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Political Consciousness and Governance in Africa

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Abstract

This paper interrogates the subject of political consciousness and political governance vis-à-vis the mounting level of global restiveness precipitated by an unprecedented level of disparity in the global distribution of wealth. It borrows from the mainstream Marxian political-economic framework, arguing that the material existence of the growing and restive global population spurs political consciousness and questions the legitimacy of many national governments, as well as the global governance structures that support them. The paper is a desk study which relies heavily on secondary data, supported by a qualitative review of existing literature. Findings suggest that the global capitalist ideology – regulated by market forces – and accentuated by political globalization has failed to satisfy the legitimate aspirations to better conditions of living for the majority of the world’s population, especially in the developing countries, but particularly in Africa. The paper strongly recommends the strengthening of regional governance architecture in order to hold national leaderships accountable and responsive.

Keywords: *Political Consciousness; Global Governance; Globalization; Marxism; Africa*

1. Introduction

For many centuries, the study of political consciousness has garnered enormous research interest from scholars, policymakers and students of global politics. This is not unrelated to the accelerating concern and awareness of people about their political, economic and social well-being vis-à-vis their social contract with the State. However, the subject of political consciousness has gained momentum in the recent time given the magnitude of global challenges confronting humanity, which are serious indictments on global political (mis)governance cum failure of political leadership. The inexhaustible list of global challenges currently dominating global governance agenda includes the following: terrorism; climate change; humanitarian crises; the prospect of nuclear war; global economic recession; poverty, hunger, starvation and diseases; international migration issues and so on (Chidozie and Aje, 2017; Yunus, 2017; Fukuyama, 2018; Kusimo and Chidozie, 2019; Ogunnowo and Chidozie, 2020; Pecoud, 2020).

It is within this context that the effectiveness of many national governments to mediate on the above global challenges has become debatable (Aje and Chidozie, 2020). To illustrate, the massive protest that greeted the emergence of some world leaders in 2016, added to the most

recent anti-government demonstrations by different segments of the society (women, working-class, students, civil society groups) around the world, including Turkey, Venezuela, United Kingdom, Bulgaria, United States, Germany, Iran, Italy, Zimbabwe, Kenya, South Africa, China, Argentina, Spain, Honduras and most recently, Russia and Hong Kong, are, indeed, instructive (Zhu, 2017; Andretta, 2018; Gold, 2018; Hughes, 2018; Valentim, 2018; O'Brien, 2019; Uestebay, 2019). To be sure, the growing and restive global population is an indictment on failed national leaderships at some levels; a pointer to depreciating level of material existence for so many. Marx (1859) rightly argued that it is not the consciousness of men that determines their being; but, on the contrary, it is their social being that determines their consciousness. It is evident, therefore, that global citizens are not increasingly politically conscious despite their social conditions; but, on the contrary, they are politically conscious because of their current social conditions.

Besides, the global capitalist ideology – regulated by market forces – and accentuated by political globalization has failed to satisfy the legitimate aspirations to better conditions of living for the majority of the world's population (Deneen, 2018; Pecoud, 2020; Lockwood, 2020), especially in the developing countries of Asia, Africa, Middle East and Latin America. The unprecedented level of disparity and inequality of global distribution of wealth came to the fore in the recently concluded World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland in 2018 (World Economic Forum Report, 2018). It became evident from the discussions and proceedings that the gap between rich countries and poor countries have not only astronomically widened, but 8% out of every 10% of global wealth circulated in 2017 went to the richest individuals in richest countries, aided by technological distribution and transfer (Yunus, 2017; World Economic Forum Report). Indeed, the “End of History” thesis propounded by Fukuyama (1992) may have become the beginning of the end for certain civilizations.

More critical, is the fact that international and regional organizations such as (United Nations, European Union, African Union, International Monetary Fund, World Bank) that should design, regulate and mediate the distortions inherent in the global political economy are facing crises of legitimacy and effectiveness (Armstrong and Gilson, 2011). This handicap of the international governance structures in the face of the enormity of contemporary global challenges was well articulated by Weiss (2013):

The gap between the enormity of the global problems requiring attention; climate change and other ecological challenges, widening inequality, continued poverty, mass migrations, pandemics, global financial instability, the increased unaccountability and autonomy of global companies and the weakness of the existing mechanisms and processes of international governance to address them has never been greater (Weiss, 2013 cited in Deacon, 2016:116).

This further explains why the emerging economies such as the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) countries are designing alternative trans-regional economic governance initiatives that will enable them to be more competitive in the international economic system (Agwu, 2016; Folarin *et al*, 2016). The most audacious, indeed, notable demonstration of the above is the creation of BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) in 2014 at the Summit in Fortaleza, Brazil, as a counter-hegemonic trans-regional finance institution to World Bank and IMF, followed by the creation of Contingency Reserve Arrangement (CRA) to the tune of \$100 billion as a key alternative source of liquidity and precautionary instrument (Cooper and Farooq, 2015; Liu, 2016). Thus, the overall implication of these developments is that global citizens and marginalized countries are highly resentful of their governments and established institutions fueling repeated calls for the reconstruction of both the State and the global economic and political governance institutions.

In Africa, this call has become more urgent given the peculiarities of the post-colonial state in the continent characterized by prebendalism, political turbulence, civil unrest, intra-state conflicts, unbridled corruption and economic imperialism which have conspired to create a culture of mediocrity among the African ruling class (Dorman, 2006; Onuoha, 2014; Chidozie and Olanrewaju, 2016). In short, the thesis of the 'shadow state' (cited in Enweremadu, 2013: 58) clearly illustrates the dilemma of some contemporary African states, which have been brazenly hijacked by political demagogues and predators leaving the institutions of democracy, rule of law and property rights in tatters (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012; Fukuyama, 2014). The obvious consequence of this is that the citizens in Africa, like their counterparts in the rest of the world, are bemoaning their collective fate in this drama of 'political decay' and drumming up support for political revolution (Meredith, 2005; Fukuyama, 2014).

In effect, the unparalleled degree of global political consciousness in contemporary international politics is clearly and unequivocally attributable to the deteriorating economic conditions of the global society (Lockwood, 2020). We can prematurely conclude that the disparity, discrepancy, unevenness and inequality – in short – the asymmetrical nature of the global distribution of wealth, is a serious indictment on global political mis(governance) cum failure of political leadership. The paper, therefore, grapples with the following questions: How can the global and regional governance institutions be strengthened to hold national governments accountable and make them more responsive to peoples' aspirations? How can the 'shadow state' in Africa be recaptured from political demagogues? To what can we attribute the stark failure of global political governance and how can this trend be arrested?

To answer these questions, the work will rely heavily on secondary data and supported by a qualitative review of existing literature. The paper is structured into six parts. After the introduction, the second section discusses the theoretical and conceptual issues on Marxian Political Economy, Political Consciousness and Political Governance. The third part examines the Prelude to Global Political Consciousness. The fourth segment surveys Political Consciousness and Governance in its Emerging Forms globally and the fifth part contextualizes Africa's Brand of Political-Economy. The last part concludes the work and proffers policy-relevant recommendations.

2. Theoretical and Conceptual Discourse

This section illuminates the key concepts in the paper within the context of theoretical and conceptual discourse. Marxian Political Economy, Political Consciousness and Political Governance are described to suit the view adopted in the paper.

Marxian Political Economy

Political economy substantiates the nexus between politics and the economy. It explains how economic forces influence political choices and vice versa. Popular in the political-economic field is the Marxian political economy which renders a classical and critical analysis of the workings of capitalism.

The Marxian political economy examines broadly the working of the economic factors such as the mode of production, factors of production, the productive forces, the class structure and the social relations of production and its subsequent effect on the political affairs of a polity. For Marx, the economy represents the sub-structure while politics, law, religion, among others, represent the superstructure (Amin, 1974; Ake, 1981).

Coming from the standpoint of the materialist, Marx iterated that it is not the consciousness of man that determines his social being, but on the contrary, it is the material existence of man that decides his consciousness. In other words, the physical conditions of man, the socio-economic realities and experiences of man, shape his consciousness generally, but particularly, his political consciousness; since man is a politically conscious being (Appadorai, 1968). Marx argues that the material condition is best articulated in terms of economic realities which divide the society into distinct levels of (class) consciousness. Hence for Marx the first consciousness that is acquired and resultant of economic conditions is class consciousness- the consciousness of the have and have not (Buzuev, 1986; Kulikov, 1989).

Political consciousness for Marx represents an individual's awareness of politics, a person's political sense of others and an understanding of one's true position in history (Ahmed-Gamgam, 2018). This consciousness only originates in tandem with the socio-economic realities that surround the individual.

Taking as correct as possible, we adopt the Marxian political thought with a strict focus on Marx popular assertions on consciousness to examine the emergence of political consciousness among the restive global population given the current socio-economic realities in the global political economy.

Political Consciousness

The term political consciousness describes the process of awareness of the individual regarding the political processes and activities in society. It entails a gradual or holistic comprehension of power and inequality in social, political and economic systems, relations and values (Miller, 2002:2). However, the socio-political, economic relations and value systems are not static but are governed by the law of constant motion - which is often dialectical in nature. Thus, political consciousness itself is

always in motion, 'a procedural and contradictory motion' and not a linear motion (Filho, 2018:10). This reveals that political consciousness cannot be seen as an absolute phenomenon and that the comprehension or self-awareness of the society is not without dialectics (Filho, 2018:10). Thus, Valerie Miller (2002:2) describes political consciousness as a process of conflict and growth that can be liberating and painful at the same time.

Miller (2002:2) opines that political consciousness involves the questioning of current (political) power dynamics and demagoguery as well as constructing new forms of more widespread and transformative power that improve human life and forges bonds of cooperation across cultural, racial, ethnic, and religious differences. According to Miller (2002), viewed from the perspective of social justice advocacy, political consciousness represents a tool and an objective. As a tool, it serves as the motivating elements of critical analysis of power dynamics on many levels. And as an objective, it entails the basis of a consistent and informed citizen participation necessary to hold powerful interests accountable and transparent. This assertion reveals the inextricable nexus between political consciousness and political participation and socialization.

Tellingly, one only becomes aware of the political process through the mechanism of political socialization and he/she is, thus able to participate in such a process. Hence, political socialization and participation form the high point of political consciousness. By extension, this means that political consciousness also affects the legitimacy of the government. Ahmed-Gamgum (2018) puts this connection succinctly when he defined political consciousness as mutual consciousness, observation, justification, recognition and appreciation of rights. It is reciprocal recognition of both rights of government and the people and it produces confidence in the relationships and unity of the State system.

Miller (2002) identified four levels of political consciousness, to include, a consciousness that accepts the roles of political subordination as natural, a questioning type of consciousness, an analytical consciousness, and an active-critical consciousness. The first type of consciousness is passive in nature and accepts the political status-quo as natural. The second is less passive as it raises the question on the why of the political status quo. The third is active as it goes beyond the asking of why to developing an analytical mind, (first by naming and analyzing

oppressive situations). The fourth is more active as it delves into a more detailed and critical analysis of the defect of the political status-quo while taking actions with others to transform them (Miller, 2002).

Political Governance

Kjaer (2004) defined governance in systemic terms as focusing on both the input side, concerned with democratic procedures and the output side, which is concerned with efficient and effective institutions. It represents a fine interplay between the three-basic component of the society (the government, the institutions, and the people). Thus, for Abe (2010), governance comprises the intricate mechanisms, processes, relationships and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interest, exercise their rights and obligations and mediate their difference. In a similar vein, the Commission on Global Affairs (1995:2) defined governance as the aggregation of methods by which individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. It is a persistent process of accommodating conflicting or diverse interests and pursuing co-operative actions as the case may be.

Governance cannot be separated from the political system and government, for the hallmark of effective government and the political system finds expression in governance. Thus, political governance rightly conceived is the totality of the process of conducting the affairs of a polity. It takes into account the way the people articulate their interest and pass it on to the government and how the government, in turn, provides the solution through its various institutions.

3. Prelude to Global Political Consciousness

Political consciousness as stated earlier is not an absolute phenomenon; rather, it represents a gradual or holistic comprehension of power and inequality in social, political, and economic systems, relations, and values (Miller, 2002:2). Thus, political consciousness itself is always in motion, 'a procedural and contradictory motion' and not a linear motion. (Filho, 2018:10). This implies that there are usually variations in the procedural and contradictory progression of political consciousness across space and time. This section seeks to examine the foundational basis of political consciousness in the 21st century.

The end of the Cold War ushered in a new political landscape in the global political arena. It brought an end to the bipolar world order and its attendant dual ideological divide. It presented America and its liberal democratic ideology as the singular mode of doing politics (Fukuyama, 1992). This period ushered in a new form of globalization or Americanization as expressed by some scholars. In sustaining its position as the leading global hegemon, America and her allies emphasized on the beneficial and inevitable need to adopt the neoliberal democratic model because it was believed it would better socio-economic and political life of every political system (Fukuyama, 2012; Deneen, 2018). Particularly, the U.S. canvassed the core socialist state (Russia) to democratize in exchange for its terminating the NATO's expansion eastwards and supporting the unification of Germany. This era marked a new phase of political consciousness across the globe as countries and peoples tried to acclimatize with the new wave of global democratization (Fukuyama, 2014).

However, the economic breakthrough of certain emerging economies (The Asian tigers, BRICS among others) questioned the model suggested by the global hegemon. The economic development of these countries was not tied strictly to the political-economic neo-liberal democratic dictates suggested by the hegemon. And it birthed a new form of international system sufficiently described by scholars as a multi-polar world order with different centres of power (Ciobanu & Bejou, 2009; Cooper and Fledes, 2013; Thakur, 2014).

The rise of these power centres pigeon-holed the argument by the advanced democratic states, that a neo-liberal democratic mode of operation guaranteed economic success and self-development of the individuals in the global system. While some of these emerging economic powers deviate slightly or completely from the neo-liberal democratic model, their citizens enjoy a reasonable level of self-fulfilment and development, whereas the contrast is observed in some developed and developing economies where strict adherence to neo-liberal democratic model is observed (Satgar, 2009). For example, in the Brexit debacle in the United Kingdom, some of the citizens question the practices of the government and its subordination to the European Union, arguing that membership and observation of the dictates of the EU have further decapitated the potentials of the Kingdom, it has taken away the jobs of its indigenous citizens and has caused social inequality to escalate (Brown, 2015; Aje and Chidozie, 2020). The same expression is framed

in the heart of many Americans as evidenced by the support given to President Trump and his decisions regarding immigrants and certain international organizations (Fukuyama, 2018).

In essence, as have been alluded to earlier, there has been an unprecedented level of discomfort among citizens of many countries with the status quo (Zhu, 2017; Andretta, 2018; Gold, 2018; Hughes, 2018; Valentim, 2018; Brien, 2019; Uestebay, 2019). Recent challenges like terrorism, poverty, unemployment, climate change, the migrant crisis, disease pandemic and social inequality have assumed global dimensions and efforts to combat them have succeeded only partially. These issues have also awakened the consciousness of the greater number of the global citizens towards the way and manner of doing politics; thus inciting 'the politics of resentment and demand for dignity' (Fukuyama, 2018). Hence, as argued by Marx (1859), the present material conditions of the global citizens have steered a new wave of political consciousness among many of the global citizens, particularly in Africa.

To be sure, the situation in some African countries is more pathetic (Taylor, 2016; Samatar, 2019). The character of the post-colonial state in Africa, accentuated by neoliberal economic models of the North with its concomitant primitive accumulation of capital has driven a wedge between African governments and African peoples (Amuwo, 2010; Onah and Nwali, 2018). Tellingly, Rostron (cited in Amuwo, 2010:4) summarized the nefarious outcome of Africa's engagement with the North as a minority approximately 20% of the world's population, which consumes more than 80% of the world's resources. This minority, according to him, are not about to give this surplus up or share the privileges with others. He concluded that the developed world has Africa in a neck-lock and not about to let go, because there are profits to be made from poverty.

Indeed, the hostile conditionalities imposed by the agents of these neoliberal Bretton Woods institutions (The World Bank and IMF) and their harmful economic prescriptions, in active collaboration with predatory African elites, have made life bitter for the majority of the African people, leading Amuwo (2010:4) to conclude that there is a fundamental sense in which core states and their agents are making a fortune out of the unfortunate plight of peripheral countries. The unfortunate result of this economic sabotage by these international cooperation partners of Africa and their co-conspirators is de-

legitimization of governance and leadership deficit in the continent (Obi, 2009; Obi, 2015; Taylor, 2016).

4. Tying the Thread: Political Consciousness and the Politics of (Mis)Governance in its Emerging Forms

Political consciousness and the politics of (mis)governance have become umbilical cords that bind the trends in global politics. Osman (2010) observes that governance entails the function of government in charting the pathway for the activities of economic development and in making enlightened choices about the distribution of benefits, as well as the character of the relationship between the government and governed. In essence, the general positive attributes of governance include accountability, effectiveness, rule of law, popular participation, protection of property rights, trust, responsible and equitable administration at all levels of government (Osman, 2010; Gberevbie, 2013; Gberevbie *et al*, 2014). If these dividends of good governance are missing, or unjustly redistributed in a given society, political mis-governance sets in leading to a crisis in leadership (Onah and Nwali, 2018). This explains the magnitude of global political protests across different regions, itself an indication of political consciousness by a growing army of the restive population seeking economic redress.

The fundamental cause of this growing wave of political consciousness is rooted in the politics of governance. Commonwealth of Australia (2005) views political governance in relation to administering over the State and instituting a culture of accountability to the people. This should include among others, the process of electing leaders to office, the interface between the political and bureaucratic arms of government, the prospect of oversight functions, and the capacity of the civil society to influence the quality of governance (cited in Osman, 2010). Thus, the ethos of governance is inclusion and cooperation among a variety of role-players sharing a common goal (Piper, 2007), in a complex web of diffused and dynamic political processes, often resulting in conflicts of interests.

Accordingly, the emergence of governance poses significant challenges for global politics and international relations. In a study of group consciousness and voting behaviour among Latinos/Hispanic (Mexican) and Asian Americans (India) described as multi-ethnic newcomer groups in the Southern United States, Vidal (2016) identifies

immigration politics and group consciousness as major factors that influence electoral politics in the US. Despite the understandable differences in how migration politics affect these groups of minorities, Vidal (2016) further argues that both multi-ethnic groups of voters are expressing a deep concern for their ethnic communities at the polls, underscoring the crucial linkage between immigration politics and group consciousness. He concludes that state-level political contexts are not only integral to the understanding of minority political influence in the US but other similar multi-cultural societies in the international system.

Similarly, Ambe-Uva (2011) in his study of another minority group in Central-Northern Nigeria avers that the long-standing grievances fueled by modernization and economic regression together with democratization have brought to fore the contentious issue of indigene and settler in various African countries. Using the Jos crisis, in Plateau state of Central Nigeria as a point of departure, he contends that the absence of good governance constitutes the root cause of the crisis. Consequently, he notes that in the absence of good governance, the political elites resort to ethnic, religious and regional appeal, thereby inflaming primordial identities of the masses. To be sure, this form of identity-based politics thrives in an already-made patron-client relationship of the Nigerian State, where loyalties to sub-nationalist arrangements are pervasive. Ambe-Uva (2011) further observes that the hotly debated issues about the legitimacy of the Nigerian constitution provides a ready rationale for institutionalized violence underpinning identity-based politics and recommends that only a leadership that is transparent, accountable and rises above primordial identities will be able to enhance the peaceful coexistence of both settlers and indigenes in Jos. Ambe-Uva (2017) has conducted other studies to demonstrate the increasing wave of political restiveness fueled by natural resource governance in Africa.

Drawing from the experience in Taiwan, Chou *et al* (2015) present an interesting relationship between party politics and the development of political democratization in the country. According to them, the contradictions inherent in the divisive party politics in Taiwan have complicated governance issues at national and transnational levels. Accordingly, these fragmented processes of party politics and political governance have posed a legitimacy question on political institutions of that country. Similarly, DeVotta (2014) regrets that despite the early democratic experience of Sri Lanka in 1948, following the end of World

War 11, successive leaders in the country squandered this opportunity by embracing ethnocentric policies that disempowered the minority group and empowered the majority group of the population. He argues that these ethnocentric politics caused the civil war in the country, and further fragmented the political, economic and social institutions, leading to attendant political decay, malgovernance and democratic regression.

In Cambodia, the politics of misgovernance continues to trail the political economy of aid and development of that country. According to Ear (2007), despite more than five billion dollars in aid granted to Cambodia in 2007 alone, infant and child mortality, inequality, poverty and corruption continue to undermine and overwhelm the institutions of governance in the country. She concludes that international aid regime, typified by the Official Development Assistance (ODA) has weakened the institutions of governance in Cambodia, encouraged massive corruption in the already impoverished and conflict-torn country and denied the teeming population of the dividends of good governance for a very long period.

The trajectory of Islamic politics in Indonesia has been associated with the political economy of the state. Hadiz and Robison (2012) argue that the advance of the market economy and the pressures of globalization are singularly responsible for the religious conflagrations in Indonesia. They deny the prevailing idea in the literature that the Islamic politics in Indonesia is a product of conflict over ideas, doctrine or culture or the institutional requisites of authoritarianism or democracy. In effect, Hadiz and Robison (2012) contend that small conservative interests of the ruling class in active collaboration with the strangulating market-driven economic policies underpin the class and religious structures of Indonesia failing political governance.

5. Africa's Brand of Political Governance

Africa presents a compelling case of political (mis)governance leading to a failure of political leadership (Southall and Comminos, 2009). The very nature of the postcolonial state in Africa is totalistic, creating a fertile ground for extractive political and economic institutions (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). This is rooted in the triad factors of slavery, colonialism and civil wars that feature prominently in Africa's Political and economic history, making the continent amenable to issues of misgovernance and political consciousness. In the legacy of these triad

factors rest the burden of the continent over many decades and still feed contemporary centrifugal forces in postcolonial African political economy. To be sure, the triad issues alluded to above, have been persistent and overarching – if not always explicit features of the continent's external links. Thus, the above triad forces can be conveniently collapsed into Africa's experiment with her international development partners and the consequences of such engagements.

Indeed, issues in Africa's political and economic development have been much debated by scholars of African politics (Ake 1981 & 1996; Offiong, 1983; Joseph, 1983; Onimode, 2000; Meredith, 2005; Mazrui, 1986 & 2006; Amuwo, 2008; Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012; Herbst & Mills, 2012). Moss (2007:37-39) concisely summarizes the narratives on African political-economic developments by identifying four major factors that support the slow pace of Africa's political and economic development: power concentration in states that are fractured and weak; personal rule by powerful individuals that in turn undermines effective bureaucracies; patronage politics and other related themes like clientelism, prebendalism or neopatrimonialism which reinforce the uneven distribution of commonwealth; and predatory regimes which underscore blatant abuse of power through an unbridled waste of public funds. From West Africa through East, North and Southern Africa, the legacies of African states have remained that of a continent in regression making her more vulnerable to the politics of international capital (Southall, 2009). Fukuyama (2014) singles out Nigeria, a pivotal state in Africa and presents a graphic image of Africa's brand of political economy in the contemporary international system. He argued that:

When we turn to the African country of Nigeria, however, we observe clientelism and corruption of an entirely different order of magnitude and, correspondingly, one of the most tragic development failures in the contemporary world (Fukuyama, 2014:217).

Amuwo (2010) argues that the post-cold war internationalization of the State has been very hurtful to Africa. He contends that the state has become more responsive to multinational and international capital at the expense of very pressing national and regional development issues. He identifies three factors that have strengthened the subordinate role of the African state vis-à-vis contemporary capitalist globalization. These are neoliberal democracy; international aid; and free trade. These market-

driven reforms have continued to define Africa's development path amid protectionist policies of the advanced economies.

It is this very double standard by the developed countries in their political and economic relations with Africa that compelled the latter's renewed relations with Asia, Latin America and indeed, other Southern partners in the newfound South-South Cooperation regimes. While some scholars have expressed optimism about the new South-South relations concerning Africa's political and economic development (Schoeman, 2011; Sylla, 2014; Obi, 2015), others have warned that the pattern of relations between Africa and emerging countries from the Global South, notably China and India conveys an idea of sub-imperialism reminiscent of the mercantilist character of Africa's relations with the Global North (Cornelissen, 2009; Kornegay and Landsberg, 2009; Naidu, 2009; Shaw *et al*, 2009; Agwu, 2016). These later groups of scholars attribute the sub-imperialist thesis to Chinese and India's unrelenting and aggressive quest for Africa's resources to service their growing population and industrial output (Melber, 2009). This development has been popularized to mark a historically important global shift in production and manufacturing from global North to global South, reordering the global economic landscape (Gray and Gills, 2016:559)

Incidentally, the forces of capital accumulation are beginning to awaken political consciousness in the global South giving rise to disputations among civil society groups about the economic wellbeing of the population of the countries affected. Gray and Gills (2016) point out the dangers of this 'resistance from below' in that:

...the strategies pursued by rising powers are often subject to contestation from below. Whatever may be the view or judgment concerning the intentions and actions of reigning governments of the global South, it can neither be denied nor ignored that 'resistance from below' is manifesting itself increasingly and globally. Myriad forms of often militant social contestation to the practices of global capital developmentalism have arisen among labour, peasants, youth, NGOs, and social movements, civil society and indigenous peoples across the global South, sometimes also bridging with social forces in the global North in common cause. These popular struggles are very much at the centre of global politics, though sometimes less visible than state-to-state relations. Most of these movements are social responses to the domestic and globally organized appropriation of land and resources towards the ends of capital accumulation and economic growth models (Gray and Gills, 2016:563).

It is evident that Africa's restive population in conjunction with their counterparts from the established economies, as well as emerging states, indeed 'the wretched of the earth' (Fanon, 1963) are intertwined in the same global capital accumulation structures carefully erected, sustained and managed by the dual government machinery of the developed and a few of the developing countries in an unholy alliance (Southall and Comminos, 2009). The question that begs for an answer is: where will the world population turn to for answers to their legitimate aspirations?

6. a. Conclusion

This paper consistently advanced the view, supported strongly by Marxian political-economic bent, that political consciousness is a direct consequence of the material condition of the restive global population, intensified lately by the massive failure of governance at different levels. It traced the origin of the current precarious state of global politics and identified political misgovernance as the root cause of demonstrations and near government collapse in many parts of the world. It argued that the failure of governance at various national levels is traceable to the brand of political economy encouraged by international political and economic institutions inherited after the end of the Second World War (Bretton Woods Institutions) and their capital accumulation of profit around the world. It singled out Africa as the most vulnerable, indeed, susceptible to these agents of imperialism, contending that the continent's international cooperation partners have shaped Africa's brand of politics. The inevitable result is the underdevelopment of Africa's development. Africa's case is made more perilous because of the current conspiracy between the old agents of imperialism from the established/traditional countries of the North and the new agents of imperialism from the emerging/rising countries of the East in the 'new scramble' for Africa's resources. These latter groups of countries, masquerading under various South-South constellations have further fed the appetite of Africa's political elites whose 'politics of the belly' (Bayart, 1993) have brought misery, pain and suffering to a larger percentage of African people.

b. Recommendations

The complete restructuring and more democratization of global economic architectures, represented by agents of imperialism like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organization is long overdue. This will make the international financial system more transparent, encouraging fair trade practices and other international transactions. Similarly, contemporary global and regional governance institutions must redeem their image by intensifying their focus on issues of common concern such as global climate debates, poverty, starvation and disease, which are the major culprits of global unrest and crises.

African countries must take advantage of the new wave of South-South cooperation at both bilateral and multilateral levels and stamp their feet very strongly on these platforms, not as recipients of aids but as strategic development partners. Before African states can compete globally, their leaders must summon the political will to replace their extractive political institutions with more inclusive ones, thus, opening more space for political participation and social mobilization. To be sure, some African states whose domestic politics are plagued largely by weak democratic institutions and bureaucracies must be replaced with democratic developmental institutions that will engender strong and competitive states on the continent. In the long run, African people will be better for it.

Finally, the African Union (AU) governments must move beyond rhetoric and reposition the regional organization for the realities of 21st-century international politics. In essence, the AU must transition from being widely known as the organization for African governments to becoming the organization for African peoples. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), a mutually agreed framework voluntarily acceded to by the member states of the AU must remedy its badly injured reputation of rubber-stamping the policies and politics of AU's member states and hold African governments more accountable to their citizens. By so doing, perhaps, the regional institution will regain credibility and win the confidence and support of the African people.

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