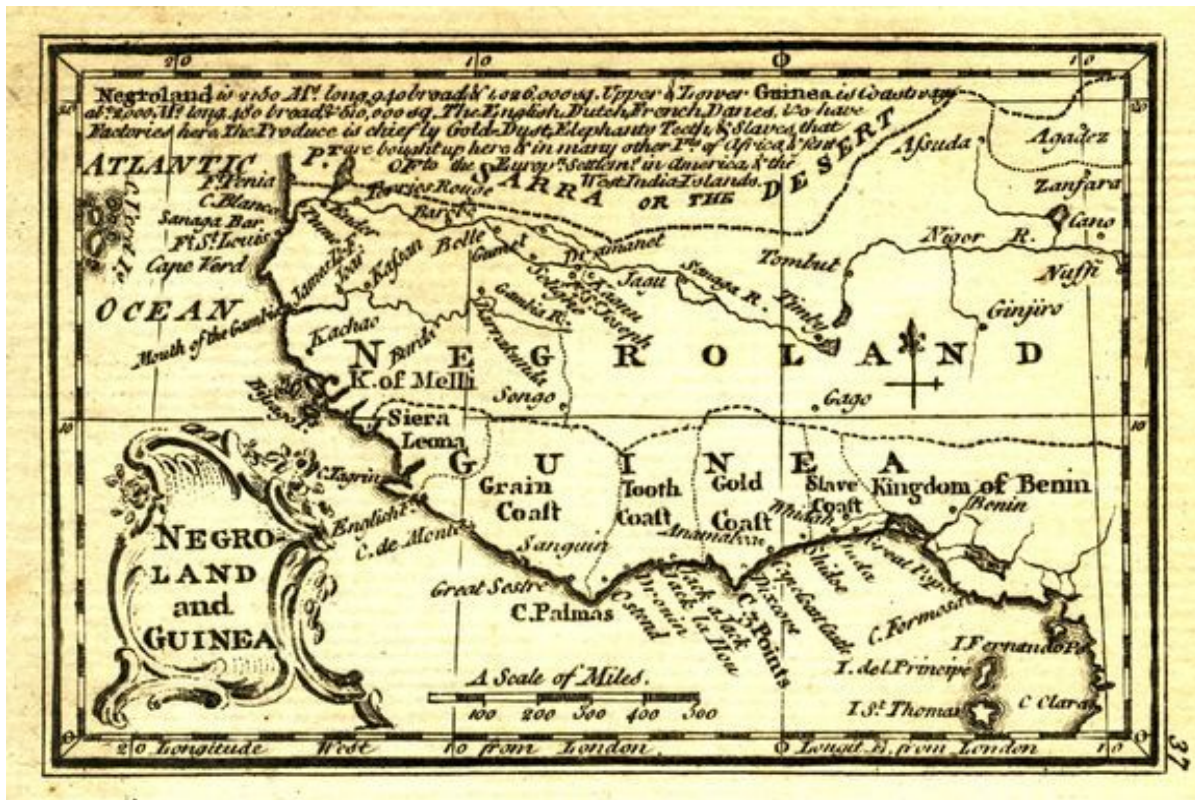


West Africa's Savior: The "Black Star" of the Underdeveloped Region



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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Literature Review: <i>World Systems Theory</i>	9
Postcolonial-Dependency.....	12
The Resource Curse.....	13
Developmental Guidance: <i>Deterrents to Growth</i>	17
Literature Review Conclusion.....	21
West Africa's Background: <i>The "White Man's Burden"</i>	23
The Impact of Governance: <i>Ghana's Rise, Fall, Rise</i>	30
Combatting the Resource Curse: <i>Oil in Ghana</i>	36
Ghanaian Case Study Conclusion.....	39
Critical Analysis and Recommendations.....	40
Final Conclusion.....	49
Bibliography.....	50

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Asé



“We want Africans everywhere, no matter where they live or how they got there, to see Ghana as their gateway home.”

- J. Otanka Obetsebi-Lampty, 2005.

Introduction

The Transatlantic Slave Trade lasted about 400 years and it was the largest and longest deportation in history. The main trading port in the Transatlantic route primarily ran through the region of West Africa. The displacement and removal of over 17 million people from the African continent has resulted in severe underdevelopment; enabling economic instability and consistent exploitation.¹ “No amount of excuses can hide the monumental failures of the African internal public policies, the complicity of the African governments and the impact of the influence of the developed nations in the process.”² When the African continent gained its independence in 1961, European post-colonialization had already exploited their resources, disrupted revenue, political policies, and culture.³ By default, colonial rule has shaped the trajectory of development for this region. These failures have been attributed to decades of underdevelopment in the West African region. Therefore, my **research question** is: “What factors account for *differential* growth in the region of West Africa?” The **factors** implemented in this thesis are a lack of political accountability (ineffective governance) coupled with the mismanagement of oil (resource curse), under the guise of mental colonization (inferiority complex). Therefore, my **hypothesis** for this question is three-fold: I first argue that a significant loss of human capital stunted the growth and development of West African societies socially, economically, and politically. I, then, argue that resource curse is prevalent in the region. However, this paper shows that political accountability,

¹Babacar M'Baye. "The economic, political, and social impact of the Atlantic slave trade on Africa." *European Legacy* 11, no. 6 (2006): 607-622.

² Kato Gogo Kingston. "The impacts of the World Bank and IMF structural adjustment programmes on Africa: The case study of Cote D'Ivoire, Senegal, Uganda, and Zimbabwe." *Sacha Journal of Policy and Strategic Studies* 1, no. 2 (2011): 110-130.

³ T.C. McCaskie., and John D. Fage. "Western Africa - Colonization | Britannica." In *Encyclopædia Britannica*, October 23, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/place/western-Africa/Colonization>.

effective management of oil and the act of mental decolonization, can mediate these dynamics as seen in the case of Ghana.

This thesis emphasizes the impact of the Slave Trade in correlation with colonialism. For West Africans, this event altered their competitiveness in any international trade market and positioned them as dependents; physically, politically, socially, economically and mentally. The research conducted in this thesis will provoke scholars to understand how the implications of colonialism, racism and structural imperialism severely impact how the African continent as a whole is perceived and how the infliction of economic damage can leave a permanent scar. No matter how many bandages you apply, the scar will remain.

First, I will provide a general overview of the World System's theory in order to set the stage for how underdeveloped countries function in the international economy. Then I will combine the theory of Postcolonialism with Dependency theory, in order to elevate the discussion-- thus, transcending both theoretical debates so they can adhere to the primary framework of this thesis and also acknowledge the presence of Mental Colonization and its continuation which falls under the realm of Neo-Colonialism.

Postcolonial theory is a means of defiance by which any exploitative and discriminatory practices, regardless of time and space, can be challenged.⁴ Dependency theory can be defined as an explanation of the economic development of a state in terms of the external influences-- economic, cultural and political on national development policies.⁵ These key theories combined in correlation to the region of West Africa will articulate said framework.

⁴ Lazare S. Rukundwa., and Andries G. Van Aarde. "The formation of postcolonial theory." *HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 63, no. 3 (2007): 1171-1194.

⁵ Vincent, Ferraro. "Dependency Theory: An Introduction," in *The Development Economics Reader*, ed. Giorgio Secondi (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 58-64

Adding to the literature review, I will address the Resource Curse debate. Oil is a key resource in the West African region, “The international context of oil seems only to strengthen the negative relationship between oil and development.”⁶ The scramble for Africa’s oil resulted in an increase of social tensions and intensified the dispossession of minority groups.⁷ Therefore, the on-going debate surrounding the economic implications of oil, has trickled down to affect the political and social spheres as well. The current ‘oil rush’ in Africa has made the world more interested in their oil markets, “West Africa is expected to be one of the fastest-growing sources of oil and natural gas for the American market.” However, because of West Africa’s economic instability, oil revenues in the region have the potential to cause internal damage. Therefore, increased oil investment in Africa is risky considering the implications such as: corruption, conflict and ineffective government. In turn, the consumers of the oil imports will become dependent on this resource that is birthed from a region infested with chronic instability.⁸ Similarly, Nigeria “has remained a country of political unrest, social disorder and economic instability,” since their discovery of oil. They argue that if improvements are not made to the Nigerian government, Nigeria will continue to cultivate a restless and poorly maintained country.⁹ It is pertinent to understand the political contests at the forefront of the oil debate and the role of internal corruption in the region.

⁶Géraud, Magrin, and Geert Van Vliet. "The use of oil revenues in Africa." *Governance of Oil in Africa: Unfinished Business*, Paris, IFRI (2009): 103-163.

⁷ Julia Maxted. "Exploitation of energy resources in Africa and the consequences for minority rights." *Journal of developing societies* 22, no. 1 (2006): 29-37.

⁸ Michael Klare and Daniel Volman. "The African ‘oil rush’ and US national security." *Third World Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (2006): 609-628.

⁹ M. N. Uwakonye, G. S., Osho, & H. Anucha, (2006). The impact of oil and gas production on the Nigerian economy: A rural sector econometric model. *International Business & Economics Research Journal (IBER)*, 5(2).

In general terms, the literature review of this thesis will conclude with an analysis of my factors that will enunciate the tone of my argument. Ineffective governance proves to be the main catalyst of underdevelopment in the region; therefore, I analyze the mistakes in governance in order to understand how Ghana has learned from them.

In the period of the 1950s-1980s, Ghana held the most substantial growth potential because of the country's influx of natural resources, but that was quickly refuted when economic stagnation and decay plagued the area after they were granted independence under President Nkrumah's leadership. Although strong efforts and advocacy for Black Nationalism and Global Black Unity were efficient under his leadership by garnering agency and executing the act of Mental Decolonization, under Nkrumah's rule, ineffective economic management still prevailed, and allowed 'potential' to slip through the cracks.¹⁰ The infrastructure of Ghana's internal affairs lacked efficacy-- external influences such as donor control of the Ghanaian government, and poor export performance contributed to a significant drop in their developmental economy.¹¹ Thus, the World Bank stepped in. In the 1980s, Structural Adjustment Programs were introduced to Ghana and Ghana quickly became a success story in the World Bank experiment.¹² This financial assistance allowed Ghana to import the capital goods and supplies it needed for rehabilitation.¹³ With that being said, Ghana is not exempt from the blight of an often fetishized commodity in West Africa: oil. The negative connotations of oil allow it to be characterized as a "resource curse." However, because of Ghana's progressive ideals and transition back into

¹⁰ Jonathan H. Frimpong-Ansah. *The vampire state in Africa: The political economy of decline in Ghana*. Africa World Press, 1992.

¹¹ Jiyoung Kim. "Aid and state transition in Ghana and South Korea." *Third World Quarterly* 36, no. 7 (2015): 1333-1348.

¹² Franklin Obeng-Odoom. "Neoliberalism and the urban economy in Ghana: Urban employment, inequality, and poverty." *Growth and Change* 43, no. 1 (2012): 85-109.

¹³ Chad Leechor. "Ghana: frontrunner in adjustment." *Adjustment in Africa: Lessons from country case studies* (1994): 153-192.

democracy after overthrowing President Nkrumah, Ghana has been able to effectively combat the resource curse.

Overall, the Slave Trade negatively affected Africa and its people as a whole. However, Africa still reigns supreme when it comes to resources. But, if resources such as oil are poorly managed, this can equate to corruption; especially when ineffective forms of government are in place. Lastly, without a general sense of cultural pride through the act of mental decolonization, it will be difficult for the people of West Africa to grow and develop their human capital, mirroring the consistent blight of underdevelopment.

The map of this thesis is led with an introduction that follows a literature review; broken into four parts that include an overall conclusion. After the literature review, I will provide background context of the West African region, in order to elicit my argument and answer the initial research question while contributing to the existing literature on African politics. Then, I will provide an argumentative section that emphasizes my factors with respect towards the Ghanaian case, followed by my own critical analysis and recommendations. Finally, I will provide a thorough conclusion and finish off this thesis with a bibliography.

Literature Review

During the Post WWII reconstruction period, the international agenda was to promote global development.¹⁴ Currently, underdeveloped countries still struggle to position themselves in the international political economy. Although the function of periphery countries in association with core countries makes them strong benefactors; exploitation, conflict and corruption can plague developing areas of the world. Therefore, my region of focus is imperative to understand because it is a key example of how interconnectedness in world affairs creates a conceptual “crutch” as the resource abundant “weak states” carry and hold together the most powerful economic markets in the world.

World Systems Theory

It is essential to mention World Systems Theory as it pertains to the region of West Africa and attempts to, explain the entire structure of the international political economy. World Systems Theory can be defined as, “a form of ‘world-economy,’ woven through several regional markets that are interdependent with respect to necessities such as food, fuel and protection.”¹⁵ The rule of this theory is consistent with the idea that a states economy determines its politics, and capitalism is the driving force of regional exploitation. With this in mind, several debates surround the topic. The theory implies that the world system is exploitative towards the periphery and semi-periphery countries. For example, the implications of taxes and tariffs on a periphery country’s “cheaply made” product implemented by a core country can possibly ruin the periphery countries economy. The key points of discussion surrounding the debate of this

¹⁴ Evan Osborne. "Measuring bad governance." *Cato J.* 23 (2003): 403.

¹⁵ Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, and Senior Researcher Immanuel Wallerstein. *World-systems analysis: An introduction*. Duke University Press, 2004.

theory are: 1) that the World Systems Theory provides a large “generalization” of a complex system—clumping together race, gender and social class without acknowledging all of the implications, 2) unequal exchange is the base of the World Systems Theory; implying that all core countries are participating in unequal exchanges to exploit periphery and semi-periphery countries¹⁶ and 3) subordinate actors may be “mystified” by the dominant ideology presented by core countries and unconsciously incorporate themselves into a system that works against their interests because they want to be active in the global system and build their nation.¹⁷

The opposing side of this theory makes it a point to address how Wallerstein’s approach was an adequate attempt to understand something complex, but he failed to address the conflicting interests of such vast generalizations. Also, his arguments attest to the dominance of capitalist systems in society; leaving out systems that function in a different way. Further, the existence and explanation of the semi-periphery allows us to, again, question the theory. The semi-periphery can be considered “middle-class” in the global system. The function of the countries in this category is to “instill hope” and enhance competition in the overall system. It allows the core to keep its power and alleviates some exploitation from the periphery.

In the World Systems Theory, there is no explanation of how semi-periphery countries maneuver through the system with communist, democratic or socialist internal structures. It is assumed that the core countries follow capitalistic-values and that’s why their willingness to exploit ranked countries exist. It is also assumed that the implementation of such a system is

¹⁶ James Petras. "Dependency and world system theory: a critique and new directions." *Latin American Perspectives* 8, no. 3-4 (1981): 148-155.

¹⁷ Thomas Clayton. "Beyond mystification: Reconnecting world-system theory for comparative education." *Comparative Education Review* 42, no. 4 (1998): 479-496.

organized to exploit instead of to “help” so concepts such as foreign aid are refuted because it actually contradicts the capitalist system.

Furthermore, the side of the debate that understands Wallerstein’s point of view can be encouraged by the notion that a “hegemonic” figure in the global system only advertises external moral disdain for the rest of the world. It pushes the narrative that model countries are mostly capitalistic and western modernization is elite. Thus, implying that there is no room for any other internal system to work effectively towards sustainable development. Therefore, underdeveloped countries try their best to situate themselves in a position that leans on the core for help and guidance—especially considering the previous colonization of most countries. In this scenario, Wallerstein’s theory answers the question of “why” these countries have not been able to penetrate the system that exploits and binds them—it is because these core and semi-periphery countries are creating opportunities for them to be active participants in the global system. World System’s theory understands that exploitation happens, but that is because of the capitalistic values that are implemented, not because core countries are looking to take advantage of underdeveloped countries.

Moreover, Wallerstein was the first to agree that ineffective governance in the form of dependence is an issue; even if you take for granted global inequality in the World System. Therefore, I will combine the concepts Postcolonialism and Dependency Theory because they stand on similar grounds and this will form of “Postcolonial-Dependency,” will serve as the primary-background framework of this thesis.

Postcolonial-Dependency

A key concept representative of these theories is colonization. Colonization is essential to understand when discussing the historical context of underdeveloped countries. The implications of colonization have left generational scars on the societies that inhabit most underdeveloped regions. In the West African region, the large misplacement of people caused detrimental effects on the growth and development of a stable economic society by removing a bountiful amount of human capital. The main object of concern in Postcolonial theory is binary categorization such as: master > slave, white > black, civilized > uncivilized. These categorizations became stereotypes that were used to culturally oppress and justify prejudice against people in underdeveloped countries.¹⁸

The key internal debates of these theories are: 1) that Postcolonial-dependency often fails to address issues of poverty, resource distribution, state violence and human rights violations¹⁹, 2) the concept of dependency has a difficult time understanding social relationships based on geographical observations and creating a model of the world capitalist system²⁰, and 3) that Postcolonial studies must advocate for postcolonial intellectuals to learn that their privilege is their loss.²¹ Postcolonial-dependency offers background knowledge for the larger debate of completely understanding the “third-world” Because Postcolonial theorists fall short of internal understanding, there is a gap between the literature and human experience—especially if the intentional focus and study is catered towards a Western point-of-view. For example,

¹⁸ Ilan Kapoor. "Capitalism, culture, agency: dependency versus postcolonial theory." *Third World Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (2002): 647-664.

¹⁹ Christine Sylvester. "Development studies and postcolonial studies: disparate tales of the 'Third World'." *Third World Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (1999): 703-721.

²⁰ Harriet Friedmann, and Jack Wayne. "Dependency theory: a critique." *Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers canadiens de sociologie* (1977): 399-416.

²¹ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. "Can the subaltern speak?." *Die Philosophin* 14, no. 27 (2003): 42-58.

Dependency theory adheres to the capitalist discourse; it critiques inequality solely based upon global, capitalist development. This limits the range of motion dependency theorists can obtain by only exploring the impact of external conditions. The remiss of social factors within underdeveloped countries leads me directly into my critique of Postcolonialism.

Postcolonial theorists understand colonization, usually from a colonizer perspective—this point is best argued by the scholar Spivak. Spivak brings attention to how Postcolonial studies ironically regurgitates Neo-colonial imperatives of political domination, cultural erasure and economic exploitation; therefore, the post-colonial critic can be seen to be subconsciously complicit in the task of imperialism. These critiques are essential to understanding the larger debate at the forefront. Thus, the purpose of Postcolonial-dependency only functions as background context for this body of work.

The Resource Curse

The theories and debates critiqued above beckon the question of “why?” Why do core countries seem to have the ulterior motive of exploitation in association with underdeveloped countries? Some argue that the concept of a “resource curse” is to blame.

For this project, it is important to understand the resource curse debate because the region of West Africa is resource abundant. A resource curse can be defined as, “the claim that natural resource wealth tends to adversely affect a country’s governance.”²² Furthermore, an important component of the resource curse, is known as the ‘Dutch Disease’, which acknowledges that a large inflow of foreign revenue leads to the overvaluation of a country’s currency as a natural resource (diamond, oil, gold) prices escalate. Thus, the result of price escalation inevitably

²² Michael L. Ross. "What have we learned about the resource curse?." *Annual Review of Political Science* 18 (2015): 239-259.

causes a decline in the manufacturing industry.²³ The most notable resource curse in the West African region, is oil.

Many scholars have argued on the topic of a resource curse—especially concerning petroleum. The key arguments I will address are: 1) whether or not the concept of a “resource curse” is real or illusory²⁴, 2) that imperialist oil companies are exploiting Africans and, 3) that mineral dependence enables economic instability, provokes conflict and causes greater inequality and more corruption.²⁵ The largest debate about resource curses stems from the ideals of scholars who believe that “too” much of something, is inevitably bad. At the focal point of this concern is the existence of weak governments in underdeveloped countries and their hyper-dependence on a singular resource such as oil. “The general notion has been that fragile states provide the breeding ground for corruption.”²⁶ Therefore, scholars suggest that oil has become the blight of West African development.

The scramble for African oil started during the colonial period. European countries became the main culprits of exhausting African resources, even during decolonization. European countries have also been spotted expanding their control over Africa’s resources in collaboration with state elites.²⁷ Scholars argue that since then, African countries have failed to harness their resources—resulting in harmful effects inflicted by their own product. It is implied that oil dependence in the region of West Africa has castrated internal functionality with an emphasis on

²³ Emmanuel Graham, Ishmael Ackah, and Ransford Edward Van Gyampo. "Politics of oil and gas in Ghana." *Insight on Africa* 8, no. 2 (2016): 131-141.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 241.

²⁵ Nicholas Shaxson. "Oil, corruption and the resource curse." *International Affairs* 83, no. 6 (2007): 1123-1140.

²⁶ Atuobi Samuel Mondays. "Corruption and state instability in West Africa: An examination of policy options." (2007).

²⁷ Chris Nwachukwu Okeke. "The Second Scramble for Africa's Oil and Mineral Resources: Blessing or Curse?." *The International Lawyer* (2008): 193-209.

governance. Systemically, the quality of the institution (state itself) is an essential factor in determining whether or not the resource will “help” or “hurt” the society. Further, the social relation of the production of oil with international imperial capital and their collaborators, has perpetuated a recipe for impoverishment, corruption, conflict and disempowerment.²⁸ Therefore, the scholars who uphold oil as a valid resource curse, do make diligent claims that offer insight into the deep rooted issue of human rights when the militarization of oil is observed.

As for the counterargument in this exchange, scholars who believe that the concept of a resource curse is illusory, claim that the beneficial effects of harboring an abundance of oil are often overlooked. “While oil appears to have been the cause of recurrent problems in countries like Venezuela and Ecuador, Norway has become one of the world’s richest economies largely thanks to its oil endowments.” The primary argument is that low-quality institutions rich in minerals will suffer from a resource curse while a higher-quality institution with an abundance of minerals will experience a resource curse “reversal.”²⁹ The possibility of a country’s economic growth increasing due to mineral abundance relies heavily on the internal structure and governance of the country itself. So, when it appears that a country such as Norway has gained economic growth from mineral abundance, it is implied that the internal structure has experience less corruption. The concept of resource curse “reversal” may not be applicable to post-colonized regions because of the previous damages inflicted upon their internal system. Therefore, during reconstruction and the post-independence era when decolonization was in motion, it is hard to imagine a region such as West Africa regaining its economic stability while simultaneously re-inventing their own cultural, political and societal values. The bending factor and answer to the

²⁸ Adelaja Odutola Odukoya. "Oil and sustainable development in Nigeria: A case of study the Niger Delta." *Journal of Human Ecology* 20, no. 4 (2006): 249-258.

²⁹ Anne D. Boschini., Jan Pettersson, and Jesper Roine. "Resource curse or not: A question of appropriability." *Scandinavian Journal of Economics* 109, no. 3 (2007): 593-617.

argumentative research is that: it depends. It depends on the layout of governance on the country itself and the previous historical facts that attribute to the functioning society as it is.

Furthermore, the argument of imperialist oil companies specifically exploiting Africans is beneficial to understanding the root cause, and gap in the literature provided concerning the concept of a resource curse. In Nigeria for example, they are the fifth largest oil producer within the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), yet they have accumulated little to no wealth illustrating this fact. Many Nigerian people still suffer from a lack of economic and social rights-- the right to healthy and adequate living standards is nonexistent. "In the Niger Delta several oil companies have historically acted arbitrarily, or failed to deliver on promises made, or thought to have been made to communities. In other cases, companies have pitted one community against another, or interfered with the traditional governance structures of the communities."³⁰ This type of outer-influence and tampering of internal affairs pushes a slight agenda; what if the blight of a resource curse was subconsciously intentional and actively implemented in weaker societies? The next section provides context for this speculation.

³⁰ Julia Maxted. "Exploitation of energy resources in Africa and the consequences for minority rights." *Journal of developing societies* 22, no. 1 (2006): 29-37.

Developmental Guidance: *Deterrents to Growth*

In all three spheres of development, the key factors I will address are: ineffective governance coupled with the mismanagement of oil revenue, under the guise of looming mental colonization. It is commonly implied by scholars that these political, economic, and social factors incite underlying conflict, corruption and other various forms of tension. Therefore, these factors specifically are essential to answering all of the previous questions presented in this thesis. Regarding the region of West Africa, the implications of said factors understand economic instability and overall development by reflecting the consequences of inadequate internal functions and weak governmental structures.

Ineffective governance encompasses variables such as oil revenue and foreign aid. The triad interaction of these factors is a direct response to a lack of political accountability. Development theorists in the political realm of internal domestic affairs, insist that the impediment of development relies on the presence of weak-internal government infrastructures, and examines the lack of reform occurrence when systems fall subject to downward-economic spirals. They argue that the factors attributed to ineffective governance are: 1) purposeless leaders, 2) lack of legitimate and accountable citizens, 3) states that were created and shaped around political authority based on economic and political interactions with wealthier countries— they suggest that all of these variables are the result of “uneven” distribution. Additionally, they request that scholars examine and understand the nature of these processes because that could lead to policy reform. Also, they emphasize that it is important for scholars to pay attention to how wealthy foreign countries actively help sustain international political underdevelopment.³¹ For example, in Bangladesh ineffective governance has been determined as

³¹ Mick Moore. "Political Underdevelopment: What causes 'bad governance'." *Public Management Review* 3, no. 3 (2001): 385-418.

a hinderance for possible poverty alleviation. In 1995/96, 47.5 percent of Bangladesh's population lived in poverty and inequality continues to increase over the years. Interventionalist programs implemented by donors and NGOs "aiming at poverty reduction have suffered from rent seeking at various levels which reduced efficiency and effectiveness and deprived many poor of access to the services to which they were entitled... the negative effects of this have been compounded by the absence of accountability of public servants either to their superiors or to the community they are meant to serve. Accountability towards above and below is identified as the decisive factor for enhancing the quality-of-service delivery to the poor."³²

Additionally, it is imperative to mention that foreign aid has created some dependency when core countries aid the periphery. Loan conditionality can attest to this dependence by causing severe indebtedness when sometimes enforcing detrimental conditions on financially unstable countries. This type of bond upholds the hierarchical world system and allows dominance to manifest in the name of a "helping hand" when the severity of conditions interferes with the efficacy of repairing economic sustainability in weaker states. When aid is received but does not contribute to the greater good of singular states in the region, this can allude to the aversion of aid distribution being categorized as an effective strategy to achieving sustainability within weaker states with valuable resources. For example, in recent years debt relief was given to numerous African countries but corruption was perpetuated throughout some of the foreign aid regimes by external actors.³³ So, there are constraints placed upon aid when regimes and policies are tampered with; in some cases, creating noticeable inequity from state to state.

³² Rehman Sobhan. "How bad governance impedes poverty alleviation in Bangladesh." (1998).

³³ Shola J. Omotola and Hassan Salu. "Foreign aid, debt relief and Africa's development: problems and prospects." *South African Journal of International Affairs* 16, no. 1 (2009): 87-102.

Scholars and theorist alike uphold the concept that effective governance promotes growth development. With a noticeable lack of leadership and foundation, the probability of a socioeconomic community failing is more likely.³⁴ Therefore, it is hard to disagree with scholars who argue that weak internal governance is the primary foreboding factor in a state's development. By acknowledging the lack of political accountability on the international and singular internal level, the factors of what leads to corruption and conflict become digestible.

Furthermore, development economists suggest that the mismanagement of oil, is corruption adjacent. The literature on oil revenue and mismanagement of such, attest to money-laundering, lack of reinvestment, and fraudulent behavior.³⁵ Additionally, "OPEC's ability to increase oil prices in 1973-94 and again in 1979 strengthened the collective bargaining strength of the Group of 77 and produced foreign exchange shortages and unsustainable indebtedness that, in turn, forced many non-oil-exporting developing countries to accept intrusive structural adjustment."³⁶ This all points to the disappearance of capital revenue in the West African region. This notion inevitably causes internal problems that disrupt the society on a local and international level. As previously stated, petroleum is an essential resource in international markets, but a country such as Nigeria (highly dependent on oil), that can accumulate billions of dollars in oil revenue does not illustrate this fact. When this happens, international intervention may appear in the form of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) with loan conditionality. This in turn, can result in mountains of debt.

³⁴ Thomas G. Weiss. "Governance, good governance and global governance: conceptual and actual challenges." *Third world quarterly* 21, no. 5 (2000): 795-814.

³⁵ Kalim Siddiqui. "Corruption and Economic Mismanagement in Developing Countries." *The World Financial Review* 1, no. 1 (2019).

³⁶ Thomas G. Weiss. "Governance, good governance and global governance: conceptual and actual challenges." *Third world quarterly* 21, no. 5 (2000): 795-814.

Further, the implications of corruption within oil markets are seen to be a hinderance to the society's development. Oil-led development can be defined as, "an overwhelming dependence on revenues from the export (and not the internal consumption) of petroleum, as measured by the ratio of oil and gas to gross domestic product, total exports, and the contribution to central government revenues."³⁷ In West African societies, it is a pattern for their governments to base their development around this money-making resource. But, the internal managers of these oil markets often fall subject to the "grabbing hand" model of government. Within this model, government interventionists or independent bureaucrats pursue their own agendas while natives try to do the same, "In extreme cases, the government becomes sufficiently disorganized that it loses its ability to ensure law and order and to provide basic legal protections. As a consequence, contracts become privately enforced."³⁸ In this scenario, who actually benefits from oil abundance? The mismanagement of oil harms societies, economies and internal government structures when the managing is done from the outside in. Manipulation of capital revenue allows corruption to exist inside of a state, and that ultimately effects the trajectory of overall development.

³⁷ Terry Lynn Karl. "Oil-led development: social, political, and economic consequences." *Encyclopedia of energy* 4, no. 8 (2007): 661-672.

³⁸ Timothy Frye, and Andrei Shleifer. *The invisible hand and the grabbing hand*. No. w5856. national bureau of economic research, 1996.

Literature Review Conclusion

As this thesis adheres to the general framework of Postcolonial-Dependency, it is essential that I briefly reinforce the looming factor of Mental Colonization because it works as the common denominator in conjunction with the key factors referenced. Mental colonization is “essentially a self-destructing mechanism by which an ideology that is used to oppress or weaken an ethnic or national group is internalized by the victims of that ideology and accepted as valid.”³⁹ When the mentality of an individual or group is attacked, it becomes easier to control them. In the case of Africa, mental colonization has been weaponized—instilling inferiority complexes that carry out dependence. This interpretation can be held accountable through the findings of scholar P-Kiven Tunteng who addresses the psychological dependence in Africa by stating that: “Without confidence in their own skills and abilities, dependence on foreign powers has been viewed as a necessity. Herein may lie the explanation for what has commonly become known as ‘neo-colonialism,’ for it is not so much the result of foreign machinations as the African *need* for direction. It could be argued that dependence on European powers is the outcome of a certain psychological necessity to compensate for the lingering inadequacy which was inculcated or reinforced during the colonial period.”⁴⁰ Under the ideology of Postcolonial-Dependency, the concept of Mental Colonization understands this project by reiterating the vice of a severe loss in human capital; physically and mentally. Therefore, in association with the key factors, the detriments to African development are better understood.

³⁹ Tony. 2020. “Mental Colonization.” MexConnect. June 17, 2020.

<https://www.mexconnect.com/articles/1749-mental-colonization/>.

⁴⁰ P-Kiven Tunteng. “Political freedom and mental colonization.” *Transition* (1974): 9-16.

This literature review has covered World System's theory, Postcolonial-Dependency, Ineffective Governance, The Resource Curse Debate and pertinent factors that I believe impede economic growth in West Africa, with the concept of Mental Colonization aiding to the interpretation of such factors. Additionally, the analyzed literature contributes to this thesis by creating an avenue that leads to the justification of my argument and answers the initial research question by highlighting the variation of growth development that is illustrated in the case of Ghana. At the base of this overall analysis, themes of dependence, government influence and interventionism are apparent. However, Ghana refutes the pessimistic view of Africa as a whole by illustrating a beacon of hope within their successful community. It is imperative to understand how deterrents of growth affect Africa, but it is also imperative to realize the mobility of certain outcomes when effective governance is apparent in each sphere of development. Therefore, I do not deny that commonalities between ineffective governance, mismanagement of oil and the subtle continuation of colonialism reveal instances of corruption, conflict and exploitation; rather, I add progressive insight to the literature that often critiques Africa's misguidance without praising its effective countries. Now, we are going to take a look at West Africa's overall background, then introduce the outlier and growth champion of West Africa: Ghana.

West Africa's Background: *The “White Man’s Burden”*

“The most momentous discovery in Western Africa, [came] in 1471, when Portuguese captains first reached the coast of modern Ghana... it was quickly appreciated that the Akan peoples of this coast had access to supplies of Gold.” Historically, the region of West Africa has always been rich and resourceful—making it a valuable trading partner in the early stages of the international economy. When Portuguese-Europeans discovered how valuable the West African region was resource-wise, they began to refine its functionality in order to strengthen their own country by using African resources. European imperialism in Africa, set up the continent to have its resources eradicated. As European activity in the region persisted, resource exploitation occurred in several forms.⁴¹ One form of this can be seen through the concept of **human capital**. Human capital is the accumulation of knowledge, skills and health that people gain which allow them to realize their potential as productive members of society; this in turn helps to alleviate poverty by establishing more inclusive societies.⁴² This notion can also be interpreted as a sense of “pride” or autonomy within a society and their culture. Therefore, nourishment of human capital becomes the catalyst for proper domestic infrastructure. But, in West Africa’s case, the slave trade left a traumatic scar on their societies and culture, by displacing and colonizing their people—making the presence of slavery the final component to what led to the developmental

⁴¹ T.C. McCaskie and John D. Fage. “Western Africa - Colonization | Britannica.” In *Encyclopædia Britannica*, October 23, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/place/western-Africa/Colonization>.

impediment of human capital in West African societies, induced by removing a large number of able-bodied citizens from their homes.

Population loss due to Atlantic slave trade				
	from Africa as a whole		from western Africa north of the Equator	
	arriving overseas	leaving Africa	percentage	estimated total
before 1600	290,000	370,000	60	220,000
1601–1700	1,490,000	1,870,000	60	1,120,000
1701–1810	5,150,000	6,130,000	60	3,680,000
after 1810	2,780,000	3,270,000	33	1,090,000
Total	9,710,000	11,640,000	—	6,110,000

figure 1: T.C. McCaskie and John D. Fage. “Western Africa - Colonization | Britannica.” In *Encyclopædia Britannica*, October 23, 2019, chapter 9. <https://www.britannica.com/place/western-Africa/Colonization>.

The Slave Trade Era single-handedly dismembered any form of viable human capital within the region by enabling the largest deportation of people in history.

“When the Slave Trade was at its height during the 18th century, the export of slaves was averaging 45,000 a year.”⁴³ The repetitive migration of people in association with colonization,

⁴³ T.C. McCaskie and John D. Fage. “Western Africa - Colonization | Britannica.” In *Encyclopædia Britannica*, October 23, 2019, chapter 9. <https://www.britannica.com/place/western-Africa/Colonization>.

affected the flavor of West Africa. The history of West Africa, that once delved in riches and culture, was quickly transformed into a mere product-pawn at the hands of European disposal. Naturally, West Africa and its people also became a popular commodity for the rest of the developing world. People became dependent on slave labor and African resources because they escalated the rate of growth development within their own societies. “The external demand for West African labor, especially in the period ca. 1650 to ca. 1850, was so great that the export of slaves to meet it had a disastrous effect on the peoples of West Africa, disrupting not only their natural demographic development but their social and moral development as well.”⁴⁴ To reiterate, a significant loss of millions of able-bodied citizens in the population, equates to a loss of human capital which in turn, eliminates the presence of most strong-minded individuals equipped with the abilities to grow and develop their societies properly without dependence.

⁴⁴ J.D. Fage. (1969). Slavery and the slave trade in the context of West African history. *Journal of African history*, 393-404.

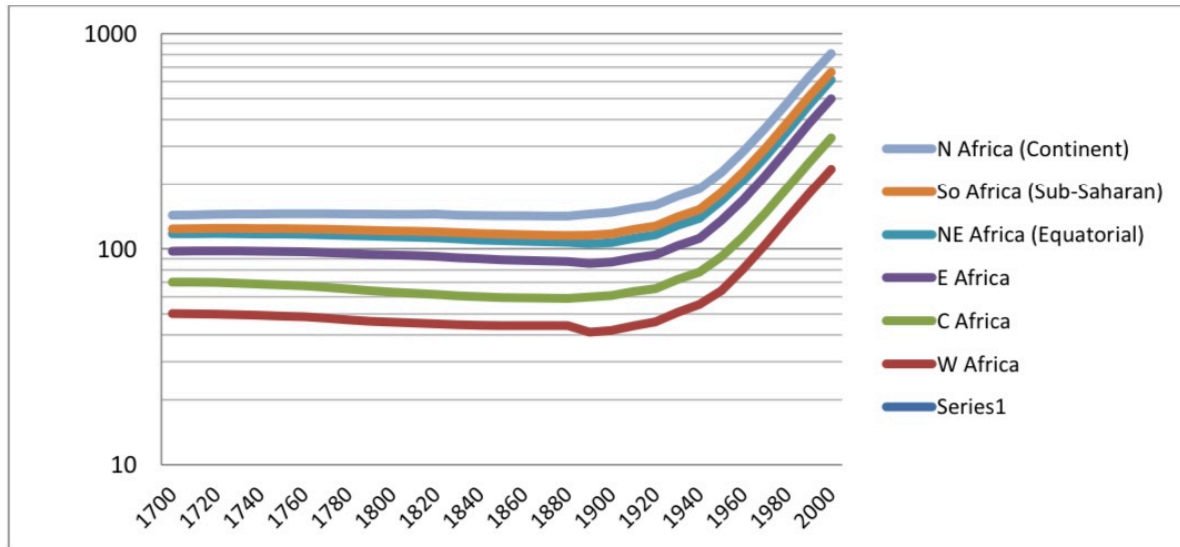


Figure 1.
Estimated African population (in millions) by region, 1700 – 2000.
Source: Tables A.1, B.1, C.1, D.1.

	1700	1790	1850	1900	1950	2000
North Africa	13.4	15.8	17.9	20.4	19.3	18.1
Southern Africa	4.6	5.1	5.6	7.2	6.8	6.4
Northeast Africa	13.8	13.9	14.0	13.5	14.1	13.7
East Africa	19.2	20.9	20.8	17.6	19.1	21.1
Central Africa	14.0	12.3	10.8	12.8	12.3	11.7
West Africa	35.1	31.9	31.0	25.4	28.2	29.1

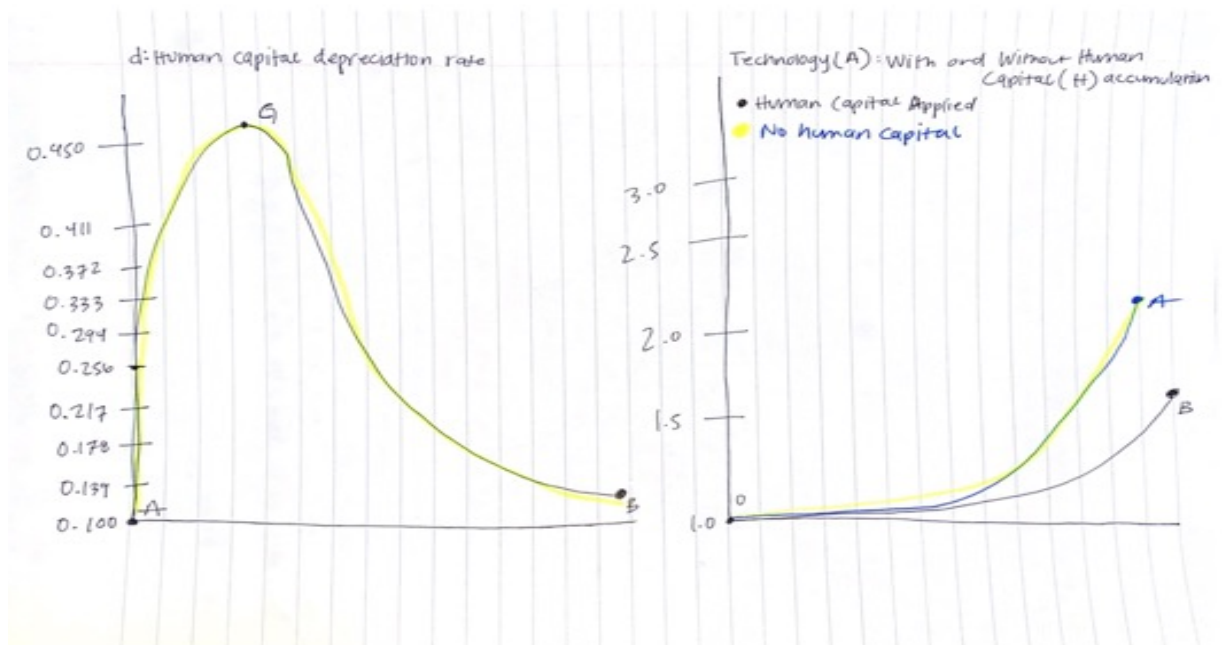
Table 1. Percentages of African population by region, over time.
Source: Tables A.1, B.1, C.1, D.1.

The graphs above illustrate a significant population decline in the region of West Africa from the period of the 1850s-1900s specifically; with a deportation of approximately 5.6 million able-bodied citizens due to the Slave Trade. The rate of population declination from the 1790s-1900s emphasizes the impact of the Slave Trade in the region.⁴⁵

Additionally, it is essential to mention the Endogenous Growth Theory in association to the previously provided context. The Endogenous Growth Theory assumes that long-term

⁴⁵ Patrick Manning. "African population, 1650-1950: methods for new estimates by region." In *African Economic History Conference*. 2013.

economic growth is generated from within a system as a direct result of internal processes. It argues that economic growth depends on the accumulation and investment in human capital, innovation, and knowledge as determinants to growth.⁴⁶ To emphasize this theory as it adds to the overall conducive research presented, I will specifically highlight the **Uzawa-Lucas Model** as it adheres to human capital: “With human capital accumulation ($H > 0$) the economy is capable of long-run growth through accumulation of physical capital, expanding quantity of intermediate goods, and improvements in the quality of labor without developing new products. Basically, we are then in the Uzawa-Lucas framework.”⁴⁷



Graph 1: d: “Human capital depreciation rate. Investing in human capital is initially exponential, then becomes subject to diminishing returns, then is slowly counterproductive after reaching an inflex point.”

Graph 2: “Comparison of technology growths.”⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Onyebuchi Onyimadu Chukwuemeka. 2015. “An Overview of Endogenous Growth Models: Theory and Critique.” *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2685545>.

⁴⁷ William A. Barnett and Taniya Ghosh. “Stability analysis of Uzawa–Lucas endogenous growth model.” *Economic Theory Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (2014): 33–44.

⁴⁸ Murad Kasim. n.d. “Endogenous Growth: Dynamic Technology Augmentation of Solow’s Model.” <https://arxiv.org/pdf/1805.00668.pdf>

The graphs provided above belong to the scholar Kasim who uses the Uzawa-Lucas Model and Solow's Neo-Classical Growth Model as reference for the creation of his new model that represents the "middle" ground of those models specifically. I highlighted these two graphs in particular because they further explain the Endogenous Growth Theory with human capital placed at the forefront in two differing scenarios—justifying credibility within my argument and proving that human capital is a viable guise for development.

Now, what does a severe loss of human capital mean for West African people? It means the impediment of progress in every single sphere of development. For example, "Low skills in Ghana have contributed to a workforce structure shaped like a steep Egyptian pyramid or the Eiffel Tower. This huge base is made of unskilled workers, employed in low-finance agriculture, fishing and other extractive activities that require the use of little technology."⁴⁹ While other countries were establishing powerful positions in the international economy, Africans were suffering from cultural genocide and mass exploitation in the period between the ending of the slave trades, and the beginning of colonial rule which can be characterized as the "White Man's Burden."

Post-Independence for West Africa and Africa as a whole, can be analyzed through the lens of another major event—the Scramble for Africa. "During the "Scramble for Africa"- that starts with the Berlin Conference of 1884 – 1885 and is completed by the turn of the 20th century- Europeans partitioned Africa into spheres of influence, protectorates, and colonies... [despite] their arbitrariness boundaries outlived the colonial era. As a result, in many African countries today a significant fraction of the population belongs to groups that are partitioned

⁴⁹ Kwamina Panford. "An exploratory survey of petroleum skills and training in Ghana." *Africa Today* 60, no. 3 (2014): 57-80.

among different states.”⁵⁰ At the end of the 19th century, Britain subdued previously independent African kingdoms and less village-based societies—eradicating local trading networks and replacing them with their own firms and transportation infrastructure. British companies still owned private sectors that facilitated corporate revenue and resources in the region. Naturally, conflict arose through the slow implementation of Africanization in management because British people still held direct political control.⁵¹ Ultimately, the Scramble for Africa was ideological—it aimed to capture the minds of African people and instill inferiority through the false pretense of independence, as the continuation of colonialism was transformed into neo-colonialism. This was morally justified through the imaginative concept of a “White Man’s Burden,” which suggests that: “white colonizers believed they had to impose their civilization on the black inhabitants of their colonies.”⁵²

Therefore, I reiterate my argument that: a significant loss of human capital stunted the growth and development of West African societies socially, economically, and politically. I, then, argue that resource curse is prevalent in the region. However, this paper shows that political accountability, effective management of oil as a resource and the act of mental decolonization, can mediate these dynamics as seen in the case of Ghana.

⁵⁰ Michalopoulos, Stelios, and Elias Papaioannou. "The long-run effects of the scramble for Africa." *American Economic Review* 106, no. 7 (2016): 1802-48.

⁵¹ Stephanie Decker. 2010. "Postcolonial Transitions in Africa: Decolonization in West Africa and Present Day South Africa." *Journal of Management Studies* 47 (5): 791–813.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2010.00924.x>.

⁵² Oxford Languages. 2020. "Oxford Languages and Google - English -." Languages.Oup.Com. 2020.
<https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/>.

The Impact of Governance: *Ghana's Rise, Fall, Rise*

Ghana was the first country to gain independence in West-Africa under the rule of Kwame Nkrumah in 1957. Under Nkrumah's avant-garde rule, he quickly became one of the most notable political leaders in African history. His approach to leadership was anti-colonial, a direct challenge to the emergence of the "modernization" paradigm which assumed that newly independent states would seek to mimic previous European systems of governance. Ghana under Nkrumah inspired the rest of the continent to fight for independence. Ghana became a vehicle for the rest of the continent as he advocated for every region of Africa to become politically free and gain total liberation without dependence on material support. His main goal was to achieve the unification of the entire African continent.⁵³

"On this continent it has not taken us long to discover that the struggle against colonialism does not end with the attainment of national independence. Independence is only the prelude to a new and more involved struggle for the right to conduct our own economic and social affairs; to construct our society according to our aspirations, unhampered by crushing and humiliating neo-colonialist controls and interference. From the start we have been threatened with frustration where rapid change is imperative and with instability where sustained effort and ordered rule are indispensable. No sporadic act nor pious resolution can resolve our present problems. Nothing will be of avail, except the united act of a united Africa."

- Excerpt from Kwame Nkrumah's speech at the inaugural ceremony of the OAU Conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 1963.⁵⁴

The concept of a loss of human capital induced by the mass deportation of able-bodied citizens, is adjacent to Nkrumah's efforts to perform mental decolonization on the minds of

⁵³ Ama Biney. "The Legacy of Kwame Nkrumah in Retrospect." *Journal of Pan African Studies* 2, no. 3 (2008).

⁵⁴ "READ: Kwame Nkrumah's Iconic 1963 Speech on African Unity - Face2Face Africa." Face2Face Africa. May 24, 2019. <https://face2faceafrica.com/article/read-kwame-nkrumahs-iconic-1963-speech-on-african-unity>.

African people by leading the entire continent towards unification and Black nationalism. Thus, under Nkrumah's guidance, the ideology of Pan-Africanism was promoted—formerly created by the African American scholar W.E.B Du Bois, “Pan-Africanism is a global movement to unite Africa and its people against racial oppression and exploitation associated with European hegemony.” The goal of unification in Africa was grounded within this ideology that harbored a sense of “cooperative movement among peoples of African origin to unite their efforts in the struggle to liberate Africa and its scattered suffering people.”⁵⁵ Nkrumah believed that unity within governance was vital for economic, social and political growth in Africa. His efforts in Ghana marked a turning point in African history, but the utopian paradise that he once imagined did not prevail.

Although Nkrumah's ideas about the unification of Africa provided the continent with a sense of agency and Black pride, his individual political advances on the state level within Ghana itself, were executed poorly. In the early 1960s, the Ghanaian government inherited a large amount of money from the British Empire and their cocoa market was successful, making their GDP levels competitive with places like South Korea. Therefore, under the Nkrumah administration, Ghana was expected to become a powerful state economically. But, two major occurrences took place that led to the deterioration of the Ghanaian economy: 1) the cocoa market crash, and 2) Nkrumah gave 10 million pounds to Guinea because they rebelled against France and needed help financially. This was huge loss for Ghana economically—it undermined the needs of the individual state and emphasized a severe lack of political accountability. Also, when the cocoa market crashed, Nkrumah was unable to find solutions to the challenges that

⁵⁵ Kumah-Abiwu, Felix, and James R. Ochwa-Echel. "Rethinking the ideas of Pan-Africanism and African unity: A theoretical perspective of Kwame Nkrumah's leadership traits and decision making." *The Journal of Pan African Studies* (2013).

fueled the Ghanaian economy. In other words, Nkrumah's vision of unity soon became offensive to most Ghanaians as he embarked on a large-scale journey that seemingly used Ghana as a tool for global change. This type of poor economic management only accelerated the rate of economic deterioration in Ghana, further weakening the government at large.⁵⁶

Furthermore, the political infrastructure of Nkrumah's rule was flawed because of his 1964 proposal of a one-party system and single party state. His authoritarian government regime led to a concentration of power that enabled brutal suppression of voice and led to political retribution which aided civil unrest.⁵⁷ He placed a ban on all forms of opposition and declared Ghana a one-party state. "Nkrumah's government began as early as 1957 to deport what it perceived as non-Ghanaian citizens from the country, many of whom were charged as being a threat to the security of the state."⁵⁸ The final push towards civil unrest in the state was when he passed the "Preventive Detention Act in 1958," which allowed the government to detain anyone without trial for any reason. Through this authoritarian form of government, it was easy to perceive the true intentions of this leader—although the path to unity was appealing, it seemed to threaten the sovereignty of other regions in Africa, and their leaders because he did intend to be a "life-long" president for the entire continent. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that a key foundational flaw in his government regime was the hiring of his own security and cabinet members that consisted of foreigners; for example, he hired African American people and Chinese people to aid him in the creation of policies and governmental functions. This

⁵⁶ Asante, Richard, and Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi. "Ethnic structure, inequality and governance of the public sector in Ghana." *United Nations Research Institute for Social Development* (2004).

⁵⁷ Michelle D. Commander. "Ghana at Fifty: Moving Toward Kwame Nkrumah's Pan-African Dream." *American Quarterly* 59, no. 2 (2007): 421-441.

⁵⁸ Biney, Ama. "The Legacy of Kwame Nkrumah in Retrospect." *Journal of Pan African Studies* 2, no. 3 (2008).

eliminated some positions for Ghanaian natives and created harmful distrust between the people and the president.⁵⁹

“Nkrumah’s obsession with Pan Africanism prevented him from being able to efficiently divide his time between Ghana’s domestic need and his pursuit of unity, taking Nkrumah away from Ghana. His inability to be both a national leader and a Pan Africanist revolutionary resulted in increased opposition to Nkrumah.”⁶⁰ Nkrumah’s presidential failures in Ghana, inevitably contributed to his overthrow on February 24th, 1966. The Republic of Ghana was overthrown in a military coup d’état when Nkrumah was on a peacemaking mission in Vietnam. This day was marked as the bittersweet end to the idea of paradise through the expansion of Pan-Africanism and the idea of global Black Nationalism. This day also positioned the Ghanaian nation on the brink of collapse.⁶¹ The mistakes implemented under Nkrumah’s rule, led to an unfortunate detour on the path of decolonization and the global unification of Black people. Although his leadership was profound for the creation of continental African pride and global agency, the economic toll Ghana took severely interrupted its path to exponential growth and development.

However, the Ghanaian diaspora, which is the one of the largest diasporas from Africa, allowed development to continue despite an ineffective leader. Therefore, “By employing the concept of diaspora and creating state institutions for migrant inclusion, Ghana has adapted its discourse of national belonging to the conditions of mass migration... the ‘new diaspora policy’ creates opportunities for Ghanaians abroad to represents themselves as a group that acts as a benevolent patron for their compatriots in Ghana.”⁶² With that being said, Ghana continues to

⁵⁹ Ibid, 107." *United Nations Research Institute for Social Development* (2004).

⁶⁰ Autumn Anne Lawson. "Kwame Nkrumah’s quest for Pan Africanism: from independence leader to deposed despot." PhD diss., Wichita State University, 2010.

⁶¹ Eric Quaidoo. "The United States and the overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah." (2010).

⁶² Boris Nieswand. "Development and diaspora: Ghana and its migrants." *Sociologist* (2009): 17-31.

advocate for the unification of Africans that were displaced throughout the world—giving them a unique perspective that not all Africans harbor in regards to decolonization.

Furthermore, after the near collapse of the Ghanaian economy due to a severe lack of political accountability, the National Economic Recovery Program (ERP) stepped in to save them. In 1983, Ghana became the first country in West Africa to successfully implement Structural Adjustment (SA) in the form of financial assistance. As we address the topic of effective governance, through the guidance of the IMF and the World Bank, policies were amended that allowed Ghana to regain attractiveness in the investment sphere for foreign mineral-exploration and extraction companies.⁶³ The enactment of SA policies during the period of 1984-1990s had allowed the Ghanaian economy to recover after years of disinvestment and ineffective governance. “Ghana has had an average real growth in GDP of 5.7% per annum during 1984-89, or 2.7% per capita; GDP growth slowed to 2.7% in 1990. Although this growth was built on the base of a severely depressed economy, it is the longest—and only—period of sustained economic growth since independence in 1957.”

⁶³ Gavin M Hilson. "Structural adjustment in Ghana: Assessing the impacts of mining-sector reform." *Africa Today* (2004): 53-77.

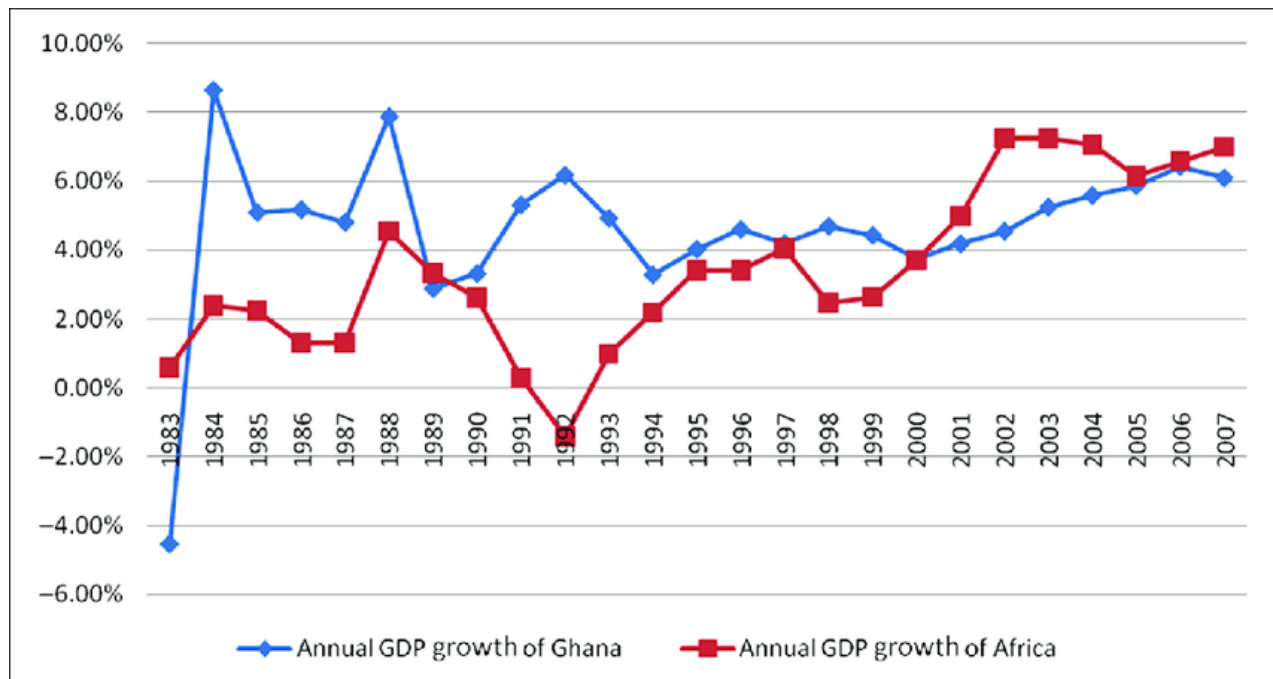


Figure 1: “Annual GDP of Ghana and Africa.”⁶⁴

Source: Prepared with data from the International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, April 2009.

According to a report by the World Bank Organization, their goals when implementing SAPs in Ghana were to: reduce the rate of inflation, increase production in traditional exports, and increase government revenues. Their strategy was to simultaneously address these issues of policy design and its implementation from a neo-liberalist perspective.⁶⁵ These type of economic reform measures taken in the Ghanaian government allowed them to grow. Also, it is to beneficial mention that in 1992, Ghana’s government transitioned back into democracy which allowed the country to regain its autonomy and enhance steady progress within their economic sphere.⁶⁶ Ghana has been able to see exponential growth due to effective governance and policy management that allowed new perspectives to thrive. But dependency was still created in the

⁶⁴ Jasper Abembia Ayelazuno. "Neoliberalism and growth without development in Ghana: A case for state-led industrialization." *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 49, no. 1 (2014): 80-99.

⁶⁵ Charles D. Jebuni. "Governance and Structural Adjustment 16 in Ghana." (1995).

⁶⁶ "Ghana: Economic Development in a Democratic Environment--IMF Occasional Paper No. 199." n.d. www.imf.org. <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/nft/op/199/>.

midst of loan conditionality although, in Ghana's case, these loans expedited their country's growth.

Combatting the Resource Curse: *Oil in Ghana*

In 2007, the "Jubilee Field" in Ghana was discovered—it was estimated to contain reserves of 1.8 billion barrels of oil and 800 billion cubic feet of natural gas.⁶⁷ By some scholar's standards, it is believed to be the largest discovery in West Africa in more than a decade. This type of discovery alludes to conflict, corruption and exploitation considering the history of West Africa. The Ghanaian oil debate focuses on evading this curse and inventing preventative tactics to do so. As it stands, the discovery of an abundant amount of oil in Ghana attracts investors, companies and donors to the country.

"Since Ghana found oil, the discourse on its development prospects has been informed and dominated by ORCA." For purposes of this argument, I will focus on the Orthodox Research Curse Approach (ORCA) theoretical framework that attempts to explain the failure of development in resource abundant regions. Orthodox economists argue that it's easy for resource-rich countries to rely heavily on the export of a natural resource such as oil for foreign exchange; which leads to less attention given to other industries such as manufacturing. This in turn, results in de-industrialization of the society at large. To add to their point, they also explain how currencies appreciate in value relative to other currencies, making their exports more expensive and uncompetitive, "market prices of natural resources makes them a curse if they are

⁶⁷ Jared M. Kapela. "Ghana's new oil: Cause for jubilation or prelude to the resource curse." *Unpublished master's thesis, Nicholas School of the Environment, Duke University* (2009).

poorly managed.” Therefore, the dependence on oil-wealth debilitates other export-led activities of the economy, especially in the guise of manufacturing.⁶⁸

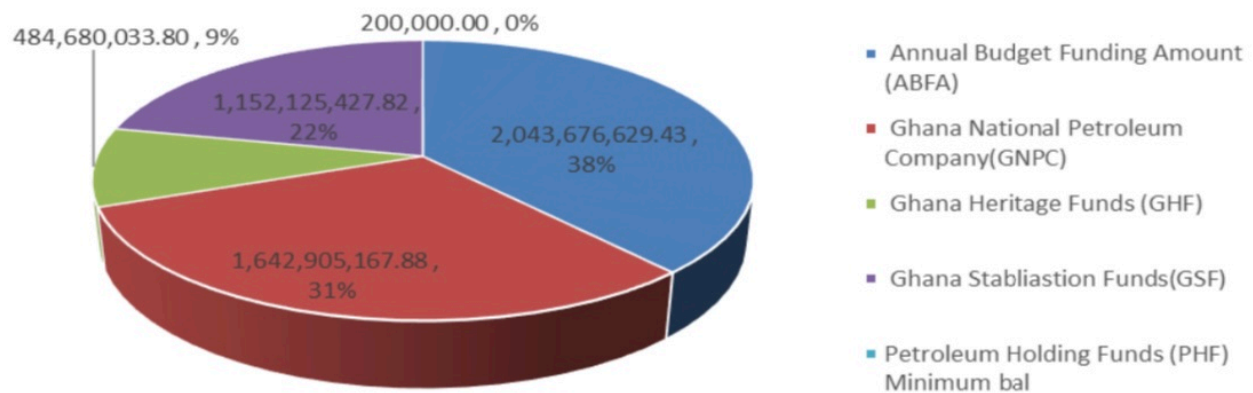
The commercial production of oil began in 2010 and “there was no revenue- management law and no independent regulator for the oil and gas sector.”⁶⁹ Ghana’s oil and gas sector serve as the foundation for management and mismanagement of the sector conducted by politicians. The National Democratic Congress (NDC; ruling party) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP; opposition party) have shown conflicting interests and made accusatory statements to one other for perpetuating the mismanagement of the sector. The infant oil sector in Ghana poses as a challenge to the democratic society through a lack of political accountability. Furthermore, Ghana has become very attractive to investors because of their large discovery— “according to data available online, Ghana had received US\$ 2,810,112,010.22.”⁷⁰ The allocations of this financial loan and potential implications of reformed oil policies, will decide the economic future of growth in Ghana.

⁶⁸ Jasper Ayelazuno. "Oil wealth and the well-being of the subaltern classes in Sub-Saharan Africa: A critical analysis of the resource curse in Ghana." *Resources Policy* 40 (2014): 66-73.

⁶⁹ Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi and H. Kwasi Prempeh. "Oil, politics, and Ghana's democracy." *Journal of democracy* 23, no. 3 (2012): 94-108.

⁷⁰ Emmanuel Graham, Ishmael Ackah, and Ransford Edward Van Gyampo. "Politics of oil and gas in Ghana." *Insight on Africa* 8, no. 2 (2016): 131-141.

Distribution of Petroleum Revenue from Aug 2011 (inception) to June 2019



Source: *Bank of Ghana Semi Annual Report: Jan 2 – June 28, 2019.*⁷¹

As allocation of revenues poses a threat to the strong democracy of Ghana, through ORCA's perspective, it is imperative to mention the Ghanaian oil management plan as it pertains to revenue. The Civil Society Platform on Oil and Gas (The Platform) was created to combat the possible negative outcomes that are often associated with an abundance of oil—primarily within the legal framework of the sector in mind. The Platform consists of civil society groups such as: human-rights groups, environmental groups, governance think tanks, research organizations, and community-based organizations from coastal districts— a culmination of more than 110 groups involved. The involvement of The Platform through media and its involvement within the legislative process, has allowed for the creation of legal framework as it pertains to governance,

⁷¹ "Petroleum Holding Fund (PHF) & GPFs Semi-Annual Report – Bank of Ghana." 2011. Bog.Gov.Gh. 2011. <https://www.bog.gov.gh/notice/petroleum-holding-fund-phf-gpfs-semi-annual-report-3/>.

to become more inclusive and transparent.⁷² The mobilization of public input has translated positively within the Ghanaian democracy regarding the oil sector and implementation of policies.

As Ghana battles the volatile occurrence of a resource curse, it is important to mention that, the outlying factor of human capital coupled with oil resurgence in the country is apparent. The scholar Kwamina Panford argues that: “Ghana did not train oil workers in the past; with the recent production of petroleum, it has to catch up by quickly training workers who can be deployed by industry.”⁷³ The relationship between human capital and oil resurgence is essential when interpreting what policy changes need to be made-- in order to make oil revenues more supportive of human capital development.

Ghanaian Case Study Conclusion

Lastly, Ghana is unique because of its early introduction to the concept of Mental Decolonization, when the country gained independence under the leadership of Nkrumah. The “Black Star” country continues to advocate for Black Nationalism and unity because of how spread-out their people are across the globe. There are, “estimates that assume between 5-20 percent of the Ghanaian population lives outside of their country of birth which amounts to a number between 1-4 million persons... and Europe, Canada and the U.S. are the most important destinations for transcontinental Ghanaian migrants.”⁷⁴ Therefore, Ghana welcomes Black people all over the world and enforces the ideology of Pan-Africanism that adheres to an anti-

⁷² Gyimah-Boadi, Emmanuel, and H. Kwasi Prempeh. "Oil, politics, and Ghana's democracy." *Journal of democracy* 23, no. 3 (2012): 94-108.

⁷³ Kwamina Panford. "An exploratory survey of petroleum skills and training in Ghana." *Africa Today* 60, no. 3 (2014): 57-80.

⁷⁴ Boris Nieswand. "Development and diaspora: Ghana and its migrants." *Sociologus* (2009): 17-31.

colonial mindset. Not only is their growth in population when Mental Decolonization is actively present, human capital is also strengthened. Ghana continues to hold renowned placement in the vast realm of the international political economy. As it continues to develop, hope is garnered within the entire region. Through the implementation of policy reforms, attention to domestic infrastructure and a healthy democracy, Ghana has the potential to transform itself into a competitive player in the world economy. Despite a long history of colonialism, exploitation, and corruption in the West African region at large, Ghana remains progressive.

Critical Analysis and Recommendations

The “Black Star” country that is Ghana, has gained international recognition and respect across the entire globe. Ghana functions as a beacon of hope for the African continent by actively defying the underdeveloped, dependent and corrupt narrative often forced upon Africa as a whole. At the heart of this research is the overall ability to adjust and learn from past mistakes. Although I focus on how detrimental the Slave Trade was for Africans and their path to growth and development, I offer candid mobility to the equation by focusing on Ghana as a current success story in the region. My case study findings provide optimism for African politics by promoting a growth mindset that focuses on acknowledging the past, but not letting the past define or create future. Ghana currently is fighting the manifestation of a resource curse and continuing to learn from its neighbors’ mistakes. They continue to enforce positive change and inclusivity across the globe—especially when offering citizenship to Black Americans and Black people, which they have continued to do for decades. As they welcome and unite Black people, cultural pride is revived and refined.

In the argument section of this thesis, I expand on the importance of human capital. It can be argued that a significant population loss, specifically in West Africa, accounted for the lack of overall development. However, the case of Ghana proves that by actively working against the colonial past endeavors, a country is able to contribute to its growth by aiming towards unification to enhance human capital and regain a sense of Black Nationalism and respective pride. The welcoming of Black kinfolk has drawn attention to the area which, in turn, sparks interest in the region and allows population growth to occur—accounting for that exact loss during the colonial period. Therefore, this factor enhances my argument by first acknowledging that this fate exists, while Ghana provides this factor with the ability to bend and change the shape of the overall tone in this body of work.

As for the analysis of the resource curse in this thesis, it is imperative to understand that the resource curse is only a conceptual manifestation that is often automatically placed upon regions in Africa when an abundance of valuable resources is discovered by other continents. Therefore, the resource curse narrative upholds a pessimistic view of Africans when assuming they cannot govern themselves correctly—this allotted perspective can also be interpreted as an extension of Neo-colonialism and racism. Although the plague of a resource curse does infect most of the countries in Africa, we have learned that it is possible to fight this fate under the examination of Ghana's reform policies as they currently govern the oil sector. Ghana's refusal to allow the infection of resource curse to spread, is an extension of Anti-colonialism. Through this act, the creation of growth manifests quickly and democracy becomes the change Africa has always dreamed of. Effective governance will determine the outcome of Ghana's efforts to extinguish the resource curse.

Furthermore, the reiteration of Mental Colonization throughout this thesis occurs in order to elicit awareness when formalizing thoughts and opinions about African politics. In other words, we ourselves are victims of Mental Colonization because of how Africans and Black people are viewed by the general public. Through the systemic racism upheld by white supremacy, it can be argued that darker-skinned people across the entire globe suffer from oppression and discrimination. This narrative is often internalized and wreaks havoc on one's mind by working against their individual authenticity of self that is portrayed through agency and culture. When West Africa was colonized, they were forced to assimilate by a means of culture, religion, language and other basic values. Their authenticity of self was virtually annihilated in the process; altering the ability for them to think for themselves which, in turn, created a parasitic relationship between the colonizer and the slave. This type of relationship can be described as innate dependency. So, when President Nkrumah enforced ideals of Pan-Africanism and unification throughout the continent; this changed not only the African perspective of self, but the national Black perspective of self. This reformed mindset and movement functioned as a direct response to colonialism and instilled confidence and hope within Black people. As the analyzation of African politics occurs, it is essential to be aware of the African mind when ills such as the resource are automatically placed upon a country—along with the idea of dependence and irreversible corruption.

Moreover, with an emphasis on the literature review portion of this thesis, the factors in this body of work first act as deterrents to growth but are quickly transformed by Ghana's active defiance to fall victim to severe underdevelopment. The core factor of this research is ineffective governance, where a lack of political accountability is upheld. Through this political factor alone, economic and social disruption can also be attributed for. This thesis offers insight on tools such

as foreign aid and a significant lack of cultural pride when human capital is tampered with. The observation of this factor allows internal conflict and corruption to be understood. The case of Ghana simultaneously illustrates how ineffective and effective governance can change the trajectory of a country's economic, political and societal growth. In all three spheres of development, governance acts as the main catalyst for change. In Ghana's case, the juxtaposition between the overall narrative of weak infrastructure in Africa enforced by dependency, versus the rehabilitation of infrastructure under the leadership of President Nkrumah in efforts to decolonize the minds and structures of Africans across the globe, allows this factor to evolve throughout the thesis. As the history of Ghana is briefly analyzed, the factor of governance changes from ineffective to effective. For example, after the overthrow of Nkrumah and his authoritarian regime, Ghana reforms the governmental structure into a multi-party system under the ideology of democracy.

Furthermore, the analysis of the resource curse becomes only a conceptual fad under the resurgence of effective oil management enforced by Ghanaian government. According to the literature, oil has remained one of the scariest billion-dollar discoveries for developing countries because their reliance becomes top-heavy and this results in counter-productiveness within the spheres of development. The credibility of resource curse is apparent, but the narrative relies too heavily on a prediction formulated from past patterns seen in some African countries. Therefore, the outlier Ghana, breaches the gap in literature because oil in Ghana is functioning as a positive force, rather than a negative. Time can only determine whether or not a "true" resource curse will infest Ghana, but Ghana's ability to change, grow, and learn situates the curse in a "less-likely" scenario.

When these specific factors attribute to the detriments of active growth in a region, it can be argued that underdevelopment is inevitable. But in the case of Ghana, we are able to understand these factors as malleable opposed to hard. Through an Anti-colonial approach, there is a large abundance of change that has occurred and allowed the Ghana to prevail, despite affluent pessimism within and towards the entire continent of Africa.

As for the theoretical framework of this thesis, I situated it in the realm of Postcolonial dependency to interpret the stagnant evolution of the West African region even long after its independence. By doing so, the overall picture of this thesis is supported, but does not remain stuck within those bounds. Postcolonial theorists and Dependency theorists often view Africa as a helpless region by allowing their historical past and situations to define and predict its future. Therefore, it is essential to understand these perspectives, but it is more important to learn from them rather than dwell on the fact that Africa has seen minimal growth development. These theories only function as credibility in reference to the rough colonial past of the West African region; they expose the intentions of colonizers during, and after verbal independence was granted. I allow these theories to enhance my argument by proving that they are not necessarily beneficial when eliciting change and deconstructing ideologies such as Neo-colonialism to uphold white supremacy and various hierarchies in the world system. But they do provide a general guide into how the colonizers think. Furthermore, the analysis of the World System's theory allows a general overview of how underdeveloped countries are seen internationally and this again justifies my argument by reiterating the notion of automatic and forced narratives.

The cumulation of the general findings in this thesis allow the literature to free itself from attaching to such pessimistic foresight in regard to African politics. Therefore, the findings are directly in line with my argument because they adjust, rather than define the outcome of said

country. The initial research question of this thesis is: “What factors account for differential growth in the region of West Africa?” Through thorough analysis, my argument that a significant loss of human capital stunted the growth and development of West African societies socially, economically, and politically, and that resource curse is prevalent in the region, is upheld. However, this paper illustrated that political accountability, effective management of oil and the act of mental decolonization, can mediate these dynamics as seen in the case of Ghana. Therefore, the inverse of the deterrent factors from growth function as the facilitators of it. Under this scope of research, it becomes apparent that positive change is achievable in the region. The painful history of West Africa’s past does not define its potential; rather, it only briefly answers the short-term answer of “why?” when people assume the entire region is incredibly underdeveloped. Differential growth depends on the willingness to reform thought and accept any and all change, while simultaneously adjusting in the face of adversity.

Although the argument of this thesis proves successful, the limitations of this research are as follows: 1) some censorship of credible sources in association with African literature written by Africans themselves, 2) lack of primary, directly from the region first-person sources and 3) the presence of another case study to compare and contrast developmental progress. The significant number of peer-reviewed articles in regard to African politics written by white scholars, was absurd. The point of view in regard to a white scholar allows little to no range in perspective. This notion can be referred to as the colonizer regurgitating his or her own narrative on the situation, in light of the African struggle. This proves to be counterproductive because the literature starts to become less blunt and riddled with euphemisms that disguise atrocities. To that end, it was difficult to find credible sources written by African scholars themselves. The research process to me, felt as though it was being gatekept by “credible” white scholars. Also,

performing a live case study or speaking with Ghanaian immigrants, would have elevated my argument by providing a face to a name, and personalizing the thesis in a unique way. Lastly, since there was no comparative case present in this thesis, we are not able to fully interpret how the neighboring countries of Ghana are affected by the factors explained in this thesis. Therefore, a full picture of the West African region is less attainable when there is not active juxtaposition between a neighboring country.

Alternatively, if I had the chance to rewrite this thesis I would start out with a more open-mind and try to eradicate an emotional connection to the paper. When I first started writing it, I was very pessimistic toward the topic and blamed underdevelopment directly on colonization without much room to grow from that preconceived ideal. Therefore, I limited my thinking in order for it to mold into my initial thought that, the past is to blame. Although that is somewhat true, there are far more implications that point to a more detailed description of why underdevelopment is prevalent in the West African region. Throughout the writing process, my thoughts, opinions and outlook towards the future of African continuously evolved. This allowed my thinking to settle in the forward, rather than dig a hole in the past. I believe that what Ghana did for Africa as an entire continent, is what writing this thesis did to my perspective. I was able to transmute my pessimism into optimism and increase my range of intellect in the realm of African politics. This not only made me more credible as an author, it allowed me to adjust how I perceived the world and myself.

Furthermore, my argument was transformed immensely throughout the creation of this thesis because it was reflective of my learning process. The more knowledge I gained, the more I optimistic I became in terms of development. The original question of this thesis was negatively connotative and set an overall dismal tone for the paper. But I came to the realization that a great

paper always encompasses balance. Therefore, I shifted my thinking when the analyzation of the Ghanaian case study began. I allowed myself to adapt to more progressive way of thinking and this left me with a more fulfilling perspective in return.

The overall picture of this thesis relishes in the idea of positive reformation of thought, and the ability to manipulate preconceived narratives inflicted on an entire continent by learning from past mistakes. Ghana, in this thesis, represents growth, change and evolution in Africa. My findings attribute to this statement by illustrating Ghana's willingness to welcome Black people around the world and create inclusive governmental groups such as "The Platform" to encompass a variety of perspectives and uphold democracy. Although deterrents from growth such as ineffective governance, dependency, resource curse and mental colonization can affect the trajectory of growth in the underdeveloped region, Ghana provides an alternative to various outcomes such as conflict, corruption and civil unrest. Ghana has always held a strong position in Africa and was the driving force for the entire continent of Africa to gain independence. With that being said, it does take a village to succeed. I believe Ghana is on the right path in terms of growth and development; they have the tools to lead the rest of Africa out of intense poverty by reinforcing unification and actively promoting different types of governmental reforms that prove to work in their system.

In terms of recommendations, Ghana can be characterized as the "blueprint" for the rest of West Africa. If Ghana continues to accumulate active growth and carry out effective reform measures, they should begin to expand their positive change by sending delegates to advise internal functions of the neighboring countries that are suffering from detriments such as a resource curse, that promote the impediment of growth. Also, if they continue to advocate and welcome other Africans to their country, this could reinforce the ideology of Pan-Africanism

which could lead to more growth interpretation. If the Ghanaian government is willing to spread their ideals and progressive philosophies with the rest of Africa, it is possible that Africa might be able to leave the narrative of underdevelopment behind. Overall, there is a lot of hope for the West African region; especially with Ghana leading by example and learning from various mistakes. There is speculation that Ghana can become a powerful player in the international system if they are able to effectively manage oil and continue promoting inclusivity throughout the world by offering Black people in the diaspora the option to “come home.”

Final Conclusion

The main points of reference in this thesis are: 1) reclaiming government if it proves to be ineffective, 2) managing oil with a significant level of efficacy in order to evade a resource curse and 3) participating in Anti-colonial activities such as Mental Decolonization to regain self-authenticity and garner agency provoked by a strong sense of Black pride. If all of these factors are properly executed, growth and development will occur in the West African region. By viewing Ghana as the model citizen of development, Africa is able to let go of past scars and heal from the traumatic experience of the Slave Trade which created dependency, inferiority complexes and a forced lack of cultural pride. Africa can view hope through the lens of the “Black Star” country. Renovations are being made, change is on the way, and Ghana is paving the way to pivotal development in the West African region.

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