

Is and Ought: The Problem of Leadership in Africa's Development

Gregory Ogbenika, PhD
Department of Philosophy
Seminary of All Saints, Uhiele-Ekpoma
oshokwe67@gmail.com

and

Gideon O. Adeniji
Department of Philosophy
Seminary of All Saints, Uhiele-Ekpoma
tryphodon17@gmail.com

Abstract

Despite several decades since the end of colonialism, considered by many; a sufficient time frame for any political order to lay the foundations for development, many African States grapple with the reality of under-development, exemplified in social indices such as poverty, poor infrastructure, unemployment and incompetent leadership. Of all these indices, the problem of incompetent/bad leadership lies at the root of the multifaceted problems facing the propensity towards development in Africa as a result of the fact that many of the individuals who end up at the helm of affairs in their respective political domains possess a certain moral lacuna. They eventually permit their selfish interests and desire for unchecked power to supersede the need for an egalitarian mindset that places the common good of the masses at the centre of administrative policies. In addition to this deplorable leadership conundrum in Africa, the palpable lacuna created by institutional incapability to checkmate the excesses of political leaders as a result of institutional weakness is also a primary factor in Africa's underdeveloped status. In most cases, African political leaders exercise an overwhelming influence over state institutions to manoeuvre them to succumb to the interests of such political elites. Adopting a descriptive and analytic approach, this paper aims at examining the relationship between development and leadership, the irony of leadership in Africa and how it affects issues of development.

Keywords: Africa, Challenge, Development, Leadership, Morality.

1. Introduction

The dilemma of underdevelopment in Africa has continued to attract attention in scholarly cycles. This conundrum presents as a persistent puzzle to the rational and logical intellectual minds why a continent so richly blessed in natural and human resources, continues to hover at the trenches of impoverishment and underdevelopment.

Several explanatory models have been developed to account for Africa's dire situation of which the problem of leadership holds a central place. This problem of leadership has itself been examined through several dimensions. One of such dimensions as found in political science and political philosophy lies in tracing the issue to its colonial roots. From this, scholars opine that though, our colonial precedents left a solid administrative structure in place, the dynamics and intricacies of how African colonies were run, had an adverse effect on the mentality of Africa's leaders. This was hinged on the notion that the State possesses the maximum extractive capacity without necessarily being accountable to the populace.¹ This indirectly instituted a culture of unaccountability and corruption in Africa's political sphere.

Another argument concerning the challenges of leadership in Africa stems from the perspective that democracy as a form of government is *sui generis* alien to Africans and their unique political organization, and was imposed as a result of Western political and economic interests. Hence, most African States adopted it as a form of necessity and a survival mechanism, rather than with genuine intentions of establishing democratic ideals.² Based on this, Africa has continued to struggle with achieving development because she is finding it difficult to measure up to the demands of the political model placed at her feet as the standard for development.

Irrespective of the varying ideas and opinions of scholars, the reality remains that there has to be a fundamental paradigm shift

¹ A. Ikelegbe, "Public Policy Analysis: Concepts, Issues and Cases", (Lagos: Imprint Services, 2006).

² J.P. Mackintosh, *Nigerian Government and Politics*, (London: George Allen & Unwin Limited, 1967).

in the political structure and organization of many African States to achieve prospects of development. Hence, salient issues such as the relationship between leadership and development, the irony of leadership in Africa and how such has hampered growth in the continent will be examined, with a view of suggesting pathways to progress.

2. Conceptual Clarification

For a better understanding of the subject of discourse, it is pertinent to take a cursory look at some salient terms, with regards to their usage in this work. This will provide a better understanding of the discourse to be embarked upon.

Africa, which is speculated to have been gotten from the Latin word *aprica* (meaning sunny) or *aphrike* (without cold),³ is a continent located south of Europe and found between the Atlantic and Indian oceans, covering approximately 11,700,000 square miles. It is majorly inhabited by the black race covering central to the West and South of the continent.⁴ However, the Northern parts of the continent have a considerable population of white-skinned indigents of Arab descent. It is the second-largest continent after Asia. Africa contains an enormous wealth of mineral resources, including some of the world's largest deposits of fossil fuel, metallic ores, gems, and precious metals, which is complemented by the presence of lush rainforests and a rich population of wildlife.⁵ Unfortunately, Africa's enormous wealth in natural resources has not been translated to better welfare and standard of living for the majority of the continent's population which further highlights the importance of the subject of discourse.

The term 'development' can be described as an improvement in the qualitative or quantitative use of available resources, both

³ A. Kroner, "Africa; Continent," in *Britannica Online Encyclopaedia* <https://www.britannica.com/place/Africa> (retrieved 16th February, 2022)

⁴ *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* (New York: Random House, 2001), 35.

⁵ Kroner, "Africa; Continent."

human and material.⁶ In this sense, the term development does not refer to one perspective on social, political and economic betterment, but a conglomeration of strategies adopted for social, economic and environmental transformation.⁷ Notwithstanding, in developmental studies, as it applies to various fields or disciplines, the term 'development' could be understood from different perspectives, depending on the intellectual orientation of those involved. In mainstream scholarship, there is a high tendency to examine the term basically as it relates to neo-liberalism and political economy.⁸ In this sense, Western models of development are endorsed as ideal global models to adopt. However, it has been noted that the individuality and uniqueness of cultures cannot permit a universal adoption or application of a Western oriented model of development. Hence, any developmental studies must have the discourse on culture as a central theme.⁹

As opposed to certain ideas which tend to see development only from the point of view of its economic relevance, scholars like Diderot and Jean d'Alembert are of the opinion that the cumulative improvement in human knowledge and condition is quite possible if the rational methods employed in the study of morals, religion and politics can be removed.¹⁰ The implication is that the considerations on development should encompass issues that touch on social and moral progress of the society.

Leadership on the other hand, implies the ability to persuade and convince a group of people who are placed under one's charge to work towards the achievement of set goals. It involves talking, discussing, explaining, making constructive suggestions and working with them to demonstrate what they are being urged to

⁶ R. Pearson, "Rethinking Gender Matters in Development," in *Poverty and Development into the 21st Century* edited by T. Allen & A. Thomas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 22-31.

⁷ Pearson, "Rethinking Gender Matters in Development," 22-31

⁸ J. Haggis and S. Schech, "Pathways to Culture and Development," in *Development: A Cultural Studies Reader*, edited by J.Haggis and S. Schech (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), xiii.

⁹ Haggis and Schech, "Pathways to Culture and Development," xiii.

¹⁰ C. Frankel, "Progress, the Idea of," in *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Vol.6, 484.

do.¹¹ This definition toes the footprints of a democratic dispensation where rules or ideas are not imposed through authoritative means, but where society is governed in a collaborative effort. According to Abraham Lincoln, leadership is the ability to 'lead by being led.'¹² The short statement does not imply total acquiescing to the demands of one's followers but illustrates a situation whereby the one who leads possesses an open-mindedness and flexibility that would enable him or her to accommodate worthwhile and progressive suggestions or recommendations that could come from the followers in such a manner that if they match his own ideas, they are implemented in such a way that the followers feel they are carried along. However, if such suggestions do not fit into the leader's strategy, such leader could direct the followers towards the path he or she feels would be worthwhile for such undertaking, not ordering or dictating.¹³ This view of leadership incites us to once more take our attention back to the African landscape. Are these elements or descriptions of leadership enunciated above concretized in the African political landscape? Perhaps the answer to this question will be provided as the work proceeds.

The term 'Morality' is often used in everyday language. However, there may be some challenges as to the understanding of the in-depth significance of the term's usage in everyday life. In philosophical parlance, the term 'morality' is often equated with 'ethics' which connotes "a system of values and custom instantiated in the lives of particular groups of human beings."¹⁴ However, morality and ethics cannot be equated in absolute terms, as ethics involves a more rational and systematic approach to the study of moral principles. Ethics is also described as the science of 'right'

¹¹ G. E. Ogbenika, *African Philosophy and the Quest for Development in Africa* (Benin: Mindex Publishers Company Ltd., 2020), 22.

¹² D.T. Phillips, *Lincoln on Leadership; Executive Strategies for Tough Times* (New York: Warner Books, 1992), 99.

¹³ Phillips, *Lincoln on Leadership*, 100.

¹⁴ *Concise Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, (London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group 2000), 256.

and 'wrong' concerned with evaluation of human actions and there qualitative implications.¹⁵

It has been part of the mainstream arguments in philosophy as to the necessity or not of emphasis on moral conduct. While some philosophers such as Plato, Kant and Hegel tend to endorse the idea that morality is objective and there is a universal moral code to which all human beings should conform, empirically inclined philosophers such as some Logical Positivists and Existentialists like Nietzsche and Heidegger pitch their tents with the idea of moral subjectivism or relativism.

In Africa on the other hand, the community plays a significant role in stipulating and delineating acceptable or non-acceptable conduct based on cultural and religious belief. The conceptual significance of moral codes in the African setting is largely based on communalistic traditions, not based on individual consent, highly naturalistic and humanistic in outlook.¹⁶ However, due to the influence of external forces such as Islam and Christianity, the ethical system of Africans now seems multi-dimensional. Notwithstanding, the core of the moral code still retains its communalistic touch. Having examined these concepts which serve as a springboard for further enquiry into the subject matter, we shall proceed to address other issues.

3. Intersection between Leadership and Development

A prominent idea in political philosophy and related disciplines is that people who aspire to positions of leadership ought to be groomed and prepared for such positions. It is in this light that the concept of 'leadership education' is prominent.¹⁷ This view has been part of mainstream political philosophy since the time of Plato who posited the idea of a Philosopher King as an ideal leader of the *polis* (city state) and also supported the idea that the

¹⁵ *Concise Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, 256.

¹⁶ *Concise Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, 255.

¹⁷ M. Slimane, "Role and Relationship between Leadership and Sustainable Development to release Social, Human, and Cultural Dimension," *Procedia - Social and Behavioural Sciences* 41 (2012), 92 – 99.

philosopher king should experience some form of training in preparation for the task of administration. In the same vein, this view is re-echoed in the book, *The People's Republic* of the foremost Nigerian politician and political strategist, Chief Obafemi Awolowo who views politics as an 'art' or 'science' of public administration. The idea connotes that leaders ought to undergo some form of leadership education.¹⁸ This leadership education is pertinent because it furnishes prospective leaders with the necessary administrative tools and skills to manoeuvre the complex maze of political leadership. Leadership education helps prospective leaders to have a clear-cut vision of the goals they want to achieve and how to achieve them for the betterment of the society and its people. In fact, leadership education is itself a pointer towards development.

For development to occur in a society, there has to be clearly outlined and stated goals that the whole society strives to work towards. Simply put, there has to be a vision. Without such a vision, there can be no appropriate articulation and guardianship to the attainment of the outlined goals. The vision and goals cannot be well articulated without proper leadership.¹⁹ A leadership structure without well-articulated goals or vision cannot steer a society towards development.

Placing many African nations in perspective, the above scenario seems to mirror the gimmicks at play in the political landscape of many African countries. In Nigeria for example, one continues to wonder why the social welfare conditions of citizens continue to dwindle in the midst of abundant natural and human resources. Nigeria, until recently, ranked the highest producer of crude oil in Africa. Coupled with this, are the vast agricultural and mineral resources well distributed across the various federating units around the country. Yet, the country continues to rely on imports of the very things they produce to survive. The majority of her citizens lack access to crucial infrastructure such as education,

¹⁸ See Obafemi Awolowo, *The People's Republic* (Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1968).

¹⁹ M. Slimane, "Role and Relationship between Leadership and Sustainable Development," 92-99.

good health care, portable water, regular power supply amongst others. It is not the case that there are no viable and sustainable policies that clearly map out effective strategies to the attainment of specific goals, but lack of a visionary, selfless and charismatic political elite has plunged the country into its consistent downward spiral of socio-economic misfortunes.

There is also a synergy between leadership and development to the extent that leaders keep an open mind towards new ideas and respect the opinions of their followers. This enables capable individuals or groups to contribute effectively to the growth of the society which leaders cannot achieve alone.²⁰ This also explains why there seems to be under development in authoritarian and suppressive regimes across the world, especially in Africa. Notwithstanding, not all authoritarian regimes are without progress, as the visionary spirit and zeal of some so called leaders could make up for the lack of synergy between political authorities and their followers. However, what we see in many African countries is a combination of visionless leaders with authoritarian tendencies who are only concerned with holding on to power.

4. The Irony of Leadership in Africa

The Pan-African agitations for an independent Africa championed by the likes of Leopold Senghor of Senegal, Patrice Lumumba of Congo, Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania among others began to yield positive result, as the wave of independence swept across African countries starting from the 50s and 60s till the last apartheid regime in South Africa was overthrown in 1992. The independence of several African nations came with lots of nostalgia and hope for a progressive continent and this period saw the rise of several visionary leaders across Africa who were ready to lead the continent to enviable heights. With the bright prospects of adopting democracy, with emphasis on the rights and privileges that came with it, Africans felt they could begin to chart their own course to progress. Unfortunately, many African nations got

²⁰ G. Almond, *Political Development* (Boston: Random House, 1970), 33.

entrapped in the hallows of underdevelopment, necessitated by certain occurrences both external and internal to the continent.

The first difficulty encountered was the inability of African leaders to dissociate themselves from their colonial roots both mentally and materially, as the tussle for foreign aid to help solidify their stance as newly established independent nations placed them at the disposal and control of former colonial masters.²¹ Following this line of thought, visionary African leaders who stood at a variance with the politico-economic interests of the West and tried to chart a unique part way for their respective nations, void of Western interference, were systematically eliminated or rendered irrelevant. The examples of Patrice Lumumba of Congo who tried to resist French domination and Kwame Nkrumah who supported a Socialist regime in Ghana are examples who were both eliminated comes to mind.²²

On the other hand, the exploitative tendencies of colonial lords were passed on to the new political elite who in turn perpetuated the vicious cycle of exploitation.²³ These occurrences helped in no small measure in instituting corruption among the various African political elites which further complicated the fortunes and destiny of many African nations.

While some may still point accusing fingers at colonial precedents, others reject this stance and vehemently emphasize that lack of dedication to the principles of accountability and transparency are the major stumbling blocks to development in Africa.²⁴ According to this viewpoint, Africa's underdevelopment is not due to lack of capital, access to the global market, credible and capable technocrats or a partial world economic system, but because African leaders continue to make poor choices that keep

²¹ See S. Wright, "The Changing Context African Foreign Policies," in *African Foreign Policies*, edited by Stephen Wright, 1-22 (Colorado: Westview Press, 1999).

²² See E. Nwaubani, "Eisenhower, Nkrumah and the Congo Crisis," *Journal of Contemporary History* 36, no. 4 (Oct, 2001), 599-622.

²³ Ogbenika, *African Philosophy and the Quest for Development in Africa*, 102.

²⁴ Ogbenika, *African Philosophy and the Quest for Development in Africa*, 103.

their people glued to the wheel of underdevelopment.²⁵ In this light, it is the opinion of this paper that even if developed nations tend to exploit Africa, it is because our leaders give room for it.

5. Effects of bad leadership on African development

Leadership so considered connotes excellence; a desire towards excellence, a leader is one with such qualities that are necessarily geared towards an overall development of the people who are put under his care. The leader almost always dictates the tone of development of a particular body of people.

In the Berg report of 1981 from the World Bank, poor governance was highlighted as a major contribution to Africa's poor state of economic health, while another report from Fosu Augustine 2013, noted the prominent role of governance in selected developing economies like Ghana, Botswana, Mauritius and South Africa.²⁶ Poor governance or good governance lies deeply at the heart of the development or the lack of such in a given state.

Many African leaders of the post-colonial era were simply persons who lacked the required vision and training for the leadership positions they occupied, but were also predatory and lacked ideological knowledge.²⁷

From the foregoing, we can fully state that the bane of development in African countries is well and fully rooted in the ability or inability of the leadership of a country to fully articulate and understand the problems of their country, initiate ideas and programmes, that could help to alleviate the plight of the said country. In many instances, like that of Nigeria, the leadership truly understands the recurring challenges of our nation-State, with seeming programmes put in motion to address the said

²⁵ See J. Ponica and E.S. Mgaya, "Africa's Leadership Challenges in the 21st Century: What Can Leaders Learn from Africa's Pre-Colonial Leadership and Governance?" *International Journal of Social Science Studies* 3, no. 3 (May, 2015), 106-115.

²⁶ A. Fosu, "Rethinking Governance and Development," in *The Palgrave Handbook of African Politics, Governance and Development*, edited by Samuel Oloruntoba and Toyin Falola (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 883.

²⁷ O. Bade, *The IMF, the World Bank and the African Debt* (London: Zed. 1989).

hindrances. The cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of our polity is the inability of leadership to implement such programmes and decisions put in place to resolve the many crises that becloud our common vision and goal to join the committee of developed nations. Right from the late 20th century, when the whole continent gained independence, foreign colonials have been replaced by local exploiters and at least 20 countries have leaders who are gradually manipulating democratic rules to operate life-presidency, for example in the case of Uganda where massive oppression and rigging assures that Museveni continue his 36 years of rule. We would consider now how bad leadership has served to undermine developmental strides in Africa.

The corruption that exists in Nigeria and Africa as a whole is one that has negative effects on service delivery, access to goods, levels of investment amidst others.²⁸ Investment opportunities are not given to the qualified, but rather to the most connected or the most favored. The level of nepotism and self-interest that rules various government decisions, mean that the ignorant and clueless are given the responsibility of service delivery and investment which only serve to undermine Africa as a continent and ensures she remains a third world continent. In fact, the rapid developments that has taken place in some former third world nations have now placed Africa as a fourth world continent. This status has remained unabated despite the global outcry over our deplorable and horrible condition as a people.

The corrupt nature of the African state governments has created a system of winners and losers, the ones who loot and the ones who suffer from the excessive looting. It affects social and political stability which are ordinarily backbones of any real concrete developmental projects. The society suffers from a lack of stability when all interests are geared towards the personal, family and communal desires of a few people who have used leadership as a means to hijack the treasury of all.²⁹

²⁸ S. Zalanga, "The Political Economy of Corruption," in *The Palgrave handbook of African Politics, Governance and Development*, edited by Samuel Oloruntoba and Toyin Falola (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 871.

²⁹ Zalanga, "The Political Economy of Corruption," 871.

There is also the issue of lack of ability coupled with a lack of vision on the part of many African leaders, for no one can give what he does not first possess, the palpable ignorance and lack of education of many leaders simply make the possibility of development low and unattainable. It is necessary for a developing nation to have capable hands-on deck, persons who can create ideas, set goals, plan projects, and make vital decisions and present quality representation of a nation's goals and ideas in the community of nations.

Poor choices have a key role to play in the impediment of development on the African continent.³⁰ The lack of ability and education could lead to poor choices by leaders, who simply are vulnerable to making bad decisions out of a lack of deep insights considering developmental efforts:

Good leaders are scarce commodity in all ages, and few people prepare themselves before falling into leadership. Leadership is governed by choice and decision making. The choice the leader makes works for good or ill of the entire people. And, the gains of leadership can be destroyed in a moment by the precautions the leader fails to take or one blind spot or a few bad habits or one wrong choice.³¹

The above submission is one of the banes of the African society. There are lots of choices being made by African leaders that have brought the continent down the hill, descending into the precipice of retrogression in a disgusting manner. For instance, the choice of taking foreign loans without judiciously using them and accounting for them; electioneering manifestoes without fulfilment; collaboration with some foreign nations and International financial organisations in sabotaging the efforts towards economic growth and stability; piling ill-gotten wealth into foreign banks, restricting the enjoyment of the dividends of democracy to cronies, family members, clannish affiliates to mention but a few.

³⁰ Poncia and Mgaya, "African Leadership Challenges," 106-115.

³¹ C. O. Eneh, , *Leaders Common Wrong Choices – A Review* (January 2008), <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281275387> (Accessed 18th March, 2022).

Furthermore, the undeniable impact of capital flight of foreign investment and aid due to threat of running at a loss and wastage of expended resources would often discourage investors or foreign business partners from concrete involvement in a nation.³² This could easily be deduced from the attitude of politicians during the Covid-19 pandemic when funds sent from foreign organizations and even from local entities ended up in the hands of few corrupt leaders. The lack of concrete strategic economic plans can only serve to discourage investors, and a country devoid of external investment is one that struggles to stand on its own. In many cases then, agreement between foreign countries would usually be lopsided and exploiting in nature with the awareness of the bigger country that the leaders are selfish and lack sincere concern for developmental efforts, and so would not scrutinize agreement contracts.

Corrupt leaders help to undermine competitiveness that serves as the hallmark of capitalism, which is a key economic strategy in our contemporary world by compromising and killing developmental initiatives, because citizens with ideas are often discouraged and frustrated by the system that ignores 'merit' as a criterion in decision making. The high possibilities of favoritism of some corporations which do not even meet the necessary standard above other well qualified corporations, reduce the impact of the competitiveness on the economy of the state.³³

There is the undermining of the potential contribution of human resource and human capital to national development because of the high levels of nepotism and cronyism that could be involved in employment and appointment decisions.³⁴ The least qualified are given the most technical jobs and there is the problem of both incompetent public employees and worse still brain drain as in the case of Nigeria where doctors, nurses and some other paramedical staff in many hospitals in Nigeria have gradually

³² See D. Moyo, *Dead Aid: Why Aid is not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009).

³³ Zalanga, "The Political Economy of Corruption," 872.

³⁴ H. Chang, *Bad Samaritans* (London: Random House Books, 2007), 159.

migrated to other parts of the world for greener pastures, for a better pay system and fulfilling economic opportunities.

Another effect is the growing sense of indifference on the part of the populace; indifference rooted deeply in a lack of trust for a failing and indeed failed system. There is a growing sense of political apathy, especially in the Nigerian state, where the people seem to feel their votes would not count in the final analysis and so the ridiculous character of an attempt to line up under the sun just for a chance at participation.

The effects on moral ethos on the part of the people are ever-present, for when there is corruption and bad leadership, it necessarily affects the whole system down to the people in the nation. The issue of corruption has grossly affected the entire security of most African nations such that the threat of foreign intrusion and terrorism is more than ever alive in the minds of most Africans. This is evident in Nigeria, where kidnapping, herdsmen attacks, banditry and ritual killings, armed robbery amidst other signs of moral bankruptcy have become endemic in the entire region, depriving the teeming population of the peace and security needed for development. The mammoth number of unemployed graduates churned out yearly by our citadels of learning, need something to do in an environment rife with unemployment. All these serve to create moral challenges that further affect the development of a country. For example, corruption is linked to lack of accountability and institutional weakness to checkmate such excesses which further embolden political elite to expend resources of the state according to their selfish interests.

6. Possible Remedies to the Problem of Bad Leadership

In his idea of development, Joseph Omoregbe succinctly places human and moral development as the primary focus of developmental efforts, the secondary such as infrastructure are also important, but cannot be achieved without the human dimension

being readily dealt with.³⁵ Human formation is at the heart of development, such that the human person is the first entity to be developed, only when the human person is developed that we can talk of development as it affects others. Also, Kwasi Wiredu uses his analysis of the Akan's concept of the human person which intrinsically notes the importance of the development of the human person, which requires the building of the human person.³⁶

Morality lies at the heart of human development, which is illustrated in the problem of leadership on the African continent. The fading sense of morality helps to keep corrupt and visionless leaders in power. This lacuna is well expressed in the theoretical analysis of Peter Ekeh of "The Two Publics" where the "primordial public", referring to indigenous roots of public leaders, ought to serve as the moral compass of those in public offices who also belong to the civic public that is amoral and from which they benefit materially.³⁷ As a result of the dichotomy of the *modus operandi* of these two publics which affect African leaders, there is often a distortion of the sense of right and wrong in the minds of many leaders in Africa. Hence, Omoregbe noted that moral development is a *condition sine qua non* for any state on the path towards development. It is only when African leadership possesses a formidable moral structure that embezzlement of funds by the ones originally tasked with the role of development will abate.

Education is also an important factor to curb bad leadership in the sense that a good educational system inculcates moral principles such as hard work, objectivity, propriety and zeal for success in a willing individual. An uneducated leader, though may not be corrupt as a person, may, however, provide the enabling environment for public officers to be corrupt due to his or her cluelessness. For instance, Mohammadu Buhari of Nigeria has struggled to produce his WAEC results while various other office holders have often been accused of lacking Youth Service Certificate or other requisite certificates. Any nation which neglects

³⁵ J. Omoregbe, *Knowing Philosophy* (Lagos: Joja Publishers, 1993), 194.

³⁶ Ogbenika, *African Philosophy and the quest for development in Africa*, 13

³⁷ P. Ekeh, "Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 17, no.1 (1975), 91-112.

education of the citizens relinquishes the right to development and also any nation that refuses to provide the right man for the job *ipso facto* decides to remain dependent and undeveloped.³⁸ It then necessarily follows that until African countries can have visionary, well-educated leaders they cannot fully and truly move forward on the path of development.³⁹

The involvement of the citizens is a necessity to achieve development and conquer the cankerworms of bad leadership, unless the people are able to stand together against the menace of bad leadership. Unless the people stand together to against the menace of bad leadership, Africa can make no headway. Hence, any development that is not people-oriented is not worth the name. The people have a stake, not only on the choice of direction of where progress should go, but also in the choice of the nature of development. A key example is shown in the #EndSars Protest of October 2020 in Nigeria where young people rose to protest the wrong being perpetrated by the police. It is a truism that we need security, law and order; but when those who ought to ensure security, law and order in the society now become instruments of oppression or state brutality, then citizens cannot live peacefully.

The involvement of the people in their overall development would also involve a conquering of the attitude of political apathy so that the people can be more involved in the decision-making process, rather than creating and electing representatives who do not fully fulfill the tasks entrusted to them as leaders. Involvement of the citizens build the various segments of development, for when the citizen is involved in decision making and has a sense of being represented, there is a deeper desire towards patriotic efforts, always and everywhere promoting the values of the nation to which the citizen belongs.

Patriotism from all segments of the populace is a necessity, but should mostly be found in leaders, a strong feeling of indebtedness of their role in the development of their country which they have

³⁸ Omoregbe, *Knowing Philosophy*, 198.

³⁹ S. Folarin, "Leadership Challenges in the 21st Century: A Nigerian Perspective," *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 7, np. 1 (2013), 1-11.

care of.⁴⁰ The original sense of democracy is then developed when African countries adopt a rule created by the people and geared towards the needs of the people, and so other necessary criteria associated with the presence of a democracy, also take center stage, accountability and probity amidst others which would serve to protect and develop fully and truly the economy of the state.

Also, there is a need for investment in the people, improving the persons who are said to be the future leaders.⁴¹ The only way to prevent future examples of bad leadership examples is only when the people are invested in and then given the sure opportunities to exhibit what they have been trained to do. This does not seem to be the case in most African countries because of sit-tight syndrome of many of our political leaders, who remain perpetually in power with little or no plan to relinquish power for selfish reasons. Africans should learn to deal sincerely and honestly with one another so that the question of mistrust and suspicion amongst the various ethnic groups in the continent would be wiped away. Africans should learn to deal sincerely and honestly with one another so that the question of mistrust and suspicion amongst the various ethnic groups in the continent would be wiped away.

There is also the issue of ethnic divisions which must also be resolved, given that the quality of leaders is usually sacrificed on the basis of ethnic bias. For example in Nigeria, many northerners would almost never vote for a southerner, no matter his qualification, based on the simple issue of ethnicity.⁴² This is also the case with southerners who once a party is tagged northern, the ratio of voting usually benefits the one where they have more political affiliation and connection. Against this aforementioned anomaly, a system then must necessarily be developed, where a candidate is elected based on his merits and qualities of leadership.

⁴⁰ C. Ekene and A. Ugwunwanyi, "Leadership and Economic Development in a Developing Economy: A Critical Look at the Nigeria's Experience," *International Journal of Business and Management Review*, 4, no. 6 (August 2016), 105-114.

⁴¹ Folarin, "Leadership Challenges in the 21st Century," 1-11.

⁴² A. Salami and A. David, "The Challenges of Leadership and Governance in Africa," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 2, no. 9 (2012), 141-156.

7. Conclusion

An honest society lies at the heart of any effort geared towards development, where development would reflect the general wellbeing of all in the society.⁴³ This is becoming increasingly difficult by the day, considering the caliber of leaders that represent African nations in the world today. This paper calls for all concerned African Philosophers and scholars from other disciplines to firmly work on how we can go back to our roots by placing African ontological belief systems at the service of the social and political sphere of societal life. When there is this consciousness in comradeship in the minds of Africans, whether as leaders or those being led, coupled with the authentic spirit of connection and interaction between the divine reality and the human reality, this will go a long way to alleviate this ongoing impasse that unfortunately still persists.

⁴³ Chang, *Bad Samaritans*, 161.