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REPOSITIONING AFRICA FOR GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

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Abstract

Africa undoubtedly was in the first rank of civilization, was great in economic power, and organized in her political system and productivity, driven by several factors leading to economic prosperity. Her economy could sustain economic growth, development and served the general well-being of her citizenry. Today it appears that reverse is the case, Africa is unable to find a place in the global competition, a thing which has remained a course of concern among many, including the continent itself. It is on this basis that the paper analyzed the factors responsible for this backward state and assessed how best to reposition Africa for global competitiveness. The study was guided by two questions: what factors are responsible for Africa's backward State? How may these factors be corrected to enable Africa re-fit into the global competition? The purpose of the study therefore is to provide answers to these questions. To do so, two corresponding hypotheses were raised: some factors had been responsible for the inability of Africa to compete globally; termination of these factors can help reposition Africa for global competitiveness. Competitive advantage theory and people centered approach to public administration guided the study. Being a qualitative research, data were collected and analyzed. The findings revealed that Africa's inability to compete globally is facilitated by macroeconomic instability, infrastructural failure, weak public institutions, slow pace of technological development, bad leadership, etc. The paper concluded that to repositioned Africa for Global competitiveness, these factors must be tackled, that there has to be some kind of 'structured continental efforts' directed at building institutions, etc. The paper recommended immediate re-development of Agriculture, industries, improved leadership system among others.

Keywords: Competiveness, Factors, Global, Leadership, Repositioning Africa.

Introduction

It is on record that Africa was in the first rank of civilization; great in wealth; had revered and organized political systems, economic might and from her others borrowed a leaf. Status she maintained for centuries, during which period she produced professionals and academics that remained revered till date. Speaking in the opening session of the conference of Inter-African and Malagasy States held in Lagos, on 25 January, 1992, Nnamdi Azikiwe, categorically stated:

> The importance of this continent to the world cannot be over-stressed. Africa is regarded by authorities as the birthplace of the human race. Africa is also regarded by them as the cradle of human civilization. In fact, we have at this conference the Emperor of Ethiopia, whose empire dates back to antiquity and was contemporaneous with Egypt, Nubia, Assyria and Phoenica".

Thus, as a hub of human culture and treasury of natural resources, Africa became a magnet that attracted Greek intellectuals, Roman adventurers, European and American explorers, missionaries, empire builders, story-tellers and soldiers of fortune. Up to the period of the great discoveries made by European explorers, several empires and Kingdoms flourished in Africa at all points of the compass. It however, remains a thing of worry why and how those distinctive qualities appeared to be behind those of them she showed the way to these virtues. To that extent therefore, the paper examined the factors responsible for this seeming backward state and assessed how best to re-position Africa to her pride of place.

Theoretical Framework It is an open secret that so many if not all states of Africa are not where they ought to be in terms of economic growth and development. Most Asian countries that were at the same level of economic development with Africa in the 1960s have overtaken her. These Asian countries include among others, India, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, China, Malaysia, and South Korea, just to mention a few. While most of these countries are enjoying strong economic growth, Africa appears to remain economically underdeveloped due largely to macroeconomic instability, poor infrastructure, government interference, inefficiency, weak public institutions, poor corporate governance, corruption and recently insecurity. For instance, Nigeria now belongs to the group of Extremely Poor Countries on earth (World Bank: March, 2014). Maybe we can just use Nigeria, as one instance, being a state in Africa. Nigeria whose economic and socio-political condition is probably better than those of other African states, lack the necessary legal and administrative mechanisms to harness her rich heritage in Agriculture, Solid Minerals, Tourism and other non- oil sectors. With infrastructure deficit estimated to be in the region of $30billion; about 120 million Nigerians lack access to electricity (World Bank, 2013); transportation network is still very poor across the country thereby making movement of people and goods to be difficult and costly. For *macro- economic stability,* the good news is that inflation is down to single digit (7.6% in 2013), but interest rate is still high at 12%, with commercial banks lending to private entrepreneurs for as much as 30 to 34% interest (CBN, 2013) - which makes it difficult for Nigerian firms and industries to compete globally. An estimated 56 million people in Nigeria are illiterates, i.e. cannot read or write in any language (UNESCO, 2014). While her counterpart states like Singapore, China, Malaysia, South Korea, et cetera have long developed the technical know- how to deal with issues such as *education, health and* preventable diseases like malaria, typhoid, polio, cholera and other epidemics, several states of Africa still have these issues in proportion. It is as a consequence of this that the "Theory of competitive advantage" and "People centered approach to public administration", become the most appropriate framework in tackling the African condition.

Research has been done by political economists, policy analysts, academics, etc on competition and competitiveness; among whom are, Porter (1985), Porter (1990), Tyson (1991), Chakarborty (1991), Thurow (1992), Dunn (1992), Rugman and D'cruz (1993) Dunn (1994), Cohen (1994), Krugman (1994), Powell (2001), UNIDO (2001), Johansson (2003), Atkinson (2013), Onyemenam (2004), WEF (2012), Barney (2007), World Bank (2006), International Institute for Management Development (2006), Okereafo et al,(2015), Porter (1996), Keter (2012) et cetera. This paper finds the works of the above stated researchers of immense usefulness in the subject under discuss, even though they tend to base their explanations somehow at the domestic level. It does not however reduce in its usefulness in this subject given the fact that a continent is the composition of countries and the concept of competitiveness at the height it is now is all pervading. In the same token, the continent of Africa is the composition of states within the continent. Apparently, the global competitiveness of the continent must generate from its constituent states. To that extent therefore, the paper accepts their explanations as to be all involving.

The paper considered the above mentioned authorities and their thesis on competitiveness: For Porter (1985) the only meaningful concept of competitiveness at the national level is productivity. Productivity growth is the focus of national competitiveness strategies. Porter argues that the development potential of a country or an economy is determined by its ability to foster competitiveness, generate, retain and attract economic activities that will ensure prosperity. Porter identifies four broad attributes which individually or collectively could create a platform that enables an industry or industries in a country to develop and compete nationally or globally. There are as follows: First, *factor endowments* of a country are prerequisites to efficient and competitive production. Factor endowments; include human and non-human resources such as land, labor, mineral resources, water, etc. Second, *the structure,* *size and rate of growth of domestic demand* for industrial products are also important for competitiveness. Third, the presence of *suppliers and related industries*- those that render support services such as information and communication technologies (ICT), financial services, market information are crucial. Fourth, the set of conditions including *corporate governance, cluster development and cooperation*, as well as domestic rivalries are crucial factors for competitiveness. Porter added the fifth factor as *government's actions/inaction* as they are known to impact positively or negatively on the above four broad attributes. In Porter‘s view, industrial competitiveness determines national competitiveness; and so countries can have strong national competitiveness in some industries and not necessarily in all industries and remain globally competitive. Onyemenam (2004) in Geff et al (2015:56-59) describes competitiveness as the —degree of superiority by which a firm or a nation produces goods, services and other related functions when compared to peers. Nations are said to be competitive when they pursue a package of economic policies that emphasize private sector as the engine of growth and revolve around the market-oriented doctrine, and have the associated public institutions and continue to experience technological progress.

According to UNIDO (2001), other critical factors that account for a country‘s competitiveness include; but not limited to domestic economic strength/viability, quality of corporate governance, macroeconomic stability, level of infrastructural development, managerial and leadership capabilities, scientific and technological capabilities and quality of manpower/ labor skill. Countries can create a favorable environment for firms to thrive but firms should be able to exploit such competitive advantages and overcome any diseconomies especially in terms of labor and other input costs. Atkinson (2013) in IJMSBM (2015:59) argues that competitiveness is not the same as productivity. In his view, competitiveness relates only to the economic health of a nation‘s traded sectors. A nation could have high productivity in some sectors and still be economically unhealthy by not creating enough jobs. For him, economic health can only be defined in terms of the ability of a nation‘s economic sectors to add value and thus create jobs. The World Economic Forum (2012) defines competitiveness as —the set of institutions, policies and factors that determine the level of productivity of a country. The general assumption behind the World Economic Forum index is that competitiveness and economic growth complement each other. However, the International Institute of Management argues that economic growth alone cannot determine a country‘s competitiveness. Rather, it is only one of the factors that contribute to competitiveness. Okereafor et al (2015:59) posit that competitiveness describes the ability of a country to continuously implement a mix of economic strategies involving relevant institutions and stakeholders that emphasize productivity, growth and job creation, with a view to increasing the overall living standard of the citizenry. Johansson (2003 cited in IJMSBM 2015:59) however asserts that being better than competition means —assessing and responding to global competition by offering better value, high quality or low prices to the world. And this can only be achieved by building superior structures, processes and systems.

In the author's view, competitiveness looks beyond just competition as a struggle not to stay below or behind others in the global market or event. It reflects the ability of a country or a continent to consistently stay ahead of others in the economic competition, using a mix of economic strategies that combines important institutions and stakeholders that stress productivity growth and job creation towards multiplying the total living levels of the peoples. This study is anchored on the theory of competitive advantage. According to this theory, a competitive advantage is what makes you better than the competition in your customers' mind (Porter, 1985). The term was first applied to business, but works for countries or continents (Kimberly, 2017). The theory, emphases that competition denotes: benefit; target market, and competition. First, to compete, there is the need to be clear on the benefit your product provides. It must be something that your customers truly need and offers real value. It points out that this requires being regularly aware of new trends that affect your product, especially new technology. Second, it is important to know who constitute your market (customers); this way you create demand, which forms "the driver" of all economic growth.

Perhaps, the basic assumption of this theory is that, competition is more, than just similar companies or products; that it includes anything else your "customer must be made to do" in order to be able to meet the needs you can provide. Porter (1996) further revealed, that the essence of competition is not just to provide what others are providing for their customers, but to ensure that your product or/ and service is more beneficiary to them than what they get from others. According to Porter, to succeed in this, first, there must be a strong communication network between the producer and his target market. Second, all the component parts of the organization must be able to compete within the organization; the component parts of the organization must have one target-that of the entire organization. Third, that there is need for continuity in communicating through action what the organization can do to benefit the wider market (Porter, 1990). Porter believes that the development capability of a people or an economy is determined by their ability to foster competitiveness, generate, attract and retain economic activities that will ensure prosperity of the people at different levels.

In applying the theory of competitive advantage to nations, Porter (1996) points out that there are four primary determinants of competitiveness of firm: factor conditions; demands conditions; related and supporting industries, and firm strategy, structure and rivalry. This is what he called national "Diamond". Porter argues that national prosperity is not inherited but created. The extent to which a nation is competitive globally depends on the capacity of its key industries to innovate and upgrade. Companies and by extension industries gain advantage against fellow competitors because of pressure and challenge (capacity) to provide more benefits to customers. They benefit from having strong domestic rivals, aggressive home based suppliers and demanding local customers. The competitiveness of a firm is the result of a competitive advantage relative to other firms (Keter, 2012:2). From the foregoing, we can observe the relevance or applicability of the theory of competitiveness to this study. Put simply, competitiveness has a lot to do with deliberate efforts to continuously improve on the general business climate with a view to improving the productivity levels of firms in a country or continent for the better living standards of the people. It is concerned with the export performance of firms located in those countries or continent relative to their foreign counterparts.

Strength of National Economy Competitiveness and Consequences

It is important however, to distinguish between the competitiveness of a country - a term which refers to the economic strength of a national economy on world markets; and its possible consequences, i.e. the increasing or decreasing living standards in a particular country during a certain period of time. Thus, understanding the nature of competition of nations does imply a specific goal system different from simply increasing the living standard per capita in every country. Tyson (1994) agrees that in an economy with very little international trade, the growth in living standards and thus "competitiveness" would be determined almost entirely by domestic factors, primarily the rate of productivity growth; not productivity growth relative to other countries. In other words, for an economy with very little international trade, "competitiveness" would mean "productivity" and would have nothing to do with international competition. He argues that even in countries where world trade is large and increasing, national living standards are overwhelmingly determined by domestic factors rather than by some competition for world markets.

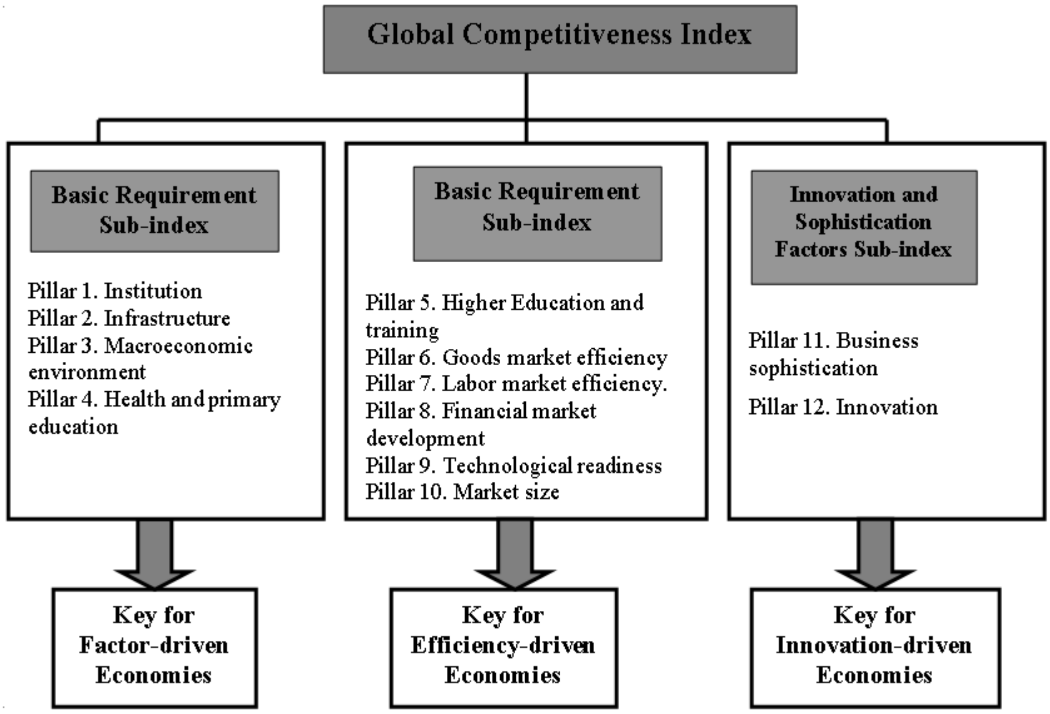
Krugman (1994) argues against the idea that a country's economic fortunes are largely determined by its success on markets, and maintains that such a hypothesis is flatly wrong'. He thinks competitiveness skews domestic policies, leads to trade conflicts among nations, and threatens the international economic system. In his essay, he criticized the notion that the bottom line of a nation's economy is simply its trade balance, in which case competitiveness can only be measured by the ability of a country to sell more abroad than it buys. He maintains that —any government wedded to the ideology of competitiveness is unlikely to make good economic policies and concludes that a trade surplus may be a sign of national weakness, as much as a trade deficit could be a sign of strength. Krugman, points out that international trade is not a zero-sum game where one nation's gain is another's loss. He however, acknowledges there is always rivalry for status and power among countries; —but saying that one nation's growth diminishes another's standard of living cannot be true, and that is what the concept of competitiveness preaches.

Dunn (1994) believes however, that countries do compete economically, *though in a different way than corporations do and opines that* countries are not only economic entities, but defined by political and social features too. Improving the living standard per capita might be an economic objective of a political élite particularly if it is committed to democratic principles, but it is certainly not the only element within the politically defined goal system of a nation. Other motives like gaining bargaining power and influence on other countries, strengthening the country's position in international negotiations and institutions, increasing its prestige and military power, and so on, play an even greater role in public policy. He, posits that "the —win-lose" character of power motivation determines the way nations act economically, too. States (or their political elites) treat their economy as the major source of economic means to achieve politically-defined national interests. Countries compete economically because they compete politically to gain regional and global power and influence. Conversely, countries may not go out of business (like firms), but they might very well become dependent upon other countries to such an extent that their sovereignty is undermined. Therefore, as countries compete economically and promote their nation's industries trade might become a zero-sum game. It is worthy of note however that competitiveness may not identify with a country's living standard at all times and in all cases as canvassed by proponents of national competitiveness. For instance, the rising standard of living in East Germany (before unification) was not a sign of growing competitiveness of its industries but the effect of an enormous flow of capital aid and public spending on the social services. Singapore and Hong Kong whose industries meet international competition standards extremely well still have the living standards in both countries comparatively low. Many less developed countries (e.g. India), whose industry competitiveness depends almost entirely on the nation's comparatively low wage level, have lower living standards. But even in highly industrialized countries like Germany and Japan, the competitiveness of a national economy is to some extent, dependent on the existing wage level of the overall economy.

The measurement of competitiveness has always been problematic. This is because the driving factors behind a nation's competitive performance are often varied and interconnected. Therefore, to measure competitiveness, it is important that the underlying economic factors measured by an indicator or set of indicator correspond to the features of a country's economy. Again, measuring the competitiveness of a national economy by using one indicator only or by isolating one economic factor from its economic environment can only yield poor results (Cohen, 1994). However, this measurement difficulty implies that further research is needed in this area. Krugman, is therefore, right in pointing out that blaming foreign competition for unemployment and low wages is in many cases wrong, when they are mainly caused by domestic factors. Both Krugman and Dunn are right in their criticism that competitiveness cannot simply be measured by the living standard or by trade balances and their changes alone. Some other interrelated variables also play their role.

Pillars of competitiveness What Africa needs is the combination of productivity and competitiveness. Several factors serve as productivity and competitiveness determinants ranging from investments in physical capital and infrastructure, to interest in other mechanisms such as education and training, technological progress, macroeconomic stability, good governance, firm sophistication, and market efficiency, among others. They are not mutually exclusive— as two or more of them can be significant at the same time in an economy. These components being grouped into 12 are referred to as the pillars of competitiveness and are used as shown in figure 1 below:

Figure 1: THE GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS INDEX



Source: *World Economic Forum (Global Competitiveness Index, 2014/2015)*

In such economies as in Africa, companies compete on the basis of price and sell basic commodities (especially agricultural products), with their low productivity reflected in low wages. Maintaining competitiveness at this stage of development hinges primarily on well-functioning public and private institutions (pillar 1), well-developed infrastructure (pillar 2), a stable macroeconomic environment (pillar 3), and a healthy workforce that has received at least a basic education (pillar 4). As a country becomes more competitive, productivity will increase, and wages will rise with advancing development. Countries will then move into the efficiency-driven stage of development. At this point, competitiveness is increasingly driven by higher education and training (pillar 5), efficient goods markets (pillar 6), well-functioning labour markets (pillar 7), developed financial markets (pillar 8), the ability to harness the benefits of existing technologies (pillar 9), and a large domestic or foreign market (pillar 10). Finally, as countries move into the innovation-driven stage, wages will have to rise so much that firms/countries are able to sustain those higher wages and the associated standard of living only if their businesses can compete with new products, services, models, and processes. At this stage, companies must compete by producing new and different goods through new technologies (pillar 12) and/or the most sophisticated production processes or business models (pillar 11).

Academic reviews of the concept of competitiveness The most revered competitiveness models at macro level are: Porter‘s (1990) —Theory of Competitive Advantage, the —Nine-Factor Model of International Competitiveness by Cho (1994), the —Double Diamond Model by Rugman and D‘Cruz (1993), the models presented in the reports on competitiveness of national economies by the World Economic Forum (2006), the International Institute for Management Development (2006), the World Bank (2006). However, most of these studies focus only on the economic factors of competitiveness; giving less attention to areas such as social, historical, cultural, legal, political, environmental, et cetera. In recent time countries started looking increasingly at their global markets competitiveness. These countries included: Ireland (1997), Saudi Arabia (2000), Greece (2003), Croatia (2004), Bahrain (2005), the Philippines (2006), Guyana, the Dominican Republic and Spain (2011).

Bakan and Dogan (2012) conducted an empirical study on why some states are more competitive and why some industries within states are more competitive than others‘, Porter‘s diamond model of national competitiveness was again used —to assess the sources of competitive advantages of an industry in a particular country and how this can help raise the competitive status of a nation in global competition. This model consists of four national determinants of competitive advantage: factor conditions, demand conditions, related and supporting industries, and firm‘s strategy, structure and rivalry. The study revealed that achieving a sustainable competitive position can be realized only through firms and sector-specific strategies, since nations compete through their firms/industries. Reviewing the results of the study, it was observed that the ―conditions of demand affect sectors ‘competitiveness more than any other factor in the Diamond Model. The second factor is ―the government. Related industries follow these two. The last is ―factor condition and it is not surprising because the competitive advantage is gained with the inimitable qualities of the firms. Hence, the factor conditions of the firms are not easily copied by observing and imitating the rival firms. This study is valuable as it depicts strategic ways in achieving a competitive advantage and also the importance of the factors of competitiveness in Kahramanmaraş firms in the various sectors of that nation‘s economy. Reich (2013), Magaziner (2006), and Porter also carried out empirical studies on global competitiveness especially as economies are moving away from domestic economies to a global one. Each offered a different view of how a company remains competitive in this global economy. Reich stresses the difference between American-owned corporations and American competitiveness. Magaziner highlights the growing need of innovation and the avoidance of national complacency. Porter focuses on his diamond of national competitiveness. The results of the above empirical studies all indicate that internal factors play greater role than external factors in determining the competitiveness of national economies which eventually metamorphosed into global economic competitiveness.

Repositioning Africa for Global Competitiveness

What Africa needs is repositioning in terms of productivity and competitiveness. Repositioning Africa for global competitiveness has become more necessary than we think, especially, now that global competitiveness has become a central theme for both developed and developing nations. We are in the midst of an increasingly open and integrated world economy where countries compete for investment and human capital that are critical to their economic growth. This focus, not only on national but also on inter- states competitiveness has been increasingly reinforced by global competitiveness rankings, published on a regular basis, by a variety of institutions. They measure and track nations across various metrics and indicator, including the strength of their public and private institutions, the quality of their infrastructure, their macroeconomic environment, education, health, market efficiency, financial market development, and transaction costs and flows, among others.

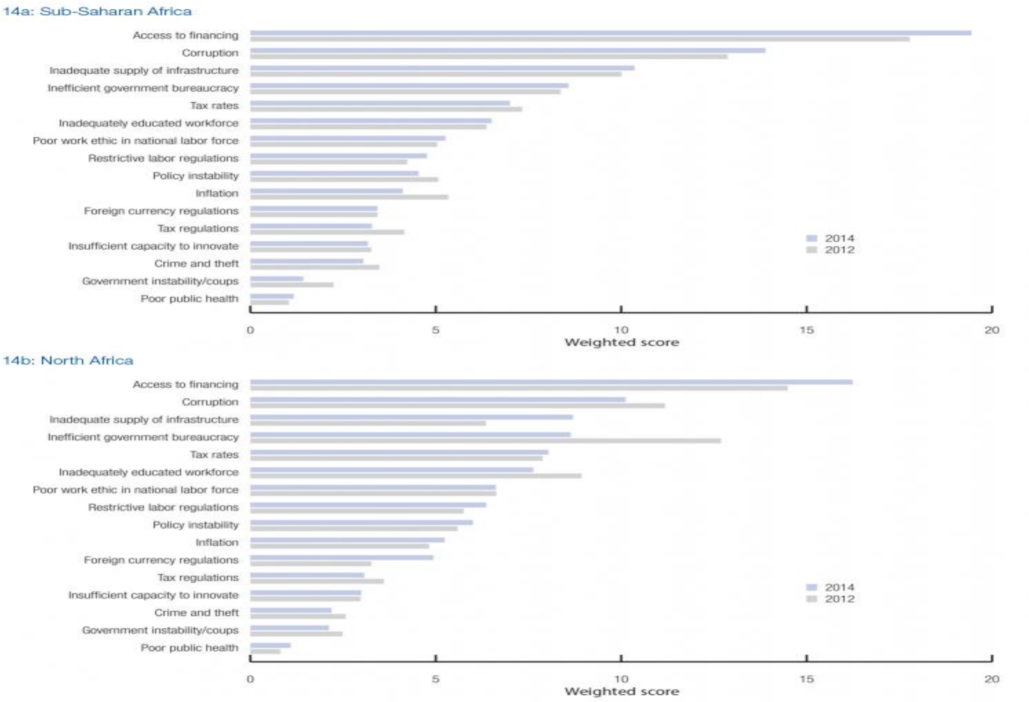
Repositioning Africa in terms of global competitiveness is particularly important for open economies which typically rely on trade and foreign direct investment to provide the scale of economic activity necessary for productivity enhancements to drive increases in living standards. It distinguishes in particular between policy inputs in relation to the business environment, the physical infrastructure and knowledge infrastructure as well as the essential conditions of competitiveness that such repositioning brings, including business performance assessments, productivity, labour supply, the costs of doing business and related ventures. The paper insist that repositioning of Africa to her pride of place, is not necessarily to be where others are but to be higher than others in terms of sustained economic and socio-political growth as that is the whole essence of competitive advantage. Africa needs to give co- urgent attention to many more factors, including – diversification, restructuring, strengthening of institutions, and the necessary leadership interventions required to advance the continent towards sustainable economic and socio-political development and growth.

Competitiveness pertains to the ability and performance of a firm, sub-sector or country to sell and supply goods and services in a given market, in relation to the ability and performance of other firms, sub-sectors or countries in the same market. The term is also used to refer in a broader sense to the economic competitiveness of countries, regions or cities. Competitiveness is viewed as the *set of institutions, policies, and factors that determine the level of productivity of a country.* The level of productivity, in turn, sets the level of prosperity that can be reached by an economy. The productivity level also determines the rates of return obtained by investments in an economy, which in turn are the fundamental drivers of its growth rates. In other words, a more competitive economy is one that is likely to grow faster over time. The concept of competitiveness thus involves static and dynamic components. Although the productivity of a country determines its ability to sustain a high *level* of income, it is also one of the central determinants of its return on investment, which is one of the key factors explaining an economy's *growth potential.* As the world becomes a smaller place, economies are shifting away from national economies to global economies. Reich (2013) Magaziner, (2006) and Porter each offer a different view of how a company remains competitive in this global economy. Reich stresses the difference between American-owned corporations and American competitiveness. Magaziner highlights the growing need of innovation and the avoidance of national complacency. Porter focuses on his diamond of national competitiveness. While Whirlpool is an American owned company—the company's headquarters and upper management all operate out of America—the majority of the company's factories and production lies overseas in South America and Asia. Similarly, while Toyota is a Japanese owned company, it has increasingly manufactured its cars within US borders. Whirlpool is an American company but does not benefit American competitiveness. Reich maintains that "foreign-owned businesses that benefit national competitiveness most are those that commit their engine of competitiveness to the host country." Whirlpool may be American run, but Toyota's factories in America create American jobs and train an American workforce, both commodities in national competitiveness. Reich further emphasizes the importance of a skilled work force: "A nation's most important competitive asset is the skills and learning of its work force… [And]…National policies should reward any global corporation that invests in the American work force." (Magaziner, 2006) Stressing the skilled work force, as Magaziner has noticed, is not just an American necessity. Magaziner gives two examples of countries who take national pride in training the work force: Korea and Singapore. Both were third world countries in the 60's but now boast first world economies. The key was the government's intense investment in education and companies' investment on export. While Korea's exports came mainly from domestic companies such as Samsung, Singapore lured many foreign companies such as Apple and Texas instruments to open factories in Singapore. The results are the same: a low-pay, high-skilled work force producing for a fraction of the cost to produce in the US. The US on the other hand has fallen heavily complacent on its industrial might. No one could challenge American ingenuity, especially in high tech arenas such as appliances. General Electric (GE) an American multinational conglomerate, however, learned its lesson when Korean microwaves came over cheaper and better quality than American microwaves, forcing GE to its microwaves line. GE found the best and only way to beat low wage competition was to develop technology which would cut costs. Thus, competitiveness as used in this paper looks beyond just competition as a struggle not to stay below or behind others in the global market. The term is used here to reflect the ability to stay ahead of others in the present or potential competition, for there lays the essence of the entire struggle.

Achieving the first purpose of the paper Discussion on the main factors responsible for Africa's backwardness in global competitiveness is necessary. The findings of Global Competitive Index (GCI) as reported by World Economic Forum (WEF, 2014-5) corroborate the answer already provided in this paper on the question of factors responsible for the backward state of Africa. They are shown in their figure 14a and b which forms figure 2 of this paper, as follows: Figure 2, below, presents the most problematic factors for doing business in both Sub-Saharan as well as north Africa:

Figure 2: MOST PROBLEMATIC FACTORS FOR DOING BUSINESS IN SUB-SAHARAN AND NORTH AFRICA

Figure 14: Most problematic factors for doing business (2012 and 2014 scores compared)



Source: World Economic Forum Executive Opinion Survey, 2012, 2014.
Note: From the list of factors above, respondents were asked to select the five most problematic for doing business in their country and to rank them between 1 (most problematic) and 5. The bars in the figures show the responses weighted according to their rankings.

Lack of access to financing, corruption, and the inadequate supply of infrastructure not only remain the most odious hindrances to doing business in sub-Saharan countries, the same factors also represent the most harmful barriers to doing business in North Africa. Inefficient government was considered the second most important barrier in North Africa, though it appears to have been a bit relieved. The next concerned an inadequate educated workforce, indicating an insufficient education, as well as poor work ethic. It is however important to understand that businesses in both regions are faced with somewhat different challenges with regard to all other most problematic factors. For instance, government instability coupled with policy uncertainty continue to be a worry for business leaders in North African countries, whereas inflation is a greater concern in sub-Saharan countries, while public health receives little attention from business leaders in the entire continent which paved way for the continent's major health challenges, metamorphosed into the recent Ebola pandemic, which though Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria tried to fight it to what appeared to be a good attempt, but still leaves the continent with fear of its continuity. This is not to talk of the "Monkey pox" problem presently in Nigeria. The bar above reveals that lack of access to financing, corruption, and inadequate supply of infrastructure are significant hindrances to doing business in the countries of Africa. And these issues must be tackled if there is going to be any encouragement toward wealth creation and reduction of unemployment in the states of Africa. Africa's ability to move its economy on a sustainable growth level will largely depend on notorious improvements across all sectors; with special focus on strengthening institutions, infrastructure deficit, macroeconomic stability, health/education, and insecurity.

Achieving the second purpose of the paper The second purpose of the paper centered on how these factors may be corrected to enable Africa re-fit into the global competitiveness. To achieve this, figures 1 and 2 of the paper were discussed. (Figure 2 of the paper, represents figures 14a and b of WEF, 2014-5). It is noteworthy that, Africa is blessed with a large expanse of arable land for agriculture and assorted solid minerals. Some countries in Africa are serving as world biggest oil exporters, besides being well populated. With the large reserves in human and natural resources in Africa, it is expected, that Africa builds a prosperous economy; reduce poverty significantly; provide health; education, and infrastructural services needed by citizens and the globe at large. This is achievable. Some Countries in Africa have at some point in the past tried to execute challenging reform agenda and their economies responded with encouraging growth for a long period. A good example is Nigeria, from 2003-2010. Unfortunately, some of these countries, including Nigeria, at some point became more concerned with oil business which, sadly, increased macroeconomic risks. Presently, there is decline in oil business due to weak demand, and lower pricing, resulting in increased unemployment among others. To correct these anomalies, and stabilize economic growth, and ensure rising prosperity in the continent, there must be a human capital based development activities; diversification in Tourism and hospitality; Agriculture; Sports; Solid Minerals; Music and Entertainment; Transforming leadership; sustained structural reforms aimed at enhancing competitiveness. To actualize this, Africa must focus on strengthening the institutional, physical, and human capital requirements for a strong and competitive private-sector-led development that must be void of foreign supervision.

With great measure of understanding that Competitiveness is all pervading, encompassing virtually all areas of economic activities, it is recommended that matters relating to economic growth and development should be addressed from two different angles: first, at the level of constituting states and second, at the continental level. These can be achieved if and most likely when relied on factors that drive competitiveness. The factors are as follows:

■ The firm level competitiveness. It is important to note that while a trusted and efficient economic system, with stable institutions coupled with strong political, legal, and social frameworks underpin the success of an economy; they are not by themselves sufficient to sustain the country competitiveness. They are certainly necessary and important conditions, but, by themselves, they do not create wealth for a nation. These broader macroeconomic conditions are only half of the competitiveness equation, the other half lies in the micro (or firm) level of an economy-The private sector carries much of the responsibility. At the heart of it, firms and companies are the entities that create national wealth and eventually the continent's wealth, consequently, their productivity, efficiency; dynamism is central to, not only national or continental competitiveness, but also global competitiveness. An economy cannot be competitive unless companies operating within it are competitive and productive, and at the same time links to the quality of the broader macroeconomic and business environment. Productivity, therefore, is the ultimate driver of country and eventually continent competitiveness. Country competitiveness improves as companies operating in it increase their productivity. This highlights the important and crucial role of the private sector in improving national competitiveness. We are not only "consumers" in the business environment; we also have a role in shaping the right framework for success. This can be done by, constantly raising our operating standards to match global best practices. Raising the standards under which we run our individual businesses, continuously upgrading our technological skills and business models, and constantly innovating on our products and services ultimately not only benefit our consumers, but also improve the overall environment for business and industry.

■ Human Resources: At the core of productivity is the quality of the human resources of a nation. Human resources, and their skills, ultimately affect productivity. This is greatly influenced by the quality and standard of education we provide to the youth at the very basic level, at the tertiary level, and at the professional level. It is imperative that we invest in the proper education and training of our youth and our workforce to prepare them for jobs in industries where our country has a competitive advantage. In the same manner, continuous professional training is imperative to keep our human resources at par with global standards. The ability to address today, new problems and challenges of tomorrow is directly linked to the ability to raise the educational standard of today.

■ Inclusive Growth: An emerging economy cannot afford to ignore the needs of the larger population; the majority who belong to lower income groups and who are oftentimes left with poor access to basic goods and services should be carried along. Resources should be put to work to address the needs of this broader market effectively, while simultaneously generating new business growth. Neither national nor continent competitiveness can simply be achieved if and when majority of the population is struggling to meet their most basic needs and most times end up not realizing them.

■ Regional Competitiveness: It may not be easy for a country, much more a continent to become globally competitive based on only one or two economic hubs. There is the need to build more economic growth centers across the countries of Africa. To make this work, there should be need for regional groupings and make use of their political and economic structures, including their Regional Development Councils and regional business associations. The continent should work with more of these groups to develop suitable metrics for measuring their own competitiveness such that those in Kenya would compete with those in Tanzania and so on.

Conclusion

The paper focused on repositioning Africa for global competitiveness; traced the main problematic factors that militate against doing business in Africa. The finding showed that lack of access to financing, corruption, inadequate infrastructure et cetera; pose great hindrance to doing business in the continent. There is a great need to restructure and diversify on consistent basis the economies of the countries of Africa in the line of Tourism; Entertainment; Agriculture; Sports; Solid Mineral among others toward improving their worth. Africa should invest greatly in infrastructure, health; education, et cetera. We must continuously upgrade our technological skills and business models, and constantly innovate on our products and services to suit not only Africa but also the global community. Of utmost importance, is the need for Africa to decide on the political theory to adopt. The leadership system should be designed, in any case, to be people centered. To reposition Africa toward global competitiveness therefore, all the constraining factors herein discussed must be tackled both at individual country level and at the continent level, while attempting on a more serious note, to improving the living standard of the African man. In all, Africa must be ready to compete, not to be like others or to equal others but setting the pace once again that is the whole essence of competitive advantage, that way, Africa, would resume her pride of place in the global economy.

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