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Public Policy, Leadership Initiative and African Development

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Abstract:
Over the years African counties have frantically pursued policies and programmes with publicised objective of development. However, development has eluded the continent mainly because of stealing of public funds, mismatched policies, pretentious elections and, erosion of indigenous leadership. This article argued in favour of policy effectiveness, unchallenged ingenuity, credible election and, a justice system as catalysts to spark African development in this 21st century and beyond. This article insisted that African development is a function of leadership initiative. This conclusion was reached through a systematic review of development paradigms, neglected route to African development and, effective leadership initiative's influence on African development. Data for the study came mainly from published sources. It was suggested in the article that Africa still has a chance to develop if leaderships responsibly match skills with resources to meet citizen's needs. This is possible.

Keywords: Policy, leadership, Africa, development, unchallenged, initiative

1. Introduction

Development quest of the African continent has been a major concern of not just Africans but also African friends. At many forums where the endemic underdevelopment of the African continent is discussed, almost surely, it is found out to be rooted in poor leadership. The idea of using public policies as instrument to drive the development of states is gaining momentum among development planners and scholars. This is especially so since Pressman and Wildavsky brought policy implementation to the centre stage in the early nineteen seventies. How may public policies be used by Africans to drive African development? In any case, have Africans attempted to develop Africa? Since public policies are meant to address societal concerns, African states since independence - which occurred mainly in the 1960s - have frantically pursued multifarious and at times dialectical policies aimed at aimed to lifting Africa out of almost endemic poverty. Though the countries are varied in their historical, cultural, minerals, and human capitals, their attempts can be fairly grouped into import reduction stage, strangled development stage and, incapacitated conscious stage (Bassey, 2012). The reasoning here is that, at the early years of independence, African States established industries which produced basic goods that were hitherto imported from Europe, America and Asia. The people were happy. At strangled development stage, established industries showed signs of distress and in most cases the industries dissolved. The result was a gradual dissipation of development mist across the African continent. Today, Africans are conscious of their underdeveloped situation, but have been incapacitated by a "club" of local and foreign leaders who through time kept them in expectation of development through various ostracised policies. Africa's economy is reeling and the people are in penury. That perhaps, explain why the joint "UNIDO & UNCTAD (2011) African Economic Development Review" put the growth rate of real output at 2.6 percent in 2009 from 5.2 percent in 2000-2006. All through these decades, policies of governments no matter how lofty, have failed to bring about expected quantum jump in the living standard of the average African - basic amenities, personal freedoms and a regime of justice. Amidst see of abject poverty, African leaders continue to live in luxury and pursue grandiose policies privately developed or handed down by Western beneficiaries like the Brettonwoods (Aaron, 2011). A culmination of dashed hopes of decent living on the people's side in the midst of biting policies pursued by a cartel of leaders in Tunisia for instance, sparked in 2010 what has come to be known as the Arab Spring. Notwithstanding the grim picture painted above, effective public policies can spark development in the African continent. Africa can learn from the BRICKS countries - Brazil, Russia, India, China, Singapore and, Korea - which attained commendable development partly due to well articulated and effective implemented policies, characterised by unwavering purpose and commitment, leadership support, communication and information management skills and clear prioritising of what needs to be done and what can be done (Gelase, Mutahaba, and Andax, 2012). Development is human. Freely recruited leadership can match ingenuity with necessity to trickle development in Africa.

2. Review of Concepts

2.1. Leadership

In the words of P. F. Drucker quoted in Pittinger, (1996), leadership is lifting of people's vision to a higher sight, the raising of their performance to a higher standard, the building of their personalities beyond its normal limitations. Leadership is the "process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish the shared objectives" (Yukl, 2002: 7). Leadership is the "ability to envision a goal or needed change, to take initiative or action to achieve the goal, to take responsibility for outcomes, and to work well with, relate to, and communicate effectively with others" (Edelman *et al.*, 2004: 4). All these views have something in common, namely that leadership is about the ability to work with people to achieve a purpose. This common factor as noted by Akpakpan (2012) makes leadership central to the performance of groups, organisations, or countries, and it is the reason social scientists invest enormous intellectual resources to try to understand and explain the phenomenon. So far, leadership involves the leader and the led. Leadership therefore entails winning confidence of the led through problem solving skills that brings about change to satisfy the needs of the led and objectives of the state (Bassey, 2012).

2.2. Public Policy

Public, in this paper has to do with the realm of government's influence which is different from the private sphere of influence. Policy on the other hand should be understood in the sense used by Frank and Odigie (2012) namely "a programme or guidelines (bill or proposal), which has gone through the entire gamut of policy-making (parliament) and has been translated into law in order to guide the nation towards specific objectives captured in the vision of the leader". Let's merge both concepts now. Public policy is whatever governments choose to do or not to do (Dye, 1972:18). Jerkins (1978), sees public policy as a set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where those decisions should, in principle, be within the power of interrelated decisions. James Anderson's exposition is apt. Public policy is "a course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem of or matter of concern" (Anderson, 1975:3). In Eminue (2005), public policy is conceived as a statement of the goals and objectives of government in relation to a particular subject and the description of the strategies by which the goals and objectives are to be achieved. These suggest that public policy relate to a special realm in which its effect is expected to have broad application to the citizens. Therefore, it is a coordinate proposal and framework of action by a public authority to address societal concerns. Effective public policy has to be people oriented. It may be initiated by government, but its beneficial effect must be felt by the people. Notice how public policy is expected to be driven in the model adapted here under:
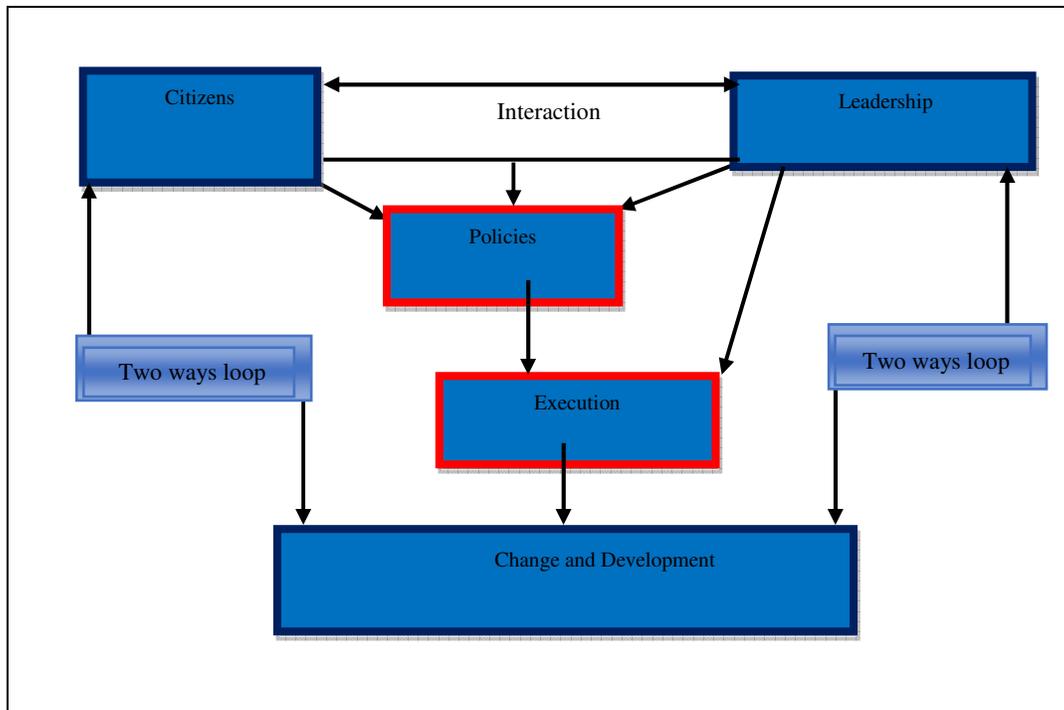

Figure 1: Policy Effectiveness
Source: Bassey, 2012

In this model, public policy emanates from either government or the citizens or a combination of both. The leadership or government execute policies which bring about change and development. This Change and development impact on both citizens and government, which increases their interaction and cooperation.

2.3. Development

As a concept, development can be at individual and/or group levels. Emphasis will be on group as societal tangible and intangible process of matching ingenuity with skills to provide goods and service to satisfy man's needs. Whether from the Marxist or liberal divides, development must take care of all concerned. In the view of Rodney (1972;10), "development implies an increase capacity to regulate both internal and external relationships." From the liberal perspective, Gerald Meire defines development as the "maximisation of the growth of the gross national products through capital accumulation and industrialisation" (1989;5). These are just a pinch of the sea of available views on development. As one can quickly noticed when reviewing development literature, writer's rush to define the concept is more competitive than effort to initiate development strategies. And these efforts tend to limit it definitions to economic development at the expense of other key ingredients of development. That is why Peet and Hartwick (2009:1), is apt. In development, "all the modern advances in science and technology, in democracy and social organisation, in rationalised ethics and values, fuse into the single humanitarian project of deliberately and cooperatively producing a better world for all". This expository makes more sense because it has taken into cognisance the composite nature of development. Importantly too, it recognises the critical role of science and technology in development equation.

2.4. Africa

Africa is a well known centre of ancient civilization, but almost left out in modern development. That may be the reason the World Book Encyclopaedia described it as the Dark Continent. It is now understood that the encyclopaedia did not mean 'African darkness' but rather, 'European darkness' -Europe's lack of knowledge about a largely unexplored continent (Awake, 1994). So it is not contradiction that Africa possibly derives its name from the Latin word *aprica*, which means "sunny'. As a geography, the African Union Character (formerly Organisation of African Unity, OAU) defines Africa to include the Continental African States, Madagascar and other islands surrounding Africa (Eminue, 2007). In similar vein, DuBios (1987) notes that Africa has been described as an inverted saucer, the centre of world continents, including Madagascar; Africa is three times the size of Europe, four times the size of United States of America. Africa measures about 5,000m long and 4,600m wide. It is the only continent which both the equator and the Greenwich Meridian cut through. African population is the second largest of world continents with well over 1billion (UNHABITAT, 2010). So much can be said about Africa.

3. Development Paradigms

Throughout Development Literature, the search for an acceptable theory seems elusive. This challenge is further compounded by a deep divide of theorists and writers into liberal and Marxist schools. A third group, though not very popular, have emerged with the objective of bridging the divide.

Liberal or modernisation theories concentrate on capital accumulation through economic growth. Rostow stages of economic growth list "the traditional society, the precondition for take-off, the take-off stage, the drive to modernity, and the age of high mass consumption" as necessary protocol for development (1963). If applied strictly, African economies cannot fit into Rostow's model, because in South Africa and Egypt, the steel industry is in advance stage, yet poverty and underdevelopment is the lot of many. In most of Sub-Saharan Africa, the "traditional stage" does not fit in, because, the masses though agrarian, are aware of its capacity to transform, but is inhibited by poor leadership. Another liberal theory of development is institutional theory. Proposed by Black (1966), the theory holds that in a modernising economy, there is need for good leadership and that even when this exists, the leadership is confronted with the problem of creating modernising institutions given the traditional nature of these societies. It is reasoned in the theory that challenge of modernity, consolidation of modernising leadership, economic and social transformation, and integration of society are the core issues of developing a society. True to institutional theory, good leadership is needed to drive the collective resolve of a people to great heights. However, the theory is flawed by insisting that traditional nature of societies inhibits leadership ability to modernise them. Rather, underdevelopment of African societies, for instance, is a function of *deficit of intent* of leadership. Deficit of intent portrays a leader's projection of a popular objective with inner resolve to cheat. Therefore, liberal postulation is not sufficient as a framework of this analysis.

The theoretical and philosophical foundations of underdevelopment as opposite of development could be traced to the works of V.I Lenin, Karl Marx, and Frederick Engels (Okereke and Ekpe, 2002). Works like the Communist Manifesto, the Critique of Political Economy and, Imperialism; The Highest Stage of Capitalism, provides the lenses through which the Marxist sees development. Marxist theories of development is that modernity yields high materials standards of living for a few at the expense of the majority - inequality causes poverty - which the environment is degraded-, nature destroyed, culture debased, again to satisfy the consumptive whims of the richest of the world's people (Peet and Hartwick, 2009). The central theme of this theory is rationally planned and controlled development process through collective ownership of production process. Issues of leadership succession through fair and open competition usually flaw this school as most states adopting it - China, Cuba, and Venezuela tends to restrict individual freedoms. Because of this observation, it is reasonable to look for a theory that can bridge the gap between poverty induced capitalism and freedom bridged Marxism.

Bridging the divide; "a theory of critical modernism". The proponents of critical modernism are Richard Peet and Elaine Harwick. Critical modernist developmentalism gains insight from the Marxist, Postructural, and Feminist critiques of modernity, but it holds on to potential, rather than the practice of contemporary development. As noted by Peet and Hartwick, (2009), critical modernism entails a critique of capitalist power systems in socialist terms of class ownership of productive resources, in feminist terms of male dominance, and in postructural terms of hegemony of elite imaginaries and discourse. The theory distrusts any elite, whether it is entrepreneurial, scientific, racial, bureaucratic etc., in favour of the views of the oppressed peoples of all kinds - from peasant social

movement, to indigenous organizations, to women organising for the reproductive rights, to working-class movements. Critical modernism favours alliances that draw together the powers of the oppressed majority in countering what would otherwise be the overwhelming power of the exploiting minority. Notwithstanding the above, the theory remains modern in terms of favouring a basically rational scientific attitude toward the world; that is, requiring some kind of evidence before believing rather than accepting purely on faith, as with pre-modern understanding, or denying any validity to evidential truth, as with much of poststructuralism. Yes, if applied in the context of each African State's pressing needs, critical modernism can lead the way to developing the underdeveloped societies. But this may not happen if extant leaders and institutional structure persist.

4. Deficit of Intent to African Development

By deficit of intent, reference is to express objectives as opposed to inner resolve to deceive. In the African context, deficit of intent can be traced to colonialism. Recall that the ostracized objectives of colonialism included enlightenment, development, and religious affinity. But at the Berlin conference where no African was invited, fourteen states, including the United States, superimposed their domains on the African continent. By the time Africa was left to breath from the mouth, it had acquired a legacy of fragmentation and underdevelopment that could neither be eliminated nor made to work satisfactorily (Blij, Peter, and Muller 2003). According to Alvin, (1971; 453), " the European colonial powers shared one objective in their African colonies; exploitation". Now in the hands of local inheritors, the continent has not fared better. In Nigeria for instance, deficit of intent played out when the House of Representatives intended to investigate fraud in the oil subsidy regime (objective) only for the chairman of the house ad hoc committee Hon. Farouk Lawan to turn around and collect bribe amounting to $163,000 (N25,265,000) (inner resolve) from an oil dealer involved in the scam. In France, the Supreme Court upheld judicial investigation on complaints lodged by civil society organisation (Transparency International and SHERPA) against three African presidents and their relatives (Denis Sassou-Ngues of the republic of Congo; Teodoro Obiang of Equatorial Guinea and Omar Bongo of Gabon) on their acquisition of property and luxury goods in France that are worth far more than their official earnings (Panth, 2010). The initiator of the legal battle Minta Gregory of Gabon was particularly worried because the diverted funds was meant for vital drugs which could have saved avoidable deaths in his country and others as well. The World Bank acknowledged in the same report that every $100 million recovered could fund full immunisation for 4 million children or provides water connections for some 250,000 households. Ebegbulem (2009), concludes that corruption is worrisome, but more worrisome is the fact that these stolen funds meant for economic development of the continent are not invested in Africa to create employment for the unemployed, but are taken away to consolidate development of already developed societies. More so, aid packages meant for African rural poor are diverted by the African *Rich* and Western collaborators. As noted by Ferhat Yunes, vice president of African Development Bank, only 7 percent of the international aid donated to alleviate hunger and poverty in Africa reaches the intended beneficiaries (Awake, 2005). This source added, far from aid being a charity, donor countries are getting a bargain. The influence and economic opportunities that both the West and East get from aid is cheap at a price; development aid had contributed to Africa's staggering $175, 000, 000, 000 debt. In truth, African development is pursued with deficit intent!

5. Neglected Route to African Development

Man is a depository of creative ideas needed to solve problems and meet new challenges. The process of figuring out how to shield oneself from blazing sun and freezing waters led to housing development. Entrepreneurs are ingenious in their ability to match skills with capital under challenging environment to create goods and services to fill the needs of the people and generate profit. Since Whites have conquered space, and Africans have dominated the long distant races for decades, except at the thirtieth Olympiad, development of the continent can be met. The route is unchallenged ingenuity. Unchallenged ingenuity is the untapped depository of creative ideas needed to spark African development. It is contended here that leadership initiative holds the key to unlocking development processes. Therefore, leadership recruitment is key to African development. In Nigeria, an ingenious leadership recruitment strategy was initiated and used in the 1993 general elections. Popularly called option A4, the Professor Humphrey Nwosu's model was cost effective, simple and credible. Why has Nigeria and indeed Africa neglected that novel route? In the 2011 general elections in Nigeria INEC spent well over N87.7 billion, yet the exercise was shrouded in misgiving. Even the president of the Nigerian senate David Mark, while approving the sum in August 2010 noted, "we have expressed reservations. Inspite of the reservations, we don't want to give INEC or anybody an excuse for not conducting credible elections in 2011". In the 1993 elections, a two-party system was adopted. Two-party system allows for keen competition and clear-cut options before the electorate (Ikpe, 2000). This system minimises secrecy as results can be seen on the queue even before they are announced. Also, delays experienced in arrival of materials and the cost of printing materials are almost eliminated. This point needs no emphasis, because Nigerians for instance, appreciate the politics of "arrival" of so called "sensitive" and "non-sensitive" materials during elections. It is worthy to note that sanctity in leadership recruitment is the departure point for meaningful development in Africa. Once electoral system is cleansed, the other sectors will fall gradually in place, especially when leadership responsibly and accountably implement African centred policies. Within the sub-Saharan African states, Ghana is vast developing a creditable electoral management system. Understandably, obstacles are many to scale. Citizens must not wink at the derailing leaderships, but must consciously reflect on the path set by Tunisians in displacing a non performing leadership. Africa does not need strong men, but strong institutions.

6. Policy Initiative and African Development: The Nexus

Every policy, no matter how novel has to be implemented for its positive and/ or negative side to manifest. Implementation literally suggests carrying out, accomplishing, fulfilling, producing or completing a given task (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984). It is the responsibility of government to implement its policies. Funds must be appropriated, personnel assigned, and rules of engagement

established and other critical variables for policies to start work. These steps have been followed by African states, yet development remains elusive. What could be the problem? The answer lies in two key variables- leadership and effectiveness.
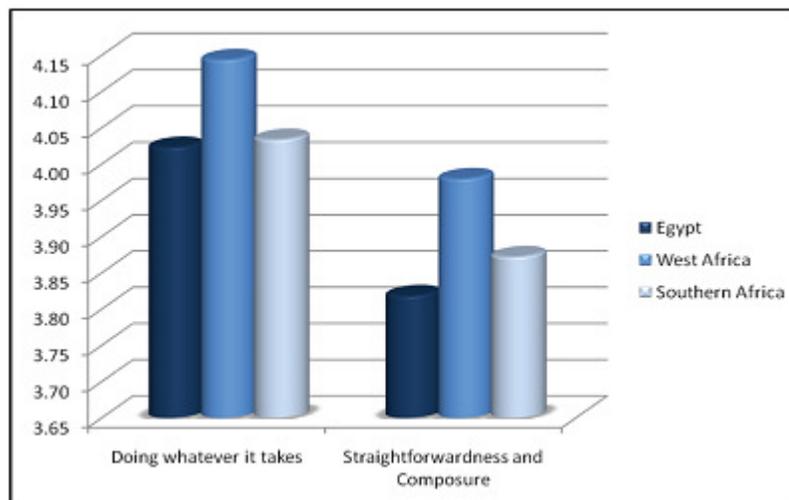

Figure 2: African Leaders on Regions
Source: Eckert and Rweyongoza: Centre for Creative Leadership

Leadership is the ability to anticipate, envision, and maintain flexibility and to empower others to create strategic change as necessary (Hitt, Ireland, and Hoskinson, 2007). Leadership is contextual, that is, defined by task to be accomplished. It emerges through skills of problem solving to win confidence of the led. The African leader therefore, is that person armed with skills to harness resources and meet African developmental needs. In this connection, if leadership is tied only to political "high office," that will be wrong. But if "office" represent sphere of authority, then success is by the corner. At the heart of any development sits leadership. Meanwhile Western leadership model may reject African development drives occasioned by environment. African leadership model like *Ubuntu* deserves fair trial. Literally Ubuntu translates as collective personhood and morality. Ubuntu is original to south Africa, and entails showing genuine concern for others, valuing their contributions, developing their strengths, coaching, mentoring and having positive expectations of what people can achieved together (Naidoo, 2008). As opposed to self, Ubuntu positively contributes to the sustenance and wellbeing of all people and institutions by promoting the common good of all people. Under this African leadership model, institutions triumph over individuals. Leaders are subject to leadership. Leadership is the collective will driven by leaders. Here, every action and inaction of government must be a responsibility of someone or some persons. Centre for Creative Leadership (2010) has done a regional based study on African leaders with the following outcome; Leaders in West Africa were seen as being more ready to "Do whatever it takes" to produce results.

They were also rated higher in "Straightforwardness and Composure," showing more calmness in times of change and crisis, contributing more to solving problems than to complaining about them, and tending to be patient and resilient when tempers run high. Regional Differences in Strengths when contrasting leaders in Egypt, West Africa and Southern Africa, we found they differ in many dimensions of leadership. The largest differences are displayed in figure 1.2

The suggestion here is that African leadership can break out of extant under underdevelopment shells. Where discipline is deemed necessary, it must be administered with dispatch. As leadership ticks, the led ticks, the whole system will tick.

Effectiveness on the other hand should be understood as the realisation of intended result. Since the commencement of free distribution of retroviral drugs in Kenya for instance, has mortality rate dropped? If so, by what percent? Effectiveness relate to the achievement of predetermined objectives. So far, it has been shown that policies of government emanates from leadership. And that these policies are effective if intended results are met. In this paper, result relates to development. Logically, have public policies in Africa trickle development?

In a lead study, Jooste and Fourie, (2009), found out a large gap between policy objectives and policy outcomes in South Africa. They concluded from findings that leaderships were better in formulating policies than implementing policies. Writing on Development Effective in Fragile States, Lockhart (2007), ask 'how effective are programmes and project designs to outcomes'? In Ghana, Dinye, (2006), acknowledges John Kufo's Government thoughtfulness in bringing forth the Rural Microfinance Scheme in support of the poor, but shows that low outreach, low recovery rate, and high annual loan loss rate have made the policy ineffective.
 Source: CCL 2012

Public policies in Nigeria have not fared better. Essien (2004), found out that poverty alleviation programme of the Obasanjo administration remained ineffective occasioned by Nigeria's mode of production. A Sector-Wide Approach Process (SWAP) to national health policy implementation in Uganda by Jeppsson (2004) revealed a gap between policy goals at the centre and outcomes at the periphery for reasons not limited to different values, absence of a common frame of reference, and lack of government commitment. Putting Africa on the spot, the "Addis Ababa Statement on Development Effectiveness" issued at the "3rd Africa Regional Meeting on Development Effectiveness organised under auspices of Africa Platform for Development (APDV) (2011), noted;

i.   For development efforts to be effective, Africa must achieve policy coherence between aid and non-aid policies for development.
ii. Africa must depart from traditional way of capacity building/gap filling (technical assistance and training) to a more comprehensive approaches of capacity development which address the need for transformation and result.
iii. The contribution of regional organisations to development effectiveness must incorporate the principles of complementarily, variable geometry, subsidiary and policy coherence at national, regional and continental levels.
iv. Principles, norms and value that underpin the capacity development agenda should take into account gender equality, social protection and human rights issues and should include accountable and transparent institutions.

7. Leadership and African Development for the Future

At this point, discerning eyes can clearly see that past and extant leaderships have failed to initiate let alone realise the developmental needs of Africa. What is the picture for tomorrow? It is an established fact that the past and the present provide raw data for predicting the future. Of course, a well-known dictum has it that the youth are future leaders. So, how prepared are African youths for leadership roles in the continent? Firstly, leaders of tomorrow are involved in examination malpractice across board. In Ghana, for instance, The West African Examination Council (WAEC), has sanctioned Ghana National High School (GHARMY) as examination centre for mass malpractice. Dosh (2012), reports that the students numbering about 600 contributed CH ₵ 100 each to a teacher for the deal to be sealed. On election rigging, Adenusi reports that youth are handy in politician's hands for various election crimes. Writing in National Mirror, Adenusi (2011) reports the arrest of Nigerian youths, including members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) for ballot stuffing and possessing already thumb printed ballot papers at Makama 'A' ward polling unit No.014, Yelwa Primary School of Adamawa State. Again, Nigerian youth drafted for National Service cheat on age just to qualify. Female corps members equally graft to beat the mandatory pregnancy test during orientation exercise. Those with early pregnancy and those who suspect it due to unprotected or casual sex, borrow urine from male corps members and present same for screening. That explains why you may see a corps member giving birth 5-8 months into the service year. Further, statistics from UNAIDS is disturbing. Of the estimated 10million youth worldwide with HIV, 63% are from Sub-Saharan Africa (UNAIDS, 2005). This paints a picture of a careless African youth as most may die from HIV/AIDS. To be sure, a Southern African proverb has it that the head can go only as far as the leg. That being the case, the future of African leadership and development without drastic intervention is at best uncertain.

8. Conclusion/ Recommendations

From the findings of this study, the following conclusions could be made;
i.   Underdevelopment of Africa is squarely rooted in poor leadership mostly from independence of states. The future of the continent is uncertain because the so called leaders of tomorrow (youths) have imbibed mostly corrupt vices from the extant leaders. Development and change in Africa is a function of leadership initiative through beneficial policies. This is grossly lacking in the continent.
ii. Deficit of intent exemplified by stealing of public funds by Africans, mostly delays development and the people must stand up to stop the looters through insistence on justice as initiated by Tunisians in 2010;
iii. Ineffective public policies across African states in the form of low loan recovery rate and lack of government commitment etc., pose serious obstacles to development efforts in the continent, but that effective policies must bring about beneficial change to both citizens and leadership as shown by fig.1 on effective policy regime.
iv. Adoption of the open ballot system and two-party system to recruit leaders in the continent will not only reduce cost, but is more transparent, fair, and credible. This is true as results can be seen on the queue even before counting and announcement of election results. A cleansed electoral system is the foundation for the development of other sub-systems and thus the entire continent.

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