firms and other organisations.

The second one is the informal or unwritten rules – culture, norms of behaviour, customs, values, religions, etc. They are generated from socially transmitted information and imposed by the people upon themselves in order to structure their relationships with each other. The last one is the enforcement mechanisms – institutions are ineffective when they are not enforced. Enforcement mechanisms, therefore, make up an integral part of the institutional framework of a society and can function fully, marginally, or not function at all. Also, according to Yeager, enforcement mechanisms can be “the single most important element in explaining differences in economic performance.”<sup>76</sup>

Furthermore, North emphasises that the major role of institutions is “to reduce uncertainty by establishing a stable (but not necessarily efficient) structure to human interaction”<sup>77</sup> and points out that both formal and informal institutions are evolving and changing, thereby continually altering the choices available to us. Thus, the change in institutions occurs incrementally since it is a consequence of the imbeddedness of informal constraints in society.

However, while the change in formal rules (as a result of political or judicial decisions) may occur as fast as overnight, “informal constraints embodied in customs, traditions, and codes of conduct are much more impervious to deliberate policies.”<sup>78</sup> These cultural constraints represent the link between the past and the future and provide the key to explaining the path of historical change. Thus, herein is the representation of the complex interaction

between the State as a designer of formal rules and the society as being bounded by its informal constraints.

It becomes clear, therefore, that institutions structure and shape human behaviour, interaction, and relationships by constraining them and consequently structuring incentives in human exchange. Similarly, conceptually speaking, an institution refers to the complex interplay of norms and behaviours that have become established and continued to be applied and adhered to over time. This means that abstract institutions such as the law, policy making and cultural norms all fall within the parameters of the institution.

### **5.5.2 Oladipo's 'Foundations of Social Life' as a Theoretical Framework for Institutional Development**

The interest here is to engage institutional development in the context of a specific society – Africa. In this perspective, Oladipo's discourse on the foundations of social life becomes very appropriate in putting institutional development within a specific frame of social reference to Africa. By 'foundations of social life,' Oladipo implies the essential conditions that are required for the persistence of social life<sup>79</sup> and he observed that in the African situation, with Nigeria as a case study, the foundations of social life are "very weak – in fact, they are getting weaker."<sup>80</sup>

Oladipo, however, implicates our national orientation as the cause of the problem. According to him, it "privileges the inessential and the superficial over the real and essential in the resolution of problems."<sup>81</sup> As a consequence, we

preoccupy ourselves with artificial issues such as the duration of tenure for political office holders, ethnic and religious identities, etc, whereas the really essential but largely unaddressed issues like the foundations of social order in our society, social justice, wealth creation and distribution and social efficiency with moral sensitivity, and concern for the common good, unity in diversity, etc continue to undermine the basis of our society.<sup>82</sup> In short, the general situation of normlessness which has undermined the foundation of our society underscores the enormity of the challenges of development that confront Africa today.

Furthermore, in identifying the foundations of social life, Oladipo refers to Alex Inkeles' three essential conditions,<sup>83</sup> namely, (1) adaptation to the external environment, physical and human, (2) provision for human bio-social needs, and (3) establishment of the conditions for social cooperation. The first condition which is adaptation to the external environment has two aspects – the first involves interaction with the physical environment in order to guarantee group survival through the provision of the materials required for meeting the basic needs of feeding, clothing and shelter, while the second concerns the protection of individuals in society through adequate care and support for vulnerable groups in the society, particularly the very young, the sick and the elderly, as well as protection against human aggressors.



The second condition is adequate provision for human bio-social needs which include the need for food, clothing and housing; cultural needs, - for example, the need for social and cultural identity; and psychic needs – for example, the need for self-dignity, sexual expression, and other forms of human communication.

The third condition, which Oladipo emphasised over the other two, is the establishment of appropriate conditions for the achievement of social cooperation. This is clearly because without social cooperation, the other two conditions of adaptation to external environment and provision of bio-social needs cannot be met. Social cooperation, therefore, according to Oladipo, “requires the coordination of the public affairs of a society in a manner that makes human co-existence orderly and productive.”<sup>84</sup> Oladipo is convinced that the absence of social cooperation with its attending ingredients of social life such as coordination and integration is one of the major factors responsible for the African predicament.

Having underscored social cooperation as the fundamental condition of all other conditions for the foundation of social life, Oladipo postulated the framework for institutional development by further emphasising two basic elements of social organisation without which the goal of social sustenance and progress cannot be pursued. These basic elements are social institutions and the values that sustain them, and Oladipo described them as the “two pillars of

social organisation.”<sup>85</sup> Thus, it is from this posit that Oladipo becomes customarily associated with the theory of institutional development (even though he never used the word institutional development, but all he was advocating in his social philosophy particularly his theory of African development was that the social institutions in African societies are weak and as such responsible for the crisis of development, and to develop Africa, there is need to strengthen the weak institutions).

The connection between Oladipo’s theory of social reconstruction and social institutions was made clear by Oladipo when he quoted R.H. Tawney that: “An appeal to principles is the condition for any considerable reconstruction of society, because social institutions are the visible expression of the scale of moral values which rules the minds of individuals, and it is impossible to alter the institutions without altering the valuation.”<sup>86</sup> Again, Tawney’s quote not only buttresses Oladipo’s assertion that social institutions and values are the two pillars of social organisation, it also clearly depicts the connectivity and interconnectivity between social institutions and values in the business of social organisation and coordination. Also, a cursory look at Tawney’s view reveals that it underscores the importance of principles in human life and organisation and it is the formulation or reformulation of those principles to suit our situation, that is the important task of Oladipo’s social reconstruction. Therefore, either head or tail, Oladipo’s social reconstructionism

is a proposal to strengthen the weak social institutions in order to achieve development in Africa.

Moreover, to give a clear picture of what social institutions are and their relevance, Oladipo relied on Anthony Giddens' definition that "social institutions are the 'cement' of social life."<sup>87</sup> This, according to Giddens, is so because they "provide the basic living arrangements that human beings work out in their interaction and by means of which continuity is achieved across the generation."<sup>88</sup> Some example of these institutions, as Oladipo noted, include political institutions, economic institutions, cultural institutions, kinship institutions, etc.

Recall that Oladipo had earlier connected social institutions with values by stating that it is values that sustain the social institutions. He made a further connection between these two pillars of social organisation by stating that "these institutions not only aid social organisation, they also help to civilise the human spirit through the inculcation of the values that support them."<sup>89</sup> Since value has become so central to social institutions, it is important to take a brief look at it.

According to R.B. Perry, a thing or anything has value when it is the object of an interest, and interest is a train of events determined by expectation of its outcome.<sup>90</sup> Thus, the fact that we conceive something as valuable puts into proper perspective the extent to which we desire that thing. But it seems that value transcends the desirability of a thing to the issue of the extent to which we

can go in the procurement and preservation of our object of desire. This point has been made clearer by Godwin Sogolo when he said that value in a general sense refers to the conglomerate or set of institutional ideals cherished either by an individual or by a group of people. Sogolo applied this in defining African values as distinct from western values that they are “set of institutional ideals which guide and direct the pattern of life of Africans.”<sup>91</sup> In this sense, African value becomes a notion descriptive of a convergent set of desired goals and aspirations which all, or at least, most Africans entertain and towards which their activities are directed.<sup>92</sup> It becomes clear that “a society’s values are what they consider important to them”<sup>93</sup> and according to Singer, such values are expressed in laws and legislatively enacted policies in mores, social habits and positive morality.<sup>94</sup>

The claim that values are expressed in laws shows that values play a regulative function in the society such that good values will produce good and productive social interaction that will benefit all in the society. T. Ebijuwa puts it aptly that:

the value system prevailing in a society is a function of the laws, morality and the people living therein. A society can be said to be good if such values can lead to the promotion of good human relations and happiness, that is, if it produces programmes, policies and laws that are necessary for the attainment of social and public goods such as peace, security, justice and freedom. These social and public goods are given expression in different societies in the manner in which they enhance human social interaction – the benefit of which can be seen in the preservation and the promotion of the good life and the resources of both physical and human development.<sup>95</sup>

Olusegun Oladipo argues that values help to lubricate the engine of social organisation, and so, he defines value as “the ideals, which express the ultimate ends, goals or purposes of an individual or group of individuals.”<sup>96</sup> But to clearly point out the function or focus of values, he quotes Alex Inkeles as saying that: “Values deal not so much with what is, but with what ought to be; in other words, they express a moral imperative.”<sup>97</sup> Oladipo gives examples of these values to include honesty, trust, tolerance, compassion, reciprocity, etc and states the following as reasons why these values are important: they make the achievement of social cooperation and integration possible; they determine the direction of state policies; they define the nature of the responsibility which individuals owe to themselves and the society as a human collective.<sup>98</sup>

The foregoing shows that values are the measures for determining the boundaries of proper conduct in various social situations, and so, their proper inculcation is a major determinant of the degree of development in a society. Thus, as shown above, social institutions and values are the two pillars of social organisation (and therefore, development) since central to the sustenance and viability of a society is the nature of its institutions, particularly the scale of values they express and their level of efficiency. Consequently, Oladipo’s foundations of social life becomes a theoretical framework for institutional development, especially, given Oladipo’s emphasis that in defining development, focus should be on “the extent to which the institutions of a given

society enhance the capacity of the people, as individuals and as a social collective, to secure the conditions for the persistence of social life.”<sup>99</sup>

Finally, one major point that can be gleaned from Oladipo’s foundations of social life is that the organisation and sustenance of social life and development go beyond merely occupying a geographical territory and having a state that is able to maintain law and order in some ways. For Oladipo, what is important is “the construction of social institutions, which regulate social life in its various manifestations and the inculcation of those values that make social cooperation possible.”<sup>100</sup> Thus, applying Oladipo’s theory of development as a paradigm for African development, it becomes evident that the social institutions that should regulate social life and strengthen the capacity of the individual and the society for coping with challenges of life are weak and pathological, and therefore, require strengthening.

### **5.5.3 A Proposal for Institutional Development as a Paradigm for African Development**

Strong institutions are a prerequisite for development since strong institutions make and implement sound policies, deliver services to citizens and generally ensure a sufficiently high standard of accountability to satisfy the requirements of good governance. But, on the other hand, weak institutions lead to underdevelopment and the overall failure of government. Thus, there can be no doubt of the correlation between the quality of a country’s institutions and its level of development. This contrast between strong and weak institutions, no

doubt, initiates a justification for a proposal for institutional development as a paradigm for African development.

It is so clear that Africa today is far from being a viable society. The major reason for this, as adduced above, is because the social institutions that should regulate social life and strengthen the capacity of the individual and the society for coping with the challenges of life are weak and pathological. Another reason is that the worst human instincts predominate in individual conduct and human relations. Oladipo has observed that “normlessness and social disorder constitute the chief index of national life”<sup>101</sup> in Africa today and, as a result, the task of development “has become a mirage.”<sup>102</sup> Oladipo worries that “what is worse, indeed tragic, in this regard is that, rather than see these problems within their larger social context, the political leadership continues to place its hope on a programme of social reform which has a very narrow economic focus.”<sup>103</sup>

There is no gainsaying the obvious that whatever other myriad problems Africa may have, the most fundamental is the problem of social coordination. This, according to Oladipo, is “the problem of fashioning or strengthening those social institutions and entrenching those values through which a viable social order can be established.”<sup>104</sup> Given the above, the importance of social coordination in the reconstruction of Africa should not be difficult to recognise. This is because, if this problem remains unsolved, it is unlikely that Africans

would have the social ambience required for development. This underscores the imperative of institutional development as a paradigm in this circumstance. Thus, the proposal for institutional development responds to the timely and compelling need for the articulation of a new destiny for Africa. This is because institutional development will initiate “the kind of reconstructive thinking that can point the way to the ideas, values and institutions that can aid the emergence of another Africa of hope, fulfilment and civility.”<sup>105</sup>

Institutional development, according to D.R. Brown, refers to the creation or reinforcement of the capacity of an institution to generate, allocate and deploy financial, human and material resources to meet its changing development objectives. It includes the capacity to reflect systematically and rigorously upon its own role and functions, thereby enabling it to discharge its responsibilities. Also, the capacity for continuous reinvention lies at the heart of institutional development and sustainability.<sup>106</sup> Put differently, institutional development is concerned with the process and content of changing existing institutions to improve their effectiveness in promoting growth and service delivery. In this sense, institutional development involves increasing the capacity or ability of institutions to perform their functions.

Furthermore, institutional development is aimed at improving the effectiveness of existing structures, processes and systems. And so it focuses primarily on building policy, implementation and regulatory capacity, as well as



improving operational efficiency. As such, it is a process of removing from underdeveloped societies, certain inherent qualities that act as binding constraints on the ability to develop strong social institutions.

From the above explications of institutional development, it should be obvious that central to the realisation of the goal of development in Africa, is the need to ensure that there is harmony between the goals of the state and its institutions and the needs and interests of the people. To meet this need, however, Oladipo has recommended that “the modern African state would have to be transformed. The aim of this transformation would be to de-emphasise its negative role as an avenue for the pursuit of individual or group interests through the oppression and exploitation of others and accentuate its “beneficent functions.””<sup>107</sup> But the achievement of this goal requires that “there is a national consensus on the goals and purposes of development, and on the apportionment of costs as well as the benefits of development.”<sup>108</sup>

Oladipo argued further that the consensus mentioned above “cannot be achieved without the establishment of democratic institutions which will allow for the full participation of the people in the political process.”<sup>109</sup> Although there is evidence of a growing awareness in Africa of the need for these democratic institutions, Oladipo observed that there is still cause for worry because “the interpretation of “political participation” and the institutions required to secure it which informs on-going democratic experiments in Africa is uncomfortably

narrow.”<sup>110</sup> For instance, political participation is taken simply to mean ‘opportunity to exercise vote’ whereas, in truth, it is far broader than this.

Moreover, it should be noted that the adoption of the conditions stated above is not an automatic guarantee that the state and its institutions will be responsive to the needs of the people at all times. Hence, Oladipo makes a case for institutions other than economic, political, or cultural, etc. In his telling expression, Oladipo states that:

to ensure accountability and transparency in governance, it is necessary that the freedom and independence of watch-dog institutions, such as the media and the judiciary, are guaranteed. A free press is necessary to ensure that the people are adequately informed about the activities of government and, hence, are better placed to evaluate its conduct, while an independent judiciary is required to enforce the rule of law.<sup>111</sup>

In the same vein, it is important that the freedom of various groups and voluntary associations to operate within the limits of the law, which should be seen to be fair and just, be guaranteed. Thus, the point being made here is that the freedom and independence of watch-dog institutions is, according to Oladipo, “a precondition for the enlargement of the public space which has so much shrunk in contemporary Africa.”<sup>112</sup>

Of importance too, in the proposal for institutional development in Africa, is the need for “more decentralised government systems, for greater regional or local autonomy”<sup>113</sup> in African multinational states. This, in Oladipo’s view, is to enable each ethnic group to develop according to its values, culture, historical

experience and aspirations and ensure that governance and development cease to be, in Claude Ake's telling phrase, "the abuse of many by the few."<sup>114</sup>

In addition, Oladipo argued that all the above mentioned conditions for institutional development cannot be achieved without a shift from the prevailing paradigm of development which emphasises top-down processes.<sup>115</sup> The alternative paradigm of development should be one in which development is "conceived as a process of self-determination."<sup>116</sup> This, according to Oladipo, is a paradigm of development where the people would be actively involved as initiators of plans and programmes for their well-being. As such, "they would cease to be mere objects of development whose primary duty is to obey the commands of leaders and experts who, in many cases, do not have any knowledge of what their true needs and interests are."<sup>117</sup> This is not to deny that the state has a role in the development process. In the conception of development as a process of self-determination, the state still has a role, which is that of motivator and facilitator of development. According to Oladipo, what is denied the state is not the role of motivator and facilitator of development, but its prevailing functions as determiner and controller of the goals of development, functions which it has performed at the expense of the people's right to self-determination and well-being. Oladipo is sure that this reduction in the role of the state would curb its potential for being used as an instrument for the pursuit of individual or group interests through the oppression and

exploitation of others.<sup>118</sup> This implies a call for a new socio-political order in Africa which can effectively serve as the motivator and facilitator of development.

Thus, the above proposal is the path to the required reconstruction where we can find and apply our traditional values which have been destroyed by the combined forces of colonialism, industrialisation and urbanisation. The conception of value which is being considered here is one which is humanistic in orientation, that is, one which defines what is good in terms of what promotes human interests.

One thing which is clear, from the foregoing, is that there is now an urgent need for Africans to free ourselves from the dead hand of our political past. According to Oladipo, “the politics of the belly which has dominated our national life in the past can only further depreciate our capacity to survive and flourish; it can never guarantee for us the foundation of justice and compassion which we require for the successful execution of our project of nation building.”<sup>119</sup> The point here is that Africans would not be able to meet the challenge of development unless they develop new forms of social relationship.

Also, it is crucial that we all as Africans recognise the importance of strong social institutions and values as ingredients of the foundations of social life which we need for the realisation of our project of African development. To achieve this, Oladipo recommends that: “We need to strengthen those organs of

civil society which are capable of checking the manipulative and exploitative tendencies of those political elites who see in politics essentially a means for the promotion of exclusivist personal or group interests.”<sup>120</sup>

In conclusion, a cursory look at the state in Africa would reveal that rather than serve as facilitator of development, it has been the greatest obstacle in the path to its realisation. In fact, the declining capacity of the state to serve as an agent of development has become glaring. This being the case because, appropriate socio-political frameworks have not been created for the enhancement of autonomy and development. In other words, it is clear that the social institutions of the post-colonial African states lack the functional efficiency to regulate, coordinate and control the state. What is not clear, at the moment, is the potential “to enhance the capacity of the state to serve as the facilitator of development.”<sup>121</sup> Nevertheless, what is required, at the moment, is to strengthen the weak institutions so as to position them as facilitators of development.

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## CHAPTER SIX

### EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

#### 6.1 Evaluation

Development, indeed, is a recurrent theme in today's society. It seems to be more significant in every aspect of human activity in the African society, especially as it stands out as an effective medicine to the malady of the African predicament. Consequently, most people rely on development as a guide to problems of diverse range, and so, development does seem to hold sway over the African society. Within this context, different forms of knowledge as well as disciplines have sought to either contribute to or identify the solution to the African challenge of development. No doubt, every discipline, particularly, the humanities and social sciences, has shown some interest in development.

Philosophy, being the quest for knowledge, has also got to grapple with development. This seems so surprising given the common opinion that philosophy is essentially abstract and far removed from our day-to-day life. Such views about philosophy have been made popular by philosophers like Kolawole Owolabi who, while emphasising the need not to water-down or derail from the mainstream of philosophy, have said that "philosophy qua philosophy is supposed to be a theoretical enterprise."<sup>1</sup> As such, the question that necessarily follows the assertion that philosophy has also got to grapple with development is one of the social utility or relevance of philosophy.

Unfortunately, while it is relatively easy to clearly articulate the ways through which some disciplines like medicine, engineering and economics have contributed to the improvement of the quality of human life, “Many people assume that nothing substantial can be identified as part of the contributions of philosophers to social development and the enhancement of human well being.”<sup>2</sup>

It should be clear therefore, that one problem that philosophy, as an academic discipline, is grappling with is that of practical relevance. This problem is underscored, in the context of this study, by the question: how does philosophy enhance the process of development in society? Two possible inferences can easily be made in this circumstance. First, is that philosophy is a highly critical enterprise that proceeds by asking fundamental questions and subjecting issues that are often taken for granted in other disciplines to rigorous analysis. It, therefore, facilitates the spirit of consistent and rational inquiry. Second is that any project of development can be a veritable tool if directed towards this end.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, one of the social benefits of the application of philosophical analysis to the methods, principles and the material outcome of diverse disciplines consists in ensuring that these disciplines employ morally acceptable techniques and methods, remain internally consistent and are actually geared

towards the overall good of humanity. Hence, when a philosopher dedicates himself or herself, for example,

to an analysis of the political structure of a given society, his/her objectives would include identifying the type of structure on ground..., how consistent it is with other existing economic, cultural and religious institutions, the extent to which it conforms to an ideal political structure as well as the degree to which it can or it does actually realise the values of good governance, protection of basic human rights and the overall promotion of human welfare.<sup>4</sup>

It is through a critical and rigorous analysis of the nature of the political structure, its concrete and logical relationships with other structures and institutions in society as well as an evaluation of its actual and possible implications on society, which would be offered by philosophy, that these goals would be achieved.

In fact, as far back as Plato and Aristotle, philosophers have been concerned with the identification of the ideal political and socio-economic principles that would best enhance the development of society and the promotion of human welfare.<sup>5</sup> This interest is still manifest in the enterprise of philosophers today,<sup>6</sup> who continually apply the philosophical tools to critically examine the history, nature and condition of society and humanity as a whole, with a view to gaining a better understanding of current social conditions and fashion out fundamental principles and theories that would constitute the bedrock of the basic institutions and systems of society.

Moreover, before a society can develop its basic structures and institutions, it must be based on principles that are suitable to its development,

with due consideration of its peculiar nature and socio-political and economic conditions. And according to Chris Uroh, to identify such principles, we need “an integrative or holistic analysis”<sup>7</sup> of the different aspects of society. Such analysis would take into account all the contending variables in society, and as rightly pointed out by Andrienne Koch, the philosopher is best suited for this task.<sup>8</sup> Thus, with the integrative attitude present in philosophy, philosophers seek to understand society, and the world, in a holistic manner, interrogating, as it were, “its nature and conditions,”<sup>9</sup> as well as its history. One primary aim of doing this is to identify basic socio-economic and political principles, on the basis of which viable structures and institutions that would help to resolve the diverse problems confronting society and enhance human welfare would be established.

Contrary to the common opinion that philosophy has nothing to do with social and practical life, the foregoing has shown that philosophers have so much to do with the social structures and institutions in the society. In fact, Oladipo records Kwasi Wiredu as saying that social philosophy is the crown of all philosophy.<sup>10</sup> Adebola Ekanola puts it clearly that: “philosophers may be rightly described as social architects because they design the general social framework, which, to a very great extent, conditions the structure of societies, and the kind of activities embarked upon in them.”<sup>11</sup>



Thus, besides being a proposal for African development, part of the concern of this work has been to establish that philosophy can be and is relevant to the development of society, hence effort has been made to correct the general but wrong conception of philosophy as necessarily abstract and far removed from practical life. Although it is still granted that certain aspects of philosophy appear to be quite abstract and removed from practical life, for example, the kind of issues that philosophers grapple with in metaphysics and logic, but in very fundamental respects, these issues underlie much of our daily activities in our various social capacities without many people being conscious of this.

Against this backdrop, Olusegun Oladipo's theory of African development which is epitomised in his theory of social reconstruction becomes a radical proposal for practical philosophy. This is because it proposes that philosophy ought to be properly conceived as a vehicle of social engineering, and this, for Oladipo, will be to fulfil the practical mission of African philosophy in the contemporary world. In fact, in emphasising the practical relevance of philosophy, especially in the African context, Oladipo worries about "the extent to which African philosophers have been able to put their intellects in the service of the aspirations and struggles of African peoples."<sup>12</sup> Thus, where most other philosophers have opted for the fact that "philosophy qua philosophy is supposed to be a theoretical enterprise"<sup>13</sup> and so overemphasising the need for social and practical relevance restricts

philosophical scholarship to “its utilitarian significance as a means of retailing solutions to immediate problems and thus misses its paramount value as a means of insight,”<sup>14</sup> Oladipo stands out as a provocative crusader of practical relevance of philosophy.

Oladipo’s theory of development surfaced at a time when the crisis of development in Africa is so challenging. Africa bears conspicuous indicators of underdevelopment such as high rate of poverty, lack of infrastructures, high rate of illiteracy, collapsing economy, low technical growth, political instability, human rights violation, and disregard for the rule of law, etc. In fact, the crisis of development in Africa is a problem that is necessarily multi-dimensional being that it is economic, political, socio-cultural, moral, etc. This clearly points out the size of the problem. Oladipo himself made it clear that his recommendation of a practical mission for African philosophy is “suggested by the socio-political context within which the African philosopher is called upon to fulfil his scholarly obligation. This is a context of underdevelopment and pervading human misery and the varied attempts to overcome these problems.”<sup>15</sup>

The silhouette of Oladipo’s theory of development was etched in his seminal book, *The Idea of African Philosophy*, which earned him severe backlash as he noted in response to criticisms that “my recommendation of a practical mission for African philosophy in the contemporary world is not an

arbitrary one.”<sup>16</sup> The main thrust of this book is that the debate on the idea of African philosophy is more than anything else, “a debate on the position of philosophy in a society in search of a new beginning.”<sup>17</sup> With this, Oladipo suggested that there is crisis of relevance in contemporary African philosophy. Thus, he noted that philosophy has not been able to grapple with the African experience. As a result, he dismissed the preoccupation with the definition of philosophy in contemporary debates on the idea of African philosophy as misguided because it denies the freedom of a dynamic interaction with its environment.

Furthermore, Oladipo’s idea of African philosophy as one of practical mission in the contemporary world is the source of his social philosophy. His social philosophy centres on establishing that the mission of African philosophy is a practical one, and so, he looked beyond the theoretical aspect of philosophy towards practicalising it as he argued that philosophy has the historic mission of being a pragmatic compass for achieving meaningfulness and understanding. He expressed the opinion that the fluidity of the socio-political condition on the continent needs an urgent attention from scholars.

In addition, Oladipo uses the argument for practical relevance in making a case for African development. He conceives development purely as a process of social reconstruction. Thus, social reconstruction, which proposes social change, is the basic thesis of Oladipo’s social philosophy. As a strategy of

development, social reconstruction is aimed at social recovery of a nation from the challenge of development and so, it is taken to be a therapeutic response to the deepening crisis of African development. With its proposal for social change, therefore, social reconstruction surfaces as a response to the African predicament. It entails shaping of our societies by finding the right way to arrange or rearrange our social and political interactions.

Nevertheless, the recipe which is proposed from social reconstruction is the strengthening of the social institutions. By social institutions, Oladipo means the social system or the regulators of social life. But generally, institutions refer to arrangements made by human beings for governing their lives. In this sense, institutions are seen as humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic and social interactions. Thus, the fundamental elements of institution include formal or written rules like political systems or taxes; informal or unwritten rules like culture or norms of behaviour; and enforcement mechanisms.

Oladipo recommends strengthening of the institutions as the procedure for social reconstruction because he observed that, in the African context, these institutions are weak owing to some encumbrances which must be removed if we are to achieve development. It is these encumbrances that have weakened the social institutions of the African societies. These encumbrances make life in Africa less productive and less fruitful. Thus, Oladipo's social reconstruction is

a response to the need for new thinking and new initiatives in efforts to tackle Africa's myriad problems. In the view of Oladipo, therefore, if these encumbrances are not removed, it is unlikely that Africans would have the social ambience required for development.

To make his case for social reconstruction clearer, Oladipo argued that the roots of the encumbrances which have weakened the social institutions of the African societies are found in the African past, precisely the colonial experience. So, for Oladipo, the problem of African development is simply the problem of the failure of post-colonial state in Africa to fulfil its mandate of social coordination which should result to unprecedented development. Thus, while the fact and effects of the weakness of the social institutions exist in the post-colonial era, the colonial era is implicated as the cause of the weakness. This is the primary reason behind Oladipo's proposal in re-making Africa rests on going back to the past.

However, Oladipo's campaign for going back to the past is not one of jumping back to the past thereby rendering the present and future as insignificant. Rather, it is one of tracing the cause of the problem to the past, resolving it when it is recognised and then reconstruct the realities of the present with the lessons and values of the past. This explains why Oladipo emphasised the need to re-examine our history with a view to finding the path we need to follow in order to achieve the goal of development. In any case, Oladipo

criticises the colonial legacy as one marked by horror and violence as well as a successive chain of elements of dislocation which delegitimized the traditional values and dislocated the African economy while persistently weakening the African states. Thus, the fact of African colonialism is a fact of our historical development whose implication we need to grasp.

One implication of the colonial rule on African development is that rather than moulding one citizenry from the many people they had brought together which would create a unity of purpose and convergence and interest which easily could undermine colonial practices and their assumptions and so formulate policies that would gear towards development, the colonial legacy entrenched ethnic divisions to ensure that the colonial peoples were sufficiently disunited. As a consequence, the new states could not generate the feelings of support and loyalty which could promote national cohesion in Africa.

There are also economic implications of the colonial legacy. Colonialism undermined the old economic institutions of the Africans without truly replacing them; it introduced external orientation which continues to characterise African economies today; and destroyed African skilled trades and embryonic industries.

The above indices present a clear picture of the characteristic features of the colonial legacy in Africa, and also, they explain why Oladipo argued that the problem of African development have a colonial origin. In this

circumstance, Oladipo moves a motion for the need to subvert the colonial background and create a conducive environment for development in post-colonial Africa. Thus, it is the task of social reconstruction to ensure this given the understanding that the colonial state and its institutions are inadequate in driving the tasks of post-colonial development. This is why Oladipo laments that at the inception of post-colonialism, rather than transform colonial institutions in a manner that would make them suitable for serving new needs and interests, African leaders simply proceeded to use them, in many cases without significant changes in the means and methods used, to achieve the limited aims of colonial governance.<sup>18</sup> It becomes clear enough that the crisis of post-colonial development in Africa is as a result of the inherited colonial institutions.

As a solution to the challenge of African development, therefore, Oladipo proposes the need to strengthen the weak institutions. This proposal was made in Oladipo's discourse on the "Foundations of Social Life"<sup>19</sup> where he took a closer look at social life in Africa and discovered that there are some essential conditions that are required for the persistence of social life. These essential conditions include adaptation to the external environment (physical and human), provision for human bio-social needs, and establishment of the conditions for social cooperation. Oladipo emphasised social cooperation over the other two conditions obviously because without it, the other two conditions cannot be met.

This is because social cooperation allows the coordination of the public affairs of a society in a manner that makes human co-existence orderly and productive. But in the African condition, as he observed, these essential conditions which make the foundations of social life are very weak.

Furthermore, Oladipo emphasised two basic elements of social organisation without which the goal of social sustenance and progress cannot be pursued. These two basic elements which he described as the two pillars of social organisation are social institutions and the values that sustain them. With this, Oladipo postulated a framework for institutional development even though he never used the word. But he did make so much effort at emphasising that the social institutions in African societies are weak and as such responsible for the crisis of African development, and to develop Africa, there is need to strengthen them.

Consequently, for the obvious reasons above, this study justifiably builds on Oladipo's theory of African development as the framework for its proposal for institutional development. Since institutional development is concerned with the process of changing or transforming existing institutions to improve their effectiveness in promoting growth and service delivery, that is, increasing the capacity or ability of institutions to perform their functions, this study makes a proposal for it as a paradigm for African development.



Thus, this study begins by acknowledging the size of the problem of African development as enormous. It registers the disappointment that comes with a vivid understanding of the African predicament. In other words, while some perspectives may see nothing wrong with the African social arrangement, others may think that some issues definitely plague the African continent but they are not very different from the kind of problems encountered in other continents of the world. Some other perspectives may even acknowledge the seriousness and size of the problem of African development but rather adopt a pessimist attitude like thinking that almost nothing can be done to remedy the situation or at best imbibe the attitude of ‘suffering and smiling’.

This study, however, takes a different approach by first making reasonable efforts to determine the constructs and contours of the African problem. It wonders why Africa is left behind in a milieu of rapid developmental strides breaking forth in different societies around the world. It recognises that Africa, indeed, possesses colossal potentials for development, at least given the evidence of diverse natural and human resources all over the continent. Also, Africa has been, and is still, very relevant, economically and politically, to the Western world. The evidence of this is the western incursion into Africa under the guise of slave trade and colonialism, and particularly its latest version of imperial neo-colonialism and globalisation.

To buttress its assertion of the fact of African underdevelopment, this study takes a cursory glance at the spreadsheet of the African nation and highlights the myriad conspicuous indicators of underdevelopment which define the African society to include failed or fragile states, an alarming rate of poverty, collapsing economy, lack of infrastructures, etc. With this, the basic problems of African development, therefore, become, as well, the problem of this study, which include: the declining capacity of the state to serve as an agent of development; the present socio-economic conditions that are constructed on weak institutions; the administration of inherited colonial institutions which are weapons of exploitation and not instruments for the provision of public benefits; the inability to make incremental change; continuous exploitation by the erstwhile colonial masters who double as global capitalists; and more importantly, most of the development theories, strategies and agendas that have been applied to the problem of African development are not internally driven and, as such, are yet or have failed to deliver development to the Africans.

In the sequel, the purpose of this study is to proffer a solution to the crisis of African development by looking beyond the limitations of the existing theories and determining the path for the achievement of development for Africa. Thus, this study is significant because it responds to the current quest for a solution to the crisis of African development and it attempts to redirect attention to the fundamental but largely unaddressed issues of development such

as the foundations of social order in our society, the value system appropriate to a post-colonial society, etc.

However, to achieve the huge task of this study, it engaged in a review of literature with focus on the theory of African development which Olusegun Oladipo seems to have constructed – social reconstruction which argues that the problem of African development is one of failure or weak social structures defined as institutions. Given that Oladipo is a big figure in African philosophy, his theory of African development, no doubt, has exerted enormous influence in the intellectual space. Therefore, it is expected that different literature should have engaged Oladipo's theory of development from different angles. Consequently, this study employed the thematic method of literature review and classified the related literature into three themes as follow: those that assent to Oladipo's theory, those that react to it, and those that are revolutionary, that is, by suggesting something new to the theory. One point that guarantees the novelty of this research, however, unlike the works reviewed in the course of this research, is that it directly implies from Oladipo's theory of development that institutional development is a paradigm for African development.

A cursory glance at Oladipo's theory of African development which this study has adopted as its theoretical framework reveals an avalanche of strengths or contributions which makes the theory very significant. First is the fact that Oladipo's theory is a project aimed at the enthronement of a newer paradigm for

African development. Indeed, the current paradigm of development that has populated the world today is a product of a consolidation of the culture arising from Western capitalism with its modernity which has translated into the narrow and often self-seeking implementations of the idea of modernity. But the newer paradigm which Oladipo's theory of development proposes is one of unlimited self-realisation for the individual in society that would guarantee a space for civil law in the society and the participation of the individual in the formation of political will, and related conditions serving the ends of freedom. Thus, with his theory of social reconstruction in Africa, Oladipo proposes ways out of the mush, toward a more fulfilling paradigm for African development. However, Oladipo noted that the new paradigm for African development is based on the formation of a new moral framework of cooperation centred on identity, self-help and dignity, etc.

Also, with his book, *The Idea of African Philosophy*, which is the foundation of his entire philosophy, Oladipo made a significant contribution to the crisis of relevance that has rocked African philosophy. This crisis has its roots in the dispute over the nature of African philosophy by the traditionalist trend and the analytic trend. Rather than pitching tent with either of the trends, Oladipo took a different position by pointing out that both criteria are inadequate, and recommended that what is required is for African philosophers

to create a tradition of thinking and discourse over issues that affect the felt needs of their people.

Thus, with his intervention in the debate surrounding the identity and responsibility of African philosophy in the context of post-colonial underdevelopment, Oladipo proposed an idea of African philosophy that departed radically from its conception in the controversy involving those he called the traditionalists and the analytic philosophers. With the above, it should be clear that Oladipo represents a pragmatic thinking on the African predicament and advocates a practical mission for African philosophy in the contemporary world.

With the kind of thinking with which Oladipo contributed to the crisis of relevance in African philosophy, he at once emphasised the social and practical relevance of philosophy. In some of his major works, such as *Thinking about Philosophy* (2009), Oladipo set forth his thoughts and conviction about the relevance of philosophy beyond its academic disguise. Thus, with his telling phrase “the philosophic spirit”, Oladipo explained that the practice of philosophy involves the conscious and sustained application of critical and reflective thinking to various aspects of human life and experience. In fact, it is the philosophic spirit that seeks to evaluate, re-evaluate and reconstruct ideas and experiences that would go into the construction of worldviews and the adoption of critical thinking which ensures that we examine our worldviews in a

critical light to see the extent to which they are tenable as means of coping with the challenges thrown at us by our reality. However, Oladipo's brilliant argument in favour of social relevance is reinforced by the care he takes to address issues and questions that may arise as a result of his postulations.

Subsequently, with his contention on the social and practical relevance of philosophy, Oladipo contributes a new method to philosophy, namely the "Method of Relevance." Earlier on, different methodologies have been formulated and advanced in response to the question: what is the appropriate method to follow in order for African philosophy to be valid or authentic? Some of these methodologies include C.S. Momoh's "Canons of Discourse in African Philosophy", Barry Hallen's "Cultural Thematic", William Abraham's "Cultural Essentialism", Kwasi Wiredu's "Renewal or Reconstruction", Peter Bodunrin's "Universal Philosophy", Paulin Hountondji's "Scientific Philosophy", and Odera Oruka's "Philosophic Sagacity", etc.

Oladipo's "Method of Relevance" is closely related to the view of William Abraham's "Cultural Essentialism" which makes philosophy pragmatic by emphasising the usefulness of philosophy to African societies, based on African mind and cultural paradigm. It is likewise related to Kwasi Wiredu's method of "Renewal or Reconstruction" which implores us to examine the intellectual foundation of our cultures for possible reconstruction or renewal. However, Oladipo's "Method of Relevance" differs significantly from those of

William Abraham and Kwasi Wiredu because it hinges on the reminder that African philosophers should have as their primary task how to be relevant physically and socially to their societies in order to contribute to self-knowledge in Africa. One of the reasons that Oladipo advanced to buttress the need for the method of relevance is that since “the contemporary African philosopher derives his/her education from cultural sources that are distinct from African culture,”<sup>20</sup> it affects the traditional African way of life and makes contemporary African philosophy to become vacuous. Thus, there is the imperative to introduce a method that will make African philosophy to become relevant to the present day Africans. This justifies Oladipo’s “Method of Relevance.”

Furthermore, Oladipo philosophised in large part on African culture. He is so passionate about Africans finding rediscovering and living according to the tenets of their culture. As a result, in his book *The Idea of African Philosophy*, one of the tasks of the African philosophers which he emphasised is cultural reappraisal. Since culture refers to a common heritage or package of experience shared by all in a given society and human beings are necessarily the products of their culture, Oladipo argued in line with Wiredu that reappraisal of African culture is necessary and important in the light of the current cultural transition in contemporary Africa.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, for Oladipo, the task of African philosophers is to bring about a critical reconstruction, which will enable Africans to separate the backward

aspects of their culture from those aspects that are worth keeping. Thus, he argued that there is a link between philosophy and culture expressive in the crucial role of philosophy in the production, clarification and propagation of the ideas and values that guide the thought and life of a people and in challenging a people's established views of themselves and their condition. However, Oladipo cautions that African philosopher should not only criticise the African culture but must also fulfil their mandate of promoting African cultural development.

In addition, Oladipo emphasised the role of culture in human scientific and technological explorations, especially how the viable aspects of a people's culture can be explored for technological development in Africa. Indeed, the fact of culture in Africa is an accentuation that there is a huge possibility for the development of technology in Africa. This is because culture is a phenomenon that constantly propels the human instinctive attempt at technological innovation and scientific exploration. Oladipo, however, bemoans that "Whether our reference is to the slave trade, to the colonial era or even to the post-colonial era, it is clear that African oppression and exploitation by others have been a function of her technological underdevelopment."<sup>22</sup> Thus, in the view of Oladipo, the possibility of slave trade and colonialism was largely due to the underdevelopment of the African technological capacity.

Oladipo maintains that in post-colonial times, the evidence of the gap created by the cross-cultural interference is that of a yawning technological gap



that has made it impossible for Africans to record any appreciable advancement in the competitive sectors of culture, which include things like military strength, industrial capacity, economic viability and technological prowess. Thus, Oladipo engages culture in articulating his theory on the technological development of Africa as put forward in his book, *Philosophy and Social Reconstruction in Africa*.

Oladipo also made so much contribution to the Nigerian situation. His social diagnosis of the Nigerian situation reveals an open secret that Nigeria today is far from being a viable state not only because the social institutions that should regulate social life and strengthen the capacity of the individual and the society for coping with challenges of life are weak and pathological, but also the worst human instincts predominate in individual conduct and human relations.<sup>23</sup> Thus, whatever other myriad problems Nigerians may have, the most fundamental is the problem of social coordination, that is, the problem of fashioning or strengthening those institutions and entrenching those values through which a viable social order can be established in the country.<sup>24</sup>

Moreover, Oladipo made effort at defining the role of philosophy in the Nigerian condition. Given his conception of philosophy as essentially about critical and reflective thinking, and given the present situation of Nigeria, it becomes clear that Nigeria today urgently requires an intellectual orientation, which in the words of Kwasi Wiredu, examines “the intellectual foundations of

our life using the best available modes of knowledge for human well-being.”<sup>25</sup> Oladipo remarked that it is unfortunate for us in Nigeria that this intellectual orientation which has played a major role in the development of human civilisation “is a key ingredient of human development that we badly lack.”<sup>26</sup> As a result, the entire social atmosphere in this country is largely dominated by various forms of irrationality and inauthentic, that is, unquestioning, imitative existence. According to Oladipo, “It should not be surprising, then, that Nigeria is what it is today: a chaotic and almost hopeless society. For the philosophic spirit is not an accidental addition to human attributes in the process of evolution; it is at the core of human development.”<sup>27</sup> In a more telling expression, Oladipo stated that: “There is a lot in our mentality that is responsible for our situation of underdevelopment and decadence, and that, unless we as individuals begin to cultivate the attitude of critical and reflective thinking about ourselves and the things we do or do not do, not much in our society would improve.”<sup>28</sup>

Again, given Oladipo’s theory of cultural renewal and overall development, Oladipo holds that the modern African history and culture were forced on the African by the Whiteman. For Oladipo, the elements of African culture might be useful in founding a new continent from the debris of Dark Continent given that before the coming of the Whiteman, Africa was home to Africans. In other words, Africans had their own culture not until the Whiteman

arrived with his own did everything change. Thus, to restore the dignity and identity of the Blackman has become the foremost existential exercise and philosophy in our time. Therefore, the effort to resolve the African problem will not yield any positive result unless it is discussed within the context of African cultural traits and values. In this sense, Oladipo explains that the reappraisal and rediscovery of the place of African cultural values have the potential of promoting the kind of self-understanding that would provide some basis for determining the kind of socio-cultural reconstructions that would enable Africans to come to terms with the challenges of contemporary life.

Besides, Oladipo's contention in his "Society and National Development"<sup>29</sup> can be used to deduce sustainable development since he is of the opinion that to define development, focus should be on the extent to which the institutions of a given society enhance the capacity of the people, as individuals and as a social collective, ensure the conditions for the persistence of social life. Sustainable development is the development that is stable, enduring, and consistent. It is a development that can guarantee the protection of the environment and resources today and tomorrow. Thus, sustainable development implies interdependence of various strata of the society in the realisation of stable economic, social, political, technological, and cultural development, and this is the heart of Oladipo's proposal for strengthening the weak institutions as a recipe for African development.

Also, Oladipo's theory of development provides for the core objectives of religion. Oladipo identifies what he considers as two "core objectives" of religion as "self-realisation and "social harmony."<sup>30</sup> Oladipo construes self-realisation beyond being a state of economic, social or cultural well-being to imply a condition of existence or a state of being, which is guided by a longing or a desire for the discovery of the ideal possibilities of human life. Then, social harmony, for him, refers to that element in the make-up of the individual that enables him or her act towards other individuals in a spirit of care, brotherhood and love. Oladipo connects his development theory to religion therefore, when he states that morality is a necessary condition for religion because true religion binds us to live with moral integrity within our lights, thereby joining in the important task of helping to create the conditions for a decent life for oneself and for other members of society. Oladipo captures this succinctly when he suggests that both religion and development would mean to be engaged in the crucial task of helping human beings enhance the "capacity for self-action and social transformation."<sup>31</sup> Thus, Oladipo presents the social nature of religion hence he characterised religion as a search for the meaning and purpose of life.

One important point to note about Oladipo's theory of African development and his social philosophy in general, is the manner with which he borrows ideas from sources and disciplines other than philosophy in articulating his thoughts. A good example of this practice is seen in his discourse on the

‘Foundations of Social Life’ which is contained in his *Thinking about Philosophy*. Here, in ascertaining the foundations of social life, Oladipo relied on what Alex Inkeles has identified as three essential conditions for the persistence of social life in his book *What is Sociology?*<sup>32</sup> Likewise, when Oladipo was to define what is meant by social institutions, in the same book, he relied on Anthony Giddens definition that “Social institutions are the ‘cement’ of social life.”<sup>33</sup> These two scholars are sociologists yet Oladipo extracts the philosophical necessities from their views and applies them as raw materials for his postulations. This is just to mention a few of how Oladipo sources ideas from the works of non-philosophers such as Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Ade Ajayi, Niyi Osundare, Ngugi wa Thiong’O, Ben Okri, Okot P’ Bitek, Saro Wiwa, Claude Ake, Samir Amin, Peter Ekeh, Ali Mazrui, etc. This attitude surely pictures him as a true social thinker.

Above all, one very remarkable feature and strength of Oladipo’s theory of African development is that it linked the role of philosophy in Africa directly to African development when he emphasised that African development must be central to the business of African philosophers. In Oladipo’s telling expression, he says, “The primary task of African philosophers should be to begin to create a tradition of thinking and discourse whose main focus would be on issues affecting the interests and aspiration of their peoples.”<sup>34</sup> He further employed the words Okot P’ Btek to corroborate his point that African philosophers

should “begin to do original thinking with the interests of African peoples at heart.”<sup>35</sup> In fact, Oladipo’s career as an African philosopher is a testimony that he practiced what he preached since he engaged in original thinking on how to solve and resolve the African predicament. Finally, Oladipo’s analysis is as critical as his prose is elegant.

Nevertheless, since this work is a very critical piece, it is not absorbed by the clout and glamour of Oladipo’s postulate as many works of its nature would do. As a result, attempt is made here to observe some loopholes or limitations in Oladipo’s theory of African development. Subsequently, some solutions or recommendations would be provided to ameliorate such limitations.

First, Oladipo’s advocacy for a return to ‘African roots’ and indigenous cultures of Africans for new social and political theories and practices to solve Africa’s present problems is questionable. The validity of such appeals to the past and certain traditional African structures and institutions contained in this past is highly contested. Oladipo argued for a return to the past by putting the blame of the post-colonial African predicament on the inherited colonial institutions. In doing this, Oladipo seemed not to have thoroughly considered what exactly these cultural roots are and how relevant and effective the indigenous traditional African structures and institutions of the past could be in addressing the present predicament of Africa.

Indeed, given the context of the African present, the following reasons seem to suggest that the past is a wrong direction to seek the way forward for Africa: strains of history and the frictions of intercultural contacts have fatally weakened the traditional culture for which nostalgia is being expressed, and so there may be nothing that could be called ‘the indigenous African traditions, values and ways of life’ anymore; the traditional institutions do not seem viable to cope with the extraordinarily complex issues of governance in this age of globalisation, at least for the fact that they could not withstand the onslaught of slavery and the threat of direct colonialism; the paradigms on which the demolished traditional institutions stood are no longer compatible with the new world order; the approach of urging us to look away from reality to some obscure sources of redemption in the past seems like nothing but an undesirable diversion from the serious task of remaking Africa; the failure of our indigenous cultural arrangements and institutions to repel the attack of other cultures in the past does not leave any reason to think that they will be able to bail the continent out of its present predicament; there is also the doubt if there are any experts or elders from who lessons about the traditional institutions could be taken.<sup>36</sup>

The rejection of going back to the past seems to have been corroborated by Oguejiofor when he said “The hard fact is that in the failure of the African political institutions to withstand the threat of direct colonisation, and again, by

cooperating with the new order (i.e. the colonial order), the paradigm on which the old institutions stood was destroyed for good.”<sup>37</sup> Thus, it will be dangerous to remain uncritically attached to these deficient and inefficient structures and institutions carried forward from the past. Although, it is clear that Oladipo would need to tie some loose ends with regard to his idea of going back to the past but it is pertinent to note also that when Oladipo invites us to go back or revisit the past, he is ultimately calling for an appraisal or reconstruction of the past to make it fit into the present. He does not in any way insinuate abandoning the present in place of a dive-back into the past. What he is concerned about instead is that the past must not give way to the present but must be blended with the present to attain African development.

Also, in his *Idea of African Philosophy*, Oladipo suggested that the mission of African philosophy is not simply a conceptual one having much to do with the meaning of cross-cultural concepts but rather a practical one. With this, he over-emphasised the need for social and practical relevance without considering the fact that philosophy ordinarily ought to be a theoretical enterprise. This criticism of Oladipo’s theory was raised by Owolabi who believes that African philosophy should, like Western philosophy, attempt to mediate in a theoretical manner on baffling questions of life.<sup>38</sup> Thus, to over-emphasise the practical relevance of philosophy, would be to water-down or derail from the mainstream of philosophy. In fact, Oladipo himself held that



philosophy is “a unique discipline in which discourse on its nature is an essential aspect of its practice.”<sup>39</sup> This obviously suggests that philosophy, strictly speaking, lives and thrives in the theoretical domain as against Oladipo’s strong advocacy for philosophy in the public or social domain.

Furthermore, as observed by Omoregie Jerome, Oladipo “fails to acknowledge the contributions of the Nationalist-Ideological Philosophers to African development.”<sup>40</sup> This is a grave oversight of which any good proposal for African development ought not to commit. The pursuit of African development is not one that began in post-colonial Africa. But Oladipo approached the issue of African development as though the quest to develop Africa came only after Africa got independence. The truth of the matter is that the struggle for independence constitutes the foundation and bulk of the entire quest for African development.

The Nationalists were those who were vigilant, resilient and astute enough to notice the African problem. But for them, nothing can be achieved at development if there is no freedom from foreign oppressive rule. Thus, they applied political development (in the form of political liberation) to initiate an overall development plan for Africa and Africans. Their dream was African development and not merely African political liberation. Recall Nkrumah saying ‘seek ye first the political kingdom and every other thing shall be added thereto.’

Thus, the oversight of Oladipo to acknowledge and connect the Nationalist struggle to the current quest for African development weakens his theory of development to a large extent. His emphasis that the African leaders misunderstood the meaning of independence and also contributed in deepening the crisis on African development today is tenuous. Rather than putting in much effort and time in emphasising this, he should have created a space to contemplate the role played by nationalist-ideological philosophers in the agenda for African development. This thinking will inject fresh life into Oladipo's theory because it will allow a space to assess the initial development plan, if any, that the nationalists had in mind at the initiation of their struggle.

Also, another weakness of Oladipo's theory of development, as observed by Ojo Abiodun, is that it is a one-sided view. This, for Ojo, is because "it concentrates more on what is to be done or to be put into ground without considering those steps to be followed in order to realise this mission."<sup>41</sup> However, a careful reading of Oladipo's theory of development would suggest that Ojo may have engaged in hasty conclusion on Oladipo's theory. This is because, upon conception of the fact that the African problem of development is one of weak institutions, Oladipo suggested the first step to be done which is to go back to the past. And it is in this past that Oladipo put forth other steps like cultural reappraisal, cultural renaissance, etc. In fact, in his proposal for social reconstruction, Oladipo gave his first step for African development as a call for

a new socio-political order in Africa but added that this new order would only have the desired effects when the state and its institutions become responsive. He further gave another step in strengthening these institutions by inculcating African values in them since values help to lubricate the engine of social organisation

All the above suggestions by Oladipo can be grouped together as one step which is transforming the African state. But Oladipo argued further that this cannot be achieved without yet another step namely the establishment of democratic institutions. He again stated that the adoption of all the steps mentioned above is not an automatic guarantee that the state and its institutions will be responsive to the needs of the people at all times. Hence he again makes a case for other institutions beside economic and political etc. He referred to these other institutions as watch-dog institutions.

At this juncture, it becomes important to recall and assess the aim which this research set to achieve and see whether it has done well in that direction. At the inception of this work, its purpose was to find an effective solution to the crisis of African development. To do this, the work was set to look beyond the limitations of the existing theories and determine a path for the development of Africa. Thus, the study noticed that the institutions that are supposed to regulate the social life of the society are themselves weak, and therefore, require strengthening. In furtherance of its purpose therefore, the study examined

Olusegun Oladipo's theory of African development which argues that the problem of African development is one of failure of or weak social structures defined as institutions.

Consequently, this study adopted Oladipo's theory of African development as its theoretical framework in finding a compass for the crisis of African development. Upon a close study of Oladipo's posits it became clear that Oladipo made so much effort in different directions regarding the problem of African development. As such, his proposal for African development seemed to be scattered all over his entire philosophy. Therefore, this study adopted the hermeneutical method of philosophy to interrogate Oladipo's ideas closely. The hermeneutical method has been practiced over the centuries as the process of interpretation. But in the philosophical circle, hermeneutics strictly denotes the study of theories and methods of the interpretation of all texts and systems of meaning. The hermeneutical method, therefore, demands that for the interpreter to fully understand the writer, he must be guided by the author's language, train of thought or the context as well as psychological and historical condition at the time of writing.

In reading Oladipo, one may think that his focus is to contribute to the debate on the nature of African philosophy. Hence many would classify him as an African philosopher in the debased sense of African cultural studies. But with the application of the hermeneutical method, this study discovered that

every grain of Oladipo's philosophy is a product of his quest for the practical and social relevance of philosophy, especially African philosophy, to the development of the African world. It is surprising, yet fulfilling, to discover as this study has done, that Oladipo's seminal book, *The Idea of African Philosophy*, is a call on African philosophers to properly understand their task of African development. Thus, rather than being a literature on the conceptual definition of African philosophy, the book passes more as a masterpiece on African development studies and if it has anything to do with the definition of African philosophy, it is a practical definition of African philosophy as having a practical role to play in the society.

Subsequent works by Oladipo followed the same line of searching for a solution to the problem of African development. Some examples include, *Thinking about Philosophy*, *Remaking Africa* (which he edited), *Beyond Survival: Essays on the Nigerian Condition*, and his last book, *Philosophy and Social Reconstruction in Africa*, where Oladipo consolidated his thinking by outlining what such a reconstructive effort at fashioning new modes of socio-political organisation would look like, and the role of philosophy in such a process. Thus, as a true prince of the philosophical kingdom, Oladipo never dissociated the philosopher from the task of African development. In fact, in virtually all his writings, he captures the task of African development as the task of the African philosopher. This is because, as he argued, the philosopher has

the tools of reflective and critical thinking which are required in remaking the social life of any society.

Besides using the hermeneutical method to determine that Oladipo is better known as a philosopher of African development, the hermeneutical method also guided this study in discovering that the thesis or central argument of Oladipo's social philosophy is locked in his discourse on social reconstruction, which dwells primarily on the concepts of social institution and value. Thus, from Oladipo's central thesis of social reconstruction, this study hermeneutically deduced that all Oladipo is saying is basically that the institutions are weak and should be strengthened in order to achieve development. Consequently, the proposal put forward in this study, therefore, is institutional development which means strengthening the weak institutions and infusing African values into them so as to achieve development for Africa. Thus, it is evident that the hermeneutical method employed in this study is justified since it was very useful in getting to the core of Oladipo's posits on African development.

Finally, there are some issues that could have been raised in this study but were, at best, referred to in passing. Some of such issues include colonialism and African development, globalisation and African development, the contemporary European interests and African development, religion and African development, African indigenous knowledge system and African

development, Pan-Africanism and African development, Capitalism and African development, morality and development in Africa, the role of history in African development, science and technology and African development, global politics and African development, global injustice and African development, military rule and African development, communal conflicts and African development, etc. Not giving these issues a proper treatment was not an oversight because giving particular attention to these issues may export our study from its domain. Nevertheless, this study is meant to stimulate further research on issues which it suggested but did not discuss in details.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

Olusegun Oladipo provides us with a recipe for African development. His proposal is distinctly different from what other African philosophers have attempted to provide. For while other African philosophers of his time were busy with determining whether there is an African philosophy or not, Oladipo departed radically from them as he was engrossed with the struggle to utilise the force of ideas and intellection to create the climate for igniting beyond reflection the transformative catalyst badly required by the African project. Indeed, Oladipo possessed the philosophical hopefulness and optimism which, according to Tunji Olaopa, reached to his understanding of the African predicament, and rather than being an abstract consolation for mankind trying to

escape the vicissitude of existence, philosophy for him was the heroic mission of being pragmatic compass for achieving meaningfulness and understanding.<sup>42</sup>

Obviously, Oladipo made a significant contribution to the quest for development in Africa. He is convinced that the problem of African development is one of failure of or weak social structures defined as institutions. These social institutions, according to Oladipo, are the instruments for the achievement of development simply because the institutions are the regulators of social life in its various dimensions. Thus, Oladipo is advocating for strengthening of these institutions as the solution to African problem of development. This is because when these institutions are weak, they become obstacle to social cooperation and a society is underdeveloped. But when these institutions are strong, they aid social cooperation and a society is developed.

Oladipo, however, implicates the colonial legacy and experience as the cause of the weakness of the institutions in Africa. This is because, at independence, Africans inherited the colonial institutions and started using them in a post-colonial era without realising that the colonial institutions have the agenda of exploitation and oppression which is strikingly different from post-colonial institutions which are geared towards freedom and self-determination for the growth of the individual and the society. Thus, the institutions in post-colonial Africa are weak because they are inherited colonial institutions that are serving the limited aims of the colonisers. For this reason, Oladipo proposed



that the way forward for African development is to strengthen these institutions by infusing the African values and interests into them so that they can serve the aim of genuine African development.

To achieve his vision for African development, therefore, Oladipo recommends some steps to be followed in implementing his theory of African development as follow:

First, Oladipo states that it is required that there is national consensus on the goals and purposes of development, and on the apportionment of costs as well as the benefits of development. This is to ensure that there is harmony between the goals of the state and its institutions and the needs and interests of the people. But Oladipo realised that this harmony or consensus cannot take place given the situation of the modern African state unless it is transformed. The transformation would be meant to change the negative role of the state as an avenue for the pursuit of individual or group interests through oppression and exploitation of others and accentuate its beneficent functions.

Then, Oladipo noticed that the harmony and consensus cannot be achieved without the establishment of democratic institutions which will allow for the full participation of the people in the political process. He emphasised the need for a growing awareness of the need for these democratic institutions in Africa and added that the interpretation of political participation and the

institutions in Africa is uncomfortably too narrow, as political participation, for example, is taken simply to mean opportunity to exercise vote.

Also, Oladipo noted that for the state and its institutions to become responsive to the needs of the people at all times given that the above conditions are put in place, there is the need for the freedom and independence of the watch-dog institutions – some other institutions besides economic, political, cultural, etc. These watch-dog institutions include the media, judiciary, police, etc. Oladipo argued that the freedom and independence of the watch-dog institutions is a precondition for the enlargement of the public space which has much decayed in contemporary Africa.

Furthermore, Oladipo recommends the need for more decentralised government systems to allow greater regional and local autonomy in Africa. This is because the colonial legacy forced the different peoples and ethnic nationalities together to form multinational states. And the system of government that is practiced in African states today is one that is drafted according to the same colonial pattern of ‘divide and rule.’ Thus, there is need for more decentralised government systems in order to enable each ethnic group to develop according to its values, culture, historical experience and aspirations.

More so, Oladipo recommends a shift from the prevailing paradigm of development which emphasises top-down processes. The alternative paradigm of development, according to Oladipo, should be one in which development is

conceived as a process of self-determination. This is a case where the people would be actively involved as initiators of plans and programmes for their well-being. This will deny the state its functions of determiner and controller of the goals of development which it has performed at the expense of the people's right to self-determination and well-being.

In addition, Oladipo noted that this new socio-political order in Africa will require attitudinal change which will come through the creation of new forms of social relationship by applying, through reconstruction, our traditional values which have been destroyed by colonialism. The conception of value under consideration here is one which is humanistic, that is, that defines what is good in terms of what promotes human interests.

Moreover, Oladipo noted that African political elites have manipulative and exploitative tendencies which make them see politics essentially as a means for the promotion of personal or group interests. He however, noted that if the institutions and values which are organs of civil society are strengthened, they will be capable of checking these manipulative and exploitative tendencies.

In conclusion, this study employed Oladipo's philosophy of African development as a framework to propose institutional development as a paradigm for African development. Institutional development involves the creation or reinforcement of the capacity of existing institutions to improve their effectiveness in promoting growth and service delivery, while Oladipo's theory

of African development, on the other hand, proposes the need to strengthen the weak institutions of post-colonial Africa in order to make them serve the need for African development. Thus, this study has interpreted Oladipo's proposal for African development as a proposal for institutional development in Africa given that once the weak institutions are strengthened and the requisite traditional values infused into them, then they will regulate society efficiently and thus, there will be institutional development which will, in turn, necessarily, occasion an overall development for Africa.

## Endnotes

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<sup>2</sup> A.B. Ekanola, "The Social Relevance of Philosophy," *Journal of Philosophy and Development*, Vol.8, Nos.1&2, 2006, p.44.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.48.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.50.

<sup>5</sup> See for example, Plato, *The Republic*, Trans. by Francis MacDonald Cornford, (London: University Press), 1974.

<sup>6</sup> See for example, John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, (Oxford: University Press), 1971.

<sup>7</sup> C.O. Uroh, "Cultural Dislocation and Urban Anarchy in Africa: Towards a Future of a Humanised City," *Journal of Futures Studies*, Nov. 1999, 4(1): 35, p.37.

<sup>8</sup> A. Koch, *Philosophy for a Time of Crisis*, (New York: E. Dutton and Co.), 1960, p.65, cited in C.O. Uroh, *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>10</sup> O. Oladipo, *The Idea of African Philosophy: A Critical Study of the Major Orientations in Contemporary African Philosophy*, Third Edition, (Ibadan: Hope Publications), 2000, p.114.

<sup>11</sup> A.B. Ekanola, "The Social Relevance of Philosophy," p.52.

<sup>12</sup> O. Oladipo, *The Idea of African Philosophy*, p.7.

<sup>13</sup> K.A. Owolabi, "Review of *The Idea of African Philosophy*," *Quest: An International African Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. VII, no.2, 1993, pp.125-126.

<sup>14</sup> A. Irele, "In Praise of Alienation," Inaugural Lecture delivered at the University of Ibadan on 22 November 1982; Published in V.Y. Mudimbe (ed.), *The Surreptitious Speech: Presence Africaine and the Politics of Otherness, 1947-1987*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press), 1992, p.3

<sup>15</sup> O. Oladipo, *The Idea of African Philosophy*, p.115.

<sup>16</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p.14.

<sup>18</sup> O. Oladipo, "Modernisation and the Search for Community in Africa: Crises and Conditions of Change," in O. Oladipo (ed.), *Remaking Africa: Challenges of the Twenty-First Century*, (Ibadan: Hope Publications), 1998, p.111.

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- <sup>19</sup> O. Oladipo, *Thinking about Philosophy: A General Guide*, (Ibadan: Hope Publication), 2008, pp.79-82.
- <sup>20</sup> O. Oladipo, (ed.) *The Third Way in African Philosophy*, (Ibadan: Hope Publications), 2000, p.336.
- <sup>21</sup> K. Wiredu, *Philosophy and an African Culture*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1980, p.1.
- <sup>22</sup> O. Oladipo, *Philosophy and Social Reconstruction in Africa*, (Ibadan: Hope Publications), 2009, p.32.
- <sup>23</sup> O. Oladipo, *Thinking about Philosophy*, p.85.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p.86.
- <sup>25</sup> K. Wiredu, *Philosophy and an African Culture*, p.62.
- <sup>26</sup> O. Oladipo, *Thinking about Philosophy*, p.87.
- <sup>27</sup> *Loc. cit.*
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p.88.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.78-93.
- <sup>30</sup> O. Oladipo, "Religion and Human Rights: the Nigerian Experience," in *Journal of Philosophy and Development*, I, 1995, p.83.
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- <sup>33</sup> A. Giddens, *Sociology*, (Cambridge: Revised Edition), 1993, first published 1989, p. 387.
- <sup>34</sup> O. Oladipo, *The Idea of African Philosophy*, p.31.
- <sup>35</sup> Okot P' Bitek, "Reflect, Reject, Recreate: A Reply to Professors A. Ogot, Ali Mazrui and Peter Rigby," p.29, quoted in *Ibid.*
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- <sup>37</sup> J.O. Oguejiofor, *Philosophy and the African Predicament*, (Ibadan: Hope Publications), 2001, p. 33.
- <sup>38</sup> K.A. Owolabi, "Review of the Idea of African Philosophy," p. 126.

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<sup>39</sup> O. Oladipo, *Philosophy and Social Reconstruction in Africa*, p.107.

<sup>40</sup> J. Omoregie, "Book Review: The Idea of African Philosophy," *NAPSSEC Journal of African Philosophy*, Vol. 1, 2001, p.110.

<sup>41</sup> A.P. Ojo, "Oladipo's Concept of African Philosophy: An Appraisal," An Unpublished B.A. Philosophy Thesis, Seminary of All Saints, Ekpoma, 2003, p.60.

<sup>42</sup> T.A. Olaopa, "A Philosopher Amongst Us: Tribute to the Late Prof. Olusegun Oladipo," *Viewpoint*, 2009, December 24.

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