

## Africa's Golden Age Of Stupidity

Ishmael D. Norman, Ph. D., J. D., BA, Int'l Dev.

<sup>1</sup>Ghana Armed Forces Command and Staff College (Academic Division) Oti Barracks, Teshie, Accra

<sup>2</sup>Institute for Security, Disaster and Emergency Studies Sandpiper Place, NYD 54/55 Nyanyano District, Suit # 1  
Langma, Central Region, Ghana

### Abstract:

**Background:** "Africa's Golden Age Of Stupidity" Appears To Have Started Soon After Independence To The Present. This Paper Is Influenced By Dietrich Bonhoeffer's "Theory Of Stupidity" (1944-45); Carlo Cipolla's "Basic Laws Of Human Stupidity" (2011); Sacha Golob's (2019) "A New Theory Of Stupidity", And David Rothkopf's, (2017) "America's Golden Age Of Stupidity".

**Method:** I Used Publications, Policies And Actions Within Africa To Demonstrate The Golden Age Of Stupidity In The Context Of The Anti-Utilitarian Approaches Towards Africa's Integration And Development Since 1963 With Over USD\$1 Trillion Invested In Africa's Development. I Used Incidence Of Official Corruption And Administrative Inertia Of Africa's Bureaucracy As The Main Props.

**Result:** Africa Appears To Operate Under Organizational, Leadership And Personal Stupidity, Under No. 2 Of "Basic Law Of Human Stupidity", Which Delineates The Role Of "Intelligent" Men, The "Bandits", The "Helpless" And The "Stupid" Within Any Group. Output By Eminent And Classical Or Modern Economists Going Back To Arthur Lewis (1954) Not To Mention Adam Smith, (1776); Dudley Seers, (1968); Walt Rostow (1969), Amartya Sen, (1989, 1990); Xiaobing Wang & Jenifer Piesse (2009) And Indermit Gill, (2022), After Tedious Calculations, Extrapolations And Inferences, Don't Help Anybody But The "Bandits" In Power Because The Gate-Keepers, The Bureaucracy, Are 'Stupid' And The Populations Feign Helplessness.

**Conclusion:** How Can Africa's Leaders Become Less Dangerous To Their Citizens, Or Learn Humility And Service? How Would The Youth Become Productive? Such Negativity Ought To Change To Free Africa From Its Self-Imposed Yoke Of Ignorance, Conspicuous Consumption And Persistent Underachievement, Although Such Expectations Could Best Be Described As Tentative.

**Keywords:** Stupid Leaders; Slothful Youth; Xenophobia; Banditry, Dysfunction, Under-Achievement

Date of Submission: 18-06-2023

Date of Acceptance: 28-06-2023

### I. Introduction:

**"Anyone who takes it upon himself to speak on the subject of stupidity nowadays is liable to land himself in a number of difficulties: He may be condemned as arrogant and condescending. He may even be accused of seeking to interfere with the natural development of modern life"**  
(Robert Musil, 1937, Translation of a Lecture delivered in Vienna in 1937)

Accept that Africa's golden age of stupidity does not eviscerate the good that have been done by some of the previous and current leaders. The analysis in this paper starts from the position that, whatever gains Africa or the individual nations have received since independence are too infinitesimal to consider as significant in the total scheme of national development, particularly in relation to the total sums of money spent towards that dynamic objective. Before proceeding in search of desideratum for the topic, a quick narrative of the events leading to Dietrich Bonhoeffer's theory of stupidity in his native land Germany during the Nazi regime. In a nutshell, Bonhoeffer did not believe in returning violence for violence as a Lutheran theologian and a man of goodwill. After watching and seeing his fellow Germans pelt the shops, businesses and apartment windows of German Jews, women and children dragged into the streets and cruelly humiliated in the open for no apparent reason, his feelings of outrage were aroused. It was much in the same way that South Africans in Durban did to Nigerian shops owners in 2020-2022 and Ghanaians also did to Nigerians and Chinese in Kumasi and Accra in 2020-2022 under the watchful eyes of the security agencies of both nations, as the intelligentsia and Human Rights lawyers and advocates sat nonchalantly. He noticed that thinkers and social critics he was hoping would raise their voices against the injustices of the Nazi regimen were covered into submission by the mob. He eventually concluded that the root of hate and vigilantism he was observing was not malice but stupidity (Averett Jones, 2019; Rasmussen, 2005).

**Comment [IN1]:** Please give this font 9, bold these lines, center and allow a space between the quotation and the main body of the paper as done here.

Incidentally, similar act of stupidity was displayed on a national scale in 1968 in Ghana before the world to see. Just as Nazi Germany blamed the minority Jewish commercial class for all their economic woes of the time, just as even some so-called right thinking Europeans thought under Angela Merkel that she had allowed Syrian immigrants into Germany in 2015 to, allegedly usurp the will of the Germany people, in the period leading to the 1969 expulsion of Nigerians from Ghana, Ghana's economy was in dire straits and saw Nigerians and other foreign dwellers as the reason why the economy had stagnated (Oltermann, 2020). "Both the nationals and central government blamed the worsening of micro-and macro-economic conditions, run-away exchange regime and the scarcity of essential commodities, on both the legal and illegal immigrants from Nigeria and on other foreigners. The International Monetary Fund, IMF offered a truce in the blaming game: The Structural Adjustment Program. The government of Dr. Abrefa Busia was hesitant to commit Ghana to that facility, due to the strict and unfair conditions attached to the facility. In the meanwhile, the nation saw the Nigerians as easy prey". Dr. Kofi Abrefa Busia's government, perhaps touched by parochialism, dealt the decisive blow to the foreign dwellers when the national parliament promulgated and passed the Aliens Compliance Order of 1968, to the applause of the proud Ghanaians. What seems so amazing even today is that, while Dr. Busia was wooing the West African community on the day of his inauguration as one who would pursue an all-inclusive government and nation, his government under the auspices of the Progress Party in 1968, the precursor of the New Patriotic Party of today, was busy formulating the Alien Compliance Order (Norman, 2022, pp. 42-43).

Bonhoeffer was arrested in 1938 by the Gestapo, the regime police force of the Nazi State, and sent to jail where he was eventually hanged seven years later on 9<sup>th</sup> April, 1945 for allegedly taking part in a plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler. While in jail, he wrote letters to his family and followers. The "*Theory of Stupidity*" was one of such products from jail in which he argued among other profound positions that, "stupidity is a more dangerous enemy of the good than malice, because while one may protest against evil, it can be exposed and prevented by the use of force, but against stupidity one is defenseless" (Rasmussen, 2005).

The *theory of Stupidity* got more expansive when he extended it into the domain of power that, when certain persons gain too much power, they could become very dangerous or stupid, and for that, they could be more dangerous than evil ones. Just as the Germany society under Hitler was defenseless against stupid people that blindly followed the Fuhrer, in Africa: Ghana, Uganda, Central Africa Republic, Togo, Cameroon, and others, a significant segment of the population still follow stupid leaders, stupid university dons, stupid government leaders and bureaucracy to handle them like Yo-yos because "all rational appeals fall on deaf ears" (ibid). Some of these leaders are outright criminal in their vindictiveness and retaliatory responses to those who criticize them for being nepotistic and stupid. For example, to whom could Ugandans complain of the appointment of Janet Museveni, the President's wife in 2009 by her husband, Yoweri Museveni, as State Minister for Karamoja Affairs and in 2011 Minister of State for Karamoja Affairs and, thus a member of his cabinet? In 2016, she became Minister of Education and Sports. What about Ivan Kagame being appointed by his father, Paul Kagame of Rwanda, to the Rwanda Development Board, (RDB)? The RDB is a government agency for fast tracking that nation's economic development through the promotion of the private sector. The case of presidential appointments to their relatives in Ghana is so repulsive in a democracy under President Akufo Addo that, too many observers choose to be in denial about it. "President Akufo Addo's team in his government, includes names that invoked power, money and fear due to the potentiality and in some cases, actuality of retaliation and punishment: Ken Ofori Atta, (Cousin and Minister of Finance); Gabby Okyere Darko, (Cousin but with no portfolio, a lawyer); Presidential Secretary and lawyer, Asante Bediatuo, (Cousin); Samuel Atta Akyea, (a lawyer, President's cousin and Minister of Works and Housing); Virginia Hesse, (Ex-lover and Baby Mama of President's daughter, now Ambassador to Czech Republic); Eno Ofori-Atta (Sister in law of Finance Minister, and appointed Deputy MD for Finance of the State Insurance Company); Alhaji Ramadan (Father-in-law of Vice President Dr. Bawumia and Father of Second Lady Samira Bawumia appointed Ghana's Envoy to UAE); Abu Ramadan (Brother-in-law to Dr. Bawumia, and brother of Second Lady Samira Bawumia, Deputy Director General of National Disaster Management Organization); Gina Blay, (Wife of Freddy Blay, NPP Chairman till 2022, appointed Ghana's ambassador to Germany) and many others of consanguinity and direct family relationships that have been appointed since Akufo Addo came to power on 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2017.

In January 2022, Dr. Brian Klaas of UCL School of European Languages Culture and Society in his book, *The Despot's Accomplice: How the West is Aiding and Abetting the Decline of Democracy*, wrote that "power attracts those most likely to abuse it and then makes them worse". He continued to argue that, "power is magnetic to corruptible people. Just about everywhere one looks, the worst kind of people are drawn to gaining authority over others... Especially with people "with a particularly destructive psychological cocktail known as the dark triad: Machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy" (ibid, 2022). Secondly, quoting Lord Acton, "power corrupts". The third explanation Dr. Klaas gives is that, "we give power to the wrong people" because by and large, "we are seduced by charlatans and strongmen, with roots in the ancient past of our species". To

cap it all, he offered that, “corruptible people are disproportionately drawn to power, disproportionately good at wriggling their way into it and disproportionately likely to cling to it once they’ve got it” (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2022/jan/opinion-why>). Performative services often create the opportunity for corrupt leaders and persons to interfere with the process and try to adulterate the delivery of whatever service that ought to be performed, whether it is in the domain of security services or healthcare delivery.

Lee Kwan Yew of Singapore, a visionary thinker and transformational leader was widely credited with the statement, “If you want Singapore to succeed (...) you must have a system that enables the best man and the most suitable to go into the job that need them” (Yew, n. d.). His approach was based on the principle of Meritocracy and Pragmatism. In the African political and cultural milieu, where patronage is the rule, “facts that contradict a stupid person’s (or leader’s) prejudgment simply need not be believed and when they are irrefutable, they are just pushed aside as inconsequential or incidental”. It is very difficult to find a single African leader that subscribes to the concept of meritocracy and pragmatism in human resources management in the public space. Appointments to public service jobs are in most cases based on relationships either by blood, ethnicity, prior association and political expediency. Bonhoeffer added that, “in all this, the stupid person is self-satisfied and, being easily irritated, becomes dangerous” by becoming vindictive, going on physical attacks, political assassination and any form of attack, all of which requires “greater caution when dealing with a stupid person than a malicious one” (Averett Jones, 2019). Perhaps, one cannot blame all the shortcomings on stupidity. Africans “believe in the politics of contention, of opposition” and do not seek unification of purpose as their main driving force and a “way out of their difficulties” (Lew Kuan Yew, 1985).

Cipolla’s Second Basic Law of Human Stupidity provides (he reminded his readers that his interests was not to revive race wars and denigration but to develop his thesis) that due to cultural and egalitarian views, society tends to look at man as being “naturally equal and if some are more equal than others, this is attributable to nurture and not nature” (Cipolla, 2011, p. 1). He argued that men are not equal. Some are stupid and others are not and that, the difference is determined by nature and not by cultural forces or factors” (ibid, p. 1). That is to say, “a stupid man is born a stupid man by an act of providence” (ibid, p. 2), because “stupidity is an indiscriminate privilege of all human groups and is uniformly distributed according to a constant proportion, which is expressed thus: “The probability that a certain person be stupid is independent of any other characteristics of that person” (ibid, p. 2). From his experiments to ascertain the validity of the first basic law of human stupidity, he found that the same number of stupid people was found in the blue collar workers as they were present in the white collar workers, university administrators and professors including Nobel Laureates. All these were to prove that your antecedence does not determine your ability to turn stupid on some occasions and on other cases, very intelligent. He stated emphatically that the Women’s Liberation Movement and the underdevelopment in the Third World nations fall under the Second Basic Law of Human Stupidity. What have all these got to do with Africa? The short answer is everything, which I will discuss later on this paper in relation to leadership, development, corruption and identity politics, xenophobia and vigilantism.

Cipolla’s Third (and Golden) Basic Law of Human Stupidity is of interests to this topic and would be discussed briefly before moving on. Human beings, the law says, fall into four categories of: -the helpless, the intelligent, the bandit and the stupid. In rule three, a stupid person is the one who causes losses to another person or to a group of persons while deriving no gain and even possibly incurring losses (Ibid, p. 3). Juxtaposing Cipolla’s dialectics with Sacha Golob’s (2019) “*A New Theory of Stupidity*”, provides an interesting read, although they both converge, after some intellectual perambulations, at more or less the same locus. The locus of stupidity is parabolic because it is dynamic and constantly moving from one point equidistant to another to a fixed point on a straight line. Golob’s paper starts with Rothkopf’s statement that American was in the “Golden age of Stupidity” under His Excellency, President Donald John Trump, the 45<sup>th</sup> president of the United States of America. By this, Rothkopf meant the “willful disregard of knowledge – regardless of the motive” and one might add, the source, and that such stupidity is an “unwinnable proposition (...) because those who battle facts are at war with reality”. Rothkopf used various Trump adverse utterances against public health interventions he displayed during the middle of the Covid-19 outbreak in 2021 and 2022 to demonstrate his point. This echoes Bonhoeffer’s declaration that to the stupid persons, facts don’t mean anything. All of these observations are not only true about Mr. Trump, but a trait often associated with African leaders who show propensity for dictatorship and abuse for individual liberties and the right to free speech or deny the practice of the Rule of Law as an embedded concept in most written constitutions.

In Africa, the situation is made worse by the existence of weak administrative and legal systems and judiciary and large but fear gripped professionals, the bulk of whom serve at the prerogative of the President. Not only this fact, the majority of those to provide the checks and balances to the executive branch of government, are so deep to their necks in corruption and political vices that they have lost all moral and ethical standing to admonish, or even suggest the alternative. Mulligan, (2017, pp 66-85) started his review of Musil’s (1937) thesis presented in Vienna of the same year on “*Foolishness, Stupidity and Cognitive Values*” with a series of rhetorical questions: “What are the relations between ethical values and moral norms, (...) and

Cognitive Values and Norms (...) "Between foolishness and cognitive vices and forms of practical irrationality such as self-deception, resentment blether, obscurantism and obscurity?" Musil, according to Mulligan (ibid, pp. 78-79) distinguished between two kinds of stupidity. The first kind is honest and straightforward – based on "weakness of understanding", it is "a little dull of comprehension" and has a "dimwit". It is "poor in ideas and words, and awkward in applying them". It is slow. It is whatever is measured in IQ tests. The second kind even "undamaged innate intelligence may be hindered, frustrated, and led astray by the most varied kinds of mental and psychological deviations".

As a practical demonstration in African governance, take the case of Nigeria with 170 million populations. Bamidele Ademola Olateju (2013) declares, "Nigeria has become 170 million stupid people. It is quite hard to admit and it is patently invidious stereotyping to label a whole nation stupid, but anything else is blithe liberal optimism. Our problems are many, serious and grave; yet we refuse to learn, change or improve. We have elected to remain profoundly stupid". Recently, the government of Ghana introduced 1.75% Electronic Transaction Levy in 2021, E-Levy on electronic money transfer which in Ghana is called MOMO or Mobile Money. There was much hue and cry but the government of Akufo Addo and his nephew Finance Minister, Ken Ofori Atta, dug in their heels and refused to listen to appeals to reduce the levy to 1.0% until the revenues from such taxation fell flat (E-Levy, 5:2022). This resulted in lower transaction values and volumes, and made banking expensive with a reduction in bank transaction, as well as about 4,000 mobile money agents left the industry and the mobile money platform lost some GHC10 billion. Then the government in its belated wisdom in May 2022, reduced the e-levy to 1.5% taxation in addition to the fee paid to the telecommunication networks and added a few exemptions. That moment was one of the many examples of Ghana's Royal Golden Age of Stupidity in recent times.

Other nations like Kenya and Rwanda are undergoing severe economic pressures that have been part of the cycle of pain and suffering that civil servants, themselves active contributors to the government's woes, mismanagement, embezzlement and corruption, undergo from time to time. Berna Namata of the East African newspaper reported on the 22 of December, 2022 that "the Rwanda economic managers are walking a tightrope to contain a drastic rise in the cost of living that is reducing incomes and hitting the country's vulnerable households hard. Although there is evidence that the Rwandan economy expanded by 10 per cent in the third quarter, according to the National Institute of Statistics (NISR), following a 7.5 per cent growth in the second quarter, this may not be sustainable. There is high unemployment not only for the youth but the adult populations, food prices have soared at 34 per cent for nominal food inflation, and general inflation is at 14 per cent. The same story of poor agricultural practices in Nigeria, Ghana and other African nations leading to food scarcity, explains the food supply and availability situation in Rwanda (Namata, 2022). Elsewhere in Nigeria, food inflation rose to 24.45 per cent in March of 2023 from the previous month's average of 24.35 per cent and year on year basis, headline inflation rate was 6.13 per cent higher compared to the 15.92 per cent rate in March (Olanrewaju Sulaimon, 2023). The rising rate of food items is evidenced in the cost of items such as rice, beans, bread, yam, vegetables, fruits, and eggs which have all gone up by as much as 100 per cent over the last 10 years and they are expect to climb up unless there is central government interventions. The net effect of the rising food prices, as it is in the other West African and African nations, has been consigned to the already vulnerable and economically weak members of the population in Sub-Saharan African to extreme poverty and deprivation (ibid). Nigeria ranks 103<sup>rd</sup> on the Global Hunger Index (GHI) out of 121 countries, with a score of 27.3, according to GHI, Nigeria has a 'serious' level of hunger. Nominal food inflation has been wavering between 19.09 per cent in 2022 and 24.45 per cent in 2023, which translates into hardships and hunger on the streets. What these narratives about food crises in each of these nations show is, the group of African leaders and the populations that cannot process complex information, about agriculture, climate change, food security, food insecurity, value addition to the supply chain and manufacturing and transforming basic food into process food as a way of food preservation.

In effect, the leaderships and a large swath of the population of these nations are operating under the age of stupidity and under Cipolla's Law No.2 that: *The probability that a certain person be stupid is independent of any other characteristic of that person.* That is to say, irrespective of whether the men are presidents of the nation or justices of their supreme courts, a given portion of them would certainly be bona fide stupid. The leaders of these same nations whose food needs are supplemented by donations from institutions like the World Food Program continue to organize annual celebrations in praise of the 'best national farmer'. To Golob, stupidity constitutes a distinct form of failure, separate from, political, ethical and other shortcomings. That is to say, the fact that Africa has arable lands, labor but cannot feed itself is a function of failure of judgment and not a show of stupidity. He regards "willful disregard for facts", or even good advice, contrary to Rothkopf's position, to be perhaps, beneficial and might even deliver a short to medium term political success, provided the disregard does not have criminal animus and consequences. He admonishes us to inquire whether the disregard is due to plain dumbness or "a brute inability to process complex ideas" (Golob, 2019, pp. 2-3). Inability to process complex ideas is not stupidity per se, according to Sacha Golob, although its locus may lie

somewhere else. Unlike Bonhoeffer (1945), other philosophers like Kant (1998) see the element of 'willful disregard of facts' not as a sign of stupidity but a congenital inability to apply generic concepts to particular cases. Others, such as Adorno and Horkheimer, (2002, p. 214) consider such short comings as "blind spots" defined not in relationship to knowledge but to all capacities, practical and mental" (In Golob, 2019, pp. 2-3). To this conflict, Musil (1939) posed the question: What is the relationship between stupidity and 'Dummheit'? Being dumb is a lack of intellectual processing power as measured on an IQ scale. Musil (2007, pp. 282-283) offers that there are different forms of stupidity. Whereas a dumb person is "dull of comprehension" the other shows sign of intelligence. At a higher level, stupidity is not so much about the lack of intelligence but a failure of intelligence. Mulligan (2014) offers that "foolishness" is a "domain specific failure to act prudently", for example, due to poor risk assessment (Golob, 2019, p. 6). In summary, Kant (1998) sees stupidity as a failure of judgment. Golob (2019), with Mulligan and Engel think it is a domain-specific failure to act prudently, and that since stupidity arise from a mismatch of means and ends, once the ends are modified to match the means, those stupid people would no longer be stupid. This is consequentialism turned upside down. Golob also says stupidity or foolishness are gradable adjectives or values. All of these positions in characterizing a given conduct as stupid or not, depends on the cultural approximation of intelligence. In Africa, the culture does not value the weight of intelligence or ability on a numerical scale. Something is either good or bad, but relative degrees of goodness or badness is not as important as the impression the communicator creates to the ultimate listener-receiver of the value placed on that act.

Considering the quantum of financial assistance Africa has received since the 1960's amount in excess of \$1 trillion USD as part of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, (OECD) and Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries, one may be right to say, Africa is under the spell of continental stupidity and inertia. The rebuilding and re-construction of Europe did not cost this much. In 1948, the US Congress passed the Economic Cooperation Act and assented to by 33<sup>rd</sup> President of the USA, Harry S. Truman, to help rebuild Europe after WWII over four year period with USD \$13.3 billion out of which only USD \$12 billion was actually spent (<https://www.archives.gov/marshall>, accessed 4/29/2023). In 2022 alone, USAID provided more than \$6 billion in humanitarian assistance to the people of Africa. Definitely a huge chunk of it would go to cover American workers on those desks dealing with the disbursement of the aid (USAID Humanitarian Assistance, 2022). Despite the huge assistance to Africa, the talk about Sub-Saharan Africa's transformation in the last sixty-three years has gradually revealed the painful reality that, it is not an achievable goal even in the long run, let alone in the short or medium term. The revelation is that, Africans, perhaps, cannot think out solutions to their problems, period. Another observed reality is that, the various Presidents of Africa do not want to see an integrated Africa for fear that they would collectively become irrelevant. The bureaucracy does not want to see an integrated, well-functioning Africa. This is because, they would have to compete on a large continental scale to steal, to amass power and to be considered as relevant. The countless economic models produced by national and international economists projecting the trajectory of Africa's developmental growth, have been phantasmagorical and have not augmented the respective GDP from one decade to the next, except to expose the nations to more bilateral and institutional debt burdens. Africa has indeed performed best under "serendipitous" Hobbesian conflation of economic variables. What is real is that, many nations like Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda, still operate under the slave-trading era ethos of barter system, the exchange of everything of real value: - people, gold, and diamond for Schnapps or petroleum, waist beads (material things), and Mirrors (chintz furniture and used cars), like our forefathers, who came, built temporary housing, built no schools, developed no overarching political or sociological ideologies or philosophies, married multiple wives, made countless babies under drunken stupor and died off like butterflies in the wind. The modern culture of the average African intelligentsia mimics the old adulterated culture and behaviors of our inebriated forefathers; whose conduct can be excused with difficulty for the lack of formal education and exposure, but such benevolence of consideration cannot be extended to the current members of the respective African societies. Therefore stop the delusional talk about transforming Africa or Ghana, Tanzania or Zambia.

In one of my recent papers in 2022, "*Setting Thomas Kuhn's Paradigm Shift against Dunning-Kruger Effect: To Whom Should the Paradigm Shift in a Corruption Endemic Nation as Ghana?*" I posed the questions as to whom the paradigm for change should shift. I produced a lot of data in support of the question and attempted to provide some solutions. This work is a continuation of that paper. The theory of change in the current paper is that, society should reduce its expectations when it comes to the question of the transformation of Africa into a dynamic, well-performing democratic economic zone in our collective lifetimes. This is because Africa has a lazy population that does not enjoy hard work. This assertion too was reported with copious literature in another paper of mine using Ghana as a case, "*Exploring Work Ethic, Ghana, 2023*".

Secondly, many of Africa's Parliaments are corrupt which would never change (Norman, 2022; CHRAJ Special Report, 2022; Afrobarometer #9, 2022; Braimah, 2016; Adjetey, 2006; Mahmood, 2005; Ugaz, 2015; Norman and Aviiisah, 2015; Frimpong-Ansah, 1991; Transparency International, 2019; Rose-Ackerman, 2004; Van Rijckeghem & Weder, 2001; Le, V H, de Haan, Dietzenbacher, 2013; Foltz and Opoku-Agyemang,

2016). The government themselves, and their machineries of governance or bureaucracies are, by and large, unimaginative, and given to wholesale copying of projects from other nations, given to borrowing from other countries, and living high on the hog to finance public infrastructure, private grandiose, but supposedly public benefit projects, and poorly thought-out public interventions that drain the lifeblood out of the economy. Yet, the governments through ethnic and identity politics, bribery and corruption, still find adherents from the universities and intelligentsia that advocate for support for such projects even if all the evidence point to a failed project as in the case of Ghana's, "One District One Dam", "One District One Factory" and "Free Senior Secondary School" education, where at 'Ghanasco' Senior High School, students are being housed in toilet facilities and the food that is served to the students as part of the government supported school feeding program is of less quality than prison food in Ghana, which is actually quite terrible to begin with. In almost all the examples given, the common threads running through them are: the indifference to good advice or alternative view point or option, the difficulty in processing complex issues in a multicultural and intersectional nation and the tendency of the government, or through their proxies, to get vindictive, extremely adversarial towards anyone who dares to speak out against government policy or programs. These are the inherent attributes of stupidity.

### **The Theory of Stupidity and Africa's Development and Integration**

In the abstract to this paper, I stated that in analyzing Africa's golden age of stupidity, I did not use mathematical and economic models and statistical analysis in the assessment but relied on historical, sociological and ethnographical approaches to show why all the efforts towards African integration and national development in the last sixty odd years, with trillions of dollars to Africa by way of bilateral aid, debt forgiveness, grants, and budgetary support have amounted to poor outcomes perpetuating underdevelopment, xenophobia, discrimination, identity politics in addition to humongous national debts, and ignorance of the population.

### **The case of Illegal financial flows**

Over the last 50 years, Africa is estimated to have lost in excess of \$1 trillion in illicit financial flows (IFFs) (Kar and Cartwright-Smith, 2010; Kar and Leblanc, 2013). This sum is roughly equivalent to all of the official development assistance received by Africa during the same timeframe (AUECA Conference of Ministers of Finance, 2014, p 15). "Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa has seen rapid economic growth recently. Its GDP has almost tripled to \$490.857 billion. Its GDP per capita is \$2,827, (which is absolutely nothing) and its GDP growth averages 6.7 per cent. Oil exports remain a major contributor to Nigeria's economy, but the telecoms industry accounts for more than a quarter of its 2014 GDP growth. Other drivers include manufacturing and film-making, which account for an estimated 7 per cent and 1.5 per cent, respectively. Agriculture is also a rapidly growing sector in the country." Nigeria's "large economy inevitably increases the risks of IFFs, and the nation's reliance on its petroleum industry for exports and government revenue further increases this risk" (ibid, p. 14-15). "Cognizant of the detrimental effects of IFFs on Africa, the 4<sup>th</sup> Joint Annual Meeting of AU/ECA Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development adopted Resolution 886 mandating the establishment of a High Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa" (ibid, p. 14).

Now, this is actually what Musil (1937) describe as the "higher pretentious form of stupidity" and that it is not so much the lack of intelligence as a failure of intelligence for the reasons that presumes to accomplishment to which it has no right" (Mulligan, 2014, pp. 80-81). The so-called High Level Ministers of Finance are the chief "bandits" that oversee the illicit financial flows in the first place. So why empower them with a tool that they can use to monitor how best to conduct such illicit financial flows at optimal efficiency? If this is not "pretentious stupidity", then wisdom is a bastard.

### **Pretentious economic Models can't and won't win over Stupidity**

I stated also that, Africa's economic and developmental challenges cannot be cured with economic models developed by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and national economists, because they are just what they are, models devoid of morality and ethics. Output by eminent economists going back to Arthur Lewis (1954) not to mention classical economist like Adam Smith's "*Wealth of Nations*", (1776) but only the more modern ones like Dudley Seers, (1968); Rostow (1969), Amartya Kumar Sen, (1989, 1990); Human Development Commission, (1994); Xiaobing Wang & Jenifer Piesse (2009) and Indermit Gill, (2022), after tedious calculations, extrapolations and inferences, don't help anybody but the "bandits" in power because the gate-keepers, the bureaucracy, are stupid and the populations across the length and breadth of Africa, feign "helplessness". The "helpless" are also part of the racket of siphoning everything out of the system and bleeding it dry. Since Africa appears to have been ruled by leaders operating under what Bonhoeffer's "*Theory of Stupidity*" (1945) tells us, it is difficult for either the leadership or the population to extricate itself from the yoke

of stupidity in analyzing its challenges, and tackling them so as to solve them. The leaderships in Africa have spent entire generations engaging their peer who navel gaze and myopic for so long that, they have become like their brethren and cannot think beyond their generally and figuratively, bloated stomachs and egoism. These kinds of leaders: the “bandits” and “stupid” ones, coupled with the “helpless” majority, cannot transform themselves let alone a whole continent with a few “intelligent” men, whose voices are often drowned by the “helpless” and “stupid” crowd, or the cacophony of the “bandits”.

#### **Personification of National Development as Extensions of leadership**

Most African Presidents and would-be presidents see national development as a series of national investment activities and projects executed for the perpetuation of the Presidential regime and status. Most African Presidents think less about the average man or woman on the streets but shows almost comedic empathy to members of their political parties that fall ill, killed in automobile accidents or meet misfortunes in their lives. Their press releases of condolences at such moments are canned, empty and devoid of passion. National development is not what the individual African Presidents may think it is, but a complex tapestry of dreams and aspirations, of actions and commitments of deliverables, which encompasses the strategic plans of nations for a given period of time and to improve the quality of life of their inhabitants. It entails innovation, re-construction and construction of systems, infrastructure and other entities or organizations to give full faith and credit to the systematic aspirations, needs and wants of a body politic. “National development traverses the political, economic, social, cultural, scientific and other areas of societal needs including the exploitation of resources, manufacturing and distribution of essential materials for living. National development contains both qualitative and quantitative outcomes of the totality of the human endeavors. National development demands broader consultation, community involvement and discussion. Weak institutions in Africa provide weak protections to its beneficiaries which creates tensions between the various groups within that system or community (Moren, 2001; Biegon, 2009). Any discussion about national development has to concern the various dimensions of the concept. And since the average African Minister of Health or Roads and just about any sector is a product of a regime of stupidity, they tend to pursue programs and agendas calculated to produce zero result, even if at the same time, they see the infrastructural project as extensions of the personality of the President. Raila Odinga's tribute to Dr. John Pombe Magufuli, former President of Tanzania and prior to that, Minister of Roads, Public Works and Housing, tells of how stupid the leaders of Africa have been, will be and shall be.

Odinga is a Kenyan, bona fide patriot, politician, former Minister of Roads, Public Works and Housing in the National Rainbow Coalition government of Mwai Kibaki. Odinga became Prime Minister in Kenya (circa: 2008-2013). He recounted how he met Magufuli at a conference in Durban, South Africa and how Magufuli advised him on how to deal with corruption in Kenya in his ministry: “procurement and designing and tendering processes” in the ministry of roads and housing. Magufuli, according to Odinga, had “ring-fenced these areas as the hideouts for corruption and conduits for loss of government funds”. The advice was not always one way road type of consultations. Odinga also had the chance to consult for Magufuli as President of Tanzania, that in order to raise revenue from the system, he needed to take control of “procurement officers at all levels of government”, that “in most cases those officers were the ones driving the latest car models, building classic apartments in cities and putting up castles in the rural areas despite their low salaries”. He advised also that, Magufuli “needed to subject those officers to lifestyle audit, retirement or even jail the incorrigibly corrupt and transfer others and revenue collection would shoot up”.

No wise bureaucracy and nation would create a system like the one Raila Odinga cautioned his friend, President Magufuli against. If that bureaucracy was not made up of stupid people, at least, we can agree that they were made up of “cowboy contractors” to use Odinga's words or more precisely they fall under Cipolla's “bandits”. It is not only Kenya or Tanzania that has cowboy contractors who lay invoices for infrastructure they have not even constructed and demand for payment, but just about every nation in Black Africa has organized and unique criminal syndicates often in collusion with the Ministers in charge of those sectors to fleece the nation of millions of dollars for doing absolutely nothing (Raila Odinga, 2021). How can any kind of developmental agenda be prosecuted optimally if the system has such implementers to lead the implementation charge?

#### **Prevailing Theories for Development**

Although this author does not find any of the prevailing theories for development useful in the case of Africa due again to the entrenched positions taken by the “bandits” in every nation, and who are determined to steal, to plunder and embezzle every dollar they can lay their hands on, misappropriate any amount of funds they can withdraw into their bank accounts, this paper would continue to discuss some of those theories for the sake of meeting academic standard for scientific writing and publication. True to tell, until the institutional cowboys, the “bandits” and the “stupid” African bureaucracy is cleaned of its stock of moral miscreant, whether

they are present in Boardrooms, University procurement chairs, government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, no theory of development would make significant impact on the development of Africa.

### **Theoretical approaches for national development**

Be as it may, as the literature on development provides, there are three core theories of development as advanced by Rostow, Dudley Seers and others in the 1960s. These are “modernization theory” advanced by Rostow, (1959); “dependency theory”; and “World Systems theory”. Rostow presented five steps through which all countries must pass to become developed. These are (i) Traditional society; (ii) Pre-conditions for take-off (iii); take-off, (iv) Drive to maturity and, (v) Age of high consumption. Nations like Ghana, Nigeria, and Kenya have pockets or large swaths of traditional societies with the apparent desire to transition into a more cosmopolitan and modern community. Despite the market economies of African nations, consumerism is not as strong as it should be. Supply chain management for consumer products such as bread or even bottled water run out and unable to meet demand in the short and even medium term because of poor overall development of the underlying infrastructure for manufacturing. The display of national stupidity does not end with only the politicians or bureaucracy but the population as well. I reported in another paper published in 2023 “*Exploring Work Ethic in Ghana*” that, “made-in-Ghana products are tagged as inferior because, perhaps, the broader majority of Ghanaians see themselves as inferior or their nation is an inferior one. In addition, made-in-Ghana goods are also considered poorly packaged, and with poor supply chain management and pitiable promotional incentives for sales or shelf space. In 2019 a national news media outfit reported that “only 18% of the goods sold in supermarkets in Accra City are made in Ghana, after sampling 7,462 brands in eight supermarkets by a team of national and international researchers. Out of the sample, 6,108 brands were foreign brands representing 82% with only 1,354 brands or 18% being made in Ghana. The percentage representation of nationally made goods sold in Supermarkets in Ghana rose to 26% as of March 2021”(Norman, 2023, pp. 33-34). “Respondents offered that price and packaging were the main determining factors in whether to buy made in Ghana or not, in addition to the quality of the product. All of such studies, such products, such outcomes affect the branding of the nation. A nation’s branding could be due to the quality of its products (Nagashima, 1970; Jordan, 2007; Fan, 2006; Fetscherin, 2010; Hakala *et al.*, 2013). “The perception that made in Ghana goods are of poor quality should therefore be a concern to central government and the productive members of the nation, (because) when the Ghanaian rejects ‘made in Ghana’ goods, he seems to reject himself” (ibid, p. 34). In addition, as Rostow put it, “beyond the age of high mass consumption lie the problems of which are beginning to arise in a few societies” (...) from “diminishing relative marginal utility sets in for real income itself” (Rostow, 1959, p. 1). Considering all these variables, Rostow’s theory of modernization may not be too realistic in many nations in Sub-Saharan Africa due to myriad of issues, including endogenous and exogenous economic, social, regional, and international factors as well as systemic internal challenges to mass production and manufacturing. Even where Africa has the resources to produce quality goods for the mass local markets, ultimately, the national consumers tend to prefer foreign manufactured goods to locally produced goods due many systemic reasons.

Identity politics is one of the factors that directly impacts and delays the modernization progression due to its inherent retrogressive tendency of frustrating the efforts of others they consider to be foreign or not belonging to that space. In the 1980’s, Ghana under J. J. Rawlings military government, was at the cusp of a breakthrough to a higher level of economic maturity, which to all intents and purposes were not based on economic realities at the time. Then came the general call for structural reforms in African economies which led to en mass privatization of all enterprises under the control of the State (Norman, 2023, p. 206).

“There was the general understanding the leaderships in each of the nations lacked the managerial and productive skills to run any factory meant to produce consumer products of high quality. This outcome was not created by any white man or woman. It was a purely an original outcome of African leadership skills and entrepreneurial abilities. Privatization was envisioned to bring about greater efficiencies and contribute to economic recovery of these African nations. Although some government chose to modernize the operations of State owned enterprises, by and large, the bulk of poorly functioning state enterprises such as sugar factory, meat factory, tomato factory and the rest were all sold, or left to rot in the vagaries of the weather (Tangri, 1991, 523-526; In Norman, 2023, p. 205-206).

If a nation like Ghana was not touched by stupidity and was serious about national development, there would not have been the motivation on the part of central government, advised by economists from so-called Ivy League and even bougainvillea and hibiscus strewn university campuses, to sell off at the lowest prices most of the State enterprises as part of economic rejuvenating program. Stupidity, like hysteria, can be infectious. In 1984 there were 235 State enterprises but by 1997, some 110 State owned enterprises had been divested in Ghana as part of the economic restructuring policy (Edward Ulzen Memorial Foundation, 2017). Compared to the achievements of the colonial administration in terms of industrial initiatives, the British colonial administration built the public utilities, road networks, and transport services, as well as commoditized the

exports of agricultural produce of coffee, cocoa, groundnuts, which has been continued by subsequent governments and administrations till today.

“Somehow, by the 1980s, the state enterprises were in the doldrums, struggling to break even, and falling into operational deficiencies year in and year out, mostly due to over-staffing, mismanagement, stealing and neglect by the God fearing Ghanaians themselves. The 1980s through the 1990s saw the collapse of government investments falling into divestitures at bargain prices to the chagrin of laissez faire proponents who were only delighted to snap off these factories and productive outfits out of the slothful hands of government and its agencies” (ibid, p. 206).

Continuing with the controversial economic arbitrary division of the actors in the world economy into “Core”; “Periphery”; and “Semi-Periphery”, we turn to another unsatisfying explanation for national development, that is to say, “World Systems Theory”. It advances how global economic systems operate and how they have change or changed over time, bordering on General Systems Theory, Chaos Theory, Complex Adaptive Systems and Integrated Theory (Wallerstein, 1974). Wallerstein’s thesis on the subject provided for three hierarchical levels consisting of Core, Periphery and Semi-periphery areas operated when it came to how the world works or has worked. The Core nations dominate world economic activities but exploit those on the periphery for cheap labor and cheap raw materials regarding output, process, input and feedback in productive activities. Bear in mind that, economic life of a nation is not only about manufacturing or the production of goods and services but also about relationships, mutual support and pursuing common interests in the areas of health, safety or just being.

Wallerstein argued that there was no Third World but rather a complex network of economic exchange relationships. That is to say, a “World Economy” or “World Systems” in which the dichotomy of capital by competing agents (historically including, but not limited to nation-States) account for frictions, which he called, “World Systems Theory” (ibid, pp. 387 – 394). He saw the causes of under-development in the emerging nations in Sub-Saharan Africa and other nations may not be found in those nations per se (ibid, p. 388). He offers that Marxism rather than Capitalism gives better chances at finding the reasons for the relative deprivations between those States in the Core and those in the Periphery. He opined that, “nothing illustrates the distortions of historical models of social change better than the dilemmas to which the concept of stages gives rise (stages of development) to national development. If we are to give an explanation of both continuity and transformation, then we must logically divide the long term into segments in order to observe the structural changes from time A to time B” (ibid, pp. 389-390). To put the dialectics of Wallerstein, a sworn Marxist, into perspective in our overwhelmingly capitalistic world that, there is no such thing as “national development” and that the proper basis of comparison and evaluation is via the world-system theory, then to skip one stage to another does not make sense without reference to the world system of capitalist world economy (ibid, p. 390)? While I tend to agree with Wallerstein’s position on discarding the so-called stages of development, particularly when one views the rate at which places like the U. A. R., Middle East, Singapore or various provinces in China have developed, it renders comical the so-called stages of development.

Recall that Rothkopf’s condemnation of the American political economy was skillfully done with these words “willful disregard for facts”, or even good advice. Rothkopf did not condemn American manufacturing strength as, perhaps, yielding to China but raised the **issued** that, the woes and challenges of the USA may be self-inflicted? Inability to process complex ideas is not stupidity per se, according to Sacha Golob’s apologia, although its locus may lie somewhere else. Golob was not alone in his defence of stupidity as not being completely bad with a cause and effect ideation of Bonhoeffer’s dialectics (1945). Other philosophers as already discussed but which is been reiterated here to aid in recall, to have also made similar claims including Kant (1998) who saw the element of ‘willful disregard of facts’ not as a sign of stupidity but a congenital inability to apply generic concepts to particular cases. Others, such as Adorno and Horkheimer, (2002, p. 214) considered such short comings as “blind spots” defined not in relationship to knowledge but to all capacities, practical and mental” (In Golob, 2019, pp. 2-3). In the case of a developing nation with limited resources in terms of human capital, to willfully disregard material facts or knowledge or contributions that could make a difference in reaching optimal performance, is certainly a sign of stupidity.

Africa has experienced multiple catastrophic economic failures before leading to the Structural Adjustment programs in Africa due precisely to “willful disregard for facts” by the leadership that was inebriated on power and egoism. This led some of the nations in Africa to be labeled as Heavily Indebted Poor Countries, with Ghana being one of such nations. For all the boast of Ghana being a rich nation with riches in mineral deposits and other natural resources, it is rather concerning for such a nation be so poorly mismanaged that they have to practically beg for handouts. They became beneficiaries of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiatives of the 1990s leading to G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiatives in 2020-21 for nations like Ghana, Chad, Ethiopia, Somalia and Zambia under HIPC (Guillaume Chabert, Martin Cerisola and Dalia Hakura/World Bank, 2022).

**Comment [IN2]:** Please change to “issue”

Typical with a nation with childish, if not stupid adolescent exuberance, on the grant of a huge financial handicap by the developed nations to others like Ghana and Chad, in 2007/2008 fiscal years, and in the case of Ghana, under John A. Kufuor, it became a "middle income" nation over night. That was economically sensational and clearly very stupid and disabling and at the same time intoxicating. That moment of national jubilation of having reached middle income status was also a cardinal moment of national stupidity, for making a mountain out of a molehill. How sustainable is this new found status of being a middle income nation, which would not have happened if not because HIPC kicked out of sight the huge debt burden that made economic advancement almost impossible because Ghana and nations like it could not access new loans and working capital? There were no national liquidity reserves that could take care of the nation for more than two weeks before HIPC was introduced. After HIPC was introduced, in the case of Ghana, there were no real middle income national economic attributes or improved educational system, purchasing power parity of the people, improved international liquidity, improved environmental and sanitation systems, improved water and sanitation, or penetration of asphalt roads, electricity and potable water distribution, improved manufacturing and industrial output. Ghana became a middle income nation while it was still as it has always being: - a dependent nation on foreign imports for meat and chicken, even vegetables, rice and cooking oil, petroleum products, sugar, milk, canned foods, medicine, clothing, and quality education and health care delivery system.

The nation became very jubilant without stopping to assess whether Ghana became a middle income nation in fact and indeed, or by presidential fiat? A wise nation, led by wise men and women would not have rushed to harvest an empty chalice of HIPC glory, having just barely emerged out of being cast as a HIPC nation, with its currency trading as junk and failing mortgage securities and investment portfolios? Although the action of President Kufuor would probably fall under Cipolla's "intelligent" cohort, because just about everyone in Ghana appeared to have benefited from accepting to take the nation to HIPC status, the overall effect of this apparently enabling policy to allow Ghana to literally start 'anew' with little or no debt was quickly invaded by the "bandits" on one hand, as the government initiated several pro-poor programs on the other hand, to cater to the needs of the "helpless" and the plain "stupid". If Ghana had reached the "middle income status" on its own bootstraps, through value addition or manufacturing regime would have made Ghana's economic development leading to that status or point more sustainable. These values would have given Ghana the quantitative and qualitative aspects of its growth affecting the political, social, economic and industrial dimensions of the nation to meet the needs of its population without recourse to international support. "The social and political aspect of sustainable development is to" help build a nation "into an instrument of social cohesion and a process of political choice, based on equity, both between generations and the States" in addition to other benefits that accrues to the nation as dividends (Bende-Nabende, 2002, p. 13). In the case of Ghana, for example or even Zambia, the impact of HIPC did not last because it was an artificial antidote, and economic placebo, that was not rooted in the fundamentals of the nation as well as the work ethic of the population. The same observation can be made about all the HIPC nations today because the outcome of help received by those efforts from the international community are no longer visible but replaced by deep poverty, disparities, and biting social exclusionary experiences at the national, community and rural areas.

### **The real goal of African Integration and Development**

African integration was meant to cushion some of the burden of going it alone by the individual African nations and to accelerate development, but it was not supported by leaders with a touch of myopic obsession for power in nations such as Tanzania, Zambia, Congo Brazzaville, Le Zaire, now Congo, DRC. Today, Ghana and many nations like it in Africa, are sandwiched rather reluctantly between "traditional society" and "pre-conditions to take-off", as they operate under estoppels of central government corruption and bloated bureaucracies against their collective desires to reach for greater individual and collective achievements. For their peace of mind and sanity, these nations operate under "dependency theory" advocated by Andre Gunder Frank (Romaniuk, 2017, pp. 482-483). Frank, as presented by Romaniuk, basically offers what could be termed as an apology for the neglect of African governments of their people and their aspirations. Frank further argues that the people of the less developed nations are not to be blamed for the failure of their societies to develop. Dependency theory holds the view that resources flow from the periphery of poor and under-developed states to a core of wealthy states to enrich the latter at the expense of the former. To accept the position of some of such international, western scholars on the reasons why Africa is locked in under-development, mal-development and poor choices in developmental options, is to accept that the leaders of Africa are all stupid, inclusive of the intellectuals. If one knows the remedy to an existing condition, which is African integration through partial surrender of sovereignty of respective small nations into a United States of Africa, what stops the leadership of Africa to devote their energies to that singular goal? The under-development of Africa, like the reluctance to accept the integration of Africa into a United States of Africa by the so-called Monrovia-Brazzaville group against the optimistic promotion of the concept of integration by the Casablanca group led by Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, is intentional, deliberate and purposive act to create the conditions for massive thievery by the African

leaderships or the “bandits”, African bureaucracy and intelligentsia and commercial classes or the “stupid”, at the expense of the vast uneducated majority, the “helpless”.

The situation of Africa, the development statuses of African nations at the current pace defies any economic theory, and justification or explanation. The status of Africa as a Commonly Accepted Under-Developed continent has very little to do with Marxist dialectics from writers like Raul Brebisich, former director of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (UNECLA), or Andre Gunder Frank, a known Marxist and World Systems theorist like Immanuel Wallerstein (ibid, p. 482), or Chinese and Russian economic dogma. These theories are belated political anthropologic explanations after the phenomena of under-development had already been observed in many places in Africa. These theories do not provide a ‘cause and effect’ continuum and should be rejected as valid apologia for why things are the way they are in order to focus on the true cause of under-development in Africa: A deliberate, purposive and intentional design by cognitively challenged and stupid African leaderships in order to keep their subjects and citizens myopic, dazed by chronic but avoidable economic pressures under the semblance of democracy, freedom of expression, freedom of worship and such other freedoms which do not add value to the overall quality of life of the populations of Africa.

If one has the freedom of religion but one cannot afford a loaf of bread for breakfast, then what is the value of that religious freedom? If one has the freedom to vote in an election which, no matter what, and, by hook or crook, would be rigged, then what is the real value of the right to vote? Frankly, there can be no external force pressure on African leaderships and the choices they make, if they were making moral and equitable decisions driven by probity, transparency and accountability contrary to the assertions of external force pressure on development by Scott N. Romaniuk, in his (2017) chapter under “*Dependency Theory*” title. Despite the fact that dependency theorists and supporters of such almost archaic thinking in the modern system of international commerce (where fruits from the farms of Ghana are served at the breakfast tables in UK and tea from India and Kenya wet the pallets of men and women in Germany with coffee beans from Columbia serving the caffeine needs of the citizens of France) and in equal measure, where wheat from Ukraine is used to baked the bread on the tables in Ghana or Nigeria and wine from France lubricates the throats of men and women in Africa), believe that events in the world have coalesced to make developing nations dependent on the support of industrialized nations, such a thinking goes towards the realm of racism or propaganda to promote white economic supremacy and culture. Africa is no more dependent on Europe as Europe is dependent on Africa. The concept of “Periphery nations” and “Core nations” and the various stages of development are actually comical when one thinks deeply about it. Just because Ghana chooses to export its cocoa to Switzerland makes the Swiss “Core” or superior and Ghana or Ghanaians insignificant fringe people? What about asking the real damning question: Why can’t lazy Ghanaians manufacture chocolate at the level and quality of the Swiss and sell it to the Swiss? That is the ultimate question which often times many researchers do not feel comfortable to ask to put on the bushel of knowledge the true reason why Africa remains an underdeveloped continent: Laziness, stealing, embezzling and misappropriations from the national purse.

Although dependency theory arose to counteract modernization theory, I think there was no real need for counteracting modernization theory because Sub-Saharan African societies are collectively still captured in traditional society with occasional excursions into modernity. It is important to bear in mind that the respective leaders in the respective African nations see development in how many roads are asphalted. The more public works that particularly administration is able to undertake, the more the President and his cronies can enrich themselves. That is to say, the main goal of pursuing national developmental agenda, cynicism aside, is to create the opportunity for the Presidents and their posses to siphon money into their foreign bank accounts and to locally position their families in a better economic situation before their tenure of offices are over. The fact that the funds for public infrastructural projects are borrowed money from rich nations does not deter the leaderships to march forward towards funding and implementing a project even when borrowing may not be the wisest strategy (Abiakpor, 1985; Brautigam & Knack, 2004).

The African leaders, through identity politics are able to achieve such feats through the convenient placement of their relatives in positions of responsibilities that would enable them to steal part of whatever development funds they wish to capture, divide and share. The dependent nations borrow so much from the external market, through bonds, IMF or World Bank, it becomes impossible to pay back and extricate themselves from foreign banks and debt. As their internal domestic debt also grows, so does the issue of social exclusion, identity politics and conflict over the available resources. They don’t seem to be overly concerned about how many manufacturing centers they have been able to create to add local content to their resources, to add value to raw materials and produce quality products for mass merchandizing, and thus improve macroeconomic conditions and quality of life for the population (Brautigam & Knack, 2004; Amadi, 2012). Sub-Saharan Africa’s dependency is perpetuated by willful desire of Africa’s Presidents alone and no one else. Cabinet meetings and discussions in Africa are controlled by the President and his men. Those who tend to

**Comment [IN3]:** Please change to “particular”

disagree with the President on initiatives that the President or a proxy minister tables for discussion is often out of that exclusive club during the next ministerial re-shuffle.

The African bureaucracy is known to be one of the strongest citadels of corruption in every African nation. Shameful as this moniker is, it is actually a sign of pride, like the African respective customs or immigration service's workers actual and alleged corrupt practices. Those that work for these famously corrupt institutions are quite smug to introduce themselves as working for their nation's immigration or customs and excise service. Generally, the bureaucracy has never been able to define its values as to whether to self-declare as bona fide incompetent or just rehearsing towards that day that the declaration of incompetency would be made. Without reproducing data that have already been captured by other researchers such as Afrobarometer, 2023 and Transparency International, it would be a good idea for the bureaucracies in the various nations to detoxify their professional morality from the perception and reality that those institutions are simply economically toxic and morally bankrupt and hostile places of work, that attract "bandits" in security uniforms.

The universities in Ghana and this includes the so-called premier ones, produce graduates who cannot think, who cannot manage, and who cannot perform simple tasks such as writing decent curriculum vitae, producing job assignment performance objectives, and composing letters at the level of high school graduates. Today, in Ghana, we have an Association of Unemployed Graduates. With such cast of characters, from where would the change managers come? Who would set the transformation agenda, let alone marshal it, lead it, correct it, if found to be twisted or twisting, and who would monitor and **evaluation** the transformation to determine that the final destination has been reached and success has been obtained? How would the nation measure success?

Comment [IN4]: Please change to "evaluate"

## II. Conclusion

Not everyone would agree with Cipolla's Basic Law of Human Stupidity or the lessons I have drawn from the literature on Stupidity. It is even harder to disagree with his characterization of the four groups of human beings under the "*Basic (Golden) Law of Human Stupidity*" as namely: "the helpless", "the intelligent", "the bandit" and "the stupid". Cipolla explains the values enshrined in each group thus: "If Tom takes an action and suffers a loss while producing a gain for Dick", Tom's action would fall "into the helpless category" (ibid, p. 4). If the same action produces gain to both Tom and Dick, then Tom is considered "intelligent". However, if Tom's action causes Dick a loss, Tom's action falls into the zone of banditry. Stupidity relates to one whose actions cause losses to another or to a group of persons while himself derives no gain or even incurs losses (ibid, 2011, pp.3-4). African leadership landscape has had many cases of such people as government leaders, corporate leaders and even university captains, who become so drunken with power that they build silos around them and willfully disregard sound advice no matter the source. Some of such leaderships even fall what Cipolla calls, "perfect bandits". These are those who cause other individuals losses equal to his gain or profit. African Presidents no matter how hard the economic situation gets, end up being fabulously rich, including their underachieving children and often, poorly educated wives and relatives. Ghana has had its share of such leaders, such families and such bandits, whose only reason to be is to fleece the majority of the people their hopes and aspirations so that they would end up very empty and defeated. The bulk of African leaders fall into this last category of bandits as Raila Odinga advised his compatriot leader of government, Magufuli of Tanzania to be mindful of such stupid urban cowboys.

In a nutshell, these are the tasks for future researchers. What is the conduct of the universities and schools and are these institutions able to train graduates for gainful employment besides the automatic absorption of personnel into pre-existing institutions like the Ministry of Health, Interior, Defence, Banks, Education, and the rest to fill vacancies due to natural attrition, retirement and cessation of employment by the previous occupiers? Can the universities and other institutions of higher learning and training especially those that are funded by public funds and create a huge financial burden on the public coffers, assure the public that the future would be in good hands? Is the executive, together with the parliament willing to cut down their emoluments, and other financial support privileges, including the purchases of V8 four wheel vehicles and other such equipment for their offices and for their personal and family uses, operate on a more ethical regime devoid of 10% commission on national investments in defence, infrastructure, and other capital expenditures at both the Committee and parliamentary levels? Can the parents of Africa with the religious institutions avow that the crimes or criminal behaviors they have committed against **through** their respective nations through pilfering, stealing, embezzlement, over-invoicing, under-invoicing, diversion of funds, and the reckless spending they have engaged in, would be a thing of the past, and that their sons and daughters would not repeat such vices? Is the bureaucracy ready to confront itself and to assess whether, perhaps, in spite of its history and conduct, it could become the change managers and transform the national economy and themselves? Are the youth willing to eschew sloth, instant gratification, lose their propensity for self-promotion, reduce their unrealistic financial expectations for starter work and with no experience, and commit to gaining experience first before asking for bigger returns from what they have brought into the company instead of what the companies can do for them?

Comment [IN5]: Omit

**References:**

- [1]. Abdul Kargbo. (2007). <https://mightyminnow.wordpress.com/2007/10/18/black-people-are-less-intelligent-says-dr-james-watson-nobel-prize-winner-and-dna-pioneer/>.
- [2]. Adam Smith. (1776). *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of Wealth of Nations*, ed. Edwin A. Seligman (London) J. M. Dent, 1901), pp. 12-15, 400-401, 436-437.
- [3]. Adams, Bradley. (6 December 2007). "Letters: What happened after Deadly Voyage", *The Guardian*
- [4]. Adorno and Horkheimer. (2002). *Adorno, Theodor, and Horkheimer, Max. (2002) Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Stanford University Press.
- [5]. Afrobarometer Institutions and Leadership Survey, (2022) CDD, Accra. Ghana
- [6]. Ahiakpor, J. c. W. (1985). The success and failure of Dependency Theory: The experience of Ghana. *International Organization*, 39(3): 535-552. Doi: 10.1017/50020818300019172
- [7]. Amadi, L. (2012). Africa Beyond the New Dependency: A political economy. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 6(8): 191-203
- [8]. Amartya Sen. (1989). *Indian Development: Lessons and Non-Lessons*. *Daedalus Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, Vol. 118, No. 4, Fall, pp. 1-26
- [9]. Amartya Sen. (1990). A Welfare, Freedom and Social Choice: A Reply. *Recherches Economique de Louvain*, Vol. 56, No. ¾, pp. 451-485, Dept of Economics, Universite Catholique de Louvain.
- [10]. Ankomah, A. (2001). *The International Encyclopedia of Sexuality: Ghana*. In R. T. Francoeur (Ed.), New York: Continuum
- [11]. Arhin, K and Afari-Gyan, K (eds.)(1992). *The City of Kumasi: Past, Present and Future*, Accra, Institute of African Studies, UG.
- [12]. Arthur Lewis. (1954). *Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labor*. *The Manchester School*, Vol. 22 (2), pp. 139-191
- [13]. Austin, Regina. (2004). Back to Basics: Returning to the Matter of Black Inferiority and White Supremacy in the Post-Brown Era, 6 J. APP. PRAC & PROCESS 79, <http://lawrepository.ualr.edu/appellatepracticeprocess/vol6/1ssl/7>
- [14]. Averett Jones, (ed.). *The Southside Messenger*. Bonhoeffer on Stupidity – After Ten Years. <http://southsidemessenger.com>
- [15]. Avital Ronell, *Stupidity*, University of Illinois Press, 2002, 67.
- [16]. Bamidele Ademola Olateju. (2013). Bamidele Upfront: Nigeria and we its 170 Million stupid people, *Premium Times*, Lagos, Nigeria, <http://www.premiumtimes.com>, (Accessed, 4/ 19/2023).
- [17]. Barnett, H. (2009). *Constitutional and Administrative Law*, 7<sup>th</sup> Ed. Routledge-Cavendish, Taylor & Francis Group, 2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN, UK. ISBN: 13: 978-0-415-47312-5
- [18]. Beetham, D., Carvalho, E., Landman, T., and Weir, S. (2008). *Assessing the Quality of Democracy: A Practical Guide*. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Stockholm, Sweden, Available in: <http://www.idea.int>.
- [19]. Bema Namata. (2022). *County Integrated Development Plan, (CIDP) 2018-2022, Working Paper*, Nairobi City County, Kenya, pp. 1-423
- [20]. Bema Namata. (2022). *Rwandans feel pinch as cost of living and unemployment soar*. *The East African*. National Media Group, Rwanda.
- [21]. Bende-Nabende, A. (2002). *Globalization, FDI, Regional Integration and Sustainable Development: Theory, evidence and Policy*. Ashgate Publishing Limited, Gower House, Croft Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 3HR, England. ISBN 0-7546-1937-0
- [22]. Berg, Maxine; Hudson, Pat (1992). "Rehabilitating the Industrial Revolution". *The Economic History Review*, Vol. 45, No. 1. 45 (1): 24–50. doi:10.2307/2598327. JSTOR 2598327
- [23]. Braimah, A. (2016). Are Judges Corrupt? An Empirical Analysis of the Ghana Judiciary. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, (IOSR-JHSS) Volume 21, Issue 8, 6.
- [24]. Brain Klaas. (2022). *The Despot's Accomplice: How the West is Aiding and Abetting the Decline of Democracy*, Oxford University Press. Amazon.co.uk. (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2022/jan/opinion-why>)
- [25]. Brautigam, D. A. & Knack, S. (2004). *Foreign Aid, Institutions and Governance in Sub-Saharan Africa*, *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 52(2):255-285. Doi: 10.1086/380592
- [26]. Carlo Cipolla. (2011). *The Basic Laws of Human Stupidity*. *Whole Earth Review*, p 2 - 7. <http://wwwcsif.cs.ucdavis.edu/~leeey/stupidity/basic.htm>
- [27]. CHRAJ corruption survey, (2022). *Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice*, Accra, Ghana.
- [28]. David Rothkopf. (2017). *America's Golden Age of Stupidity*, Washington Post, July 25, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2017/07/25/america-s-golden-age-of-stupidity-pub-72672>
- [29]. Dietrich Bonhoeffer. (1945). "After Ten Years" in *Letters and Papers from Prison*, Vol. 8, Minneapolis, MN, Fortress Press, 2010
- [30]. Dudley Seers. (1969). *The Meaning of Development*, IDS Communication, 44, Brighton, IDS, <https://www.ids.ac.uk>.
- [31]. *Electronic Transfer Levy Act, 2022 (Act 1075)*.
- [32]. Foltz, J. D., & Opoku-Agyemang, K. A. (2015). Do Higher Salaries Lower Petty Corruption? A Policy Experiment On West Africa's Highways. *The Economist*, UK. <https://cega.berkeley.edu>
- [33]. Frimpong-Ansah, J. H. (1991). *The Vampire State in Africa: The Political Economy of Decline in Ghana*. Africa World Press.
- [34]. Genese Grill. (2013). Musil's "On Stupidity", *The Artistic and Ethical Uses of the Feminine Discursive*. *Studia austriaca XXI* (2013), 81-94, S t u d i a a u s t r i a c a ISSN 2385-2925
- [35]. Indermit Gill. (2022). *The New Threat to Prosperity Everywhere*, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/magazine/deglobalization-new-fiscal-monetary-policy-norms-bad-for-economic-development>
- [36]. Kangarlou, T. (2013). *South Africa since apartheid: Boom or bust?* CNN Marketplace Africa, <https://edition.cnn.com/2013/11/27/business/south-africa-since-apartheid/index.html>, (accessed 3/18/2023).
- [37]. Kangarlou, T. (2013). *South Africa since apartheid: Boom or bust?* CNN Marketplace Africa, <https://edition.cnn.com/2013/11/27/business/south-africa-since-apartheid/index.html>, (accessed 3/18/2023).
- [38]. Kant, I. (1998). *Critique of Pure Reason*, Ed. Paul Guyer, University of Pennsylvania and Allen W. Wood, Stanford University, California, ISBN: 9780511804649
- [39]. Kar, Dev, and Brian Leblanc (2013). *Illicit Financial Flows from Developing Countries: 2002– 2011*. Washington, DC: Global Financial Integrity.
- [40]. Kar, Dev, and Sarah Freitas (2011). *Illicit Financial Flows from Developing Countries over the Decade Ending 2009*. Washington, DC: Global Financial Integrity.
- [41]. ——— (2012). *Illicit Financial Flows from China and the Role of Trade Mispricing*. Washington, DC: Global Financial Integrity.
- [42]. Kevin Mulligan. (2014). *The Monist. Foolishness, Stupidity and Cognitive Values*. *An International Quarterly Journal of General Philosophical Inquiry*, Vol. 97, No.1, 66-86
- [43]. Le, V., de Haan, J. and Dietzenbacher, E. 2013. "Do higher government wages reduce corruption? Evidence based on a novel dataset." CESIFO Working Paper No. 4254.

- a. [http://www.cesifogroup.de/portal/page/portal/DocBase\\_Content/WP/WPCESifo\\_Working\\_Papers/wp-cesifo-2013/wp-cesifo-2013-05/cesifo1\\_wp4254.pdf](http://www.cesifogroup.de/portal/page/portal/DocBase_Content/WP/WPCESifo_Working_Papers/wp-cesifo-2013/wp-cesifo-2013-05/cesifo1_wp4254.pdf)
- [44]. Lee Kuan Yee. (1985). Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yee's May Day Message, <https://www.nas.gov.sg>
- [45]. Lee Kuan Yew. (1985). Debate on Presidential Address, Parliament of Singapore, March 1<sup>st</sup>., Singapore.
- [46]. Mulligan. K. (2014). Foolishness, Stupidity and Cognitive Values, Chapter Four, (Ed.) Barry Smith, George A. Reisch. The philosophy of Robert Musil. *International Journal of General Philosophy Inquiry*. Vol. 97, No. 1, pp. 66-85
- [47]. Norman I.D. and Aviisah, M.A. (2015). Does Corruption Manifest Post Traumatic Stress Disorder? *Donnish Journal of Neuroscience and Behavioral Health*, Vol. 1(2) pp. 012-020. <http://www.donnishjournals.org/djnbh>
- [48]. Norman, I. D. (2003). Identity Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa: The role of Identitarianism, Afroxenophobia and Vigilantism, Draft: Cambridge Publishing Ltd. Institute for Security, Disaster and Emergency Studies, [www.isdesghana.org](http://www.isdesghana.org).
- [49]. Norman, I. D. (2022) New Approach to curbing Age Cheating in Civil-Service and other Professions, Ghana. *European Journal of Law and Political Sciences*. Vol. 1, Issue 1, 9-17
- [50]. Norman, I. D. (2022). Setting Thomas Kuhn's Paradigm Shift Against Dunning-Kruger Effect, To whom should the Paradigm Shift in a Corruption Endemic Nation as Ghana? *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) Volume 27, Issue 8, Series 8 (August, 2022) 23-38 e-ISSN: 2279-0837, p-ISSN: 2279-0845*. [www.iosrjournals.org](http://www.iosrjournals.org)
- [51]. Norman, I. D. (2023). Exploring Work Ethic in Ghana. *European Journal of Social Science and Humanities*. Vol. 3 Issue 2: 23-37. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24018/ejdevelop.2023.3.2.232>
- [52]. Olanrewaju Sulaimon. (2023). Nigerian Tribune, <http://www.nigeriantribune.com>, Abuja, Nigeria. (Accessed, 4/21/2023).
- [53]. Oltermann, Philip. (2020). How Angela Merkel's Great migrant gamble paid off. *The Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/30/> (accessed 29.05.2023).
- [54]. Rasmussen, Larry, L. (2005). Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Reality and Resistance. Westminster. John Knox Press. ISBN: 978-0-664-23011-1
- [55]. Raila Odinga. (2021). John Pombe Magufuli: Raila Pens Emotional Tribute as he mourns close friend. <https://www.tuko.co.ke/406149-raila-odinga>
- [56]. Robert Musil, (1990). *Precision and Soul: Essays and Addresses*. Ed. and trans. Burton Pike and David S. Luft. Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1990, 200.
- [57]. Romaniuk, S. N. (2017). *Dependency Theory*, (ed.) Paul Joseph. The SAGE Encyclopaedia of War: Social Science Perspectives. Sage Publications, Inc. Thousand Oaks City,
- [58]. Rostow, W. W. (1959). The Stages of Economic Growth. *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 1-16, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2591077>
- [59]. Sacha Golob. (2019). A New Theory of Stupidity. *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*. Vol. 27(4): 562-580
- [60]. Svolic, M. W., Lutz, J., Milacic, F., & Avramoska, E. (2023). In Europe, Democracy Erodes from the Right. *Journal of Democracy*. Vol. 34(1): 5-20
- [61]. Ugaz, (2015). Corruption in Africa: 75 million people pay bribes. Transparency International.
- [62]. UN Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals is issued as document A/68/970, <http://www.undocs.org/A/68/970>. 2015
- [63]. USAID: United States to provide \$2 billion in Humanitarian Assistance for the people of Africa, (2022). <https://www.usaid.gov>.
- [64]. Van Rijckeghem, C., Weder, B. (2001). "Bureaucratic corruption and the rate of temptation: Do wages in the civil service affect corruption, and by how much?" *Journal of Development Economics* 65, 307331.
- [65]. Walt W. Rostow. (1959). The Stages of Economic Growth, New Series, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 1-16
- [66]. World Youth Report, (2018). UN.org, Africa's Youth: a "ticking time bomb" or an opportunity, World Health World Youth Report. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/pubs/2018/04/2018-world-youth-report/>
- [67]. Xiaobing Wang & Jennifer Piesse. (2009). *Economic Development and Surplus Labor: A critical review of Lewis Model*. Brooks World Poverty Institute, BWPI Working Paper 89, ISBN: 978-1-906518-18-88-2 <https://papers.ssrn.com/papers>.