POSTCOLONIAL, DECOLONIAL, AND TRANSCOLONIAL APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

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Abstract: In this article we attempt to think beyond the adversarial mode and imagine possibilities of concordance as a model for development in Africa. We explore the dynamics of adversariality and concordance through the stages of postcoloniality, decoloniality, and transcoloniality in African development. We argue for a shift to a reliance on concord as the basis for development. This happens to be rooted in the African notions of complementarity and harmony. We insist that theoretically and methodologically positive mindedness and a positive set of values that pursue colligation, complementarity, and overall concordance are more reliable drivers for development than the negativity that the adversarial model portends. This is part of the essence of the emerging transcolonial disposition towards accomplishing development and we think that it holds better prospects for development in Africa.

Keywords: adversariality, concordance, decoloniality, postcoloniality, transcoloniality

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Introduction

As Africa works towards accomplishing development, her quest is often permeated with a deep sense of revulsion accompanied with a tendency for confrontation and chaos. Often, this sense and tendency are expressed in two directions. One is towards the West and everything it represents due to its colonial conquest of Africa and the various levels of underdevelopment it is still perceived to sponsor in Africa. The second is towards ourselves as Africans, suggesting that fellow Africans are co-responsible for the underdevelopment we suffer. In the first instance, the leadership of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe is a clear representation of the revulsion towards the West. Even the Africanisation and indigenisation policies of Ghana and Nigeria soon after independence point in this direction. Very recently, the military junta in Niger Republic sacked the French Ambassador and ordered French troops out of the country. From the scholarly perspective, this disposition can be described as subscribing to the idea of delinking as proposed in the literature on decolonisation and decoloniality in Africa. At the second instance, the case of civil wars, xenophobia, ethnic strife, religious rancour and blaming of African leadership that have been typically African in the postcolonial era signals how one African group perceives another group as responsible for its development woes and is charged up in confrontation to retrieve such development. The #Endsars Protest in Nigeria is an example of how people react to a system of leadership that they feel has entrapped them in the snare of poverty. All these give a general sense that accomplishing development is always a struggle; development has to be taken by force. It is a form of confrontation. This is what we refer to as the adversarial model of development.

These levels of confrontation also abound in the general discourse on development. Looking through the basic theories of development, one sees that this attitude is rife. While dependency, world-system, and post-development theories of development are explicitly confrontational to the West and the various ways it has negatively impacted the development of the rest of the world, modernisation theories of development are no less confrontational, even though they are less explicit in this regard. The charge of dependency theories against modernisation, that the wealth and well-being which they wield and hold up as models for others to emulate as forms of development depended on exploiting the rest, is legitimate. The claim that the wealth of the West depends on depriving the rest is as true as it is troubling. One implication here is that the development of the West came through a form of confrontation and exploitation of the alterity of

the other and vulnerabilities thereof. In specific terms, this happened through the slave trade and colonisation, and it continues today through the coloniality of power. However, it is equally important to observe that while there is legitimacy in the charges against these historical injustices, Africa has all too well imbibed this mentality of confrontation as "the" approach to development. Michael Syrotinski (2012), quoting Achille Mbembe in this regard, is of the view that colonial rationality is re-appropriated by postcolonial regimes after Independence, and the relations of subjection are perpetuated by a process of the indigenisation of the state that colonialism had set in motion. This can be seen, for example, in the ways in which elements of ancestral tradition are appropriated and "reinvented" by African potentates in order to consolidate their power. Governance and the exercise of violent power are thus indissociable, and a logical extension of the violent origins from which they have emerged (Syrotinski 2012: 415). Syrotinski continues that, "for Mbembe both the potentate and the increasingly animalized African subject are defined by their mutual dependence on this systemic violence" (Syrotinski 2012: 415). We would say, that both the coloniser and the colonised are defined by their mutual dependence on the system of adversariality in development.

Aside the West, there are also examples of development strides in other parts of the world, particularly Asia and Latin America. One can still observe patterns of confrontation and exploitation in the way some of these nations operate. Today, Africa has newcomers among those seeking her natural resources. These newcomers include: China, Brazil, and India to mention a few. These have occupied the extractive industry in Africa along with other Western nations. Much of the consensus from the literature on the activities of these nations is that they do not operate differently from the West – their aim is to control and exploit resources from African states. In fact, Brazil was one of the leading voices in the charge of dependency theory against the West. Today, she now participates in the exploitation of Africa in a bid to move herself up the ladder of wealth. It is our opinion that these approaches to development are discordant to the extent that exploitation is not and cannot be described as a concordant relationship.

While these forms of confrontation and discord have yielded levels of human progress, it is still pertinent to ask: can development ultimately be achieved in constant discord? Despite the prevalence of these adversarial models of development, the levels of human improvement have not been commensurate to the expectations. Probably, the continued application of the same adversarial model of development could be the reason why the

tendency towards development is very slow. Besides, if discordant and adversarial relationships in the form of exploitations and confrontations are active in guaranteeing development, it will equally be legitimate to ask: can Africa exploit anyone in order to accomplish development? As it stands, Africa is at the very nadir point of the current world order. She lacks the potency to compete be it at the military, economic, and political levels in order to be able to effect any forceful change in her favour. Africa cannot afford the adversarial path given her lack of knowledge, technology, capital, and organisation. Consequently, it becomes expedient that Africa should begin to invest her mental magnitude in developing a theoretical approach to development in which her concerns can be carried along in a fruitful manner. In what follows, we shall define development and explore the point of the adversarial turn in the understanding of development. Then we shall take a look at how this turn is integral to the postcolonial and decolonial quest for development in Africa. Lastly, we shall give attention to what a concordant model entails and this will be the transcolonial turn.

Conceptualising Development

While the idea of change is integral to the understanding of development, we shall emphasise the fact of development as self-determination, which happens through positive freedom. The ultimate end is to accomplish self-capacitation or the expansion of capabilities (Sen 2003: 3-16; Nusbaum 2011). As self-determination, development is seen as human beings seeking the maximum realisation of themselves (Agbakoba 2019: 56) and this they do by themselves. In this context, freedom is vital not so much because it guarantees that obstacles in the way of accomplishing self-realisation are removed, but because it insists that the quest for self-realisation must continue in spite of the obstacles to it. This is a positive sense of freedom – *freedom to* as against *freedom from*. It is not so much about what you are allowed to do, but what you can do for yourself given the freedom you already have. Self-realisation as pursued here is the good life or what has been termed *Eudaimonia* (Aristotle 2012). This refers to the condition of consistent human flourishing consequent on the rational and conscious provision of opportunities as well as the realisation of human potentials within an active life in society.

Virtue is quite integral to the good life as conceived by Aristotle in the concept of *Eudaimonia*. "In ancient theories virtue is not discussed in isolation; it is seen as part of a larger structure in which the overarching concept is

happiness" (Annas 1998: 37-55). In Aristotle's opinion, both intellectual and moral virtues are required for accomplishing the good life. Bearing in mind the idea of virtue for human flourishing with the idea of the supremacy of reason in modern philosophy, we can understand the case for reasonability-beneficence in development. In this case, reason and beneficence are seen together and even conceived as mutually enhancing one another, for "reason without beneficence is inhuman (in the form of inhumanness and wickedness) while beneficence without reason is inhumane (in the form of self-indulgent, nihilistic, self – destructiveness or weakness – the operation of the law of self-preservation bound by reason and morality would have taken leave here)" (Agbakoba 2019: 92). Here, we have a form of reasonability that has beneficence – in fact, ontological-beneficence (which include those things that would make self-realisation possible) – as its hallmark. By this understanding, a society of skyscrapers and super highways populated by people deficient in beneficence is considered as not properly developed. But one with not-so-flashy material conditions and possessing beneficent individuals could be considered to be a developed society. Thus, the true measure of development, in this understanding, is not so much about the fulfilment of material needs or the protection of certain inalienable rights, but first a positive mind-set. Development is first a mind-set, always tuned to finding the advantages of existence even when negative experiences are always rife. From a mind-set of this kind can emanate lasting and genuine efforts at better material conditions of human existence and the protection of human rights.

Philosophy, Development, and the Adversarial Turn

Development, as we have attempted to conceptualise above, has been of concern to human rationality for long. Philosophers have also beamed their search light on understanding what human progress is all about, as well as the various ways through which it can be accomplished. While philosophers in the ancient and medieval periods made some inroads into this conversation, as we have seen in the philosophy of Aristotle, Enlightenment philosophy is particularly instructive in the philosophical understanding of what development is. The Enlightenment has been conceived as the foundational moment or the intellectual foundation of modernity (Robertson 2020; Oram 2022). And modernity, as a project, is a basic framework for the modernisation theory of development. Thus, the intellectual roots of development as modernisation can also be traced to the

Enlightenment. Within this frame of thinking, the finest accomplishments of Western civilisation are traced to the intellectual rupture wrought by the Enlightenment from the ideals of the ancient and the Middle Ages. Margaret C. Jacob (2020) sees the Enlightenment and the First Industrial Revolution together. In her view, the mathematisation of the sciences that allowed for accurate predication and the raise of representative government are not unconnected to the Enlightenment belief in reason and the capacity of man for self-governance. Thus, the ideas of human progress, supremacy of reason, autonomy of man, democracy etc., as hallmarks of modernity, have their roots in the Enlightenment.

Notwithstanding the very noble aspirations and accomplishment of the Enlightenment and modernity, postmodern scholars raise objections to it. Devin Vartija (2020: 237) writes that, "it can still be established Eurocentrism, paternalism and even racism inherent in these concepts and movements. Rather than advancing a human programme of inalienable rights, scientific rationality and democracy, postmodernism unveils the emergence of sinister control mechanism in modern institutions such as schools, prisons and the military." Foucault's analysis of power and knowledge as well as Adorno and Horkheimer's case for the dialectics of Enlightenment are quite nuanced analyses of these forms of control. For some other opinions, the ideals of the enlightenment and modernity are also the basis for coloniality (Mignolo 1995). By these analyses, there is a deep form of moral indictment against modernity. Obviously, paternalism, eurocentrism, racism, power/control and even colonialism are forms of discordant and adversarial relationships. In the intellectual constitution of the Enlightenment this form of discord is also embedded. Not minding the case for the completion of the modernity project as against those who jettison it altogether (Habermas 1987), it is safe to conclude that the moral downsides of these movements are not accidental consequences and these downsides are integral to the very makeup of modernity. The intellectual seeds for the discordant undertones of the Enlightenment and modernity is what we refer to as the 'adversarial turn' in the philosophical conceptualisation of development.

Kant is one of the finest composers of the intellectual and philosophical foundations of the Enlightenment. His essay "What is Enlightenment?" was instrumental in defining the movement not only in Germany, but as a whole. However, it is his work "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Perspective" (1784) that points to this adversarial turn. It is an essay made up of nine propositions. In the fourth proposition, Kant develops an idea that is regularly linked to the "cunning of nature." In the words of Kant, "*The*

means nature employs in order to bring about the development of all their predispositions is their antagonism in society, insofar as the latter is in the end the cause of their lawful order" (Kant 2009 [1784]: 13). He continues, "Here I understand by 'antagonism' the unsociable sociability of human beings, i.e. their propensity to enter into society, which, however, is combined with a thoroughgoing resistance that constantly threatens to break up this society" (Kant 2009: ibid). These qualities of unsociability include: envy, fierce competition, etc. Eventually, this propensity propels humans to social and cultural progress. As Kant argues,

> Without these qualities of unsociability from which the resistance arises, which are not at all amiable in themselves, qualities that each of us must necessarily encounter in his selfish pretensions, all talents would, in an arcadian pastoral life of perfect concord, contentment and mutual love, remain eternally hidden in their germs; human beings, as good-natured as the sheep they tended, would give their existence hardly any greater worth than that of their domesticated beasts; they would not fill the void in creation in regard to their end as rational nature. Thanks be to nature, therefore, for the incompatibility, for the spiteful competitive vanity, for the insatiable desire to possess or even to dominate! For without them all the excellent natural predispositions in humanity would eternally slumber undeveloped. The human being wills concord; but nature knows better what is good for his species: it wills discord (Kant 2009 [1784]: 14).

It is in such a willing of discord by nature, that "the cunning of nature" is articulated. It is still in this willing of discord by nature that Kant turns the attention of the quest for human progress to adversariality.

Hegel appropriates this discord which nature wills in Kant's universal history into the what he refers to as the "cunning of reason" (Hegel in McCarney 2002: 121ff), whereby the Spirit uses particular individual and instances to effect change in the course of universal history through acts of chaos, disputes, and randomness (Ullmann-Margalit 2017: 148-158). The individuals who effect this kind of change are involved in the realisation of the universal idea in immediate actuality or the elevation of the singular into universal truth. Thus, these individuals are moving forces in history that represent the stage of negation in the dialectical movement of history. The ultimate resolution to which they force history to move is development.

Following the same line of thought, Marx develops his idea of the clash of classes as the basis for the development of human society. Only a revolution can move a society from the capitalist exploitation stage to the stage of communism where the inadequacies of capitalism are resolved and better living conditions are achieved for all, both the bourgeois and the proletariat. This adversarial turn in the understanding of human progress also has implications for development in Africa. We shall now shift attention to the adversarial turn in Africa.

The Postcolonial Condition and the Adversarial Turn in Africa

Apart from colonialism, the slave trade and various forms of racism were also part of the African experience of modernity as its undersides. The colonisers particularly sought to give the Africans civilisation along with Christianity and commerce. This quest to civilise the African, most times, took the form of domination, intimidation, and ultimately exploitation. All of these were meant to sustain the splendour of Europe and the West. In this condition of colonialism and slavery, decolonisation was considered as one sure path to improve conditions of existence for Africans. Nationalists from various African countries pursued this quest for decolonisation with great vigour. As countries in Africa began to gain independence, Africa entered a postcolonial phase in its existence. This is the sense of postcoloniality as temporality. It is the era immediately after colonialism.

As a corollary to this understanding, there is the sense of postcoloniality as mentality. Here, it is a "means of defiance by which any exploitative and discriminative practices, regardless of time and space, can be challenged" (Rukundwa and van Aarde 2007: 1171). It is as mentality that the postcolonial phase still resonates with the struggle sounds of decolonisation. This is the period when the empire writes back (Ascroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1989). Anke Bartels, Lars Eckstein, Nicole Waller, and Dirk Wiemann (2019: 189-90) write in this regard that "Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin adopted the phrase from [Salman] Rushdie and defined it as postcolonial writers engaging the power of imperial discourse, not by writing 'for' the centre but 'against' the assumption of the centre to a prior claim to legitimacy and power" (Bartels et al. 2019: 189-90). This form of writing back is integral to Valentin Mudimbe's *The Invention of Africa* (1988), which has been described as "providing the Africanist equivalent of Edward Said's *Orientalism*. But unlike Said, Mudimbe also examines how the Other writes back by including African scholars who have worked within the

limits of imposed language and epistemological frames" (Apter 1991: 172). Afrocentric scholars have taken a swipe at Hegel's derogatory presentation of Africa in his *Philosophy of History*. Emmanuel Eze has been particularly emphatic about the racial elements in Kant's philosophy (Eze 1997) and there have been arguments to buttress the fact that Marx only sought for the emancipation of the poor in the West, a wider programme of liberation was required to address the poor in the rest of the world. Still in this context, we have the case for how Europe underdeveloped Africa (Rodney 1972). These are all discordant responses to the evil of colonisation. The adversariality of colonisation is being matched with equal adversariality by those writing back on Africa's behalf.

These forms of adversariality continue even in the practical implementation of decolonisation. In this case, it was more like "the empire fighting back." In countries like Ghana and Nigeria, the Africanisation policy in the public sector was driven by this discordant mindset. In Nigeria and Ghana, for example, the indigenisation of the public service was rapid since this was under the political control of the government. However, the indigenisation of the private sector was slow and had to be forced. "Governments limited immigration quotas for expatriates, even denying new applications completely at times, such as in the early 1960s in Ghana and in the early 1970s in Nigeria. Ghana also changed the taxation of expatriate incomes in the early 1960s, which, together with compulsory reinvestment of a share of profits, made the operations of foreign investors very difficult until Nkrumah was deposed in 1966" (Decker 2010: 5). In Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe exhibited this form of aversion to colonial elements in a form of nativism as evidenced in his fast-track land reform and the black empowerment or indigenisation campaign (Mlambo 2015: 45-59). Similarly, the *Ujamaa* villagisation experiment of Julius Nyerere in Tanzania felt like a reaction to the trend of urbanisation as a residue of the African colonial experience. Even in South Africa, there were very palpable fears among the white population about what would be their fate under the regime of Nelson Mandela, whom they had so maligned in the struggle for the independence of South Africa. But Mandela was to espouse a particularly different approach to African leadership and development. One crucial point to note in all the above approaches is that their application did not ameliorate the general lack of well-being in the countries where they were implemented. In the case of the villagisation policy of Nyerere, "it was carried out so quickly that it was not possible to take much notice of its impact on agricultural production – which led to less production and was one cause of migration

to the cities" (Coulson 2013: 280). The failure of these adversarial models of development led George Ayittey (2005) to the proposal that the strategy required for winning independence is different from the strategy required to accomplish development.

Achille Mbembe (2002) reacted to all of the above and described them as "false prophecies." He is of the view that these forms of resistance tend to be locked in what he terms a "neurosis of victimisation" and "prose of nativism" (Mbembe 2002: 252). These Afro-radical nationalists were accused of promoting a "false belief that only autochthonous people who are physically living in Africa can produce, within a closed circle limited to themselves alone, a legitimate scientific discourse on the realities of the continent" (Mbembe 2002: 241). He also stated that African scholarship that blames globalisation was informed by "a lazy interpretation of globalization" (Mbembe 2002: 269). Apart from this, Mbembe (1999) still thought that African scholarship that would continue to blame colonialism was suffering from "self-ghettoization," taking the form of "territorialization of the production of knowledge." An appealing area of possibility in this era is what Mbembe called Afropolitanism. While we think there are several issues with Afropolitanism, suffice it to say that Mbembe's critique of the position of the Afro-radicals carries some elements that are of import to the transcolonial approach to development.

Adversariality and Decoloniality in Africa

The adversarial turn continues in the decolonial quest for development in Africa. The decoloniality framework insists that postcoloniality is an approach to colonialism that emerged within Western scholarship and is still steeped in the rules of the game as developed by Western scholarship. That is, their approach was focused on dealing with the problem of subaltern knowledges from within the Eurocentric focus (Tlostanova and Mignolo 2009: 141). Thus, the change postcoloniality envisions is a quantitative one – expanding the voices in the discourse. Decoloniality seeks something more radical: qualitative change (Tlostanova 2009: 4-5). It wants to change the rules of the game entirely. The first way it does this is by insisting that decoloniality emerges as a framework to undo coloniality. While postcoloniality is focused on colonialism, decoloniality focuses on coloniality, which is described as the repressive and totalitarian forms of knowledge production at the very inception of modernity by Europe with the takeover of the New World and its persistence even after the end of colonialism in countries in Africa, Asia, and

Latin America (Quijano 2000: 533-580; Idachaba and Ichaba 2025: 80). It has a dyadic relationship with modernity and it is the "underside of modernity" (Dussel 1996). It is mostly the mode in which non-Western spaces experience modernity. From the African standpoint, Ndlovu-Gatsheni articulates what he terms the "genealogies of coloniality" in Africa. He identifies eight epochs in this genealogy. These include: the discovery paradigm and the mercantilist order. This stage was characterised by the slave trade and the unsavoury encounter between the Kingdom of Kongo and the Portuguese (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2015a: 22-25). The second is that of the post-1648 Westphalian order in which Africa was excluded from nation-state sovereignty on racist grounds in the form of reproducing the Hegelian-Conradian-Hugh Trevor Roper discourses (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2015a: 25). The third phase was the Berlin consensus in which the "curse of Berlin" (Adebanjo 2010: 2) was effected. The arbitrary fixing of boundaries for African states, which was ardently support by "urbanised political elites" (Leremont 2005: 2), was the manner in which this phase was executed. The fourth phase was that of colonial governmentality and the reproduction of African subjectivity. This operated through violence and banal power (Mbembe 1992) as well as the logic of defining and ruling (Mamdani 2013). The fifth phase Ndlovou describes as the post-1945 United Nations decolonisation normative order and Cold War coloniality. Through the formation of the United Nations after the Nazi-Hitler onslaught, African nations were admitted into the world order at the lower echelon of power. Despite this, world powers interfered in African nations as the Cold War raged on. The sixth stage was the post-Cold War triumphalism of the neoliberal order. In this context Structural Adjustment Programmes were introduced in Africa and the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank began to interfere directly in Africa in an anti-statist manner (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2015a: 33). In this phase, America took full stage as the identity of modernity. The seventh stage he called the post-9/11 anti-terrorism and securitisation order. In this era, Africa was no longer a development and humanitarian region, but one that needed security on the basis of weak state structures. The eight phase is that of the coloniality of markets and the new scramble for Africa. This refers to the recent intensification of the extraction of natural resources by countries such as India, Brazil, China, and Russia atop all that European nations already did and are still doing. In all of these phases of coloniality in Africa, development is only a pretext. Africa continues to suffer domination and exploitation and her quest for development is arrested and suffocated.

Decoloniality is the antidote to coloniality. Decoloniality is different from anti-colonialism, which is largely a twentieth-century movement

aimed at overcoming colonialism. Decoloniality was inaugurated at "the moment in which the slave trade, imperialism and colonialism were launched. It materialised as resistance, thought and action" (Ndlovou-Gatsheni 2015b: 487). This form of inaugural resistance has taken various forms and the ultimate "aim is at setting afoot a new humanity free from racial hierarchisation and asymmetrical power relations in place since the conquest" (Ndlovou-Gatsheni 2015b: 488). Decoloniality abhors all forms of essentialism and fundamentalism and is poised to repudiate "the European fundamental LIE: colonisation=civilisation" (Ndlovou-Gatsheni 2015b: 492). For some, decoloniality is a kind of combative ontology that is required to negate the kind of thinking embedded in coloniality and to imagine a more befitting future for Africa (Mpofu 2018). From the standpoint of practice, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni identifies *The Rhodes Must Fall Movement*, which has snowballed into students' demand for the decolonisation of the universities in South Africa, as one indication for the continued need for decoloniality. Also the African Union's Agenda 2063, which pushes from coloniality to pan-Africanism and African Renaissance, is another pointer towards decoloniality in Africa.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o has done much to provide the vocabulary for decoloniality in Africa. Some of these vocabularies include: decolonising the mind, moving the centre, re-membering, and globalectics. In the words of Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "*Decolonising the mind* speaks to the urgency of dealing with epistemicides and linguisticides. *Moving the centre* addresses the problem of Euro-North Mercian centrism. *Re-membering* is about uniting a dismembered and fragmented continent. *Globalectics* gestures towards post-racial Pluriversality as the home of new humanity" (Ndlovou-Gatsheni 2015b: 493).

The craving for Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital data in Africa is an instance of efforts to turn over a new leaf, but this must be considered within the context of decoloniality so as to ensure that the turn to technology is not a new way of keeping the European game alive. The ECOWAS adoption of a common passport and an agreement with regard to a common currency, the ECO is a very welcome development with regard to turning over a new leaf, but Africa (especially Francophone Africa) should be careful about France. Another positive effort at turning over a new leaf is the emerging consensus and actual signing of the agreement on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) by 54 African counties. The manner in which popular uprisings, particularly the Arab Spring, is giving steam to democracy is another welcome development, but the incursion of the military into

governance as a result of this is threatening the prospects of turning over a new leaf in this direction. In these proposals of decoloniality, the thread of adversarial thinking is still prominent. The idea of a combative ideology toes the path of discordance. The centering of the Rhodes Must Fall protests and even the ideas of Ngugi wa Thiong'o on abandoning the English language as well as the general Marxist tempo of his literary work also points in the direction of adversariality. Decoloniality advocates a matching of coloniality with the same force with which coloniality has been executed in Africa.

Transcoloniality and the Possibilities of Concordance in the Development of Africa

The transcolonial approach is one that acknowledges the impact of colonialism in Africa, but proposes that we should seek to transcend this impact in positive and creative ways. That the true development of Africa can no longer come from African heritage but from positive and constructively creative ways "to go beyond the cultural borders and limitations of the pre-colonial world and the colonial deposit" (Agbakoba 2022: 47). While postcoloniality focuses on expanding the number of non-western voices within a western dominant scholarship space, and decoloniality is intent on deconstructing/delinking the legacies of colonialism/coloniality and modernity, and insisting on a return to African heritage for the development of Africa, transcolonisation focuses on the construction and appreciation of some of the positive aspects of modernity and even colonisation. Consequently, it is averse to the oppositional scholarship that grounds postcoloniality and decoloniality. In this view, oppositional scholarship leads to alienation negativity complex, victimology, auto-rebellion, and ultimately negative knowledge (Agbakoba 2022: 35). Negative knowledge only breeds a culture of opposition and tearing down; it rarely leads to creative construction. What actually breeds creative construction is positive knowledge and a positive attitude to one's circumstance. This emphasis on creative construction is part of the reason why the transcolonial disposition is inherently developmentarian. That is, it refers to an orientation to development that takes development as a supreme value. This emphasis on development points to the core of concordance in the transcolonial approach. The quest for creative construction, which should drive development, should be premised on "positive knowledge" (Idachaba and Achemu 2025: 49) and oppositional scholarship cannot guarantee this. While opposition/adversariality was appropriate to acquire independence,

the quest for development in the post-independence era requires a new approach. Therefore, we feel that now there has to be a turn to concord in the African quest for development.

While not denying the negative aspects of colonisation and modernity, transcolonisation also highlights the complicity of Africa in the success of colonisation and coloniality – a theme that is often not properly or inadequately highlighted in postcolonial and decolonial discourses (Idachaba and Ichaba 2025: 79-100). This is one of the reasons why some views consider decoloniality as unable to practice self-criticism (Bidima 2025: 27-57). This point is important for the transcolonial perspective because it considers development from an internalist and organicist perspective. It holds the view that, "the internal state of a society initiates and directs the development of a society by responding constructively to internal and external stimuli and/or by adopting or rejecting such stimuli" (Agbakoba 2019: 65). This is in contrast to the impression that comes from the postcolonial and decolonial views that development is initiated and directed largely by external forces – the coloniser or the West. The capacity to respond to internal and external stimuli is what transcolonisation refers to as "agential integrity."

When this capacity is strong or properly developed, agential integrity is high and when it is weak or improperly developed, agential integrity is low. That Africa still complains about colonisation years after its end, or is still unable to properly deal with coloniality suggests that the agential integrity required to begin addressing the residue of colonisation is still quite low from the African standpoint. The need to address this low level of agential integrity from the African perspective is part of the reason why transcolonisation is internalist. Whereas the postcolonial and decolonial perspectives presume the integrity of the African agent, the transcolonial approach unveils it defects and seeks to address such defects. In this case the transcolonial approach advocates borrowing from colonial institutions and those of modernity. This is another aspect of its concordant approach.

In proposing concordant practice, we read Bernard Matolino's (2023) suggestion of the idea of co-operation rather than a separation of powers among the various arms of government as an example of a transcolonial approach to development in Africa. Matolino considers his proposal as aiming towards a more far-reaching reform for the structure of governance and development in Africa with regard to democracy in Africa. In his opinion, since the idea of separation of powers has not been able to establish

the practice of checks and balance in Africa, he argues that "there would be no need to thinks of checks and balances in the strict sense as we have come to be accustomed to" (Matolino 2023: 21). Instead, he advocates for institutions that co-operate and remind each other of their duties to a smooth running of the state. While there could be a tendency for co-operation in accomplishing nefarious activities by those in power, he thinks that this may lead to more superior outcomes than adversarial arms of government. Also, accountability is part of a co-operation. Besides, since the African political ideology is framed around community, it is equally important to see this communal disposition lived out at the levers of power. As a sequel to African political ideology as framed around community, we can further state that the concordance approach is more in keeping with African metaphysics, ontology, and ethics. African Philosophical expressions such as *Ubuntu*, *Igwebuike*, *Ibuanyidanda* express African ontology and moral worldview as a harmonious world in which progress is made only in concordance. Besides, from an African Philosophical perspective revenge is discouraged and constant conflict is abhorred.

These African non-adversarial philosophies and concepts could also be useful in addressing the challenge of productivity in the African development quagmire. Confrontation greatly impedes productivity. What Africa really lacks is the ability to make good use of the resources available at her disposal. Harmony is a harbinger of productivity. These philosophies point to the harmony and communality inherent in the African worldview. For example, *Ubuntu*, a concept made popular by Mogobe Ramose (1999), advocates for a form of ontological relationality in which a person is because others are. That is, I am because we are. It is an attempt to describe "reality within the confines of interdependency, complementarity, mutuality and wholeness" (Ojemba 2023: 102). Similarly, the concept *Igwebuike*, as coined by Anthony Kanu from the Igbo language in Nigeria, when broken into its components give *igwe bu ike*, which can be translated as "number is power." That is, solidarity and complementarity give power or the ability to be insurmountable (2017a: 121). Through this complementary relationality, human beings are able to attain the joy of completion (Kanu 2017b: 16). Complementarity is also central to the African philosophic concept of *Ibuanyidanda.* In Innocent Asozu's framing of the concept still from the Igbo cultural context of Nigeria, the African world is composed of a complementary form of ontology as different from the bifurcated one as advocated in the traditional (Aristotelian) ontology. Here, everything in reality serves a missing link (Asozu 2011: 108). As a composite of missing

links, reality requires the interdependent cooperative action of other links (Ojemba 2023: 102). Complementary ontology can also be said to posit in this regard that all things in reality have value on the grounds that everything in reality serves a missing link. What remains to be emphasised is that while these African non-adversarial philosophies have emerged from a scholarly oppositional disposition, their destiny can no longer remain oppositional. These philosophies must now aspire to a universal mission of pursing development for Africa in a manner of concord that may involve complementarity with aspects of modernity and even colonial influences. Their radius of complementarity must not expand beyond the immediate community of the articulation of these philosophies to the wider world. This is what transcolonial concord requires.

Three concerns with the transcolonial disposition towards concord readily come to mind. First is the possibility that a confluent approach to the West and other actors in Africa could exacerbate rather than abate exploitation in Africa. Secondly, the transcolonial inclination to exposing the complicity of Africans in colonisation and by extension showing the low quality of agential integrity of the African could be a psychological complex or a sort of self-demeaning. Thirdly, is this confluent approach possible? Is it not just idealistic? Not minding the legitimacy of these concerns, we will underscore in the first case that the likelihood of exacerbating exploitation does not negate the truth that progress and development thrive more in a context of cordiality and conviviality than in an adversarial one. With particular reference to Africa, any effort to enhance productivity cannot happen in a context of heightened adversariality, be it with the West, other non-Africans or among Africans. Only a convivial context can allow for the exchange of expertise, skill and harnessing of resources required to upscale productivity. For this reason, taking the risk of concord is well worth it in the context of African development. Secondly, the refusal to accept our complicity in what we suffer only aggravates our suffering. To accept our role in our misfortune is a first fundamental step to healing. Hence, opening up the deficiencies in agency from the African standpoint is not a question of any kind of complex or self-demeaning. It is about setting aside our pride and speaking frankly to our predicament and beginning the process of seeking concrete and pragmatic redress. This is transcolonisation – confronting ourselves in our perils and promises with a view to ultimately improving the general well-being of Africa. Thirdly, the confluent approach to development may have been difficult for some of the forebearers of Africa to execute due to their first-hand experience of colonialism. Be that as it may, the examples

of Seretse Khama and even the reconciliatory disposition of Nelson Mandela after becoming President, could be leading lights. These suffered the evils of colonisation in very personal ways, yet they demonstrated an unrivalled capacity to forgive, seek reconciliation, and forge a good working relationship with their former detractors. The benefits of their concordant approach are quite clear in how their countries have fared and continue to do so. Besides, as their successors, we do not have a first-hand experience of colonialism and therefore, executing a more concordant approach to development should not be such a daunting task.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we have sought to make a case for a more confluent and concordant approach to development. We have tried to establish the point of the adversarial turn in the discourse on development and to see how this has snowballed into the various phases of the quest for development in Africa. The final point we have made is to show what a concordant approach to development should be. Time and more knowledge have shown us the true significance of colonialism as well as the actual worth of our cultural dispositions as Africans. Developing a hybrid out of the mix of all the available resources should be an easy goal to accomplish. Putting these resources together in a harmonious and creative way is what a concordant approach to development is about. It is a mind-set that is always poised to seek out the positive side of reality. What actually breeds creative construction is positive knowledge and a positive attitude to one's circumstances. This is transcolonisation with regard to development in Africa. We think that the era of negativity in the quest for development is over. It is now time to seek creative and positive points through which to enhance meaningful existence in Arica.

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