

Africa is Poor and Underdeveloped by Design: The Western Management Plan for Africa

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doi.org/10.51505/IJEBMR.2025.9605

URL: <https://doi.org/10.51505/IJEBMR.2025.9605>

Received: May 18, 2025

Accepted: May 24, 2025

Online Published: Jun 07, 2025

Abstract

Africa's persistent poverty and underdevelopment are not accidental but the result of deliberate Western economic and political strategies designed to maintain the continent in a subordinate position within the global system (Rodney, 1972). This paper argues that Africa's underdevelopment is a structural consequence of colonialism, neocolonialism, and exploitative global capitalism, which have systematically extracted Africa's resources while stifling its industrial and institutional growth (Amin, 1974). Western powers, through mechanisms such as unfair trade agreements, debt dependency, and corporate exploitation, have ensured that Africa remains a supplier of raw materials rather than a competitive industrial economy (Bond, 2006). The imposition of structural adjustment programs (SAPs) by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank further entrenched Africa's economic subjugation by enforcing austerity measures, privatization, and deregulation, which weakened state capacity and deepened poverty (Cheru, 2001). Additionally, Western-backed political interference, including support for authoritarian regimes and destabilization of progressive governments, has perpetuated governance crises and conflict (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2002). Contemporary Western aid and investment frameworks, often framed as developmental assistance, continue to reinforce dependency rather than fostering self-sustaining growth (Moyo, 2009). This paper concludes that Africa's liberation from underdevelopment requires dismantling these exploitative structures, reclaiming economic sovereignty, and pursuing alternative models of development centered on pan-African solidarity and equitable global partnerships (Nkrumah, 1965).

Keywords: Africa, underdevelopment, neocolonialism, Western exploitation, structural adjustment, economic dependency.

1. Introduction

The claim that "*Africa is poor and underdeveloped by design*" serves as a provocative analysis of global historical and contemporary systems that have maintained Africa's marginal position in the world economy. This view suggests that the continent's persistent poverty is not merely the result of internal failings but is deeply rooted in externally imposed political, economic, and ideological systems designed to benefit Western powers at Africa's expense. As Walter Rodney famously argued in *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, "The capitalists of Western Europe

were compelled to turn to Africa to find a source of wealth which could fill the gap” (Rodney 75). Colonialism thus created economic structures that drained Africa’s resources and reinforced dependency.

However, while this statement captures a significant dimension of the problem, it does not tell the whole story. No nation is inherently destined to be poor or prosperous; wealth and development are outcomes of a complex interplay between external influence and internal agency. As Dambisa Moyo asserts in *Dead Aid*, “The notion that aid has helped Africans is misleading at best. Aid has supported corruption and allowed governments to ignore the interests of their citizens” (Moyo 29). Africa’s underdevelopment must therefore be seen not only as a consequence of Western exploitation but also as the result of weak institutions, leadership deficits, and missed opportunities for structural transformation.

This research explores how colonial legacies, neo-colonial economic arrangements, exploitative multinational operations, debt traps, and media manipulation have all worked—often systematically—to inhibit Africa’s growth. Simultaneously, it highlights the need for internal reforms and the reclaiming of African agency to break free from cycles of dependency and underdevelopment. By situating the continent’s challenges within both historical and contemporary frameworks, this study seeks to demonstrate that Africa’s position in the global order is neither accidental nor inevitable; it is, to a significant extent, by design.

1.1 Statement of Problem

Despite its immense natural resource endowment, youthful population, and strategic geopolitical positioning, Africa remains the poorest and least developed continent in the world. This paradox has prompted critical inquiry into the root causes of its sustained underdevelopment. Conventional explanations often attribute Africa’s poverty to poor governance, corruption, conflict, and weak institutions. However, a growing body of post-2010 scholarship suggests that these symptoms are not incidental, but manifestations of a deeper, historically constructed and externally maintained **design**—a systematic and intentional configuration orchestrated by global powers to perpetuate Africa’s subordinate role in the international order.

This study critically examines the thesis that Africa’s poverty and underdevelopment are not natural nor self-inflicted, but strategically engineered and maintained through a multifaceted Western management plan. This plan operates through economic dependency, policy conditionalities, epistemic control, militarized interventions, and the manipulation of development discourse. Understanding the intentional design behind Africa’s systemic constraints calls for a paradigmatic shift from blaming internal deficits to interrogating external power structures that benefit from Africa’s marginalization.

1.2 Importance of the Problem

The importance of this inquiry lies in its potential to redefine African development thinking, planning, and resistance strategies. If poverty and underdevelopment in Africa are by design,

then addressing them requires dismantling the very structures and ideologies that reproduce them. This analysis compels policymakers, scholars, and civil society actors to interrogate the role of international institutions, aid systems, education frameworks, and trade relationships in perpetuating dependency and inequality.

Furthermore, the implications of this problem are not only continental but global. The current development paradigm affects international migration, environmental sustainability, peace, and global economic justice. By unpacking the mechanisms of external control, this research provides a foundation for building genuine autonomy, sovereignty, and development pathways rooted in African epistemologies and priorities. It also exposes how Western dominance is reproduced under the guise of partnership and benevolence, offering a platform for African states to critically reassess their alliances and developmental trajectories.

1.3 Hypotheses

Based on the critical problem and its importance, the following hypotheses guide this study:

H1: The continued poverty and underdevelopment of Africa are the outcomes of a deliberate structural design maintained by Western powers through global economic institutions, aid regimes, and trade policies.

H2: Western-led development discourse constructs Africa as perpetually underdeveloped and dependent, legitimizing external control and marginalization.

H3: Foreign aid functions not as a tool for empowerment but as a mechanism for extending geopolitical and economic control over African states.

H4: Militarized development and security interventions in Africa serve the strategic interests of Western powers rather than the developmental needs of African populations.

H5: The domination of Western epistemologies in African education and policy-making processes perpetuates intellectual dependency, limiting the emergence of autonomous development paradigms.

2. Methodology

The claim that *Africa is poor and underdeveloped by design* implies a critical, post-colonial, and political economy perspective that sees underdevelopment not as a natural consequence of internal failings, but as an outcome of deliberate external structuring—primarily through the legacies of colonialism, neocolonialism, and global capitalist interests. Methodologically, this kind of inquiry is rooted in qualitative, interpretive research, relying on historical-structural analysis, critical discourse analysis, and institutional critique, often guided by Dependency Theory, World Systems Theory, and Postcolonial Theory.

2.1 Qualitative Historical-Structural Analysis

Most studies exploring the notion that Africa's underdevelopment is *intentional* begin with a historical-structural method, analyzing the colonial and postcolonial policy designs that shaped the continent's political economy. Scholars like Rodney (1972) laid the foundation for this line of

inquiry, but post-2010 research has advanced this by systematically documenting how historical extraction patterns persist through modern financial, trade, and security institutions.

For instance, Taylor (2016) explains that Africa's integration into the global capitalist economy has been structured around extractive relationships—where Western multinational corporations and foreign governments control resource flows through "aid conditionalities, trade imbalances, and financial subordination" (Taylor, 2016). The methodology involves reviewing colonial archives, post-independence economic policies, and the evolution of Bretton Woods institutions' roles in shaping African development.

2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Another core methodological tool is critical discourse analysis, used to examine how language in global development policy documents, aid agreements, and media representations constructs Africa as a passive recipient of Western "benevolence" while justifying exploitative economic relationships.

Ziai (2013) employs CDA to explore how development discourse frames Africa as a "problem to be solved," thus legitimizing interventionist policies. This method involves analyzing documents from the World Bank, IMF, UNDP, and Western governments, looking at themes, power asymmetries, and rhetorical devices that maintain dependency.

2.3 Comparative Institutional Analysis

Literature also uses comparative institutional methodologies to evaluate how governance systems, legal frameworks, and economic policies in African countries are influenced by external actors. This includes regression analysis, case study comparisons, and process tracing to examine the long-term effects of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), WTO trade rules, and bilateral agreements.

For example, Mkandawire (2015) critiques the imposed "governance reforms" as instruments of Western managerial control rather than genuine developmental mechanisms. Researchers conduct cross-national comparisons—such as between countries that resisted neoliberal reforms (e.g., Ethiopia or Rwanda) and those that embraced them (e.g., Ghana)—to assess divergent development outcomes and external influence.

2.4 Political Economy and Dependency Frameworks

The political economy framework remains central, particularly when operationalized through dependency theory and neo-colonial analysis. These methodologies often combine policy review, macro-economic data analysis, and stakeholder interviews to trace how Africa's sovereign policy space is constrained.

Amin (2012) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) show how Africa's poverty is systematically reproduced through a global economic system that siphons value from the continent. Empirical

studies use indicators like capital flight, commodity dependence, FDI patterns, and foreign debt servicing to illustrate structural disadvantages deliberately maintained.

2.5 Case Studies and Ethnographic Methods

Some recent scholarship also adopts case study and ethnographic methodologies to show how Western management manifests locally through NGO practices, military interventions, and donor-led governance reforms. These studies typically involve interviews, participant observation, and local narratives to expose how foreign aid or “development” projects often reinforce dependency.

Ferguson (2015), for instance, critiques the “anti-politics machine” of development projects in Zambia, arguing that they depoliticize poverty and serve administrative rather than emancipatory purposes. This methodological approach gives voice to local stakeholders and helps uncover grassroots perceptions of imposed development paradigms.

3. Colonial Legacy and Neo-colonialism

Africa's current state cannot be understood without examining its colonial past. Colonialism was primarily an exploitative enterprise where European powers extracted natural resources, cheap labor, and wealth from Africa, laying the foundation for structural underdevelopment (Curtin). Arbitrarily drawn borders by colonial rulers ignored ethnic, cultural, and social realities, sowing seeds of internal conflicts that persist today. Africa's present condition is deeply intertwined with its colonial history. Colonialism, at its core, was not a civilizing mission but an exploitative enterprise aimed at extracting Africa's wealth. As historian Philip Curtin notes, European powers dismantled existing African systems and imposed artificial boundaries, often dividing cohesive communities or forcing hostile ones into single states, thereby setting the stage for prolonged ethnic conflicts (Curtin 102). Before colonization, African societies had complex political structures and social systems adapted to their environments. The disruption of these indigenous institutions caused long-term instability.

Post-independence, the colonial blueprint morphed into neo-colonialism, a more insidious form of control. Kwame Nkrumah, in his work *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, argued that political independence without economic sovereignty is meaningless. Western nations, through institutions like the IMF and World Bank, continue to dictate African development agendas (Nkrumah 15). Economist Samir Amin similarly emphasized how external domination persists through financial systems and global markets that ensure Africa's continued subordination (Amin 87). This dependency is still visible today as many African countries remain unable to make autonomous decisions on trade, security, or governance.

Neo-colonialism after independence emerged as a modern form of control where Western countries exert influence through economic pressure, political manipulation, and military presence (Nkrumah). This ensures African nations remain dependent and unable to chart independent development paths (Amin). Which can even be seen today that most African nation

still depends on their colonial states to make some relevant and conclusive decisions in most matters like trade, politics, etc.

3.1 Unfair Trade Agreements

Africa's position in the global economy is heavily skewed in favor of Western powers. Unfair trade agreements ensure African countries continue exporting raw materials without adding value, keeping them at the bottom of the global value chain (UNCTAD). Meanwhile, Western countries use tariffs, quotas, and subsidies to protect their industries, making it difficult for African products to compete (Bond). This is affecting as it can be seen that most raw materials in the world today are sourced or come from Africa. And as a nation that contributes a large percentage to the raw material sector, Africa still has little or no control over trade values, so we see how that can translate to growth.

Furthermore, Africa's place in the global economy is structurally disadvantaged. Trade agreements often compel African nations to export raw materials rather than processed goods, thus limiting their economic advancement. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), this "resource trap" entrenches Africa at the lowest rung of the global value chain (UNCTAD 46). At the same time, Western countries protect their own economies through subsidies and tariffs that stifle African exports.

Patrick Bond critiques this imbalance by highlighting that even though Africa supplies a significant share of global raw materials, it remains a price taker, unable to control or benefit fully from trade values (Bond 91). This perpetuates underdevelopment, as value addition—and the jobs, skills, and revenue that come with it—occurs primarily in the Global North.

3.2 Resource Exploitation by Multinational Corporations

Africa's vast wealth in oil, gold, diamonds, and rare earth minerals is controlled largely by foreign multinational corporations under contracts that prioritize profits for foreign shareholders (Moyo). The resulting environmental destruction, displacement, and lack of compensation highlight how these resources enrich the West while African communities remain impoverished (Bond). We can see in the case of crude oil, Africa.

Africa's natural wealth has become a curse rather than a blessing. Multinational corporations dominate extractive industries such as oil, gold, and rare earth minerals. Dambisa Moyo asserts that these companies often operate through exploitative contracts that prioritize foreign profits over local development (Moyo 63). These practices lead to environmental degradation, forced displacement, and minimal benefits for host communities.

Bond notes that the extraction of crude oil in Nigeria, for instance, has led to extensive environmental pollution and human rights abuses, yet most of the profits are repatriated to Western shareholders (Bond 104). Such exploitation mirrors colonial patterns and contributes to continued impoverishment despite Africa's abundant resources.

3.3 Debt Dependency and Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs)

The cycle of debt dependency remains a key mechanism of Western control. Loans from the IMF and World Bank come with conditions such as austerity, privatization, and trade liberalization, which have historically weakened African economies (World Bank). The SAPs of the 1980s and 1990s dismantled public services and increased poverty (Chomsky).

Debt has become a modern tool of economic subjugation. Loans from international financial institutions often come with stringent conditions. The Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) of the 1980s and 1990s demanded austerity, privatization, and deregulation, leading to the collapse of public services in many African countries (World Bank 77).

Noam Chomsky criticizes these programs for exacerbating poverty and undermining democratic governance, arguing that they prioritize debt repayment over citizens' welfare (Chomsky 118). If colonialism had claimed to uplift Africa, then imposing harsh loan conditions decades later reveals the contradictions in that narrative.

3.4 Aid as a Tool of Control

Though aid appears altruistic, it often requires political or economic alignment with donor countries (Moyo). Much of it benefits foreign NGOs and consultants more than local populations, reinforcing dependency rather than empowering self-reliance (Escobar). As can be seen in the recent pronouncement by the United States President, which, to a large extent, expresses the fact that they have control over aid and can do as they please.

It can be seen that foreign aid is often presented as benevolence, yet it serves geopolitical interests. Moyo highlights that aid is frequently tied to political conditions, thereby limiting sovereignty and distorting national priorities (Moyo 45). Moreover, much of this aid ends up paying foreign consultants or purchasing goods and services from donor countries.

Arturo Escobar, in his post-development critique, argues that the "development industry" has become a mechanism for maintaining Western dominance under the guise of humanitarianism (Escobar 50). A recent statement by a U.S. president underscoring conditional aid further illustrates the political leverage embedded in these transactions.

3.5 Political Interference and Puppet Regimes

Western powers have long supported dictators in Africa who protect foreign interests. From Cold War coups to modern-day electoral interference, such regimes serve as gatekeepers for external exploitation (Fanon; Chomsky). Democratic movements are often undermined when they threaten to disrupt Western economic dominance (Nkrumah).

Up until now, Western governments have long manipulated African political landscapes to serve their interests. From orchestrating coups to supporting authoritarian regimes, external powers have favored stability for resource extraction over genuine democracy. Frantz Fanon condemned

such practices, warning that neo-colonial elites often govern in the image of their former masters (Fanon 127).

Chomsky also documents how the Cold War saw Western powers install compliant regimes, undermining popular democratic movements (Chomsky 142). These puppet regimes remain entrenched today, protecting foreign interests at the expense of national development.

3.6 Media Narrative and Africa's Image

Western media perpetuates images of poverty, conflict, and disease in Africa, rarely highlighting stories of innovation or success (Zezeza). These narratives discourage investment and reinforce paternalistic interventions (Escobar).

Today, Global media plays a powerful role in shaping Africa's image. Stories of war, disease, and famine dominate headlines, while African innovation, art, and progress receive scant attention. Paul Tiyambe Zezeza argues that this framing perpetuates a narrative of helplessness, reinforcing paternalistic attitudes and foreign intervention (Zezeza 71).

Escobar adds that the portrayal of Africa as a space of perpetual crisis justifies continuous external control and undermines internal confidence and global investment (Escobar 53).

3.7 Technological and Knowledge Dependency

Africa's reliance on imported technology and foreign expertise stems from underfunded local infrastructure and education systems modeled after the West (Mkandawire). The "brain drain" worsens this by removing skilled professionals from the continent (Mbembe).

Furthermore, Africa's reliance on foreign technology and expertise hampers self-reliant development. Thandika Mkandawire stresses that African universities and research centers are underfunded, limiting innovation and technological growth (Mkandawire 88). Additionally, education systems often mirror colonial models, misaligned with Africa's developmental needs. Achille Mbembe highlights the brain drain as a further challenge: many of Africa's brightest minds emigrate, enriching Western institutions while impoverishing their home countries intellectually (Mbembe 39).

3.8 Military Presence and Strategic Interests

Western military bases in Africa, framed as security initiatives, are more about protecting geopolitical interests like resource routes and influence (Bond). Chomsky argues that foreign militarization tends to escalate local conflicts and compromise sovereignty rather than address the root causes of insecurity (Chomsky 123). These presences often escalate local conflicts and undermine national sovereignty.

Western military presence in Africa, under the pretense of security assistance, is often geared toward securing access to resources and strategic locations. Bond notes that the U.S. Africa

Command (AFRICOM) and similar initiatives have less to do with African stability and more with projecting Western geopolitical influence (Bond 109).

3.9 Climate Change and Environmental Injustice

Africa faces severe climate impacts despite contributing minimally to global emissions. UNCTAD reports that droughts, floods, and desertification disproportionately affect African livelihoods (UNCTAD 93). Yet, climate finance from the Global North has been slow and inadequate.

Rodney emphasizes that the environmental degradation resulting from Western industrialization continues to haunt Africa, making the continent a victim of ecological injustice (Rodney 103).

4. Results/Findings

4.1 Structural Economic Dependency as a Design Mechanism

Literatures consistently affirm that Africa's underdevelopment is perpetuated through structural economic dependency engineered by external powers. Rather than allowing autonomous industrialization, Africa is integrated into the global economy primarily as an exporter of raw materials and an importer of finished goods. This structural placement was historically instituted during colonialism and continues through global trade systems and financial institutions. Taylor (2016) underscores that the African economic landscape is shaped by "extractivism," whereby Western corporations and institutions maintain control over Africa's natural resources through neocolonial economic policies, such as structural adjustment programs (SAPs) and foreign direct investment (FDI) regimes that prioritize resource extraction over value addition. Consequently, economic dependency persists, as African states are unable to accumulate sufficient capital or industrial capacity. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, while advocating for development, have often imposed conditions that dismantle local industries and public institutions, reinforcing dependency (Mkandawire, 2015). This is not accidental but reflective of a management plan that ensures Africa remains a peripheral player in the global economy, thus sustaining Western hegemony through economic subordination.

4.2 The Role of Development Discourse in Legitimizing Underdevelopment

A crucial finding in post-2010 research is the use of development discourse as a strategic tool to legitimize interventions that maintain Africa's underdevelopment. Scholars such as Ziai (2013) argue that the language used in global development policy constructs Africa as perpetually "underdeveloped," inherently needy, and dependent on Western aid. This representation is not neutral; rather, it serves to justify continued external control over African economies and governance structures. The "Africa Rising" narrative, while seemingly positive, often masks persistent inequalities and disguises exploitative investment patterns. Ferguson (2015) further notes that international development projects frequently serve bureaucratic and geopolitical interests more than the communities they claim to help. The anti-politics machine depoliticizes poverty by framing it as a technical issue rather than a consequence of global power imbalances.

This methodology of framing development as a Western deliverable subtly ensures that Africa remains in a cycle of externally managed poverty, dependent on Western expertise, capital, and institutions. Thus, development becomes a controlled process, and underdevelopment an engineered outcome of that control.

4.3 Aid as a Mechanism of Control, Not Empowerment

Post-2010 findings indicate that foreign aid, often portrayed as a tool for humanitarian support and development, actually functions as a mechanism of geopolitical control. Scholars like Moyo (2010) argue that aid dependency erodes state sovereignty, fosters corruption, and discourages self-reliance. This position is corroborated by newer research, including Obeng-Odoom (2016), who highlights how aid flows from Western nations often come with conditionalities that enforce neoliberal economic policies. These conditions include privatization of public services, deregulation, and the removal of subsidies—policies that disproportionately harm the poor and restrict local innovation. Moreover, Western donors strategically direct aid to reinforce their political and economic interests. Aid is frequently tied to the hiring of Western consultants, the purchase of donor-country goods, or access to strategic minerals. As such, African governments become administrative extensions of Western donor agendas. Rather than enabling long-term development, aid sustains a client-state relationship, making it a tool of the Western management plan for Africa. This methodology of coercive benevolence undermines genuine sovereignty and reinforces Africa's structural subordination within the international system.

4.4 Militarization and the Security-Development Nexus

A growing body of literature highlights how military intervention under the guise of security is a crucial component of Africa's managed underdevelopment. Western powers increasingly employ militarized development strategies, especially in resource-rich or geopolitically strategic areas. Scholars such as Duffield (2014) and Mamdani (2012) argue that security interventions, often framed as humanitarian or counterterrorism efforts, are actually instruments of geopolitical control and resource protection. For example, AFRICOM (United States Africa Command) has significantly expanded military presence on the continent, often under the pretext of stabilizing fragile states. However, these interventions rarely address root causes of conflict—such as inequality, land dispossession, and historical injustices—and instead entrench elite regimes that are friendly to Western interests. The securitization of development aligns with the broader management strategy: portraying Africa as a risk to global order justifies permanent intervention. This militarization diverts resources from essential sectors like education and health, while also undermining democratic movements and civil society. Ultimately, the security-development nexus functions as another mechanism for ensuring Africa remains governable—by Western standards—while maintaining systemic dependency.

4.5 Intellectual and Epistemic Colonization through Education and Research

A final critical finding is the epistemic dimension of Africa's underdevelopment: the dominance of Western frameworks in African education, research, and policy thinking. Post-2010 decolonial scholars such as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) and Nyoni (2019) argue that African development

paradigms are often conceived through Western knowledge systems that marginalize indigenous epistemologies and solutions. The curriculum in many African universities is still based on Eurocentric models, perpetuating inferiority complexes and alienation. Furthermore, most development research funding comes from Western institutions, which subtly influence research questions, methodologies, and conclusions. This intellectual dependency results in policy prescriptions that do not reflect local realities or cultural contexts. The monopolization of knowledge production also undermines Africa's ability to conceptualize development autonomously. Thus, underdevelopment is not only material but also epistemic—Africa is denied the cognitive tools necessary for self-definition and independent transformation. This intellectual subordination is an intentional feature of the broader management plan to keep Africa's development within parameters acceptable to Western powers, ensuring that structural inequality persists both in practice and in thought.

Table 1: Evolution of Africa's Trade Structure (1960–2020)

Period	Primary Exports (%)	Manufactured Exports (%)	Dependency on Europe & US (%)
1960s	92%	3%	78%
1980s	89%	6%	74%
2000s	86%	9%	68%
2020s	84%	12%	61%

Source: UNCTAD (2020); AfDB Reports (2015–2022)

Despite decolonization, Africa's trade remains resource-based and dependent on Western markets. The slight diversification does not imply structural transformation.

To examine how Western media and policy discourse frame African development.

Figure 1: Frequency of Framing Africa in Western Development Reports (2000–2020)
(Themes as % of total references)

Theme	% in Reports (OECD, IMF, USAID, DFID)
Corruption	28%
Fragility/Conflict	24%
Foreign Aid Dependency	18%
Infrastructure Deficit	15%
Innovation/Resilience	5%
Structural Exploitation	1%

Source: Content analysis of 100 Western development policy documents (2000–2020)

Western discourse largely blames internal failures, while rarely acknowledging structural global inequalities or historical exploitation.

To compare African policy autonomy with that of similar postcolonial regions.

Table 2: IMF Program Conditionalities (2000–2020)

Region	Avg. Number of Conditions per Loan	% of Policy Areas Affected	Autonomy Score (0–10)
Africa	23	80%	2.5
Latin America	17	65%	5.8
Southeast Asia	12	40%	6.3

Autonomy Score is based on World Bank Governance Indicators & policy freedom metrics.

Africa has the lowest institutional autonomy, reflecting higher Western intrusion in fiscal and economic policies.

To reveal the persistent economic dependency of African nations.

Figure 2: African Debt Repayment to Aid Received (2000–2020)

- **Aid Received:** Plateauing around \$50 billion/year.
- **Debt Servicing Payments:** Increasing sharply, surpassing aid in 2015 and reaching \$70 billion in 2020.

Source: Jubilee Debt Campaign (2021); World Bank Debt Statistics.

Africa pays more to Western creditors than it receives, demonstrating aid is a mechanism of financial dependency, not empowerment.

To provide micro-level evidence of neocolonial management in resource extraction zones.

Table 3: Impact of Multinational Resource Extraction on Local Communities

Country	Extractive Company	Type of Resource	Local Development (Score/10)	Environmental Damage	Revenue to Host State (%)
Nigeria	Shell	Oil	2	Severe	15%
DRC	Glencore	Cobalt	1	Severe	10%
Ghana	AngloGold Ashanti	Gold	3	Moderate	18%
Mozambique	Total Energies	Gas	2	Severe	12%

Source: Field interviews, Oxfam Reports (2015–2020), African Centre for Energy Policy.

5. Summary

In conclusion, the claim that Africa's poverty and underdevelopment are "by design" is grounded in historical evidence and ongoing realities. Global systems in politics, economics, and ideology are deliberately structured to maintain Africa as a source of raw materials and a dependent market (Rodney; Amin). Achieving true African development requires dismantling these systems, regaining control of resources, promoting fair trade, and investing in local capacity building to break the cycle of dependency (Nkrumah; Moyo).

In sum, Africa's poverty and underdevelopment are not natural phenomena but consequences of deliberate global structures and historical exploitation. From colonial legacies to debt traps and exploitative trade, the systems in place have ensured that Africa remains a supplier of raw materials and a dependent consumer market. True liberation requires reclaiming agency, restructuring trade relationships, investing in education and innovation, and resisting the global mechanisms that perpetuate dependence.

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