CAN CONTEMPORARY AFRICA RESPOND TO ECOLOGICAL BAGGAGE FROM GLOBALIZATION WITH GLOBAL BEST PRACTICE?

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ABSTRACT: The present effort identifies encumbrances to Africa's participation in global best practices and appraises Africa's chances of scaling up to these ideals. It identifies topical issues in the literature through in-depth literature review while identifying new theoretical issues of importance in the globalization of ecological challenges to Africa and a concurrent failure to extend the right ecological and ethical standards to Africa. What is at issue is Africa's response and therefore Africa's will, abilities, persuasions, and philosophical leaning that impinge on her exercise of agency. A number of factors have been identified which hamper quality of Africa's response to globalization's ecological onslaught. These include weakness of the institutional framework and related near absence of the right policy framework. For instance, receiving shipments of radioactive waste in 1986 was Nigeria's rude awakening to her lack of not just waste policy but general environmental management framework. There is a debilitating humanistic bent in societies pandering to a poverty narrative; a poor administrative culture of regulatory agencies; massive internal displacement overhang compromising preparedness; a socio-political environment of impact assessment that compromises sound business case development for projects from subjective government waivers to uninformed stakeholders; weakness of civil societies; fixation with raw material export economy; defective political structures that concentrate powers emasculating local initiatives; colonial hangover of educational elitism and offer of 'standards holiday' and 'standards havens' to bait foreign investments. Other problems include ambitious interventionist projects; neglect of extant product lifecycle management provisions, global inequality and a failure to mobilize a cultural bulwark against undue foreign designs. The study reviews possibilities open to Africa given her current place in the world as a major user and re-user of used items. It therefore mooted the idea of Africa championing a product last user/re-user principle that will allow the continent benefit from comprehensive product lifecycle management arrangements as provider of final resting place for products that have been used in other lands. The study concludes by reviewing prospect of appropriate response from Africa and sets agenda for the African continent on the subject of integrating best practices into ecological management. A more proactive engagement of the subject of globalized ecological challenge than reactionary steps to which the continent has grown familiar is suggested.

Keywords: Africa, globalization, Best Practices, Ecological, Environment.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization is a term that hardly requires further conceptual illumination going by the quantum of interest it has generated in the literature. It can however be understood to mean cultural and other forms of integration at a worldwide scale enabled by technological improvements in communication and interaction. Some describe it as the process of evolution of a global village (Dalglish, 2006) and actual decay of distance effect which some find to entail a discomfiting erosion of their privacy and identity (Preobrazhenskaya, Kudryavzev & Znoev, 2018).

Globalization removes insularity making for a mosaic of disparate spaces functioning at varying levels of resistance to a unified field of influence (assault). In this light, one can begin to imagine pockets of resistance in a reflection of spatial discrepancies of technological power and other adaptive manipulation capacity. Globalization entails conscription to the extent that any society caught in its gale cannot voluntarily evade its influence.

Some scholars have imputed to it the character of a tool of domination. It is blamed for the commodification of otherwise free resources such as water across Africa (Baskaran and Bolden, 2006) and it has been claimed to have had the original name of imperialism (Udeke, 2019). If globalization can orchestrate the effects ascribed to it, it definitely requires appropriate response from impacted communities. What has been the African feedback to the world (of globalized ecological baggage)? All sorts of responses are possible given levels of knowledge and other constraints but there are global best practices defining how best to respond.

Global Best Practices

Global best practices are quality management measures and benchmarks which provide alternative to command and control type standards. Certified management tools such as ISO 14001 feature best practice. The difficulty in arriving at what is best in certain contexts has made best practice only but a contextual quality. There are certainly challenges in implementing global best practice on an unequal world. Countries that uphold the tenets of very high global environmental standards have also been known to buckle under the weight of parochial gains opposed to their public creed, the pursuit of which is regarded as enlightened self-interest. Hence Australia's environmental policy on air pollution, for instance, is at times betrayed by a domestic *laissez faire* orientation (Environmental Justice Australia, 2018).

Countries have not dispensed with self-protection in the face of globalization. The phenomenon has rather increased awareness about national interest preservation in much of the developed world. All African farm products exported to Europe have to meet European specifications; North America insists on certain standards, say on allowable noise decibel for flights into her air space. The developed world strictly restrict foreign-originated nuisance.

They pursue global best practice. What has Africa's pursuit of global best practice being like? It has been difficult considering the fact that it is an unequal world and ambiguities possible in the definition of 'best' as earlier noted obfuscate decision making. Should Africa settle for the ethical conceptualization of Trevino and Nelson (1995) as surrogate for best practice, the continent may well arrive at a veritable template for defending herself against globalization's ugly ecological dimensions.

Trevino and Nelson suggest views hereby adopted:

a.   Individualism - conducts in line with Africa's long term self interests.
b.   Moral rights - preserving fundamental rights of all persons involved or concerned within and outside Africa.
c.   Justice - upholding the value of fair dealing across Africa and outside (equity).
d.   Utilitarian - achieving the greatest possible food for the greatest number (not undue elitism).

Africa has not always adopted these ethical precepts in managing her relationship with the globalized world. The impetus to ethically respond, for Africa, at times comes from outside. For instance, there is United States Agency for International Development (USAID) intervention in Northern and Coastal Kenya benefitting 630,000 people while conserving 7% of Kenya's land mass and creating space for the 65% of wildlife outside parks and reserves (USAID, 2018). Can global best practice yet become domesticated and practiced with all the constraints that seem to dichotomize Africa from the world? We seek to find out how much Africa's pursuit of best practice is challenged by circumstances within and outside Africa.

Encumbrances to Africa's Participation in Global Best Practice

Africa seems hardly able to afford the leverage for protection from externally originated environmental problems. In cases where economic growth has occurred and is expected to result to development that can enhance leverage, the poor distribution of wealth and its allocation, stymies development, as has also been noted in India (JeanDreze and Sen, 2015). The inequality trap tends to render society incapable of progress and pursuit of excellence.

Africa's vulnerability to the world and its foibles is highlighted by the fact that in Africa, only 5 percent of imported food staples are bought from other African countries due in part to intra-regional trade barriers (Kim and Azevedo, n.d). Hence Africa is exposed more to the world than to herself. Incidentally, whereas the developed world is to a large extent able to manage challenges like climate change scenarios, Africa is yet to develop capacity to deal with these and as has been observed, the Continent needs to band together to grow this capacity (Sentime, 2013). The continent has to; in addition, address multiple hurdles that encumber her access to global best practice and mustering ethically acceptable response to global ecological challenge. There are issues of poor socio-economic attributes of the population; strength of institutions, failure to diversify away from the colonial legacies of

mono-product economies, internal crises; resource curse; unfavourable trade relations, and weak political structures manned by persons wary of being found on the wrong side by foreign powers.

Africa's Chances of Scaling up to Ideals of Best Practice

Africa has largely shown internal helplessness in scaling up to best practice that will enable it survive globalization on the ecological front. As in the earlier referred case of USAID's intervention in Kenya (USAID, 2018), the way in many cases is led by foreigners. Failure of local agency is perhaps at the heart of foreign interventions. The internal difficulty inheres in unbalanced contractual relationships the continent has maintained with outsiders particularly land-demanding foreign interests given concessions that undermine the realization of corporate social responsibility (Partiti, 2014). Land loss, displacement and other social and economic upheavals follow land acquisitions by foreigners in Africa. This has been noted in the cases of Kabuye Sugar Works of Rwanda, New Nigeria Farms, Kwara State, Nigeria, Nuaanetsi Biodiesel Project, Zimbabwe, Chisumbanje Biodiesel Project Zimbabwe, New Forests Company in Kilolo District, Tanzania and Newmann Kaffee in Mbende District Uganda (Makochekanwa, 2014).

The unequal relationship with partners has been Africa's undoing. In looking at Sino-African relationship, Beijing's spending and the concessions it has won in Africa (Masimhaka, 2013), there is little suggesting possibility of an equal relationship that can make Africa ask for the scaling up of China's ecological credentials on projects. Whereas African intellectuals show apprehension about the *Dragon in Africa*, the helplessness is all too obvious. Africa has little or no bargaining power in these circumstances with her diverse policy frameworks that compromise synergy. Hence the unwillingness to integrate even at policy level has been a problem symptomatic of discordant systems and lack of political uniformity (Ajayi and Oshewolo, 2013).

These challenges however are not insurmountable considering that Africa had in the past played important role in emergence of the forest principles and had made progress with African peer review mechanism. The continent should also have learnt from the recalcitrance of the world which could only concede to it a principle that advertises the fact of its non-legally blinding status in its nomenclature (Ruis, 2018). The progress countries like Ethiopia have made (Ayenew, 2014) and those from other oriental cultures such as China's transformation from having forest deficit to forest surplus while achieving nature-human harmony (Hu, 2017) show that Africa can equally scale up.

Theoretical Issues of Importance

What theoretical issues are indicated in a situation in which ecological challenges reach Africa through globalization while high standards to manage them fail to arrive through the same route? What issues are involved in the obvious disparity in these two variables that are ostensibly, equally subject to the globalization effect?

In 2015, Lawrence and Graham noted that Africa's share of World Gross Domestic Product and trade had fallen to around 2 percent and 4 percent respectively and this they placed on the doorstep of liberalization of world trade which had resulted to declining exports, making a net food importer of Africa (Lawrence and Graham, 2015). The question is how come globalization has not also brought to Africa, the idea of subsidizing agricultural production the way Europe has done? What is this about selective globalization? Issues of selectivity in what gets globalized and what remains endemic and virtually non-amenable to trans-boundary diffusion are important. Posers can illuminate this interrogation.

Dialectical Dilemma

Can the developing world have both the desired development and high environmental standards? It appears high environmental standards maintenance is a luxury at certain levels of development. Playing up natural imperatives against critical humanistic ones is considered unsustainable (Gladwin, 2002). Allover Africa, protected environmental facilities are subject to invasions by impoverished communities.

Advocacy for Uniform Standard

If MNCs abroad do all they do at home, on the ethical plane, would they not be following the path of absolutism as opposed to cultural relativism required in specific contexts? In avoidance of ethical imperialism, mosaic of disparate rules of engagement blending universal codes of ethics with local desired situations should guide operations.

Standards Flexibility

In ecological standards versus jobs and investments trade off, Africa would rather grant standards 'holidays' and 'havens' than lose investments. Outsiders can always negotiate favourable trade and investment terms playing up African countries against themselves in a rat race of investment pursuit, a price Africa pays for failure to integrate.

Technological level

The expectation that Africa at her relatively limited level of technology has to operate at a level comparable to high technology economies may prove unrealistic.

Political Will

Patronage of Africa's leadership by foreign interests certainly brews prevarication in projecting African interests. Africa has grown diplomatically effete, more apprehensive and more circumspect. Nigeria, for instance, was far more diplomatically blunt in her immediate

postcolonial era, when it severed diplomatic links with France over her environmental assault on Western Sahara, than in contemporary times.

International Trade and Environmental Politics

Can Africa lose international trade wars and succeed in standards war? Environmental politics is also an extension of international politics.

Relativity of Sustainable Development

Whereas sustainable development is conceptualized in absolute terms, a country's national interest as defined by its leadership decides which developments are sustainable. Hence while MNCs may perform at suboptimal ecological levels, national governments usually acquiesce in deference. The impetus for redress usually comes from local communities short-changed in distributing the spoils.

Religion and Cultural Marginalization

Bennoune (2014) challenges the denial of rights under the auspices of religion. Can Africa having people with religious allegiance to quarters that are largely outside Africa not acquiesce to external baggage from these places on grounds of religion-inspired docility and deference?

Some like Misheck, Mawere and Mawere (2015) have advanced the alternative narrative that Africa has imposed on herself the status of victim of cultural imperialism contrary to the usual narrative of African passivity. Would the baggage of such psycho-cultural complex not stand in the way of globalization benefits to accentuate Africa's losses?

Urban Change

A flurry of demolitions has followed globalization-induced urban expansion in Africa? Will Africa impress the world with her 'modern cities' and keep up with the Joneses at the expense of human welfare? Can Africa push her own urban agenda different from the globalized Western model, to cater to her unique experience?

Theoretical issues have hereby been highlighted essentially as posers.

Review of Africa's Will, Abilities, Persuasions and Philosophical Leaning that Impinge on Her Exercise of Agency

King (1986) traced African misery to her legacy of inherited structural deficiencies that preclude co-operation and healthy intergroup relations. Africa's internal contradictions have

arrested her response to globalization. Whereas African civil society push for the payment of climate debts owed Africa involvement of African leaders in this quest has not materialized (Bond, 2012). What kept them away from this demand? It is probably, political correctness. Africa needs to mobilize the will, abilities and philosophical conviction to pursue equity and climate justice. Unfortunately recent events tend to rob the continent of these attributes while reinforcing the stereotype of her contradictions. For instance, governments and supra national entities alike have continued to, against backlashes, protect decadent production systems such as pastoral nomadism. Economic Community of West African States has an extant transhumance protocol that allows free herders' movements across West Africa. There is an identity crisis that conditions attitude towards Africa. Africa has not come to terms with which face to present to the world between antiquity and modernity and therefore the confusion endures on what amounts to decent treatment for Africa. Perhaps as a result, negligence of Africa's moral right to safety and welfare has pervaded her history. In 1986, Nigeria woke to the dumping, in her territory, of toxic, radioactive wastes shipped from Europe. Incidentally, the country, at the material time, lacked statutory provisions against such violations. Hence belatedly, and in a reactionary stance, the government of the time decreed, into existence Environmental Protection Laws that birthed her Federal Environmental Protection Agency. The reactionary and late-starting attitude is also a general affliction. As recently as May 2004, South Africa got a new Biodiversity Act providing for, among others, impact assessment for alien invasive species and genetically modified organisms (International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development, 2015). The question is, where has Africa been all this while? It has been a case of living in a fools' paradise and requiring rude awakening to cure a delirium.

SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) of Africa's Response Mechanisms

Africa is subject to both internal and external issues that affect her response mechanisms. They are shown in Figure 1.

Internal Assessment-Africa

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

Emerging market, few natural hazards Africa's supra national bodies, Peer review mechanism, Community initiatives in checking MNCs Afrocentric environmental philosophy, Heavy natural resource endowment, budding information technology culture, Youthful population, benefit of world development history, budding innovative leadership.

Weaknesses

Undue urbanization; obsolete educational curriculum; poor industrial capacity; poor power use; low level of diplomatic power; conflict prone countries; high level of internal displacement; infrastructural deficiency; weakness of institutions; high propensity for hazards to turn disasters; ethnic diversity; fractured societies/threat of state failure; the rise of local militias; growing terrorism; low technology; resource curse; prevalent corruption, negligence of human rights; poor corporate governance; climate vulnerability; mono-product economies; poor society-knowledge community synergy, lacking public faith in law enforcement, tribal politics, underdeveloped media/education; poor insurance culture.

Opportunities

The world courts Africa; leverage on Sino-occidental competition, global bodies, Coming on board of Africa/EU partnership in 2007, Expanding international conservation efforts. Signatory to international protocols and Conventions, Presents cheap destination for climate remediation efforts, offers cheap tourism.

Threats

Land loss to mega projects from outside, Capital flight, brain drain, image problems Global interconnected spaces as conveyors/corridors eg. Water for seaweeds,
Opening doors to industrial farms,
Non-sustainable tourism,
Forest conservation affecting livelihoods.

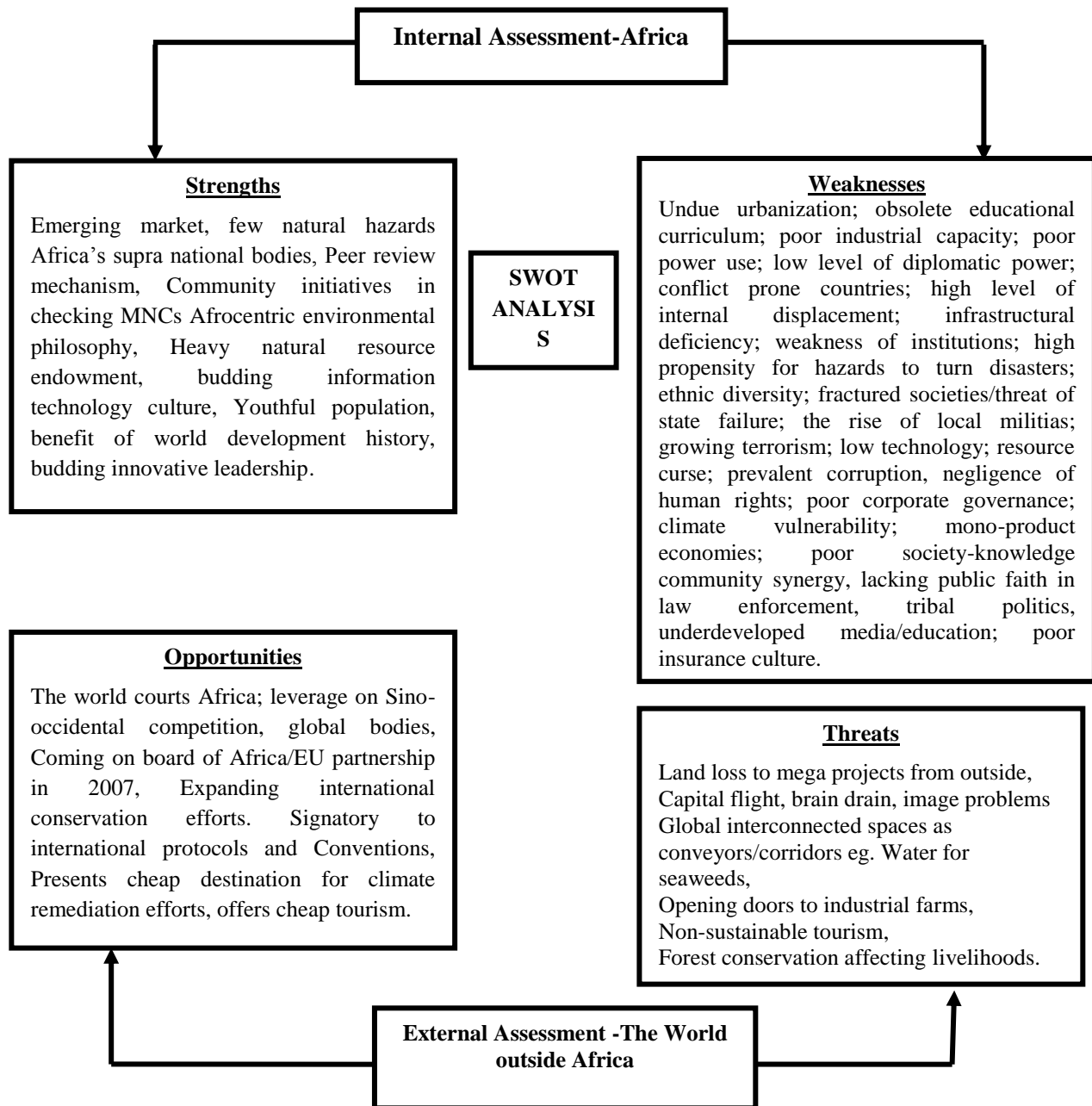**External Assessment -The World outside Africa**

Fig 1: SWOT ANALYSIS Africa's Response mechanisms on Globalized Ecological Baggage.

Weaknesses can, at a glance, be seen to enjoy relative superiority in numerical strength showing that Africa has daunting challenges in fashioning appropriate responses to imposed ecological situations. The domination of weakness in the Analysis is not unrelated to the fact that whereas Africa has an environmental philosophy that works with nature rather than conquer it (Nelusi, 2013), it has to, in the globalized world, function within one that seeks man's conquest of nature. Africa fails to provide appropriate response since its version of best practice is traditional, home grown, indigenous knowledge emphasizing essentially nature stewardship largely in contradiction to Western development paradigm. If only Africa and other oriental cultures can achieve a global reckoning for their own conservative version of ethical ecology, prognosis from her response SWOT would not look so bleak.

Factors that Hamper Quality of Africa's Response to Globalized Environmental Onslaught

Institutional/Policy Framework

African countries are yet to evolve requisite internal bilateral and multilateral arrangements for management of commons and shared resources. It is only when these arrangements are in place that Africa can defend shared zones like the Gulf of Guinea. Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) sidestepped climate, geography, culture and policy choices to place the failure of states on institutions. Sadly African institutions are hardly existent.

There is a paucity of policy framework in Africa. European integration has spurred institutional provisions at the European level in virtually every area of life. Policy has preceded these institutions or arisen from their operations. There is European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, Foundation for Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Environmental Agency; Maritime Safety Agency; Fisheries Control Agency and also Executive Agencies such as Consumers Health, Agricultural and Food Executive Agency and others.

If Europe, with all the individual country capacities can pool resources together, Africa has far greater reasons to band together. Unfortunately, Africa has no equivalent for some of these institutions. At the informal level, Europe also has bodies like European Environment Network (IMPEL) formed since 1922 to deal with issues of regulation enforcement and enforceability. Africa also lacks in the potency of institutions. Whereas Nigeria's new Freedom of Information Act cannot afford the citizenry access to her National Oil Corporation's transactions for instance, the French charter of the Environment, Article 7 has made access to environmental information 'a fundamental right of constitutional value' (Machiara, 2012).

Poverty

The idea of poverty as a conditioner of attitudes to natural resources seems overhyped in the African context. Wildlife tourism is a $3.5b industry in East Africa per year with Kenya having $1 billion share (United States Agency for International Development, 2018). This

did not stop East Africa from emerging global hub in wildlife black market. Africa tends to emphasize on perceived poverty in operating exploitation mechanisms seemingly oblivious of the disservice ultimately done to livelihoods. It is however a way of reinforcing poverty and ultimately losing leverage. African youths scavenging at Haruna garbage dumpsites in Kenya (Ochieng, 2012), or hunting for survival in Owerri suburbs, Nigeria (Azuwike, 2012) show that the continent is in a position of compromise. It is claimed that 14 out of 18 countries where number of people in extreme poverty is rising is in Africa (Beaumont and Linus, 2018). This is hardly the setting for scaling up. At €111.5m the cost of scaling up renewable energy in Africa is hardly affordable and all of IDB, GEF, EU, AfDB, REC had to assist national Governments (United Nations Industrial Development Organisation, 2013) Africa has to shed the toga of extreme poverty to scale up her response capacity.

Regulatory Agencies

Regulators are the major force to initiate action on response. They do not function in a social void and as such they may be subject to whims of powerful persons in government. Other factors of corruption, decadent law enforcement and judicial capacity can be problems to their activities.

At times local militia impedes their work. Where government persons are used to fiat, regulatory measures such as Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) may be dispensed with. The entire socio-political environment of EIA is called to question. Uninformed and unenlightened stakeholders cannot make good contributions to the process. Government bias precludes an objective process. There is no level playing field where a regulatory activity involves a poor rural community and a major rich Multinational Corporation.

Weakness of Civil Societies and Public Service

European Environmental Bureau is a network of 143 environmental citizens' organizations in 31 European member states and neighbours. Citizen power has largely been eroded in Africa as groups are cowed and emasculated through years of dictatorships. Also eroded is the Middle Class. This robs the African society of advocates. The seeming filling up of this void through Non Governmental Organizations is also a ruse as many are fake and non-committal. Rather than rein in corporate leviathans, they align with them against peasant groups (Hilary, 2013).

Natural Resource Fixation

Obsession with the extractive industry makes for difficulties in contemplating environmental audits. African nations tend to have learnt to live with cognitive dissonance about physical degradation on this account. Resource curse is indicated in lack of alternative cash cows.

Whereas the public service has the duty of implementing policy for attainment of objectives, the African public service, subject to the same ills;

Corruption, ethnicity and nepotism that characterize the larger African society, is encumbered in delivering service. It cannot therefore prepare Africa to meet the world on equal terms.

Political Structures

African leaders tend to crave control in an unhealthy dose. They concentrate power, killing off local initiatives. Over centralized systems cannot project local experiences to the world. Whereas France in a 2003 amendment held territorial decentralization to be the organizing principle of France (Mariachiara, 2012) Nigerian of 2018 proposes to enlarge her 62-item Exclusive (Federal) list by bringing local waters under national ownership.

Cultural Bulwark against Foreign Designs

Africa's failure to mobilize a cultural bulwark against undue foreign influences works against the question of appropriate response. Environmental management texts used in Africa, for instance are mainly not home grown (Azuwike, 2018) and therefore leave an educational and cultural gap in training that is capable of affecting knowledge production and application.

Level of Development

Response capacity is tied to level of development. In Africa, there are observable differences in outcomes on standing up to global challenges. Hence some cutting edge technologies in greening production systems found in South Africa are not found in less well-off countries. For instance, Exxaro Resources Ltd has brought a green technology counter weight to South African mining pollution (Togo, 2014). It is also leading the world in sustainable gold mining using carbon trading facilities which it pioneered in 2010 (Greyling,). This is happening as Nigeria cannot check gas flaring in its oil fields seven decades after her oil mining started. South Africa's experience when juxtaposed with poor environmental credentials of oil miners in Western Sahara that publish no impact study (Western Sahara Resource Watch, 2014), state form and pedigree can be seen to play a role in response outcomes. Perception of a country as *banana republic,* a place of virtual statelessness precludes respect of environmental justice and if the perception reflects reality, adequate response is not guaranteed.

Standards 'Holidays' and Standards 'Havens'

It is usually by granting special waivers and concessions that most violations from MNCs occur. They actually do not occur outside of government knowledge. Hence the United Nations Environment Programme in 2011 released Assessment of Ogoniland where Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) had been in operation and found 'significant environmental impacts from oil pollution in parts of Ogoniland'(United Nations Environment Programme, 2011). For agitating against these belatedly recognized

infractions, military leaders were executing local people in the 1990s. The Niger Delta for the sake of Nigeria's oil revenue has been a place of low standards.

Possibilities Open to Africa - Products End-of-Life Management

Given the average low disposable income of populations in most African economies, Africa has turned out to be a major market for used items: clothing, equipment, household furniture, automobiles. At a global level of conservation, Africa's inclination to 'reuse' is good for the world. Africa however pays the price for assuming the world's waste dumpsite ultimately reducing other countries' waste burden. This essentially is factored as some sort of externality by the world. What if Africa gets the exporting countries to internalize the cost of her providing end-of-life place for these items? Current de-emphasis on landfills in the West comes partly from the relief provided by countries of the developing world in accepting items that would have been destined for the landfills. Those on the ascendancy are opting out of this arrangement. China's recent ban on plastic waste imports from Europe was therefore unsettling (Rosa, 2018). Given that most of the items Africa imports in used condition are already, in Asia, Europe and North America, covered by statutory requirements for end-of-life management by manufacturers (Toffel, 2003), Africa has some leverage in asking for just treatment. The continent would however require relaxation of extant arrangements such that the last user, who is supposedly not a party to the initial contractual arrangement with manufacturer, gets covered. It also has to find a way around legal issues of international transactions involved in extending warranties beyond jurisdictions where they were originally domiciled. Much like the climate debt to which Africa is entitled (Bond, 2012) and ecological debt such as has been incurred through US biopiracy of Africa's wild seeds put at $66bn per year (Shiva, 2005; globalpolicy.org, 2000) there is a product end-of-life debt owed Africa which can be paid her. This way, Africa will not be forced in the words of Dennis Brutus and Patrick Bond to 'cleanup up after a party it did not attend'(Brutus and Bond, 2008)

Concluding Remarks

Much of what Africa has come to believe are in its interest such as Foreign Direct Investment do end up hurting her; so do policies that grant concessions to foreign interests in relaxation of ecological standards furthering a humanistic agenda at the expense of African ecology. It is time Africa started asking for due recompense in her dealings with the world. The recommendation here is for a proactive stance rather than reactionary measures. Afro-centric response is called for in view of enlightened self interest as global best practice also integrates community interests. Afforestation in Africa for global climate maintenance is global best practice that will only become Africa's best bargain if it is paid for. Africa can ask the world to equip it for the roles of managing much of the world's end-of-life products in a fair trade situation.

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