

Why Kenya Still Struggles with Economic Under-Development Six Decades After Independence

DR. CHARLES CHAMA NZAI, PHD

Part-Time Lecturer

Department of Economics & Development Studies

University of Nairobi

Abstract

Kenya remains a Lower-Middle-Income country since she attained independence in 1963 with a per capita income of about \$2,557 in 2025 according to the classification thresholds of the World Bank. This paper investigated why Kenya has struggled with this economic underdevelopment since it became independent. Many reasons have been given as the cause for that underdevelopment such as bad politics, corruption and debt but this study considered those as mere symptoms and not the actual causes. The study conducted its investigations on the premise that the root cause of economic underdevelopment in Kenya is that economic development has never been taken seriously since independence. On the basis that economic development is a qualitative phenomenon, the study adopted a phenomenological research methodology and practically examined the current Constitution of Kenya; and, the country's first economic blue print, Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 on African Socialism and Its Application to Planning in Kenya against the subject matter of economic development and used logical deduction and induction to make conclusions, judgements and inferences. The findings were that Kenya still struggles with economic underdevelopment because its current constitution ignored and omitted the critical matter of economic development in its prescriptions and never assigned any organization that were created by that constitution the mandate to handle economic development. Two, African Socialism that was proposed as the solution to the country's economic problems in Sessional Paper No. 10 was not actually an economic ideology but rather an admittedly incomplete, half-baked, arrogant, vague and fallacious proposition that was never implemented nor abided to even by the political elites themselves. The sessional paper was intended to cool down political temperatures on the debate between capitalism versus socialism that was taking place in the country and which ultimately divided the country's political elites. On the way forward, the study recommends that Kenya goes back to the drawing board and seriously address the subject matter of economic development in its constitution and prescribe specific independent structures to govern it; instead of leaving such a critical matter to the whims of manifestos of political parties during general elections which are not binding to the country's citizens.

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I. Background

The paper uprooted what it considers the root causes why Kenya remains economically underdeveloped since independence in 1963. Economic development is a qualitative measure of economic progress of a country and the welfare of its citizens and is manifested by high growth rates of gross domestic product (GDP); high real per capita incomes; high quality of healthcare services and education; high levels of industrialization and modernity; political, social and religious freedoms; and, quality natural environment. Theoretically, economic development cannot be achieved without ensuring adequate growth rate of GDP. That is, GDP is a necessary condition to achieve economic development. Which is true because GDP is the quantitative measure of dollar value of national income of a country and high-quality healthcare services and education for instance shall only be guaranteed if the national income is adequate. Economic development is the desire of every nation state because it guarantees high quality of life of a country's citizens but can only be achieved through the formulation and implementation, and choice of appropriate economic ideologies, strategies and policies.

Kenya, an East African nation was granted autonomy for self-rule by Britain in January 1, 1963 and become a full republic after amending its constitution in December 12, 1964 with Jomo Kenyatta as its first President and Kenya African National Union (KANU) as the ruling political party. Economically, Kenya is classified by the World Bank (2025) as a Lower Middle-Income country with a per capita GDP of US\$2,557. The country has struggled to break away from economic underdevelopment since independence but has not succeeded yet. Many reasons have been fronted why the country has not alleviated economic underdevelopment such as bad politics, corruption and debt but this study considers all these reasons as symptoms. This study asserts that the

root cause why Kenya remains economically underdeveloped is that economic development has not been accorded the seriousness it deserves. Immediately after independence, economic development policy was based on the dictates of KANU's Manifesto. But in 1965 the country adopted its first economic blue print titled Sessional Paper No. 10 on African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya covering the period of 1964 – 1970. By 1966 Kenya had accumulated a GDP of US\$1.1 billion the same as Singapore and slightly lower than South Korea with a GDP of US\$3.9 billion. Today, Kenya's economic development policy is based on prescriptions of manifestos of ruling parties that form government which this paper considers a serious hinderance to economic development because manifestos don't bind politicians to citizens like the constitution. The table below provides a summary of the classification thresholds for economies in the four categories developed by World Bank for 2025:

Table 1: Classification Categories of Economies

Low Income (\$)	Lower-Middle Income (\$)	Upper-Middle Income (\$)	High Income (\$)
≤ 1,135	1,136 - 4,465	4,466 - 13,845	> 13,845

Source: World Bank

II. Methodology of Analysis

The methodology of analysis used was mainly qualitative, because economic development or economic underdevelopment are themselves qualitative phenomena. But more so, economic development is a product or outcome of what ideology, strategies or policies a country adopts, touching on all aspects of life such as politics, law, religion, economics, sociology and environment such that assigning numbers to investigate such phenomenon might be misleading or very risky. This study adopted phenomenological research design. Phenomenological research is qualitative research that aims at arriving at phenomenal (economic development in this case) understandings and insights into the meaning of lived experience. Phenomenological research emphasizes describing phenomena as they appear to consciousness and is not aimed at providing causal explanations or to theorize about the experience, but to restore to each experience the ontological cipher which marks it internally. Within the precepts of phenomenological research, the aim was not to impose theoretical frameworks or seeking to explain economic underdevelopment in Kenya in terms of external factors, but to prioritize description of economic underdevelopment to provide rich and nuanced account of its experiences in Kenya as it was lived. That notwithstanding, since phenomenological research makes use of concrete examples to illustrate and explore the meaning of experience, economic theory, literature and personal narratives was used to provide rich descriptions of lived experience of economic underdevelopment in Kenya.

Practically, the methodology entailed examining Kenya's current constitution and Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 on African Socialism and Its Application to Planning in Kenya on the matter of economic development and economic underdevelopment. The constitution is the mother binding law of the country and the sessional paper was the first economic policy blue print for the country immediately after independence. The rationale for anchoring this study on these two pieces of documents is that economic development is a life-and-death matter of any country and must be explicitly prescribed in the key policy and binding documents of the country. Logical reasoning, mainly deductive and inductive logic were then used to make conclusions, judgments and inferences from known and assumed facts from the two documents and other sources.

III. Discussions on Reasons Why Kenya Remains Economically Underdeveloped

The reasons why Kenya has struggled to break off from the phenomena of economic underdevelopment and backwardness since independence are very clear and elaborate. One, Kenya's current constitution (CoK 2010) is gravely weak with regard to economic governance and cannot therefore free the country from economic underdevelopment. Two, historically Kenya committed economic policy blunders that started immediately after independence with the publication of Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 on African Socialism and Its Application to Planning in Kenya. The two reasons are clarified in detail hereunder. Economic development is a science with clear rules and laws that must be obeyed and satisfied to achieve it. To be specific, a country must choose appropriate economic ideologies and craft smart economic policies and strategies to achieve economic development. And the crafted economic policies and strategies must be binding but not left to the discretion and whims of individuals or political parties. This has been the challenge to Kenya since independence and many other countries in Africa, and as I have already said, that challenge is evident in the constitutions and economic blue prints of the countries.

3.1 Weak Constitution of Kenya, 2010

The constitution is the mother and binding law in many countries around the world including Kenya, if not all. Naturally therefore, the expectation is that a critical matter like economic development of a country should explicitly be prescribed in the constitution of that country. Astonishingly, this is not the case in Kenya. Kenya's current Constitution (CoK 2010) has eighteen (18) chapters, that is: Chapter One – Sovereignty of the People and

Supremacy of this Constitution; Chapter Two – The Republic; Chapter Three – Citizenship; Chapter Four – The Bills of Rights; Chapter Five – Land and Environment; Chapter Six – Leadership and Integrity; Chapter Seven – Representation of the People; Chapter Eight – The Legislature; Chapter Nine – The Executive; Chapter Ten – Judiciary; Chapter Eleven – Devolved Government; Chapter Twelve – Public Finance; Chapter Thirteen – The Public Service; Chapter Fourteen – National Security; Chapter Fifteen – Commissions and Independent Offices; Chapter Sixteen – Amendment of this Constitution; Chapter Seventeen – General Provisions; and, Chapter Eighteen – Transitional and Consequential Provisions.

Of all these Eighteen Chapters, only one may be said to relate to economic development or economic governance, Chapter Twelve – Public Finance. The rest of the Chapters prescribe matters of political governance, law (Chapter Ten) and security (Chapter Fourteen). But even this Chapter Twelve is weak on economic development and economic governance. The issues that are addressed by Chapter Twelve are equitable sharing of national revenue; imposition of taxes; borrowing by national and county governments; budget estimates and appropriation; public debt; procurement of public goods and services; and, financial controls. The fundamental issue in economic development is how the country shall ensure adequate economic growth or rather generation of national income (GDP) which theoretically is a necessary condition for economic development. Economic growth (GDP) is completely omitted in Chapter Twelve of Kenya's constitution as if the desired revenues will just occur. Where will the revenue that should be equitably shared come from? That core issue is not addressed. The framers of the constitution assumed revenue would just be there so the focus should be on how it should be distributed and equitably shared.

In the entire constitution there is no mention anywhere of gross domestic product (GDP). Maybe the framers of the constitution didn't see GDP as important – they were seriously mistaken. GDP is the measure of the productive power and national wealth (income) of a country and is the mother of the revenues, taxes and public debt which the framers of the constitution were so much worried and concerned about. Taxes and revenues are generated during the process of production which is measured as GDP in the manufacturing, agricultural and services sectors of the economy. When products are being produced in these sectors, labour is engaged, first that is employment; and, that labour earns wages and so the government has the opportunity to impose pay-as-you-earn form of tax, which is revenue to government. Other types of taxes through which the government may earn revenues when goods and services are produced and exchanged include profit income taxes, property taxes, VAT and excise taxes. Therefore, high GDP figures imply high tax revenues to government, that's the reality. It was therefore naïve for framers of the constitution to address how revenues and taxes are going to be imposed and distributed without addressing the primary issue of producing that revenue in the first place. Government borrowing and public debt is equally deeply rooted in GDP. Countries that produce little GDP (inadequate national income) will be forced to borrow to finance their budgets, consequently building public debt which has been the situation in Kenya for many decades. But debt per se is not a problem to economic development and Kenya must not use it as an excuse why it has not achieved high income economic status. Singapore has a bigger debt than Kenya both in absolute amount and debt over GDP ratio. In 2025 debt situation in Singapore was \$940b and 176%, while in Kenya it was \$95.3b and 68%, respectively, yet Singapore realizes budget surpluses while Kenya always suffers from budget deficits.

Ignoring and leaving out the critical issue of production and generation of national wealth and income was a serious and fatal omission in Kenya's constitution. That omission will frustrate and hinder the country's journey towards economic development unless it is resolved urgently – economic growth is a necessary condition to economic development. Production and national wealth creation has now been left to politicians to promise it in their manifestos during national general elections. That's how low the critical issue of production (GDP) has been reduced. GDP is everything. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) use the GDP figure to determine the economic status of a country including Kenya. After dividing the GDP figure of the country with its population to get GDP per Capita, the World Bank and IMF are able to classify the country as Low Income; Lower Middle Income, Upper Middle Income or High-Income country as indicated in Table 1 above. The credit rating agencies such as Fitch, S & P and Moody's equally use the GDP and GDP per Capita statistics of countries to rate them on their credit worthiness. It is very astonishing that while the World Bank and IMF who advise Kenya on economic development, and the Rating Agencies that rate us to borrow see GDP as a critical variable in economic development and governance but the framers of Kenya's constitution didn't see that at all and decided to ignore and exclude it in its entirety in all the prescriptions in the constitution.

To illustrate this point further, a comparison of Kenya with Singapore and South Korea which Kenya wants to catchup with and who were at par economically in the 1966 will bring that clarity closer to home. The GDP that was generated by the three countries between 1966 and 2024 shown in the Table below confirm the power of communication and revelation in GDP figures and in this illustration, those figures clearly speak why it will be difficult for Kenya to catch up with these two countries:

Table 2: Comparison of GDP Trends (Kenya, Singapore and South Korea)

REGIMES	KENYA GDP (US\$)	SINGAPORE GDP (US\$)	SOUTH KOREA GDP (US\$)
1966 Jomo Kenyatta	1.1b	1.1b	3.9b
1978 Jomo Kenyatta Exits – Moi Takes Over	5.3b	7.5b	51.9b
2002 Moi Exits – Kibaki Takes Over	13.2b	92.5b	627b
2012 Kibaki Exits – Uhuru Takes Over	56.4b	295.1b	1.2t
2022 Uhuru Exits – Ruto Takes Over	114b	498.5b	1.6t
2024 Ruto	120.3b	547.4b	1.88t
Population (2025)	57m	6m	51m
Per Capita GDP (2025)	\$2,557	\$74,750	\$36,750

Source: World Bank

Singapore and South Korea are high income countries while Kenya is a Lower Middle-Income country according to World Bank classification today because as shown in Table 2 Singapore and South Korea with lower populations than Kenya were generating far higher amounts of GDP than Kenya between 1966 and 2024 – no other better explanation than that. The GDP figures in Table 2 above expose it all and communicate vividly that on matters of economic development a country must for all obvious reasons generate large amounts of GDP, of course in relation to its population. Period. Now if the mother law of a country, the constitution does not prescribe how GDP shall be generated then the problem of economic under-development in that country is not solved but propagated. This is exactly the situation where Kenya finds itself in. The figures in Table 2 show that since 1966 to 2025 Singapore and South Korea have been producing their GDP figures at higher rates than Kenya and so Kenya cannot be asking itself where the rain started beating it in view of its economic progress in relation to these two countries. And that economic success of Singapore and South Korea evidenced by the high GDP figures was not by coincidence. It was accurately and smartly conceptualized, envisaged and planned and factored into their constitutions, policy papers and economic blue prints and executed accordingly. For instance, in Article 142 of its constitution, Singapore established a “Development Fund”. The purpose of the “Development Fund” amongst others is specifically for:

“The construction, improvement, extension, enlargement and replacement of buildings and works and the provision, acquisition, improvement and replacement of other capital assets (including vehicles, vessels, aircraft, rolling-stock, machinery, instruments and equipment) required in respect of or in connection with the economic development or general welfare of Singapore”.

South Korea proposed establishment of a National Economic Advisory Council in Article 93 (1) of its constitution as a presidential advisory body providing advice to the country’s President on formulation of important policies for developing the national economy and various other economic issues. Its duties amongst others include studying the economic policies of the Korean government from the viewpoints different from those of the government and providing ideas to support the government effort to minimize adverse effects that can come out of the policy and maximize its productive outcome. In Article 32 (1), the constitution proclaims that all citizens shall have the right to work and the State shall endeavour to promote the employment of workers and to guarantee optimum wages through social and economic means and shall enforce a minimum wage system under the conditions as prescribed by Act – very specific provisions in the constitution where the state is directly involved in the country’s job creation, economic development and governance.

The Chinese constitution in fact is very elaborate on economic development and governance. In its Preamble the constitution states:

“After the founding of the People’s Republic of China, our country gradually achieved the transition from a new democratic society to a socialist society. The socialist transformation of private ownership of the means of production has been completed, the system of exploitation of man by man abolished, and a socialist system established”.

In Article 1, the constitution proclaims that:

“The People’s Republic of China is a socialist state governed by a people’s democratic dictatorship that is led by the working class and based on an alliance of workers and peasants”.

Socialism is a very scientific and theoretically sound economic ideology developed by Karl Marx (1840s) rivalling capitalism clearly detailing and explaining how economic development can be achieved and the ideology has

transformed China economically to be the second largest economy in the world today. What is coming out from the excerpts of the constitutions of Singapore, South Korea and China that have been discussed above is that the constitutions of these countries not only substantively prescribed the matter of economic development but equally prescribed in very elaborate terms the roles and involvement of the governments in the matter. Kenya's constitution decided to be silent on the matter of economic development and so subsequent governments have the discretion to choose how want to deal with it as they deem fit without any compulsion.

The omission of economic growth and development is in fact made more clearer when it comes to the various structures that were established by the constitution. There are several Commissions and Independent Offices that were established by the CoK 2010, that is, Kenya National Commission on Human Rights; National Land Commission; Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission; Parliamentary Service Commission; Judicial Service Commission; Commission on Revenue Allocation; Public Service Commission; Salaries and Remuneration Commission; Teachers Service Commission; and, National Police Service Commission. Not a single commission nor independent office was established to handle the issue of economic growth (generation of GDP and national income) and economic development for the country and neither were any of the established commissions and independent offices assigned that mandate and role including the Commission on Revenue Allocation. I guess it was assumed that revenue would naturally fall from somewhere so there was no need to prescribe how to generate it. That was a fatal constitutional commission and omission! How would the Commission on Human Rights enforce the rights to adequate food, shelter, education, health and environmental quality if the country doesn't generate enough wealth and income? How would the Teachers Service Commission guarantee adequate salaries and benefits to the country's teachers if the country isn't generating enough national wealth and income? Where would the revenue to be allocated by the Commission on Revenue Allocation come from? That question ought to have been answered first before establishing this Revenue Allocation Commission. Kenya needs to go back to the drawing board very urgently, constitutionally, otherwise economic development will remain an elusive target like chasing whirl-wind. The critical issue of economic development has been reduced to a reactionary and trial-and-error phenomenon by subsequent governments and has been that way for many decades since independence.

3.2 Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 on African Socialism and Its Application to Planning in Kenya.

The policy failures in relation to economic growth and development leading to economic underdevelopment in Kenya did not start today with the current constitution. The constitutional and policy errors are historical and started in 1965 immediately after independence with the publication of the first economic blue print for the country titled Sessional Paper No. 10 on African Socialism and Its Application to Planning in Kenya. The architects of the paper were Tom Mboya and Mwai Kibaki. Tom Mboya was appointed Minister for Economic Planning and Development and together with his deputy Mwai Kibaki, then, presented the Sessional Paper No. 10 for debate in parliament in April 1965 covering the period of 1964 – 1970 under the title African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya. The paper was approved by parliament and was assented to by the President then Jomo Kenyatta who signed the opening page of the paper "STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT". In 1966, Tom Mboya was removed from the economic planning ministry and Kibaki was appointed for the first time as full Minister for Commerce and Industry. This paper was the beginning of the country's economic underdevelopment and that mistake has never been corrected. In fact, that mistake was carried forward into the country's current constitution. The paper was developed as the first economic road map for the country in its journey to economic prosperity and it is very unfortunate that both in theory and practice the country missed the right path from the beginning. Luckily enough, the paper offered the country an opportunity to correct its mistakes later on in relation to economic development agenda but even that opportunity was not taken. I will not pick everything from that paper but I will highlight several statements from it to show the misconceptions and fallacies that have cost the country dearly economically.

The following are excerpts from the "STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT" of that paper that is signed by the founding father of the nation, President Jomo Kenyatta:

"Since attainment of our Independence just over eighteen months ago, the Government has been deciding the measures that will ensure rapid economic development and social progress for all our citizens".

"All along the Government has been guided in its approach to developmental matters by the declarations contained in the KANU Manifesto. In this we declared that our country would develop on the basis of the concepts and philosophy of Democratic African Socialism. We rejected both Western Capitalism and Eastern Communism and chose for ourselves a policy of positive non-alignment".

"The Government has produced this Sessional Paper which discusses in detail both the theory of Democratic African Socialism and its practical application to planning in Kenya. There has been much debate on this subject and the Government's aim is to show very clearly our policies and also explain our programme. This should bring to an end all the conflicting, theoretical and academic arguments that have been going on".

From the excerpts, the sessional paper was done eighteen months after the country got its independence and continues to say that the country had been deciding the measures that would ensure rapid economic development and social progress for its citizens - very perfect ambitions and plans. The government admits that all along mistakenly it had been guided in its approach to developmental matters by the declarations contained in the KANU (Ruling Political Party) Manifesto. But in this sessional paper, the country would economically develop on the basis of the concepts and philosophy of Democratic African Socialism and for that matter reject both Western Capitalism and Eastern Communism and chose for themselves a policy of positive non-alignment.

The rejection to make an explicit choice on which ideology the country would follow between capitalism or socialism was the first fatal mistake the Kenya made in its pursuit for economic development. That arrogance was the first big joke the country committed. There is no superior rival economic ideology to capitalism or socialism (communism), then in 1965 and today. The proposed "Democratic African Socialism" was wishful thinking and empty arrogance and cannot rival capitalism and socialism both theoretically and practically. In fact, it isn't an established theory nor ideology and the drafters of the sessional admit the same where they state in Part I of the paper that the system adopted in Kenya is African Socialism, but the characteristics of the system and the economic mechanisms it implies have never been spelled out fully in an agreed form. What a joke? Why do you want a country to adopt an ideology whose systemic characteristics and economic mechanisms are not known yet? There is need for seriousness when addressing critical matters like economic development, prosperity and economic welfare of a country's citizens. What the sessional paper was saying is that as well as Kenya decided to reject capitalism and socialism, the country did not have an alternative fully developed ideology to follow. From the excerpts of the sessional paper that have been highlighted above and as we shall see below, looks like this paper was rushed to cool temperatures of the debate that was going on in the country at highest political levels on whether Kenya goes capitalist or communist ("**.....There has been much debate on this subject and the Government's aim is to show very clearly our policies and also explain our programme. This should bring to an end all the conflicting, theoretical and academic arguments that have been going on**"). So, the paper was reactionary to solve some hot political debate at the time but not really to construct an economic ideology to propel the country to economic development success. As we shall see below the sessional paper was not implemented neither was it lived by the political elites themselves.

There was an aggressive attempt though in the sessional paper to define and explain African Socialism as a reality. African Socialism is portrayed as a universal and self-sustaining economic ideology where the paper states that the word "African" was not meant to describe a continent to which a foreign ideology is to be transplanted but to convey the African roots of a system that is itself African in its characteristics. The principal conditions that African Socialism must satisfy are that it must draw on the best of African traditions; it must be adaptable to new and rapidly changing circumstances; and, it must not rest for its success on a satellite relationship with any other country or group of countries. Paragraph 48 of the sessional paper provides the main features of African Socialism as (i) political democracy; (ii) mutual social responsibility; (iii) various forms of ownership; (iv) a range of controls to ensure that property is used in the mutual interests of society and its members (v) diffusion of ownership to avoid concentration of economic power; and, (vi) progressive taxes to ensure an equitable distribution of wealth and income. The paragraph goes further to say that characteristics (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) are based directly on African traditions meaning African Socialism was basically about African traditions yet contradictory the paper states that the term "African" has no reference to a continent.

There is nothing unique about the above stated features of African Socialism nor African Traditions to outsmart the theory and ideologies of capitalism and socialism. In fact, the paper says the government shall welcome both governmental and private investment in Kenya which are the key features of socialism and capitalism, respectively. African traditions cannot match capitalism and socialism on all aspects of life including political democracy and mutual social responsibility which the drafters of the sessional paper thought African traditions were superior on. The real power and superiority of a theory, ideology or tradition is measured in its ability to inject production, wealth creation, modernity and innovation in the economy. African traditions which were the anchor of African Socialism discussed in the paper cannot beat capitalism nor socialism on productivity, wealth creation, modernity and innovation. The ability of African traditions to inject significant productivity, wealth creation, modernity and innovation in the economic system is weak today and in the past and that is why the entire African continent is characterized by poverty, economic under-development and backwardness. Industrial revolution whose hallmark was capitalism and which brought immense manufacturing power and modernity in the global economy and led to slave trade and colonization of Africa including Kenya itself as the industries needed raw materials started in Europe in the 17th century. In 17th century the entire Africa continent including Kenya was backward, primitive, economically underdeveloped and a dark continent. So, what is unique and progressive about these African traditions or African Socialism the drafters of this sessional paper were talking about? Africa and its traditions has never been a great continent compared to other continents and nations and the sooner we acknowledge that fact the better for our pursuit to greatness. I guess the architects of this sessional

paper were a bunch of confused, arrogant, simplistic and intellectually weak persons who were overwhelmed by euphoria of the independence Kenya had just been granted. Arrogantly, the drafters dismissed capitalism and socialism where in paragraph 21 they stated that “*As predictive models of what would happen to factory system societies, both Marxian socialism and laissez-faire capitalism have been failures*”. To the contrary, today the factory power globally is led by socialist China and capitalist USA and the west and not African Socialism and African Traditions, and so it is these architects of this sessional paper that were wrong in their predictions, not capitalism or socialism. By 1965 when the drafters of the sessional paper were attempting to construct an alternative economic ideology, the ideologies of capitalism and socialism had already propelled United States of America and China, respectively, and many other states to economic prosperity. If African Socialism and African Traditions were a powerful ideology and system capable of creating strong states politically, economically, socially and militarily, why were the African states vulnerable to slave trade and colonization, including Kenya itself?

Capitalism and socialism are economic growth and economic development ideologies with deep foundations theoretically and practically. Capitalism is an ideology that is founded on the idea of the indivisible hand of Adam Smith (1756). Adam Smith argued that by allowing an individual to pursue their own selfish interests, through some hand that is invisible, that individual will satisfy and solve needs of the society as well which were not his intentions in the first place. For that matter, the best way to achieve economic development is to allow individuals to pursue their selfish interests and let means of production to be in the hands of the individuals than in the hands of government. The government should not interfere at all in economic activities, *laissez faire*. On the basis of the *laissez faire* principle, capitalism believes market forces of demand and supply are adequate to determine and guarantee efficient prices, quantities, costs and benefits in consumption and production processes of the economy. The motive to make profits by private businesses is the driver of the economic engine in capitalist economic system and nothing else. United States of America is the frontline capitalist state in the world today.

On the other hand, socialism, which is basically a critique of capitalism, was founded by Karl Marx (1848). Karl Marx argued that the desire to make profits by private business (capitalists) in capitalist economic system cannot provide efficient prices, quantities, costs and benefits and instead leads to exploitation of workers by capitalists and accumulation of wealth in few hands of the capitalists. Marx argued that there is no way the capitalist will make profits without exploiting the worker because profits are inbuilt in value addition that is generated by the worker during production processes but which is then retained by the capitalist since the capitalist owns the means of production. For the capitalist to make profits, he must under pay workers as little wages as possible regardless of the amount of value addition the worker has generated during the production process; but also extract as much output as possible from them. To guarantee himself a decent living, the worker must earn as much wages as possible and work for much lesser hours as possible. The capitalist system cannot satisfy both and so the workers and capitalists cannot in anyway be friends but enemies always. As a consequence, Marx said there is always a class struggle and conflict between workers and capitalists. Marx argued that the accumulation of income in few hands is the biggest undoing, contradiction and self-annihilation of the capitalist system. In channelling income to few hands, the capitalist system shoots itself in the foot because it constrains consumption since few people have a lot of income which they cannot spend it all, while the majority who would want to spend on consumption lack income. The wheels of production and profits cannot roll continuously and sustainably if there is no consumption of the products that are produced. For that matter production at some point in time comes to a halt and is stalled and the economic system periodically collapses to recession or depression. So, the capitalist system frequently experiences cycles of booms and busts. Marx said the cycles of booms and bursts are not coincidence in capitalist system, they are consequences of inherent contradictions and inbuilt theoretical and practical faults of the capitalist system. Marx concluded that the only way to guarantee adequate economic welfare to the people and to satisfy their economic needs, means of production must be put in the hands of government because the government can deliberately plan for the economic needs of the people. Socialists wonder why economies should rely on invisible hands to satisfy economic needs of the citizens while those needs can be satisfied through clear visible hands of economic planning processes.

From the foregoing, unlike the proposed African Socialism ideology in the sessional paper, it is clear that capitalism and socialism are adequate theories, ideologies and practices that explicitly explain how things work out in those systems. Kenya’s founding fathers messed the country economically *ab initio* and Kenyans must not accept any apologies about it. They chose for the country an economic ideology that was non-existent, fictitious, imaginary, fallacious and vague and so the country’s economic development journey immediately after independence started from a wrong footing going forward. The fallacies and misconceptions about the African Socialism aside, did the architects of the paper and political leaders believe in it and lived to its ideals? No. In fact one of the key architects of the sessional paper, Tom Mboya, was assassinated out of political reasons on July 5, 1969, just four years later after publication of the sessional paper. Tom Mboya was appointed Minister for Economic Planning and Development and together with his deputy Mwai Kibaki presented the Sessional Paper No. 10 for debate in parliament in April 1965 as the first economic road map for the country to cover the period

of 1964 – 1970. In 1966, Tom Mboya was removed from the economic planning ministry and Kibaki was appointed for the first time as full Minister for Commerce and Industry. The assassination of Tom Mboya was ample evidence that the values of political democracy and mutual social responsibility which he himself bragged in the sessional paper that they were deeply embedded in African Socialism and African Traditions, were actually not or were strange to Kenya or didn't work in the case of Kenya.

Though the architects of the sessional paper arrogantly and jokingly played down the power of capitalism and socialism, real political conflicts at the top leadership level in Kenya started in 1966 immediately after publication of the paper in 1965 and the core cause of those conflicts, amongst others, were whether Kenya should align itself with capitalism or socialism. The founding father and President, Jomo Kenyatta clashed violently with his first Vice-President Jaramogi Oginga Odinga in 1966 leading to Odinga to resign from his post because Odinga had called for closer ties with the socialist People's Republic of China, the Soviet Union and other countries of the Warsaw Pact while Kenyatta was in favour of approaching the capitalist United States and the Western bloc. These clashes of ideology between the top political leaders astonishingly were happening just one year after publication of the sessional paper. Was the sessional paper rushed or what? Tom Mboya was himself accused of championing for capitalism and American interests in Kenya. Jaramogi accused Jomo as a "land grabber" and one who was shamelessly working with the imperial master, and that was why they differed. Pio Gama Pinto, a socialist leaning Kenya politician of Indian extraction and a patriot who had used the *Chronicles* to publicize British atrocities against Mau Mau fighters in the country was assassinated in 1965. Kenyatta was regarded as a representative of a would-be bourgeoisie, a coalition of relatively privileged petty bourgeois African elements who wanted simply to replace the British colonialists and Asian commercial bourgeoisie with themselves. By 1964 after independence, the white settlers who remained referred to him as "Good Old Mzee". The British supported Kenyatta and saw him as a bulwark against growing worker and peasant militancy who would ensure continued neo-colonial dominance. A Kenyan prominent writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o saw Kenyatta as a "twentieth-century tragic figure who treated Mau Mau freedom fighter veterans dismissively, leaving many of them impoverished and landless while seeking to remove them from the centre stage of national politics. As has already been explained above, the sessional paper was designed to cool political temperatures that were brewing at the time of its publication between capitalists and socialists. Had the political leaders made a wise decision in the process of cooling these political temperatures, Kenya wouldn't be where it is economically today, but wrong decisions were made.

IV. Conclusion and Way Forward

Subsequent governments in Kenya have never taken economic development seriously in the six decades of the country's independence. Or these governments never understood what economic development is, or have never wanted to understand it. The desire and ambition for the country to attain economic development has been talked, pronounced and proclaimed by politicians every day since independence but surprisingly the country has not succeeded in that endeavour. From experience and facts, it is clear the perceived desire and ambition by political leaders since independence up to today for Kenya to become economically developed was fake, not genuine, misconceived and public relations and politics. Or to give our political leaders the benefit of doubt let me say they were incompetent on the subject of economic development. The pretence and incompetence by the country's political leaders in pursuing economic development for the country is explicitly evident, as discussed above, in Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 which was the country's first economic development blue print; and, the current constitution of the country which was adopted in 2010. African Socialism which was proposed as the appropriate ideology to propel Kenya to economic prosperity in the sessional was not only an incomplete and half-baked ideology as admitted by its architects, but was also a fake and fallacious proposition which was neither implemented nor abided to by the political leaders. The country's current constitution on the other hand completely ignored and omitted the subject of economic development in its prescriptions. For that matter, the critical phenomenon of economic development since independence has been reduced to a mere promise in non-binding manifestos of political parties that form the government. Economic underdevelopment in Kenya is therefore a historical matter that is clearly traceable. As the way forward, Kenya must go back to the drawing board and seriously prescribe this critical subject of economic development in its constitution and prescribe specific independent structures to govern it; instead of leaving it to the whims of political leaders to casually promise it in their political manifestos during elections.

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