There is no term so heavily contested in social science literature/nomenclature than ‘Development’. This book brings Indigenous perspectives to African development. It is argued that contrary to development as we know it not working, a greater part of the problem is that conventional development approaches that work have in fact not truly been followed to the letter and hence the quagmire. All this is ironic since everything we do about our world is development. So, how come there is “difficult knowledge” when it comes to learning from what we know, i.e., what local peoples do and have done for centuries as a starting point to reconstituting and reframing ‘development’? In getting our heads around this paradox, we are tempted to ask more questions. How do we as African scholars and researchers begin to develop “home-grown solutions” to our problems? How do we pioneer new analytical systems for understanding our communities and offer a pathway to genuine African development, i.e., Indigenist African development? (see also Yankah, 2004). How do we speak of Indigenist development mindful of global developments and entanglements around us? Can we afford to pursue development still mired in a “catch up” scenario? Are we in a race with the development world and where do we see this race ending or where do we define as the ‘finishing line’?
Indigenist African Development and Related Issues
Anti-colonial Educational Perspectives for Transformative Change

Informed by an anti-colonial spirit of resistance to injustices, this book series examines the ways and the degree to which the legacy of colonialism continues to influence the content of school curriculum, shape teachers’ teaching practices, and impact the outcome of the academic success of students, including students of color. Further, books published in this series illuminate the manner in which the legacy of colonialism remains one of the root causes of educational and socio-economic inequalities. This series also analyzes the ways and the extent to which such legacy has been responsible for many forms of classism that are race- and language-based. By so doing, this series illuminates the manner in which race intersects with class and language affecting the psychological, educational, cultural, and socio-economic conditions of historically and racially disenfranchised communities. All in all, this series highlights the ways and the degree to which the legacy of colonialism along with race-language-class- and gender-based discrimination continue to affect the existence of people, particularly people of color.

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Indigenist African Development and Related Issues

Towards a Transdisciplinary Perspective

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SENSE PUBLISHERS
ROTTERDAM/BOSTON/TAIPEI
We dedicate this book to the hardworking men and women of our local communities whose sweat and toil keep our nations afloat in the sea of change.
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INTRODUCTION
INDIGENIST AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED ISSUES FROM A TRANSDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE

An Introduction

There is no term that is so heavily contested in social science literature/nomenclature than ‘Development’. Why is this so? In many ways, the contentions speak to the failure of development theories, theorists and field practitioners to agree on what development is, what constitutes development and how such development practice ought to be pursued. One would expect that with the generous vast literature on the subject of development, scholars and field practitioners should at least have arrived at some shared intellectual consensus on what really constitutes development. For one thing, the problem has been one of colonial making and a cultural imposition. This is because what passes as development in one cultural context has been imposed and promoted as what is the ‘correct’ path to development. So, why is another book contesting development necessary? This book provides more than contexts development. It speaks of viable options of development rooted in African cultural knowledge and the rich legacies of intellectual tradition. Given the diversity of communities and our cultural specificities, one would have expected that those who claim to know development and would want to promote it everywhere will temper their boldness with caution and some humility. The reader should not get us wrong. As social theorists, we are expected to develop and work with a series of ideal hypothetical set of facts, principles or circumstances about how we understand “development”. Such knowledge can and has constituted a body of generalizations, general statements, principles developed in association with development practice in the field. These principles or ideas about development have also become a set of postulates and intellectual opinions formed on basis of assumed facts which are presented as a way of thinking out problems of development. Our problem is with how we have arrived at these facts and principles, the power of some particular ideas, and how certain bodies of knowledge and experiences have constituted either
“missing dialogues” or been dismissed, negated, devalued and/or de-privileged in debates about what constitutes or ought to constitute development.

What we find troubling is those particular metanarratives or theories about development which speak about what “development” is and how it should be promoted internally and globally. Those who have the power to define development are not satisfied with simply letting their views and ideas be respected. They want to pursue their particular agenda on development on others and communities who resist face consequences and/or reprimand. Fortunately or unfortunately, there is now an on-going fierce counter-resistance in many local communities to the metanarratives as imposition of development ideas and practices. However, it is troubling that the more local communities challenge “conventional development”, then further the power of the metanarratives of development are pushed to strengthen the reasoning of the chief proponents. For example, it is argued that contrary to development as we know it not working, a greater part of the problem is that conventional development approaches that work have in fact not truly been followed to the letter and hence the quagmire. All this is ironic since everything we do about our world is development. So, how come there is “difficult knowledge” when it comes to learning from what we know, i.e., what local peoples do and have done for centuries as a starting point to reconstructing and reframing “development”? In getting our heads around this paradox, we are tempted to ask more questions.

How do we as African scholars and researchers begin to develop “home-grown solutions” to our problems? How do we pioneer new analytical systems for understanding our communities and offer a pathway to genuine African development, i.e., Indigenist African development? (Yankah, 2004). Do we run a risk of being stuck in the past when we place local Indigenous knowledges on the table? Should we be concerned that the outside world will not wait while we revisit such past, cultures, histories and our Indigenous knowledge systems? How do we speak of Indigenist development mindful of global developments and entanglements around us? Can we afford to pursue development still mired in a “catch up” scenario? Are we in a race with the development world and where do we see this race ending or where do we define as the ‘finishing line’?

This book emerges out of a genuine attempt to think creatively about African development that is promoted through local creativity, imagination, ingenuity and resourcefulness of local peoples. It is also an attempt to design our own futures as African peoples using our local cultural resource knowledge and without being forced to mimic dominant/conventional forms of development patterns. We take the stance that African scholars and Indigenous scholarship must lead a way to rethink or reframe “development” from a cultural knowledge base, pointing to learning form and reclaiming our creativities, resourcefulness and sense of agency. These are important considerations not only for Africa but the global community. But, we begin the discussion focusing on Africa. This book seeks to re-theorize African development from the standpoint of African and Southern scholars using local knowledge, everyday peoples’ experiences and scholarly research data. We
provide social, educational, economic, ideological and political dimensions to Africa’s development challenges and opportunities and bring to the fore some of the key issues and challenges in the promotion of what we are terming an “Indigenist African development”. We also point to related issues regarding the implications of Indigenist development for schooling and education of the young learners of today.

Hopefully, our discussion will add to the existing literature setting the context for identifying the challenges and possibilities of using Indigenous science and local cultural resource knowledge of African peoples to ensure an endogenous and Indigenist development. The link between education and development is often assumed. However, the linkage needs to be theorized and operationalized and, particularly, the educational, social, cultural, spiritual and political dimensions that need to be properly fleshed out in the search for understanding the society-nature-culture nexus. By identifying key questions on Indigenist development and its related issues, our discussion will broach the challenges and possibilities of social theory and academic research in the search for relevant knowledge for understanding African development from an Indigenist perspective. It is important for us to highlight key questions (see also Dei, 2010): What is studying about Africa? Why study Africa? What does it mean to teach and research on Africa endogenous development? What is an Indigenist perspective to development as far as Africa is concerned? What knowledges and paradigms do we employ in such undertakings? How do we address distorted Eurocentric views of Africa? How do we interrogate “endogenous development” from an African-centered perspective? What are the contentions and contestations over tradition, modernity and knowledge production in post-colonial Africa? What are the politics of development, and the roles of science, culture, gender and local knowledge in such politics of education? How do we locate a discussion of Africa in a global/transnational contexts, particularly, in looking at themes common to many Southern peoples contending with, and resisting the effects of [neo]colonial and imperial knowledge? Among the specific topics, we encouraged contributions from: What is the philosophical and epistemological basis of local cultural resource knowledge for development? What are local understandings and conceptions of development? How do we tap into such wealth of local knowledge to promote genuine development for Africa? How can such knowledge be studied? How do we deal with issues of custodianship of local cultural resource knowledges? How can these knowledges be communicated across communities, including schools? What are the ethnic, gender, age, class, and intergenerational dimensions of these knowledge forms? How do we introduce these knowledges into the school science curriculum to promote an Indigenist African development? And, what is the link between education and development?

Following Wilson’s (2007) use of “Indigenist”, we define and conceptualize development as a process and practice informed by home grown, locally-informed and locally-driven human initiatives to satisfy local needs and aspirations through self-reliance, resource autonomy and ecological sustainability while respecting the fundamental freedoms and rights of all peoples and including collectivities. Local
definition and control of the development process is critical but more importantly the development practice works with a knowledge base grounded in local history and culture teaching of the Land and Mother Earth that are gained from long-term occupancy of a place. Indigenist development works with Indigenous perspectives that are “steeped in culture-specific paradigms” (Yankah, 2004, p. 26). This development takes as a starting point, the importance and centrality of local culture, history, Indigenous knowledges, the continuing forces of colonial history and relations as well as the role and implications of the nation state. It is ‘development from within’ that asks tough questions of the colonial and imperial order, on-going colonial relations, local complicity, as well as the implications of the nation state in the pursuit of the development agenda. Development is Indigenist to the extent that it emerges from a relationship to the Land as an important knowledge base while working with local cultural histories and identities, and utilizes what local peoples know as a sense of agency of those who are experiencing the development practice.

Development can be ‘endogenous’, locally contextualized and grounded. Development can even be seen as emerging from the local peoples’ needs and aspirations and yet still working within a colonial and colonizing prism. We attribute such problem to the power of colonial education which can distort our imaginations and distort the realities of development. Development can start as being endogenous and end up inserting communities into a global capitalist hegemonic agenda, stripping local people’s agency, their power of imagination and ability to design their own futures. Indigenist development while embracing the positive aspects of endogenous development (i.e., local culture and science, local initiatives, Indigenous knowledge, bottom-up and emerging ‘development’, etc.) further articulates a specific and distinct anti-colonial agenda. It is an anti-exploitation and imposition development agenda that sees “colonial” as more than “foreign” or “alien” but also inclusive of anything that is imposed or dominating along the lines of internal social dynamics. In effect, Indigenist development works with a theory of the “anti-colonial” as the understanding of colonial and re-colonial relations and their aftermath and the implications of imperial power on knowledge processes, interrogation and validation, the power of Indigenous, indigenousness and identity and the recourse to power, subjective agency and resistance (Dei and Asgharzadeh, 2001).

Indigenist development sees a link between local knowledge and development. In broaching the subject of Indigenous and local cultural knowledges and the relevance for African development, we take the discursive position that local knowlings is crucial and relevant to implementing effective change. In the discussion, we use ‘Indigenous’ and ‘local’ interchangeably to denote the complexity, dynamism and variegated nature of knowledge systems. Local peoples and their knowledges must be centred in the search for solutions to development challenges and problems. Development must first proceed by critically interrogating, validating and utilizing relevant knowledges from local peoples’ cultural histories, Indigenous traditions, culture and history as a starting base to devise solutions to current social problems. Indigenous knowledge emerges in the immediate context of the livelihoods of
local peoples as a product of a sustained process of creative thought and action within communities when local peoples struggle to deal with “ever changing set of conditions and problems” (Agrawal, 1995a:5). Such knowledge is never static nor frozen in place and time. It is dynamic and fluid, undergoing constant modifications as a people negotiate and come to terms with the complex relations with nature, land, culture and society. Indigenous knowledge is relevant to the extent that it addresses the needs of the community. While this knowledge is localised and context bound, it does mean it can be boxed in time and space and/or does not transcend boundaries. This knowledge like other knowledges borrows from other ways of knowing and does not claim a monopoly as to what constitutes knowledge. In many ways, the fluidity of such knowledge system gives it life and energy and it is knowledge that can be fallen upon to offer interpretations and explanation to suit emerging conditions.

We ask: How can we pursue development in ways that effectively help understand the ways cultures interact with one another and engage in issues of poverty, democracy and environment? We believe we can begin to engage this question by placing a central role for science and culture in the development process. We can engage science and culture as we seek to understand contemporary advances in knowledge creation, innovation and technologies of development. We take this position because as Gueye (1995) long time ago observed, Indigenous communities, for example, work with a specific cultural understanding that is centred around a particular conception of the world which assigns the human being a specific role around a certain representation of time and space which structures mentalities and behaviours. Such Indigenous conceptions of both culture and science shape peoples’ thought and mental processes to offer social explanations.

The understanding of everyday social activity/practice within communities and nation states points to the importance of the science, culture and development. Just as culture is central to development so is science knowledge. The science of development can be the culture of development and vice versa. The challenge is how we define and understand science and culture to be useful for the development practice. Culture is a way of life guiding the norms, values, ideas of social practice. Culture is both material (artefacts/technologies) and non-material (knowledge/values). Science is basically a system of thought with shared reasoning and cultural logics. Arguably, Western science has generally been viewed as a methodological tool for understanding society. There are however different bodies of sciences each with its core principles and ideas that are and can be gainfully employed to help human society deal with its problems and challenges. As we point out in this book, there is also Indigenous science that also focuses on the understanding of the broad existential questions of life and existence. So, as we pursue a role for science and culture in development, we must connect Western and Indigenous sciences as legitimate each constituting knowledge systems. Each of the knowledge systems has its own fundamental principles and ideas (i.e., significant ontological, epistemological, and axiological questions) of knowledge that guide/regulate human
action and social practice, and as such, offer meanings and interpretations to social problems and challenges. Each of these sciences brings their particular histories, experiences and cultural reasonings to bear on the interpretation and understanding of the broad existential questions of society. They are each steeped in rich traditions of thought and social practice. Both of these sciences (Western and Indigenous) are connecting and help to address some fundamental challenges of contemporary society.

One such challenge is development. Development cannot be understood outside the realm of culture and science. Development can also not be achieved in the absence of science and scientific knowledge, including technologies. Where we take a departure from conventional thought is to argue that science and scientific knowledge must be embraced in all its diversity (e.g., Indigenous and Western, etc.) in order to arrive at development for all communities. We see development as a social possibility when we recognize the contributions of science and technology as inclusive of natural, biological, physical, metaphysical, as well as the different forms and expressions of technological knowledge utilized to offer practical solutions to daily encounters among communities. The latter will include not only Western scientific, industrial and technological advancements in the realm of dominant thought, but also Indigenous arts, crafts and technologies utilized by local artisans, craftsmen/craftswomen to provide basic necessities of life. The challenge is to be able to offer a connecting web of these different bodies of knowledge and to locally contextualize such knowledges to ensure that local peoples rightly identify and own the development process. It is through recognition of the local knowledge base as a starting point to development that local peoples can own the development process and practice. In this way, development is perceived as more than economic, technological and material, but also as inclusive of considerations of the social, spiritual and metaphysical. Such thinking also helps us to avoid binaries in our modes of thought, and begin to seek multiple action, logics and understandings of development.

For example, speaking about Indigenous knowledges does not, and should not necessarily commit one to a dichotomy between ‘Indigenous’ and ‘western knowledge’ (see Agrawal, 1995a, b). It is indeed a false dichotomy. Indigenous knowledge does not reveal a conceptual divide with ‘Western knowledge’ nor is it strictly in opposition to ‘Western’. The concept of ‘Indigenous’ is to be thought of in relation to Western knowledge. However, the conceptual and philosophical differentiation of such knowledge systems is both an intellectual and political act.

Political in that claiming such knowledge is for a decolonization purpose and to challenge the dominance of particular bodies of knowledge (e.g., Western science knowledge) masquerading as universal knowings. Intellectual in the sense of highlighting the philosophical differences that exist among knowledge systems (e.g., fact that Indigenous knowledges are about community, reciprocity, sharing and holism, while dominant forms of knowledge accentuate the core values of individual, rights, fragmentation, competiveness, individual ownership, etc.).
Perhaps more importantly, ‘Indigenous’ simply alludes to the power relations within which local peoples struggle to define and assert their own representations of history, identity, culture and place in the face of Western hegemonic ideologies. The interactions of different cultures and cultural knowledges have always been part of human reality and existence. Claiming Indigenous knowledge as a way of knowing in some ways different does not mean we do not have shared knowledge systems. Such understanding of different bodies of knowledge ought to be distinguished from an uncritical claim that what emerges from an articulation of two or more disparate elements as often constituting a new distinct form such that the former disparate elements [form] often lose their character, logics and identities. There is a degree of ‘authenticity’ to the Indigenous claim as not to be defined as pure, uncontaminated, untouched or pristine knowledge system. Such claim of authenticity alludes to the validity of such knowledge as tracing its origins to a place, Land and particular contexts. Of course, we adhere that there are moments and situations when we are presented with new and distinct elements as a result of these integration and synthesis of knowledges. In a culture, where there is hierarchy of knowings, it is prudent to be politically-informed by a project that holds on to what is unique about different bodies of knowledges.

In order to promote development, there is a need to integrate Indigenous science and Western science knowledge as a knowledge synthesis. This allows communities to tap the relative strength of multiple knowledge systems in a bid to find solutions to practical problems and challenges we face. In articulating a knowledge synthesis, we must be fully aware of the power relations and politics that shape all forms of knowledge including the processes of production, validation, interrogation and dissemination of knowledge. A synthesis of different knowledge systems must truly destabilize power relations that accord privilege to particular bodies of thought. Even if we acknowledge parallel bodies of knowledges, we must still challenge the dominance of certain bodies of knowledge and the tendency to devalue other bodies of thought and local communities. When development work dismisses Indigenous ways of knowing the whole approach to development practice can be alien to local communities. Similarly, when multiple knowledges are made to co-exist, the need to understand the appropriate sources of knowledge must also be upheld. Development practice must, therefore, confront the issue of knowledge appropriation and the tendency to universalize knowledges while speaking to a particular dominant body of knowledges. Western science is steeped in a particular culture of Europe. There is nothing wrong in making such claims and acknowledgments. But, we must not pretend that Western scientific knowledge is the only legitimate science worthy of pursuit in development practice. Furthermore, as Andreotti, Ahenakew and Cooper (2011; 42) have also noted in the “politics of knowledge synthesis”, there is the real difficulty of working with Indigenous ways of knowing that do not fit the “parameters of acceptability established by so-called modern knowledge (Santos, 2007). This difficulty should caution against dismissing knowledges because they do not fit into our accepted norms, values and conventional wisdom of what is worthy
of development practice. This is the case when spirituality is never acknowledged in dominant thinking about development while on the other hand it can appropriately be argued that spirituality is the bedrock, the sub-structure upon which development in the Global South is anchored (Wangoola, 2000). Consequently, we cannot even hope to create a knowledge synthesis when Western science knowledge dismisses spirituality as a site of knowing.

Internationalization of development is generally perceived as mutually beneficial, and we may be right in explicitly aiming for this. But, in order for such development to be beneficial to all, African peoples need to decolonise and liberate ourselves from the mantra of Western development. We must simply see the benefits of development for all as a by-product of critical pedagogies of liberation as they require decolonisation. This collection presents some interesting and challenging readings that shed light of the dilemma and possibilities of African development for the 21st Century. Kola Raheem, Jophus Anamuah-Mensah and George Dei’s jointly-authored paper sets the tone for the discussion. The essay is a succinct attempt to set an agenda for African development in the C21st interrogating what has become conventional analyses of development success and failures in Africa. The three co-authors offer a counter-visioning of development, one that locates local knowledge at the base of critical African development thought and practice. They note that “the development field is abound with a host of theoretical propositions or discursive frameworks as to how the objective and practice of development can be met within communities and nations”. Unfortunately, many of these ideas and theoretical presuppositions have not resulted in genuine African development. Raheem, Anamuah-Mensah and Dei urge African scholars to continue to probe what really is development and to think through carefully how development can really come about. Their main thesis is that we need to affirm “the place and context of local Indigenous knowledge” in understanding local culture, sense of self, community, social interdependence and the pursuit of development goals.

George Dei and Jophus Anamuah-Mensah’s essay on the coloniality of development situates the question of South-South cooperation as both resistance and counter to conventional development. The authors examine the possibilities of South-South dialogue and cooperation that could create the necessary conditions and pathways to development for Africa and the Global South. In this endeavour, Dei and Anamuah-Mensah situate the North in the discussion as a critique of dominant notions of development and also as part of a search for the best avenue for further opening up and creating an “authentic dialogue” among Southern partners. The paper argues that the coloniality of development as we know it must be understood in terms of globalization of colonial and re-colonial relations of development, a new colonial dominant, the emergence of new Empire or Imperial Order in the image of a Southern power, and the persistence of human rights abuses as we promote development. To deal with the coloniality of development, any new “South – South Dynamics” must begin to understand history and contexts, highlight questions of strategic partnerships (their possibilities and challenges), a shift to a new geo-politics
that go beyond trade and economic relations. The paper also offers new theoretical insights in the debates around international exchange, highlighting the power and value of local and Indigenous knowledges in the search for collaborative solutions to decolonizing development. Dei and Anamuah-Mensah pinpoint particular anti-colonial struggles in myriad social contexts that show how co-operation has been sought among nations and communities in the search for genuine development. The paper then concludes looking at some possibilities going forward.

“Why Teach Social Studies from a Global and Multicultural Perspective?” by Augustine Quashigah brings an expanded view of development and education. While the paper is not focused directly on the question of “Africa development”, it nonetheless has merits in debates about how education is and can be connected to global pursuits for human development as broadly defined. His thesis links development and global education. In looking at teaching social studies from global and multicultural perspectives and the possibilities for education and social transformation, the author notes that “a lot has also been written over the last thirty years or so about integrating global and multicultural perspectives in schools’ curricular”. Those who advocate teaching from global and multicultural perspectives see the world as an interrelated system. The paper shares a concern that in today’s world “technological, ecological, economic, educational, political and developmental issues can no longer be adequately addressed by individual nations” except through a social collective action. Education pursued from a pluralistic perspective can help meet a global yearning to educate young learners to be able to deal with contemporary challenges such as violence, security, conflict and peace within the reality of collective existence. Quashigah is hopeful that a critical social studies education that embraces transformative pedagogy has some potential benefits for the advancing human society beyond the dictates of globalization.

Nina Moore looks at the impact of Me to We, specifically within Canadian schools. Founded and led by white middle-class brothers, Craig and Marc Kielburger’s Me to We is a movement that encourages Western youth to “be the change” in the lives of those living in “third” world countries. While examining Me to We’s role in African countries and Canada, the author examines the systemic denial of white and Western privilege and power bestowed upon yet another generation of Canadians that will fail to lead to effective change. The author highlights the Eurocentric principals that misdirect young well-intentioned volunteers. The shameless promotion of materialism, consumerism and corporate power are investigated and linked to the West’s denial of responsibility of Africa’s current struggles. The author bases her arguments on Me to We’s embedded support of the single story of Africa and on the Western foreigner as “expert”. Alternatives to counter these fallacies in African “development” are discussed.

Asabere-Ameyaw’s essay, “Improving Education Standards in Africa: The Place of University of Education” is very interesting read. It pinpoints some crucial responsibilities of the African university of education, especially in the context and possibilities of globalization. While drawing attention to some of the unprecedented
challenges in African higher education, the author expresses some concern with and hope about how universities of education can become key players in the development of education through policy research and intellectual service vital for the continent’s advancement. The paper broaches some key areas including the implications of the African university in improving educational standards, a need for critical curriculum changes to students’ academic success, teacher education and training, professional development of teachers, research and development, policy development and planning, all within the context of a re-conceptualized ‘university of education’ in Africa.

The paper, “The Contributions of Continuous Assessment to the Improvement of Students’ Learning of Junior High School Science: A Case of Ghana” by Mawudem Amedeker, is replete with some revealing statistical accounts. The author argues that a major education reform in Ghana in the 1980s saw the introduction of continuous assessment as part of students’ assessment in the basic schools. The general belief is that such assessment measures are potent for improving teacher performance in the classroom, and subsequently students’ learning outcome. Since its inception, continuous assessment has been extended to assessment systems at all levels of education, including the second cycle and tertiary level institutions. Interestingly, continuous assessment has continued to be implemented in the basic schools mainly for summative purposes with little or no benefit to teachers and students. The paper presents hard data on the continuous assessment practices of science teachers at the junior high schools in two education districts in Ghana to determine its current status and quality [employing a teacher questionnaire (n = 158); interviews with teachers (n = 6), students (n = 24), teacher educators (n = 2) and education officers (n = 5); policy and curriculum document analysis; as well as, samples of students’ exercises to collect baseline data on the implementation of continuous assessment]. The findings reveal that the teachers have limited training in continuous assessment and organise continuous assessment as a series of frequent short tests, giving little or no feedback on students’ exercises. The majority of teachers were found to have limited experience of integrating assessment and instruction. It is opined that the current quality of continuous assessment in the schools portrays a teacher-centred approach that lacks a focus on using assessment to promote students’ science learning. These are new challenges that were not anticipated in the introduction of the continuous assessment. Amedeker suggests that the new challenges may be confronted with rigorous training of teachers in the skills of designing student-centred continuous assessments that are integrated with teaching for promoting students’ science learning.

In his second piece in the collection on: “Enhancing Scientific Literacy of the African Learner – Possibilities and Challenges”, Akwasi Asabere-Ameyaw reflects on some critical questions: How do we account for the fact that a number of young African learners are adverse to science? How is science taught? What constitutes science knowledge? How do we promote a holistic view of science to enhance
science learning for the African youth? The author brings a holistic view to science as encompassing Western science knowledge and local science knowledge in the interrogation of the ways science is generally conceived in many African schools and the importance of science for youth education. Exploring some of the socio-cultural background factors, language issues and students attitudes and how they mitigate against science learning the author points to more fitting direction for change in science education that will promote the cause of African development.

Solomon Faris paper is an autoethnographic research that examined the different forms of resistance and tension that occur in a backdrop of a conscious effort to build a science education founded on local spiritual and cultural values. As part of decolonizing curriculum this autoethnography engaged students, science teachers, parents, employers, curriculum experts, policymakers, elders, and religious leaders in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The idea and practice of secular government and secular education including the religious diversity within the nation have been found some of the causes of tension in the building of indigenous curriculum. This chapter presents in detail the forms of resistance and some ways to counter them. The engagement of key concepts such as resistance, tension, spiritual, cultural values, science education serves to offer food for thought for rethinking educational practice in science to contribute to African development.

Chelsea Han Bin’s paper examines the theoretical and methodological limitations of food security scholarship. The case study of hunger in Ghana in the aftermath of the 2007 global food crisis illustrates how the Ghanaian government has been perceived as the primary agent to address the issue of food security. The centrality of the Ghanaian government in food security implies that official development assistance has been instrumental in bolstering the government capacity to implement programs that reduce hunger. Indeed, aid is an indispensable component of solutions to hunger, as 20 percent of Ghanaian government’s revenue derived from official development assistance from foreign governments in 2007. Since Ghana is expected to obtain the status of middle-income country, foreign aid has been gradually dwindling. The paper evaluates how the prospect of scaling down foreign assistance operations may have negative repercussions on the capacity of the Ghanaian government to maintain and expand food security programs in the future.

Jennifer Jagire examines the case of Indigenous women science teachers of Tanzania touching on questions of power and knowledge read through the lens of women farmers as science teachers. It is argued that Indigenous African women are most often written as “powerless, exploited, oppressed, uneducated farm wives, invisible, etc”. Jagire elucidates the gendered roles of Indigenous African women in Tanzania as science teachers of the community, conservations, and custodians of valuable knowledge necessary for development. In fact, her discussion highlights the visibility of Indigenous African women pointing to their powerful grassroots contributions whose knowledge is enriched by traditional training, oral cultural knowledge, practical field experience and the established ways of
transmitting local cultural resource knowledge for community development. Aman Sium, Anamuah-Mensah and George Dei in their chapter on African Governance explore fundamental questions such as: what do Indigenous political structures and practices mean in/to Africa today? How has Indigenous governance historically engaged with and been engaged by the African state? How can we situate intersecting questions of Indigeneity and decolonization in reforming the African state? In this paper the co-authors employ Indigenous knowledges and an anti-colonial discursive framework to answer two primary questions. First, what are the common core principles of Indigenous governance in Africa? We see it as important to theorize Indigenous governance as both a *site* (village, regional and national assemblies, regulatory bodies) and a *practice* (guiding principles, songs, dance, storytelling, proverbs, morals and ethical teachings). These principles are revealed through case studies that span both time and space, while moving away from the Eurocentric categorization of time into ‘pre’ and ‘post’ colonial periods, and recognizing the pervasive nature of Indigenous knowledges in transcending these categories. Second, the co-authors briefly consider the pedagogical possibilities and limitations of pursuing a synthesis of state and Indigenous governance. What is advocated here can be summarized as a more culturally rooted form of African governance that is historically produced, locally tested, and draws its legitimacy from a diffused leadership rather than professionalized elite. The joint authors work from the premise that the African state is itself an embattled institution that lacks widespread legitimacy and cultural resonance with African peoples. Clearly, the goal of their essay is not to advocate the strengthening of Indigenous governance *in place* of the state model, but to advocate its strengthening *in spite* of it. We do not believe reformist and revolutionary strategies are always antithetical. There are spaces where the two intersect and overlap. Even reformist strategies of governance can help us find new frameworks to move beyond the state model. We understand this project to be, primarily, a question of political development and located within the broader body of development studies.

Finally, we cannot write about African development and not link it with issues of the African Diaspora. Isaac Darko illustrates one of the ways African development is linked to the struggles of other marginalized groups around the world. Using the Canadian experience, the work specifically looks at how African immigrants or Diasporan African could collaborate with Indigenous Aboriginal communities in resisting prevailing imperialist tendencies. The paper sets off by establishing the relevance of solidarity and establishing the importance of not just talking but acting. Darko uses the shared histories as well as the same or similar values and perspective shared between Africans and Aboriginal people, as bases for arguing for solidarity and collaboration. By this, spirituality and the whole colonial experience become significant, historical and cultural roadmap for present and future actions and decisions. It also establishes the importance of solidarity as it offers a greater chance at decolonization, deconstructing, interrogating, and challenging existing imperial
and colonial oppressive policies and knowledge that turns to negate and devalue the importance of Indigenous peoples’ knowledge and culture.

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INTRODUCTION

“A concept is neither true nor false, only propositions are. A concept is neither valid nor invalid, only arguments.” (G. Bergman, The Philosophy of Sciences, 1957, p.50)

Development and growth theories abound, especially for the economic development of developing/third World countries since the 1960s. The strong and common notion during that period, and even now, is that the development of Africa, for example, has to follow the same processes (economically, educationally, politically and environmentally) which the Western countries, known as more “developed” or “industrialized countries”, went through. Rostow (1960) in his book seemed to suggest that the only way for any nation to develop is to follow the “path” taken by the industrialized western countries. The development field has since then been swarmed with a host of theoretical propositions or discursive frameworks as to how the objective and practice of development can be met within communities and nations. Many of these scholarly positions on development particularly in the Global South have engaged the already existing extensive literature, while seeking to explore to expand upon the conceptual underpinnings of “development”. Clearly, if the success of development is to be measured in terms of the sheer volume of academic writings, then there will be no problem. There is simply too much that has been written about development such that for anyone to claim that he or she is rethinking ‘development’ or ‘growth’ theories is no longer perceived as holding the possibilities of some creative scholarly and professional work. Unfortunately, many of these writings, ideas and presuppositions of development have not materialized in the concrete lives of ordinary peoples in the African case at least, even with their ‘adoption’ of western development system. Globalization, which has created what Hobsbawm (1994) long ago termed ‘the age of extremes’, has added to the complexity of development. Is it then even possible to reinstate a proper and effective counterforce to replace what Awoonor (2006) sees as the “historical political counter force to Western hegemony” that has been eliminated since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989? But we cannot give up. So our aim should be to continue to try to resolve the problems which Fanon
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(1965) said “Europe has not been able to find the answers” (p. 253) and which Africa has also not been able to resolve.

As African scholars and critical thinkers, we need to constantly probe what really is development and how development can really come about. We need to trace the place and context of local knowledge in understanding local culture, sense of self, community, social interdependence and the pursuit of sustainable development. It is such understanding that could positively restructure the African educational, scientific, political and socio-economic systems for genuine and sustainable development. This paper attempts to set an agenda for African development in the 21st Century by interrogating some of the conventional analyses of development. We suggest a counter-visioning that locates local knowledge at the base of development practice.

FAILED DEVELOPMENT?

It is generally felt that Africa is a case of development ‘failure’. This is contentious to some extent when we simply use the word “modernization” as a synonym for “development” (Bendix, 1967) focusing on the failures and not pay attention to how rural peoples resist and survive the global onslaught. But the fact is, while we may quibble with how development is understood and conceptualized, there are pressing legitimate challenges that confront the continent in the 21st Century. Most of the colonized African countries got their independence more than fifty years ago. However, the dreams and aspirations of African peoples for just and fair world, where all are able to actualize their lives and aspirations are still to be met. Among the challenges the continent faces are food supply and security, water, oil and gas, health and education, rising debts, effective governance and environmental sustainability to mention a few.

This paper suggests, however, that if we begin to reframe the discussion about what constitutes development and focus instead on what local peoples know best through their cultural resource base, we may perhaps embark upon a different discourse about African development (see also Dei, 2010). Let us start from our own cultural knowledge base to see what these offer in our understanding of development. For far too long, we have shed our culture and local knowledge and assumed development presented to us through a foreign lens with theoretical arguments that have simply not worked for African peoples. This is why Africa is still faced with serious crises in the education, health, environment and technology sectors. We need a new mindset that acknowledges that African development cannot be imposed but must be from the ground and local peoples themselves.

Africa is usually seen as a continent that has no scientific knowledge or background except the one introduced by the Western world. But recently, the scientific materials by the Centre for School and Community Science and Technology Studies (SACOST) in the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana, for teaching and learning in the Ghanaian schools show that there are many Indigenous activities
which have scientific concepts relevant for formal school education in science (see Anamuah-Mensah, Asabere-Ameyaw, Dennis and Aiduenu 2008). We must learn from everyday practices and see the possibilities, challenges and failures and work from there forward. The so-called developed countries, claiming and monopolizing scientific knowledge, are on their way to “disaster” if the current state of material overconsumption, environmental abuse and social inequities among its peoples continue unabated. With a few exceptions, generally, the Global North offers dubious lessons in material greed, obscene material acquisitions, and major aspects of technological advances which are all NOT what true development is about. For African peoples, we must reclaim our spiritual sense of self, spirit and souls, learn more about what it means to be human, to become community members responsible to each other, to have a sense of reciprocity, to learn to share what we have and to appreciate nature and protect our lands.

Early theories of development saw it in a linear direction of progression of human history. Consequently, it was argued that Africa will follow the West/Europe to ‘development’ (Rostow, 1960). In his book, Rostow (1960) posited that there are five stages to growth/development i.e. traditional society, precondition for take-off, take-off stage, drive to maturity and finally age of mass consumption. This is what many have termed ‘catch up’ development. This linearity was the justification for the proposition for Africa to steep herself in Western values, ideas and technologies of development. For example, the infusion of Western capital was seen as a done deal for development to occur. Capital accumulation prerequisite for development is to take off absence of such capital infusion. African will be lost in the wilderness. But it was not just the infusion of capital, but also, regulation of such capital. Among the prescription for development were trade liberation, open market reforms, entrenched roles for the private sector and a need for African governments to cut down on state redundancies (e.g., retrenchment of the workforce). The development agenda was planned and executed through an export-led development prism (see also, Valenzuela and Valenzuela 1981; Naanen 1984). This has led to the present day practice of underdevelopment economy, which is also dependency economy, in Africa which Schatz (1984) termed “pirate capitalism”.

Resistance to such development thinking came in the form of an open acknowledgement and critique of existing colonial relations among nations as power saturated, exploitative and as constitutive of an unequal distribution of global wealth, resource power and prestige. The uneveness of development secured its foothold in the context of an unequal international division of labor and terms of trade. Africa and the Global South were deemed primary producers while the West would become the home of industrial products. Even today most African countries have not shed the tentacles of primary producers of the world’s raw materials. Centre-periphery linkages were about resource extraction and uneven development. Metropolis satellite nations would exploit the rich resources of the peripheries (see Frank 1966, 1967a & b; Galtung, 1971; Wallerstein 1974; and Amin 1974, 1976). Later refinement of the dependency thesis would focus on the internal dynamics
of production (modes and relations of production) around which issues of class, gender, ethnicity and other forms of social difference would suffice not only as sites of difference but sites of power and asymmetrical relations of power.

IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM AND INTERROGATING THE LITERATURE

Unfortunately, almost all attempts to promote African development has been mired in the colonialist approach to development without a critical examination of how Africa can search for its own path to development through its past, culture, tradition and indigenous knowledge. In effect, critiques of development have not been informed by a ‘thinking outside the box’. For example, long ago, Adeboye (1997) noted Africa as “locked in a development tragedy” and yet still holds the possibilities of extricating itself from the development malaise. The author acknowledged what is conventional wisdom on African development pointing to a “growing consensus” that sees science and technological innovation as critical for rapid economic development. What is not clear is what kind of innovation we are speaking about. Adeboye (1997) discusses current models of development arguing that they each have far-reaching implications and consequences for Africa. In examining “three dominant models of innovation that can be characterized as the US, the European (or early industrial revolution) and the development-driven models respectively” (p. 2), Adeboye (1997) opines these innovations are respectively technological advances first, “fuelled by highly qualified scientists, engineers and technologists and is sustained by large research and development spending derivative of the mission-oriented aerospace armaments efforts of the US government”; second, by the multi-billion development environment of “shared technical culture which produces a large number of practical and trained entrepreneurs and workforces and an educational system that is biased towards hands-on technical apprenticeship, vocational and technological training” (p. 2). In this second model of development innovation, the emphasis is on the cultivation of “broad tacit skills”, the effective “learning of new skills, in a nation where there is intense interaction among the entrepreneur, the workforce, the customers and other producers”. The third model is a “vision model… based largely on the transfer, adoption, adaptation of existing knowledge” (p.2). Education and training is key to this model of development in that “the ability to learn, use and adapt new knowledge” is the engine of growth. Research and development is a key component of this model.

However, the educational system introduced by the colonial Western countries to the developing countries, especially in Africa, ‘suppressed’ the existing indigenous knowledge (Freire, 1971). Instead of allowing the schools to be based on cultural and traditional knowledge of the Africans, the colonial schools sought to ‘destroy’ the indigenous educational system in Africa and replaced it by a system that did not encourage indigenous scientific activities, and indeed stopped such activities. For example, indigenous industries based on local scientific and technological knowledges were not considered, or even banned; i.e. making of local indigenous
medicines, house-building materials, alcoholic beverages, arms and ammunitions, etc. Such were replaced by those imported from the ‘mother countries’. The type of science and technology education established in the African colonies was exploitative and exclusionist. The formal colonial school system was seen as an end in itself and thereby taken to be education in its totality; that means a school system that does not take into perspective the reality of the society, and thus made the people’s culture irrelevant. The cultural and home activities of the people do not have any influence on the school system. This we argue to be the greatest undoing of the education sector in the present day Africa. In any case, colonial policies were not meant to be altruistic or favor the colonized (see also Fanon, 1965 and 1967, Rodney, 1972, Aina 1995). Myrdal (1968) clearly stated that education is a powerful instrument of social control. The colonial school systems in Africa were focused on producing people who would become “outstanding clerks” (see Awo, 1960), enterprises in which the operations needed no technical skills. Today in the independent Africa countries, science and technology education is neutral and indifferent. Hence African scientists, products of the colonial schools, have not been able to successfully adapt and use the new knowledge they obtained from such schools. What we presently have in the African countries is what we can term ‘dependency school system (DSS)’ which does not recognize the outside-of-school training and activities that make a holistic education (see also Raheem, 1980).

Bryceson and Bank (2001) write of the “end of an era” arguing that “the new century is witnessing a shift in African policy discourse from neo-liberalism, with its unshakeable belief in the benefits of market optimisation, to what might best be called ‘post-modern liberalism’ with a professed commitment to poverty-alleviating welfare measures and backpedalling on African prospects in world markets”. He notes that there is an emerging discourse counter to neo-liberalism that alludes to ‘livelihoods’ and ‘linkages’ as key concepts in the coalescing discourse of poverty awareness (p.6). The problem in poverty alleviation is understood in terms of matching what the West has acquired and of course with this kind of understanding as a point of departure in ‘attacking’ poverty in Africa, poverty is likely to increase and extended in another form. This is because the West will continue to strongly protect its exploitative roles of science and technology and dictate the pace of development and growth for Africa.

In his discussion about factors accounting for the ‘development deficit” in Africa, Mistry (2005) takes to task the effectiveness of development aid arguing that aid “has not worked because human, social, and institutional capital – not financial capital-poses the biding constrain” (p. 665). It is observed that the “aid’s community current obsession with poverty reduction and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) may be harming rather than helping the cause of development in Africa and. [that]… the focus on growth and development should be restored” (p. 665). The question should be how do we harness Africa tremendous human, social and institutional capital for development to take off and not be asking for “hand out” or going around with a cup in hand to reduce poverty. Human capital is about knowledge, power and
leadership. As long as the basis for development aid is to reduce poverty, and not to eradicate it, it will continue to be difficult to attack poverty from the roots.

There continues to be a lack of progressive leadership able to stir Africa away to a genuine path of development. Gottschalk and Schmidt’s (2003) essay highlights some of the major problems afflicting the African Union (AU). It is noted that the AU’s decision in 2002 to adopt the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) as a development program subordinated NEPAD to the AU. It is argued that both NEPAD and the AU can be regarded as unprecedented developments in Africa, whether sub-Saharan or North, but to meet its challenge, AU and the goals of NEPAD must engage the “continent-wide Indigenous initiatives providing the continent with a vision for Africa in the twenty-first century. The problem as the authors see it is that there is a general “lack of resources, leading to weak institutions and insufficient capacities” (p. 3).

Not many would dispute that development thrives in a climate of peace and security. But what is not properly theorised is what constitutes the mechanisms to arrive at peace and security informed by local understanding of human and community relations. Udombana (2005) examination of African conflicts “in the light of the refurbished continental organization, the AU, and the new development agenda-NEPAD” (p.1) only leads to a lament of the “reiterated failure and incessant peril” of development as we know it. The author questions what these “new bodies (e.g., AU, NEPAD) have to offer in tackling the problem of conflicts in Africa”. In offering suggestions to address some of the conflicts in Africa, Udombana (2003) advises the leaders of these new creatures to put the problem of conflicts on the front burner of their continental development agenda, because peace and security are the keys to the restoration of the continent's greatness and glory (p.1). It is rightly asserted that “there will always be economic and social development anywhere that there is internal and external peace and security” (p.1). But in the absence of working with Indigenous understandings of reciprocity, shared existence and community belonging to any attempts at conflict resolution will be half hearted.

In recent years, there have been attempts to link development to good governance. Good governance is about political leadership, service and management of community affairs in ways that ensure all legitimate stakeholders duly recognize their roles in the political and economic process. Political instability, incompetence and mismanagement have been cited as part of the mitigating factors to African development. However, the sort of governance that is being touted as a panacea to Africa’s woes is Western liberal democracy and political participation which simply heralds political involvement such as participation in free and fair elections in a climate of multi-partyism. The hard truth is that the Western liberal democracy will not succeed for decades to come in Africa unless it is adapted to seriously consider the indigenous political, social and economic ways of the people.

Globalization has very much changed the direction of governance and leadership in most of the Global South. The corruption of the political process is such that motivation for involvement in politics are driven more by selfish ends. Szeftel’s
(2000) essay is helpful in theorising any link between governance and [under] development. The paper explores “aspects of the tension between, on the one hand, international efforts by multilateral and bilateral creditors and aid donors to reduce corruption in developing countries and, on the other, the role played by political corruption in promoting local accumulation of wealth, property and capital in Africa”. Globalization and democracy have been presented as intertwined. Yet, the rewards of globalization are distributed unevenly. Countries may be rewarded by the international financial community to the extent that national economies are fully integrated into the capitalist economy. Globalization, notwithstanding any benefits, has come at a price. Szeftel (2000) argues the “process of globalisation includes a concerted effort to reduce the costs and increase the predictability of international business activities, [and that] the effort has been particularly directed at countries undergoing economic restructuring and democratic change” (p. 287). It is conceded that “the weak bargaining position of African states, where debt and underdevelopment make dependence on international creditors and aid donors especially acute” has had a resultant or cumulative effect of “variety of direct, unsubtle pressures to force these states to undertake 'governance' reforms” (p.287). The sad aspect is that while many of these measures of incorporating national economies into the Western capital modernity purport to address important problems undermining African development, they also actually intensify the nature and extent of political corruption as an acute African problem. If Africa is to embrace the link of governance and development, then it must also be understood that genuine African development can only occur by working with Indigenous understandings of governance, political participation and the matching social and citizenship responsibilities.

In similar a vein, many are quick to point to the problem of brain drain as a major contributory factor to the lack of development in African countries. While the problem of brain drain has been much talked about as an obstacle to Africa’s development, there has not been a corresponding attention paid to how to stem this tide in Africa’s favour. There is no doubt that brain drain robs Africa of some bright talents, competencies and expertise to think through home grown solution to our own problems. Sako (2002) enthuses “the phenomenon [of brain drain] represents a major development constraint” because “brain drain challenges capacity building, retention of skilled workers, and sustained growth on the continent” (p. 252). It is noted that “unless it is effectively addressed, the flight of skilled professionals and academics from Africa will severely undermine prospects of gains expected from implementing the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) initiative (p. 25). To understand the complex nature of the problem we must also examine first what shapes the frame of thinking of many African scholarly experts on development and second, how Africa’s own experts and expertise are under-privileged and under-utilised compared to the high regard for foreign expatriates and their skills and expertise. We however, at this stage think that ‘brain drain’ may be an infused-instrument added to the pool of methods used to perpetuate the inequality among nations.
NEPAD has been seen by some as presenting Africa’s best hope for “achieving sustained growth alongside good governance”. Alex De Waal (2002) starts a discussion with a brief, critical overview of NEPAD governance processes. It leads him to conclude that while NEPAD modestly “holds out the promise of transforming Africa’s development prospects” the organization faces major constrains primarily given its ambitious core activities…. [and urges NEPAD]….. to scale back and focus on some essential core activities…. (p. 463). He highlights these core activities as “necessary to sustain development and governance in the face of HIV/AIDS pandemic, matching its aspirations to the financial and human resource and institutional capacities in Africa today” (p. 464). The problem is that we are putting too much hope into NEPAD when it is framed by expert scholarly thinking very situated within the Western global capital paradigm and agenda of what constitutes development.

Perhaps it may be argued that local co-operation among African governments and nation states holds true possibilities for genuine African development for the future. Gibb (2009) observes Africa’s cooperation with new and emerging development partners and posit some of the options for Africa’s development. It is argued that the “increasing engagement in Africa of emerging development partners is broadening the options for growth in the continent and presents real and significant opportunities for the development of African countries, including particularly, for implementation of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals”. Furthermore, it is argued that “in the light of the prevailing global economic and financial crisis, this new cooperation becomes even more significant (p.2). Such regional and national cooperation can begin at the level of local communities in Africa utilising their own knowledge base, local creativity and resourcefulness to think through solution to their own problem (see also Dei, 2010). Clearly, development must tap into the available human resources and skills potential in Africa. Africa is not a homogenous entity. Social difference within local populations constitutes a strength that can be tapped into to enrich the collective existence. But we need a form of schooling and education that work with local cultural values in shaping the minds of our learners.

Bates (2000) work on “ethnicity and development in Africa” is useful in helping to critique the conventional wisdom by mounting an alternative interpretation to the strengths of difference and diversity. Using both qualitative and quantitative data from Africa, he argues that (i) by providing political structures that render credible implicit contracts between generations, ethnic groups promote the formation of human capital; and (ii) ethnic diversity does not imply political violence (although the reverse may be true) (p. 131) but constitute a rich reservoir of knowledge and human capital to be tapped into. There is much to say for development that taps the richness of our cultural, ethnic.

Of late, Africa has been seeking international economic partnerships outside of the major Western powers to promote development. Yet, these partnerships come with their own problems. Bracking and Graham (2003) explore some of the “complicated effects of growth and production economies in Africa as new ways imperialism has
Imperial relations have a long history in Africa. In fact, Bracking and Graham (2003) note that imperialism has come to encompass different meanings to the extent that “one has to clarify what one means by imperialism before using the term. Imperialism has a much longer history than its contemporary pretender, ‘globalisation’ (p.6). New imperial forces in Africa can mask their activities in the development as simply about benevolence and a desire to assist or help.

China has become a major player in Africa. Davies (2010), for example, discusses how the global financial crisis is “accelerating China’s investment in Africa, a region that is becoming more important to Chinese firms that are beginning to venture out into the global economy”. In particular, the author poses three significant questions with implications for the sustainability of Africa’s development: “What contribution will China have on industrialization efforts in Africa? Does China’s concessional finance model offer a new mode of developmental finance for Africa’s extractive industries? And, will China’s investment in infrastructure on the continent assist regional integration of African economies? Answers to these three questions should provide an overview of the impact China will have on the long term developmental prospects of Africa.

We would reiterate that a more effective approach to African development must start from within, what Africa peoples know best, and working with our own culture, environments and local knowledge base. We can begin by thinking about our local knowledges differently and find ways to educate and teach local peoples ways we can apply local understanding to solve pressing human problems. African schools, colleges and universities have a tremendous responsibility here in shaping the minds of learners. We can apply our local knowledges to the contemporary times. In his excellent work on Sacred Ecology, Berkes (2008) examines bodies of knowledge held by Indigenous cultures globally and asks how we can learn from this knowledge and ways of knowing. Berkes (2008) exploration of the” importance of local and Indigenous knowledge as a complement to scientific ecology and its cultural and political significance for Indigenous groups themselves” (p.1) is significant. Indigenous knowledges have their component in science, mathematics, technology, arts, humanities and literatures. This brings a broader understanding to “social ecology”.

**SETTING THE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

We have attempted to show that there is need to re-interrogate the existing concepts and theories of development and growth for socio-economic and political development, especially in Africa. Thomas Malthus in his book, An Essay on the Principle of Population (1798) raised some concerns about population growth as it might affect socio-economic development. Factually, the present economic crises all over the world can be attributed to what Malthus pointed out as the reckless interactions of human systems with the earth. Among these reckless interactions is also the reckless exploitation of humans by humans; the slave trade, colonialism, capitalism, corruption, etc. On the other hand,
the development and growth theorists focused on the steps of what they understand as ‘development for all’. There are two issues we shall attend to here.

Firstly, we can say that the concerns raised by Malthus have become more real in the present century; almost four Centuries from the time he wrote his book. However, we can say that it is because of the one part of the world, the West, which has driven the rest of the world to a disastrous development. Within the three centuries from the time Malthus wrote his book the Western countries intensively exploited the rest of the world, especially Africa, through colonialism, capitalism, pseudo socialism and imperialism all in the name of leading the less developed countries towards development. On the contrary, however, it was a steep road to underdevelopment. While the population was effectively controlled in the West, the Western economic system encouraged African countries to become more chaotic by rapid population growth, more rapid exportation of their raw materials and cheap labor.

Secondly, the limits of growth have also become a reality. The accumulation of wealth by the Western countries in the past two centuries has come to the climax and now crumbling the world economy. We are now faced with the reality that no matter how much you control the population growth, a ferocious exploitation of natural resources will surely make it impossible for sustainable development, either in the north or south of the globe. The most negatively affected is the southern part of the globe because they are lacking in what we termed ‘cultural technology’. This is a situation where the technology in use is either wrongly adapted or adopted resulting in its irrelevance for the everyday living of the society.

Presently, the terms colonialism, capitalism, socialism and imperialism are no more targets for discussions because other succinct methods, which are even more disastrous than the terms mentioned, are being used to promote perpetual dependency economy, chaotic copy of Western democracy and educational and judicial systems. These are in form of factories that do not manufacture/produce, schools that teach abstractly and thereby produce unmarketable graduates, judicial systems that rely on Western laws and democracy that are alien to Africa and thereby promotes a wider gap between the rich and the poor in the societies (see also Myrdal, 1957; Hoogvelt, 1978). The outcome of the school systems in Africa confirms that even though the science students in the African schools learn science and mathematics, they however, perform very badly. The health, sanitation and environmental standards in almost all the countries in Africa are too low for positive development. In short, the so called modern development systems in Africa seem to be incapable of gearing the continent towards sustainable socio-economic development.

CONCLUSION

In a forthcoming book, Eweagwali and Dei (In press) note that “our ancient civilizations bore sophisticated knowledge systems deeply embedded in local culture and social politics and that our local/Indigenous knowledges reside in us and in our cultural memories” (see also Dei, 2000). The authors stress that through
time such knowledges far from being abandoned have actually been transformed local communities as they adapt their cultural knowings to solve pressing social problems. These knowledges are not just simply the ownership of African peoples. It is knowledge that is connected to the Land, local environments (social, physical and metaphysical) and to culture and everyday politics. Unfortunately, what we are witnessing today particularly among the youth and a number of African intellectuals is the devaluing and dismissal of such local cultural knowings as superstitions, myths and mythologies. On the other hand, while Western science knowledge has borrowed and appropriated such local cultural knowledges to suit its purposes, there has been a downright denigration of such knowings as science or knowledge in the African countries. Instead, we need to trouble our conventional understandings of what constitutes knowledge and how such knowledges should be produced, interrogated, validated and disseminated. We must move away from narrow definitions of science to acknowledge the important place of Indigenous science in academic scholarship and everyday practice (see Asabere-Ameyaw, Dei, and Raheem, 2012). Africa must not be contended with the theories of development and growth presented to her but, according to Frantz Fanon (1967) referring to the Third World in general, “ought to do their utmost to find their particular values and methods and a style which shall be peculiar to them” (p.78). It is therefore postulated that more studies interrogating the development and growth theories should be revisited.

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