Exploring African Political Party Leaders' Roles in The Underdevelopment: African Continent in Perspective

Lawrence Vorvornator*

*University of Zululand, South Africa, Email: vorlaw@gmail.com, ORCID NUMBER: 0000 0002 4475 6665

Abstract

The paper explores African political party leaders' roles in the continent's underdevelopment. The continent's underdevelopment is sparking Africans' migration to the Western world for better lives, and democratic governments overthrown are becoming 'unprecedented'. Grounded in good governance and institution theory, specific emphasis of this study is better use of scarce resources to ensure development. A focus on this area is what sets this study apart from similar research. After conducting a meta-study of the relevant qualitative information, my findings reveal challenges such as bad leadership, bad governance, corruption, and inefficient political institutions retard development. Though, few countries on the continent are strengthening democratic institutions much needs to be done. The continent is in dire need of competent, robust and dynamic leaders to steer its affairs to sustainable development. Political leaders must be committed and willing to improve the lives of the people not to serve their interests. Terms of office of political leaders must be limited to avoid weakening of state institutions, constitution amendment, dictatorship and autocracy. The paper identified democratic principles and values namely; scrutiny of political leaders and government policies, rule of law, vibrant economic policies and capacity building among the civil servants needs to be improved. Political institutions should be independent and devoid of political interference. Checks and balances in the judiciary, executive and parliament must be nurtured. Citizens' participation must be enhanced through accountability and transparency. Overall, the paper argues that African leaders' desire to get-rich-quick syndromes affects developments of the continent. The paper recommends that Africans should adopt their means to solve their problems, rather than, seeking assistance from outside the continent since solutions cannot be 'one size fits all'. African political leaders should display a commitment to infrastructural development and invest in human resources, especially in the field of science education.

Keywords: African political leaders, Good governance, Accountability, Democracy, Development, Underdevelopment.

Introduction

The paper explores African political party leaders' roles in the continent's underdevelopment, since the continent's underdevelopment is sparking Africans' migration to the Western world for a betterment of life, and democratic governments overthrown is becoming unprecedented. Despite, the African continent is rich and endowed with natural resources in minerals such as gold, diamond, bauxite, and iron ore, the continent remains poor (Good Governance Africa, 2012). The study is grounded in good governance and institution theory the specific emphasis of this study is better use of scarce resources for African continent's development. A focus on this area is what sets this study apart from similar research.

Africa's economy is fragile and unsophisticated lead to the citizens languishing in abject poverty (World Bank reports, 2017). Because of that, the continent is termed a 'dark continent' (Good Governance Africa, 2012). Africa continent which consists of 54 nations is labelled as poor, developing, and third world. Despite the African continent does immerse in a wealth of natural resources and human resources (Ayittey, 2000). As a concern, the International Development donor's investment increased towards Africa's development, yet little result is shown for it (Development for International Development (DFID), 2015). This could be partly due to bad governance, poor policy formulations, and implementations which lead to unproductive and unfruitful results (Elone, 2008).

Since 1980 international bodies such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), who are development partners' have executed numerous development policies in Africa, but to no avail. Equally, the Rio De Jeneiro 1992 Conference, which aims to enhance the development in the poor countries globally also gives 'birth' to the term 'sustainable development' (Elone, 2008). Ever since sustainable development (meeting the needs of the present without compromising the future), become a 'catchword' for world leaders, civil societies, donor partners and organisations but the African continent is still underdeveloped (Elone, 2008).

Under development occurs when the resources of the nations are underutilised. In other words, underdevelopment occurs when the country's potentials are not optimally utilized to the citizen's benefit (Goulet, 1978). Rodney (1973) elaborates that the development's absence does not mean there is an underdevelopment. According to Rodney (1973) development in human society *"is a many-sided process, at the level of the individual, it implies increase skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being".*

The paper is not concerned about Africa's natural and human resources or the roles played by the colonial masters that led to underdevelopment but explores African political leaders' roles in Africa's underdevelopment.

- What roles do African political party leaders play in the continent's underdevelopment?
- What are the ways forward to enhance development on the African continent?
- What recommendations might lead the African continent to achieve sustainable development?

A net benefit for adopting these solutions would be to alleviate the consequences of poverty suffered by millions of Africans due their leaders' roles in underdevelopment. The paper includes a theoretical framework, based on good governance and institutions. I then include a literature review establishing the existing findings on African leaders' roles on continent's underdevelopment. The study's methodology is a based on a Literature Review, which can otherwise be called a meta-study, and I explain how this was done under that subheading. The paper ends with findings, conclusion, and recommendations. The next section presents the theoretical framework.

Theoretical framework: Governance and Institutions
The paper is grounded in good governance and institution theory propounded by (Ostrom, 1990). Good governance is explored to be responsible use of scarce resources to satisfy the masses. Ostrom (1990) examined good governance as "how people collaborate to deal with public affairs". In the absence of good governance among the state institutions weak governance, corruption, and lack of effective institutions are often cited as factors that contribute to underdevelopment (Vorvornator and Mdiniso, 2022). In her book "Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action" (1990), Ostrom systematically explains the theory of self-governance and the manner the public resources can be managed effectively for the development of the entire population. She stressed on the needs to embrace local knowledge, community participation, ability of individual to consider public interest rather than self-interest, and managing scarce resources to satisfy the needs of the people.
Ostrom (1990) indicated that for nations to developed there should be good governance which she classified into perspectives namely: the manner in which leaders are selected, held accountable, assessed, monitored and replaced; the ability and capacity to manage scarce resources effectively and formulate policies to implement plans; and the extend of the public participation in the state affairs. In surmise, good governance entails transparency, equitability openness and responsive to people's need. By relating the good governance to the African leaders' roles on the continent's underdevelopment reveals the contrarily view of theory of good governance and institutions. The individual interest takes over public interest, state resources are siphoned by the politicians and corruption and nepotism are the order of the day. These acts and behaviours of African leaders lead to underdevelopment in the African continent. The next section presents literature review of the study.

Literature review
Arguments and frame context of discourse about African political leaders' roles in underdevelopment, bribery and corruption, governance issues, democratic principles and values presented below.

Underdevelopment and development meaning
Rodney (1973) maintains that underutilisation of the nation's resources is known as underdevelopment. This means the nation's potentials are not optimally utilized to the citizen's benefit (Goulet, 1978). According to Rodney (1973) development in human society *"is a many-sided process, at the level of the individual, it implies increase skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being"*. Whereas Lawal (2007) maintains that development is the ability to invest in human growth to improve their living standards. The development comprises the existence of social justice, fair income distribution and the rule of law (Lawal, 2007). Development implies citizens should afford their basic needs and wants without hindrances. At the same time, development embodies economic, political and cultural transformation in society (Egharevba, 2007). Though some African countries such as Seychelles, Egypt, Libya, South Africa, Mauritius and Tunisia making progress regards to development, it is not a required level to change the existing scenario (African Infrastructural Development Index, 2020). Landes (1998) in an attempt to elaborate on the development of countries classified world nations' citizens into three: *"those who spend much money on their health to keep their weight down; those who eat for a living, and those who pray for higher powers for their next meals"*. Along with the division determines the life expectancy, and the types of disease one is likely to suffer from.
Landes (1998) elaborates further that advanced country citizens worry about their old age and pension whichever gets longer. They usually undertake exercises in the form of jogging, brisk walking, and running to be fit and fight for their cholesterol level. Pastimes are spent watching television and playing games on phones. Golden age, diamond age and centenaries are well celebrated. To advance countries citizens "young is good" but "old age is bad" problematic and stressful (Landes, 1998). On the contrarily, the poor nations' citizens try to make a living. The issue of cholesterol and fatty arteries is none of their concerned, because of a lean diet from a youthful age. They do not live long enough to see old age, and the issues of pension are in some cases a mirage to them. Giving birth to numerous children is regarded as an old age insurance, pension, and financial security (Landes, 1998).
In regards to Landes's (1998) classification of development according to lifestyles and life expectancy scientific scholars contradicting views in the literature about Africa's development. Some researchers maintain that the African continent is not as naturally endowed as one believes (Zambakari, 2012). Others insist that Africa is well resources in human, naturally and has favourable climatic conditions that can provide food for the continent and feed the globe as a result may lead to prosperity (Amin, 1990). The third view in the literature elaborates that Africa is underdeveloped, and puts the blame on the doorsteps of political leaders on the continent about their type of leadership, and management of the resources (Nageri *et al.*, 2013). The third view is what the paper aims to explore.

Bribery and corruption among the political leaders

Corruption is a social canker that cuts across the spectrum and fibre of every society, cultural, political, and economic. It halts and destroys the functioning of various vital organisations (Kraus, 2007). However, corruption does not only pertain to Sub Sahara Africa (SSA), it cuts across all spheres of the world (Kraus, 2007). According to Transparency International, *"corruption is one of the greatest challenges of the contemporary world. It undermines good governance, fundamentally distorts public policies, leads to the misallocation of public funds and resources, harms the private sector and the public sector development, and particularly hurts the poor"* (Amundsen,1999; Transparency International, 2020).

Regards, development processes are retarded, due to malfunctioning of administrations, accountability and political institutions which supposes to ensure checks and balances become weakened in the governance (Nduku, 2014). Kraus (2007) relates a lack of development that breeds unaccountability to the impact of corruption and prostitution on society. Kraus (2007) asserts that prostitution is a lesser evil than corruption. Kraus (2007) elaborates that the former (prostitution) only affects individuals and the latter (corruption) affects the entire nation and 'kills' dreams, aspirations, and denies citizens and unborn children education and skills and training.

In an attempt to define the two concepts that is corruption and bribery one can say that it is too close to call. Corruption is conventionally understood to be a representative of the public sector that uses state resources for his or her benefit against the citizens (Amundsen, 1992). World Bank reports (2017) views corruption as the abuse of state resources or power for private benefits. The classical views of corruption, globally accepted maintain that *"corruption is the behaviour which deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private regarding (personal, close family, private clique) pecuniary or status gains; or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private-regarding influence"* (Amundsen,1993). In other hand, bribery is considered as gains or benefits received or given to the public official in a corrupt relationship (Bayert *et al.*, 1997). It must be noted that both corruption and bribery have an element of the state-societal relationship. Corruption ranges from political, economic and judiciary practices (Girling, 1999). Corruption is considered as an aspect of the failures of good governance. It is also a means employed by some African political leaders, tyrants, and dictators to enrich themselves and to hang onto political power (Ayittey, 2000). Political corruption has derailed the sustainable economic growth and development and administrative work in SSA (Bayert *et al.*, 1997). Adeola (2015) and Sahara News (2014) revealed that *"since independence in 1960 to 2010 Nigeria has reportedly lost $500 billion"* to corruption alone. Not only between that period but from 2010 to 2015 the ex-petroleum minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was allegedly involved in money laundering and bribery scandal. It was estimated that $20 billion of the oil revenue evaporated in thin air while she was in office (Adeola, 2015). The concern of the paper is the behaviour of political leaders which results in underdevelopment in SSA. The syndrome and mania of get-rich-quick among political leaders lead to the embezzlement of state funds into foreign accounts (Heidenhermer *et al*, 1993). Yet, these accounts are opened without a background check to find out the sources of the revenue, by the developed countries who claim to be the doyen of democracy and holier-than-thou.

Robison (1993) maintains that corruption breeds wastage, results in a deficit balance of payment, hampers infrastructural development and public service delivery to become a problem. In case, public services are provided they do not stand the test of the quality. Only shoddy or inferior works or services are done. Corruption stops foreign donors not to invest in the development of the SSA and encourages brain drain on the continent. Brain drain is the migration of skilled workers into another country. It further deprives skilled workers who are supposed to contribute their quota to the development of the continent (Robinson, 1998). The citizens abroad become reluctant to contribute their quota by sending remittances and luring investors to develop their nations due to the acts of corrupt political leaders (Robinson, 1998).

Issues of Governance

Although the concept of governance is topical worldwide there has not been an agreement on the definition. It is a broad concept which involves the rule of law, accountability to citizens, transparency, empowerment of citizens, equity and inclusiveness, and broad-based participation, responsiveness, effectiveness, and efficiency (Governance Today, 2020). In the words of Governance Today (2020) governance is *"the system in which entities are directed and controlled. It is concerned with the structures and processes for decision-making, accountability, control, and behaviour at the top of an entity. Governance influences how organisations' objectives are set and achieved, how risk is monitored and addressed and how performance is optimised"*.

Kaufmann *et al.* (2011) examine governance as *"the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised"*. Governance is not a single entity, but a system that works together to formulate effective policies to be executed for the betterment of the people. Despite, the lapses, criticisms, and limitations surrounding the methods of collecting data on governance by, Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) the researchers still employ it to assess various countries (Kaufmann et al., 2011).

The WGI indexes consist of six composite indicators which are used to assess over 200 nations globally from 1996 to date (Kaufmann *et al.*, 2011).

The term 'good governance' has been a 'buzzword' on the leaps of development experts and international organisations which was much debated on the African continent. Since 1980's bad governance leads to failure of the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), which led to a decline in economic growth and development (Mudacumura and Morçöl, 2014). The World Bank reports indicted African political leaders' bad governance as the main cause of the SAP failure (Kjaear, 2014). African leaders were accused and implicated in corruption, nepotism, and execution of economic policies, which retards economic growth and development (Mudacumura and Morçöl, 2014). They were also accused of lack of accountability, inefficiency, and malfunctioning of the state institutions as the basis for the woes of the SAP's failure (World Bank reports, 2017).

In the words of World Bank reports (2017) indicates that: *"underlining the litany of Africa's development problems is a crisis of good governance. By governance, it meant the exercise of the political power to manage a nation's affairs. Because countervailing power has been lacking, state officials in many countries have served their interests without fear of being called to account. In self-defence, individuals have built up personal networks of influence rather than hold the all-powerful state accountable for its systemic failure. In this way, politics becomes personalised and patronage*

becomes essential to maintain power. The leadership assumes the broad discretionary authority and loses its legitimacy, information is controlled, and voluntary associations are co-opted or disbanded. The environment cannot readily support a dynamic economy".

For some decades, the good governance debate has been ongoing. It focuses on the states of power steering to ensure good governance in partnership with development stakeholders to formulate and initiate policies to enhance economic growth and development. Based on that, international organisations such as the United Nations, Commonwealth Organisations and nonstate actors include; issues of human rights issues, democracy and good governance in their programs to enlighten the African political leaders (World Bank, 2017). Because, it was realised that African development will be an illusion if not a mirage when effective leadership, ensuring accountability, and good governance are not in place (Calderisi, 2006).

Calderisi (2006) also reveals that prolonged corruption among African leaders results in the malfunctioning of the state institutions, and intensified autocracy and dictatorship. In the words of Calderisi (2006) states that *"the simplest way to explain Africa's problem is that it has never been known good government"* Calderisi continues *"no other continent has experienced such prolonged dictatorship"*. Ayittey (2012) concurs that despite corruption not originating from the continent; it was adopted, bred and now rooted in the SSA. Moreover, it has created a tendency of dictatorship among African political leaders on the continent since independence.

Ayittey (2012) reveals the Continent's past dictators such as; Ethiopia's Emperor Haile Selassie, who ruled for 44 years, Omar Bongo of Gabon was in power for 42 years, Moammar Gaddafi of Libya steered the country for 42 years, Togo's Gnassingbé Eyadéma, 37 years, Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, 31 years and Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe ruled for 29 years (Ayittey, 2018). The political leaders' prolonged stay in power leads to their inefficiency and ineffectiveness in formulating policies and implementing them hence, the underdevelopment of the continent (Ayittey, 2018). Not only that their overstay in some cases lead to a constitutional amendment, but it gives them more power and weakens state institutions, which aims to ensure the rule of law, separation of powers, and checks and balances in governance (Ayittey, 2018).

Ineffective political institutions and Africa leaders' weak leadership

Political leadership which is bedevilled in the African continent results in unclear ideology, civil wars, and frequent overthrow by the military through coup d'etat lead to underdevelopment (Ayittey, 2012). According to Transparency International (2021) within the last decade, Mali experienced three coup d'etat which overthrown legitimate governments. The leadership crises have been ranging on over the past five decades as the greatest challenge of Africa in the 21st century (Ayittey, 2012). Lack of political will and commitment on the part of the political leaders, and their inability to understand the responsibilities and challenges that come with the governance of a country is a major problem for development and it contributes to underdevelopment. Afegbua and Adejuwon (2012) concur that the concept of leadership is one of the most difficult phenomena to comprehend in the world, not only in the SSA. The aforementioned reasons make African political leaders rise to power do not have an idea about how to govern and they cling to power, later turn to be dictators and autocratic leaders. The number of conflicts, waves of violence, insecurity, economic meltdown, and corruption are attributed to weak institutions and leadership crises on the African continent (Afegbua and Adejuwon, 2012). The wheel of justice almost always favours the affluent and political leaders. Hardly, political leaders who commit crimes and act fraudulently are charged. However, the former president of South Africa was one of the few that were brought to book on corruption charges (Transparency International, 2021).

For the continent to experience sustainable development there is a dire need for good governance and effective institutions which must be independent or effective separation of powers among the state organs. In other words, the state organs such as the legislature (lawmakers), executive (implementers of the law), and judiciary (the adjudicators or interpreters of the law) must be devoid of political control or interference from the pressure groups or political parties. Further, checks and balances in the arms of government must be nurtured and rooted in the continent's democracy (Afegbua and Adejuwon, 2012). The point worth noting is that good governance and sustainable economic growth and development are complementary products. They work hand in hand to produce effective results. In other words, there is a nexus between good governance and sustainable development (Afegbua and Adejuwon, 2012).

African continent's inability to achieve sustainable development is due to the frail, weakened and fragile institutions, and bad political leaders are not accountable for their actions. The weakened leadership and institutions result in problems on the African continent such as migration across the Mediterranean Sea, tribal wars, drug trafficking, and human rights abuses on the continent (Ayittey, 2012). For instance, the Rwanda genocide of 1994, the Sierra Leone civil war and the Liberia civil war were the manifestations of weak institutions and leadership crises in Africa (Ayittey, 2012). As a result of failed institutions and leadership crises, abject poverty is on the rise, and high levels of crime, and civil wars characterised the continent (Vorvornator, 2024). The factors that 'forced' scholars to describe the African continent as "The Dark Continent" (Kraus, 2006).

Bureaucracy is another factor the African political leaders use to stay in power and it affects development. According to Gormley and Balla (2013), *"bureaucracy is the term so loaded with positive meaning of most people that, it is used as a negative rhetorical resource and it is difficult to make an explicit ideological case for bureaucracy"*. The bureaucracy makes the African leaders extend their tenures of office without any broader consultations with the citizens. The next section presents research methodology of the study.

Methodology

This study began with a literature review (LR) exploring African political party leaders' roles in the continent's underdevelopment. Taherdoost (2021 p. 11) states that LR is "the process of accessing published secondary data". The definition explains two distinct things. The first is that an LR adopts only data from secondary sources, not primary sources. Information from secondary sources was used in this exploration, and these sources included articles, books, journals, and organizational and non-organizational reports (Maxwell, 2021). The second implication of Taherdoost's definition is that LR

is desktop research, and is not conducted in the field (Taherdoost, 221). Another way to define such a study is a 'meta study', because it reviews, organises and arranges the information presented in existing studies in a coherent way.

Several search engines namely JSTOR, Google Scholar, Research Gate, Web of Science, EBSCOhost and Scopus were consulted for this study. Economics websites and journals including, inter alia, the Young African Leaders Journal of Development (YALJOD), and African Consortium of Public Administration were consulted. In addition, search terms such as: 'African political leaders', 'good governance', 'accountability', 'democracy', 'development', 'underdevelopment', were employed.

The study acquired 1341 ideal publications; 1330 of these were derived from an electronic search, and eleven were found through forward and back searches. Eligibility assessment was conducted and a total of 36 articles were selected to be relevant to the study, through the following eligibility criteria: a) publication concentrates on either or both African leaders' roles or development; b) publication focuses on African leaders' roles and development; c) publication date in 2014 or later; d) publication in English (Creswell, 2021). Eleven years was chosen as a way to limit the scope of this study because it explores the phenomena related to current African leaders' roles on the continent

Templier and Paré (2015) identify six steps in exploring LR namely: a) identifying primary research objectives and questions; b) exploring the relevant articles; c) making inclusions; d) exploring the quality of articles and their content; e) extracting data, and f) analysing data. All articles considered irrelevant were excluded. After an eligibility check, the researcher proceeded to the data extraction and analysis stage. Data extraction deals with coding significant articles related to this study. The researcher adopted 'framework analysis', which deals with methodological processes and procedure. The researcher, then analysed and extracted the relevant literature. The guiding process and procedure which facilitate both analysing and extraction relevant data is described by Armstrong (2021) as "sifting, charting and sorting materials according to key themes and issues". In specific terms, familiarization is done to have actual knowledge about articles' importance. Thereafter, the researcher identified the thematic framework centering on theories and ideas that emerged from reading African leaders' roles on continent's underdevelopment. Indexing is done through sifting the data related to particular themes; charting the information is done to sort-out important headings and sub-headings during thematic framework stage (Creswell, 2021). These were the processes that the researcher followed. Mapping and interpretation—which entails assembling, gathering and analysing all criteria features of dataset—and a synthesis of information were performed.

Several articles selected for the study used a range of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Meta-analysis for the quantitative data was ignored because this research method was different. This means that this research did not share common methods or the same variables with a quantitative methodology. Textual information was mapped, coded, and presented accordingly by employing a framework-analysis approach. The theories, concepts, and LR used here present a broad picture, one that forms baseline information data, and assists in the understanding of the previous literature on African leaders' roles on continent's underdevelopment (Maxwell, 2021). The LR on African leaders' roles on continent's underdevelopment has helped to avoid the duplication of existing works by other researchers. However, there are limitations to this method. For example, since not all academic search engines were employed, there could be some previous literature that was left out. The next section presents research findings of this study.

Research findings

The study's findings reveal that lack of leadership, bribery and corruption among African leaders are factors that are causing underdevelopment (Kraus, 2007). They destroy the current and unborn generation's future (Amundsen, 1999). Bribery and corruption occur as a result of the desire to get-rich-quick syndromes on the part of African leaders, which affects development (Afegbua and Adejuwon, 2012). Large sums of state funds and resources are deposited into foreign accounts through embezzlement, which could have been used for development on the continent (Ayittey, 2012).

The issue of bad governance also contributed to the underdevelopment by African political party leaders (Governance Today, 2020). African leaders on assuming power careless to implement democratic principles such as checks and balances, separation of powers and the rule of law during their tenure (Kaufmann et al., 2011). Regards, the state institutions are weakened and political interference becomes the order of the day. This leads to dictatorship and autocracy in the governance hence, infrastructural development is affected.

Racial and tribal politics among African political party leaders also affect development (Ayittey, 2012). Tribal sentiments, which results in civil wars, conflicts, waves of violence, insecurity and economic contraction hampers infrastructural development on the continents. These factors trigger continent citizens to migrate to the Western world to seek better lives (Afegbua and Adejuwon, 2012). In some instances, military intervention through coup d'état, which is destructive to infrastructural development usually occurs (Transparency International, 2020). The progress and gains regarding the development under the democratic regimes are retarded during military takeovers. The paper therefore argues that African leaders' desire to get-rich-quick syndromes affects developments of the continent.

The ways forward to ensure sustainable development in Africa.

Despite, the problems of the continent are not 'tailor-made' or 'one size fits all', the solutions are provided based on democracy and democratisation, good governance and e-governance as the likely measures that can take Africa continent to 'reach Canaan' achieve development.

Values and principles of democracy

For politically motivated and other baseless reasons, democracy in Africa is tagged as a foreign concept on the continent (Diamond, 2005). Meanwhile, it has been scientifically proven among the well-advanced countries such as: France, America, and England that improvement as well as strengthening of democracy in their countries lead to sustainable economic growth

and development (Diamond, 2005). Even in those countries, democracy expanded over the years with daunting challenges and misconceptions. Larry Diamond (2005) in his reports on *Promoting Democracy in Post-Conflict and Failed States: Lessons and Challenges* states that *"as the number of democracies has increased about 40 in 1979 to around 120 today (slightly over 60 percent of all independent states)- the task of promoting democratic transitions and consolidation has become more difficult because the countries with the economic, social, historical and geographical conditions most conducive to democracy have already installed (and in many cases, largely consolidated) democracy"*. From the statement of Diamond (2005), it is vital to note that the existence of a conducive economic, political and social environment, democracy is likely to be successful hence effective development. On that note for the SSA to achieve its sustainable development, political institutions need massive transformation to initiate policies and implement them, extract and equal distribution of wealth and income among citizens, and existence of rule of law and services delivery must be intensified. It is on record that the few African countries which established and entrenched some form of political institutions have seen growth and development over the years (Elone, 2008).

Elone (2008) noted that in Kenya, from 2000 to 2005 the country recorded over 5 percent of the economic growth annually which was attributed to the 'cementing' of democratic institutions in Nairobi, Kenya. Ghana also consolidated their democratic institutions had very successful elections, and experienced an annual increase in economic growth and development with a gross domestic product (GDP) of 4.5 per cent in the third quarter of 2021 (Ghana Statistical Services (GSS), 2021). The observation of Diamond (2005) on Ghana's political spectrum noted that *"after four increasingly competitive, transparent, free, fair and well monitored national elections under the Ghana's 1992 constitution, we can now say that electoral democracy is becoming, or perhaps has become institutionalised in Ghana"*.

Furthermore, democratic principles such as; the rule of law, human rights, freedom of speech and free and fair elections, which are ingredients needed for development must be nurtured in Africa. Despite, some African states such as Ghana, South Africa, Nigeria and Senegal have made attempts to improve on the electoral colleges, and their democratic principles the issue of human rights and the rule of law still pose a threat (Diamond, 2005). However, South African institutions must be commended for upholding the principle of the rule of law for sentencing ex-president Zuma to 15 months imprisonment for contempt of court (South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), 2021). If it were to be any other African countries it may never happened for the ex-president to be sentenced to prison because of the political interference.

Electoral democracy is important because it makes African political leaders to be accountable to the citizens. The party or officials who do not perform well are voted out at periodic intervals (Diamond, 2005). Further, electoral democracy enables citizens to elect their representatives who will respond to their development needs. More so, the people can hold the government and political leaders accountable (Diamond, 2005). Diamond posits it that it's not only the democratic principles but there should be civic, economic and political freedom that must be planted to ensure sustainable growth and development. Diamond (2005:2-3) highlighted that: *"liberal democracy requires extensive public freedom of speech, press, information, association, assembly, movement and so on. This is simply fundamental. Only in a free society with a vigorous public space can we realise all of the other aspects of liberal democracy and good governance, l am going to enumerate here. Only if people are free to organise, protest and petition, only if groups can assert their interests and values, and only if the media can report, investigate, and expose government policies and actions without fear or favour, can there be meaningful competition, participation, responsiveness, transparency, and accountability. Only in a climate of true political and civil freedom can a country achieve the absolute fundamental conditions for development: responsible government i.e. the government that is committed to the advancement of the public good, rather than the private interests of its officials and their families and their cronies"*.

Democracy calls for mass participation among the citizens to ensure competitive and effective government policies (Mosher, 1982). In that regard, Abraham Lincoln stated that *"our nation was one conceived in the liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. And our civil war is to ensure the survival of the government of the people by the people for the people"* (Mosher, 1982). Lincoln was of the view that the needs and aspirations of the people have to be paramount in the minds of political leaders and any government in power but not their interest as always, the case in the African continent. People should be encouraged to participate in decision-making and in national issues whether being minority, marginalised or majority without fear or favour (Mosher, 1982).

Numerous studies have shown that corruption decreases the level of democratic participation and makes administrative institutions malfunction (Mosher, 1982). On that note, democratic institutions need to be strengthened to fight corruption and be a watchdog on the continent. The dream of accountability and transparency can only be realised if the political institutions are independent or devoid of political control and the executives. In summary, to ensure development and sustainable development on the continent, democracy, democratic principles and values need to be deepened and rooted which will hold the political leaders to be accountable for their actions and decisions. Moreover, the rule of law must be practised and strived which will ensure economic growth and development.

Good Governance

The World Bank, IMF and other international development donors report indicted African political leaders' bad governance leadership as a problem of underdevelopment. A continent where there are high levels of the influx of foreign aid aims to achieve sustainable development, yet nothing to show for it. In that case, good governance is identified as a means to achieve sustainable economic growth and development. To the World Bank elements of good governance involve; democracy, accountability and transparency (World Bank, 1999). It can be said that the people who are elected into various portfolios should be able to serve the people with their ability, by solving their problems, providing basic services, and making the lives of the citizens more enjoyable, liveable and satisfying (Subbarao and Kumar, 2015).

Good governance can be said to be development-oriented which aims to improving people's living standard. According to Diamond (2005) good governance can be classified into three aspects namely; capacity building, commitment to public goods, and a high level of transparency. Regards to capacity building Diamond (2005) elaborates that citizens should be well-trained and equipped in their various professional realms. There should be effective execution of policies rules and regulations that

serve the public interest instead of the private interest. African continent needs nothing apart from the productive, resourceful and robust civil servants to develop the continent. In addition, African leaders should be committed to the infrastructural development (public goods) in the continent. Not only the leaders, the citizens must be educated and made aware to realise the importance of public goods to desist from damaging properties during protests or mob actions (World Bank reports, 2017). Transparency should be the hallmark of the African political leaders. Governments' programmes and policies must be laid bare for the general public to access. Contracts for the government need to be published on the government's websites and their costs. Media should not be gagged but must be liberal or free from political control to scrutinise policies without fear or favour. Moreover, information should not be monopolised but should be in the citizens' domain to access how the governments on the continents conduct their businesses (Diamond, 2005). Effective and efficient good governance will not only breed the rule of law and enhance media freedom alone, but it will ensure political participation, legitimacy and stability in the continent. This is important because sustainable development, peace, and a conducive environment are 'bedfellows'.

E-Governance
The main administrative hurdles and bottlenecks are known as bureaucracy, which retards and hampers the sustainable development of the African continent and can be replaced with e-Governance. The term e-Governance emerged in the 1990s; however, it can be traced back to computer history (Goodsell, 2004). Some scientific scholars refer to e-governance as digital governance, e-Gov, or internet Government. With the induction of the e-Gov the inefficiency and ineffectiveness as well as the waste of resources which is characterised by bureaucracy and results in underdevelopment, may be easily overcome (Goodsell, 2004).

The term e-Governance gave birth to internet boom. Munyoka and Manzira (2014) state that e-Gov *"refers to the use by government agencies of information technologies (such as Wide Area Networks, the Internet, and mobile computing) that can transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government"*. The US Congress e-Government Act, define e-Government as *"the use by the government of web-based internet applications and other information technologies, combined with processes that implement these technologies to;*
- *enhance the access to and delivery of government information and services to the public, other agencies, and other government entities, or*
- *bring about improvements in government operations that may include effectiveness, efficiency, service quality, or transformation"* (The US Congress, 2002).

With the successful implementation of e-Gov. in the continent services delivery which is always at a snail's pace might improve. Interaction among the corporate bodies may become easy and citizens will be empowered through access to information. The expected results could be less corruption among the political leaders in the continent, an increase in the level of revenue collection and a reduction in government waste. Nkohkwo and Islam (2013) posit that e-Gov. helps to remove bottlenecks and red tape which are associated with service delivery. Despite, the numerous advantages of e-Governance for the enhancement of sustainable development etc, implementation in Africa becomes a problem as a result of basic facilities.
Heeks (2003) reports that in Africa only 15 percent of e-Gov projects become successful, 35 percent are total failures from birth and 50 percent are partially unsuccessful. This implies there is a need for infrastructural development, and capacity building in regards to equipping civil servants with skills needed on the continent to enroll e-Gov to achieve sustainable development.
Nkohkwo and Islam (2013) explain that scholarly research needs to be carried out to identify the problems for the effective rollout of the e-Gov. However, irrespective of the challenges in implementing the e-Gov in Africa, it is the only means that may help the continent to achieve transparency, accountability and sustainable development. Moreover, the e-Gov will ensure competitive competition among the citizens in the participation of governmental affairs without fear or favour.

Conclusion and recommendations
The paper revealed challenges such as leadership governance, corruption, and inefficient political institutions, which slow and retards sustainable development in Africa. Though few countries are doing well in strengthening democratic institutions much needs to be done. The African continent is in demand for competent, robust and dynamic leaders to steer its affairs to sustainable development; because the success of a country depends on the type of leadership exhibited by the political leaders. The continent needs leaders who are committed and willing to improve the lives of the people. Leadership reforms are needed in Africa to achieve sustainable development. The paper reveals long-term political leaders result in dictatorship and autocracy; therefore, there is a need to limit the terms of office of the political leaders. However, it was revealed that few African countries are quite doing well in development and political leaders who are committed to the development of the continent.
The paper identified that the continent is in dire need of improvement in the democratic principles and values to achieve sustainable development. The democratic principles revealed by the paper are, encouraging scrutiny of political leaders and government policies, rules that mean equality before the law, vibrant economic policies capacity building among the civil servants to reduce waste and inefficiency in the public sector. Diamond in Democracy and Governance lecture states that *"without a strong, vigilant, transparent and resourceful civil society Africa cannot achieve development or sustain and improve democracy"*. Therefore, state institutions must be improved to tackle Africa's development hurdles. Furthermore, political institutions should be independent, and devoid of political interferences or controls. At the same time, there must be checks and balances among the various arms of government such as the judiciary, executive and parliament. Citizens' participation can be enhanced through accountability, transparency and capacity building which will lead to sustainable economic growth and development.

Recommendations

From the aforementioned reasons the paper therefore recommends that Africans should try to solve their problems rather than seeking assistance from outside the continent. Trade should be strengthened among the 54 nations on the continent to promote the peace and unity needed for development to take off. African Union must make sure the term of office of political leaders is limited to two terms only to avoid dictatorship and autocracy in the continent. This would help to avoid amendment of the constitution to suit them to weaken the state institutions. Military coup d'etat and abort coups should not be entertained by the regional bodies, and African unions. For instance, the suspension of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso from the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) should serve as a deterrent to others. Electoral colleges should be used by the citizens to elect, re-elect or change governments who do not perform well. More so, African political leaders should display a commitment to infrastructural development and invest heavily in human resources (education), especially in the field of science education. Because, scientific study reveals that the level of literacy and e-Gov is positively related to enhance Africa's sustainable development.

References

1. Adeola, R., 2015. Preventing xenophobia in Africa: What must the African Union do? *African Human Mobility Review*, *1*(3), pp.253-72.
2. Afegbua, S.I. and Adejuwon, K.D., 2012. The challenges of leadership and governance in Africa. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, *2*(9), p.141.
3. AfricaInsfrastructureIndex(2020)https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/economic_bri__the_africa_infrastructure_development_index_july_2020.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwiliaThw6uMAxU5a0EAHRcxG1cQFnoECA0QAw&usg=AOvVaw1PnsQtHbPBH1yIRewd87im Retrieved 20/03/2025.
4. Agbiboa, D.E., 2012. Between corruption and development: The political economy of state robbery in Nigeria. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *108*(3), pp.325-345.
5. Amundsen, I., 1999. *Political corruption: An introduction to the issues*. Chr. Michelsen Institute.
6. Ayittey, G.B., 2000. Combating corruption in Africa: analysis and context. In *CORRUPTION and Development in Africa* (pp. 104-118). Palgrave Macmillan, London.
7. Calderisi, R., 2006. *The trouble with Africa: Why foreign aid isn't working*. Macmillan.
8. Congress, U.S., 2002. Library of Congress. *Congressional Re*.
9. DevelopmentforInternationalDevelopment(2015)https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://committees.parliament.uk/work/3458/departmentforinternationaldevelopmentsannualreport201516/&ved=2ahUKEwjhu4qet6uMAxUsUUEAHcddKwQQFnoECBYQAQ&usg=AOvVaw2u_P8Swn_FEm4WEOmJ1x2h. Retrieved 27/03/2025.
10. Diamond, L., 2005. Building democracy after conflict: Lessons from Iraq. *Journal of Democracy*, *16*(1), pp.9-23.
11. Egharevba, M.E., 2007. Restructuring the Nigerian state for sustainable development: The value challenge. *IFE PsychologIA: An International Journal*, *15*(2), pp.143-163.
12. GhanaStatisticalService(2021)https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://census2021.statsghana.gov.gh/&ved=2ahUKEwiWi5rI_quMAxVNSEEAHa4AGuwQFnoECCAQAQ&usg=AOvVaw11hRBsjCN2VD5WqtS6AGBX Retrieved 27/03/2025.
13. GoodGovernaceAfrica(2012)https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://scholar.google.co.za/scholar%3Fq%3DGood%2BGovernance%2BAfrica,%2B2012).%26hl%3Den%26as_sdt%3D0%26as_vis%3D1%26oi%3Dscholart&ved=2ahUKEwjXrpnatquMAxX6WkEAHdghF8UQgQN6BAgIEAE&usg=AOvVaw1fNSGsE_0BYLG8J4kXyy-A. Retrieved 27/03/2025.
14. Goodsell, C.T., 2004. *The case for bureaucracy: A public administration polemic*. CQ Press.
15. Gormley William Jr, T. and Balla, S.J., 2013. Bureaucracy and Democracy
16. Goulet, D., 1978. Sufficiency for All. The Basic Mandate of Development and Special Economics. *Review of Social Economy*, *36*(3), pp.243-261
17. Heeks, R., 2003. Most eGovernment-for-development projects fail: how can risks be reduced?
18. Jeanne Elone, J., 2008. African Civil Society, Democracy and Development. *Draft Research Question*, pp.1-5.
19. Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A., & Mastruzzi, M. (2011). The worldwide governance indicators: Methodology and analytical issues. Hague Journal on the Rule of Law, 3, 220-246.Available at: https://10.1017/S1876404511200046Retrieved 27/03/2025.
20. Kjaer, P.F., 2014. *Constitutionalism in the global realm: A sociological approach*. Routledge.
21. Kraus, M.W., Piff, P.K. and Keltner, D., 2009. Social class, sense of control, and social explanation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *97*(6), p.992.
22. Landes, D.S., 2015. *Wealth and poverty of nations*. Hachette UK.
23. Mosher, F.C., 1982. *Democracy and the public service*. Oxford University Press, USA.
24. Munyoka, Willard, and Mungofa Francis Manzira. "From e-government to m-government-challenges faced by Sub-Saharan Africa". In *The International Conference on Computing Technology and Information Management (ICCTIM)*, p. 86. Society of Digital Information and Wireless Communication, 2014.
25. Nageri, K.I., Umar, G. and Abdul, F.A., 2013. Corruption and economic development: Evidence from Nigeria. *Kuwait Chapter of the Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, *3*(2), p.46.
26. Nduku, X., 2014. *Effects of dietary inclusion of Moringaoleifera leaf meal on growth performance, physico-chemical attributes, oxidative stability and sensory quality of pork* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Fort Hare).

27. Nkohkwo, Q.N.A. and Islam, M.S., 2013. Challenges to the Successful Implementation of e-Government Initiatives in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Literature Review. *Electronic Journal of e-government*, *11*(1), pp. 252-266

28. Obayelu, A.E., 2007. Socio-economic analysis of the impacts of avian influenza epidemic on households poultry consumption and poultry industry in Nigeria: empirical investigation of Kwara State. *Livestock Research for Rural Development*, *19*(1), p.4.

29. Ostrom, E., 1990. Governing the commons: The evolution of institutions for collective action. *Cambridge University*.

30. Rodney, W., 1973. *Some implications of the question of disengagement from imperialism*. Verlagnich termittel bar.

31. Sachs, J.D., 2005. The development challenge. *foreign affairs*, pp.78-90.

32. TranparencyInternational(2020)https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020&ved=2ahUKEwiCss_A_auMAxXYRUEAHRf3IA4QFnoECBsQAQ&usg=AOvVaw0tkeKqEx3i0OZGFG3mzUQM Retrieved 27/03/2025.

33. Vorvornator, L.K., 2024. Does Poverty Constrain or Encourage Migration Patterns? Exploring Internal and International Migration Trends. *African Renaissance (1744-2532)*, *21*(4).

34. Vorvornator, L.K. and Mdiniso, J.M., 2022. Drivers of corruption and its impact on Africa development: Critical reflections from a post-independence perspective. *African Journal of Development Studies*, *2022*(si2), p.295.

35. WorldBankreports(2017)https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://ppp.worldbank.org/publicprivatepartnership/sites/ppp.worldbank.org/files/202205/WDR_2017.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwjuleOutquMAxVaaEEAHXPrJfoQFnoECBYQAQ&usg=AOvVaw344R21dcOfU yGLMdiNdBP-. Retrieved 27/03/2025.

36. Zambakari, C., 2012. Underdevelopment and economic theory of growth: Case for infant industry Promotion. *Consilience*, (8), pp.171-187.