Article

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The 'New Normal' Concept Critique

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Abstract

There is increased use of the phrase "new normal" in the current times to refer to the state of the economies in Africa. The word normal in its formal meaning is linked to terms such as "usual", "regular", "standard", "customary", "expected" and "accustomed" among others. Generally, normal outcome is preferred than any other outcome. If something is not normal it is a defect, it has deviated and ways to have it corrected are usually sort as a remedy. A positive deviation may be acceptable, however, in a careful manner, checking possible future effects. The "new normal" concept now exist to praise what is not normal by making it acceptable as the new version of normality. In the name of 'new normal', it is increasingly being noticed of 'inefficiency' being labelled as new normal, hence no effective remedies sort to address the deviation. Many development indicators for African nations indicates low levels of performance, a lot being caused by instability and bad policies. Without adequate effort to address the problems, policy makers and authorities have been always busy preaching the gospel of 'new normal', to force the general populace to accept and settle for economic and social conditions brought about by inefficiency. African states are characterized by high levels of unemployment and poverty, civil wars and instability, unstable currencies, unfair income distribution, nepotism and corruption, infrastructure deficits, among other negative indicators. The study argues that the prevailing conditions in African states should never be linked to the term 'new normal' rather what is required is to make appropriate development policies to turn the economies in the right path that is sustainable. Noted drivers of inefficiency in African states include poor governance, weak institutions, poor policy formulation and implementation, low private sector engagement, low regional and international cooperation, political will among many others. The study recommends various measures that may be taken to correct the economic and social conditions of African states hence enabling attainment of positive development results.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Economies in the world partake development policies periodically to ensure that they operate efficiently and progressively. Usually a steady development path is the aim of every nation. Any deviations from the steady state path should be corrected through appropriate policies. Favorable policies are those that ensures macroeconomic stability and growth. However, to attain favorable macroeconomic stability and growth comes at a cost. Also good policy making and adequate resources to support policies matter for success. In real life, economies undergo policy making, but however, many factors contribute to the success and failure being registered in different economies. Factors, including policy support, policy reversal, policy timing, and policy lags have been found to determine results. Strength of institutions in any country determine the quality of development policies for the country. Democratic states have proved over the years to be more successful. Countries that have undergone political reforms also have registered better policies for success while politically unstable nations lag behind in formulating balanced policies.

There is no exact state of the economy which may be pegged as the normal. However, there are certain standards that are deemed acceptable to the society. A country with stable prices, stable currencies, fair income distribution, low levels of poverty, no social conflicts, low unemployment rates, real economic growth among other social and macroeconomic objectives is deemed normal. Small deviations from the steady state path may be acceptable. However, large deviations from the expected state becomes unfavourable, and attracts correction to be made in the right time. Deviations from the acceptable state may be caused by a lot of factors, including natural disasters, poor policy making, policy implementation and policy timing. Neopatrimonial states usually are associated with large deviations from the expected development standards. Neopatrimonial states are characterized by high unemployment rates, high levels of corruption and nepotism, unfair income distribution, unstable currencies, civil wars, poor international relationships, political instability, weak institutions and high poverty levels, as some few examples. Many African states possess such characteristics, they belong to neopatrimonial ideology.States in Africa have registered insignificant prosperity in the post-colonisation era (Bonga, 2021). African states are weak. Weak states are unable or unwilling to provide essentialpublic services, which include fostering equitable andsustainable economic growth, governing legitimately,ensuring physical security, and delivering basic services (Rice and Patrick, 2008).

In a way not to acknowledge failure, the "new normal" concept has been seen to be used to justify improper states' macroeconomic and socio-economic status. The gospel of normality is heavily preached to the citizens to accept the shanty status. The unfavorable conditions are caused to be deemed normal, and life goes on without correction. Citizens are encouraged, by authorities of neopatrimonial states to cope with the prevailing harsh conditions. Borrowing from Asonye (2020), allowing citizens to cope means not normalizing the situation and but just quickly moving forward, without giving the time to truly process the murky.

II. NEW NORMAL EXPLANATION

A new normal is a state to which an economy, society, etc. settles following a crisis, when this differs from the situation that prevailed prior to the start of the crisis. In world history, the term has been employed in relation to World War I, financial crisis of 2007-2008, September 11 attacks, the aftermath of the 2008–2012 global recession, the COVID-19 pandemic and other events.The events that have defined the new normal, when observed correctly, have heavy effects on many economies to the extent that the affected nations were not in a position to avoid the events. The events were determined outside the acts of the states.Levenson (2010) indicated that, it takes time for business and society to settle into a new normal following a large-scale economic disruption. In most cases, after heavy events like historic recession, there will be no return to the “old normal”, hence, governments must act to create a new economy.

New normal should come as a result of development not inefficiency. As supported by Hu (2015), China entered the so-called ‘new normal’ development era, after more than three decades of high-speed development with an average GDP growth rate ofnearly 10%. Green and Stern (2015) confirmed the move by indicating thatChina has grown rapidly for more than three decadesby following a strategy of high investment, strong export orientation and energy-intensivemanufacturing.Huang, Li and Wei (2019) indicated that ‘new normal’ is used to demarcate a distinctively new era ofeconomic development in China for the time being and also the ideal state that the Chineseeconomy should be developed.With the ‘new normal’ concept it means that China is moving to a new model with a better quality of economicgrowth, by combining structural improvements and policy instruments towards energyuse, environment and economic development (Wang, 2015).

In regaining normality after heavy recessions countrieswith strong social protection systems and basic services suffer the least and recover the fastest.The new normal that is brought about by inefficiency and corruption will put a greater strain on the citizens including their future welfare.Corruption derails success and development, and its costs are borne by thecitizens (Bonga, 2021a). People may have to live in the wrongly proclaimed “new normal” for a very long time yet remedies of inefficiency should be devised. An imposed “new normal’ has greater effects on the general populace bboth in the current time and the future. The 'new normal' framing deterthe capabilityof economic healing.Asonye (2020) indicated that ‘new normal’ ideology constrains the ability to think expansively about fundamentally transforming the society. The framing only illusions a world that only functions for the select.

III. MACROECONOMIC IMBALANCES IN AFRICA

Comparing Africa and the developed world, shows that Africa has to continue working on various issues so as to achieve what other nations have already achieved. Borrowing technology, skills and facts already in vicinity is one strategy that Africa can use to attain a lot. Despite the existing models of development, the pace of development for countries in Africa does not seem to match. A lot seems bedeviling the countries, with politics impacting most. Some economies are registering negative growth rates. Regional integration has been introduced in the continent as an enhancer of mutual development. Despitetheir existence, Africa is patch of regional blocs that are self- containing andlack common coordination and linkages to synchronise activities, currencies,policies and laws (Mahuni, Taru and Bonga; 2020). Full integration is yet to be adopted where each nation comply to the objectives of integration. Greater analysis shows that, if there were no internaland external challenges to integration, more should by now could have beenachieved from integration (Mahuni*et. al*, 2020).In support Nganje (2015) indicated that most African states are today characterised by weak and dysfunctional institutions, a predicament that is also reflected in the slow progress towards regional integration and continental unity in Africa. Effective regional integration is linked to good governance, which seems lacking in the continent.According to Crocker (2019) governance has a vital regional dimension relating to institutional structures and norms guiding a region's tactic to challenges and aid shaping the political culture. A new normal should never be talked for Africa. There are a lot of macroeconomic imbalances in many states of Africa, with appropriate solutions not sort or willingly avoided by those benefiting from the perpetual crisis.

Macroeconomic stability is the chief objective of every nation.

Macroeconomic stability exists when major macroeconomic relationships are in the balance that is are changing positively for the betterment of a nation's welfare. These relationships include among others, inflation, exchange rate, fiscal spending, private consumption, and balance of payments (BoP). It is in the best interest of every nation to have a stable macroenvironment. However, African countries are characterized by too much volatility with persistently high inflation highly emanating from unstable currencies due to massive money supply growth. For instance, in the pre-dollarization period (2009-2018), Zimbabwe suffered the worst hyperinflationary environment for a peacetime country when the rate of inflation breached the million percent milestone. Also, post-dollarization period the country is under siege of high prices with the annual outturn reaching its peak of 837 percent in July 2020 from under 43 percent as of December 2018. Empirical evidence shows that the major driver of prices in both periods was massive money printing by the central bank as it engaged in massive quasi-fiscal spending (Sibanda, 2021).

Generally, liquidity growth (money supply) in the economy should move in tandem with the growth in activity in the real sector. This averts a situation where too much money will be chasing too few goods. The market forces of demand and supply dictate that for equilibrium to be attained when money is too high, prices should adjust upwards. High inflation is dangerous for any economy as it impedes private investment, a critical aggregate for domestic production. It also wipes away individual savings and income thereby causing a knock-on consumer demand and aggregate demand.

Only a handful of African countries are experiencing stable macroenvironments. There is a high prevalence of poverty and inequalities both between and within the African continent and this has been perceived as normal. The longevity of macroeconomic instability in Zimbabwe has caused migrants to stay outside the country more than they initially expected (Bonga, 2020).Africa's economic growth and development are lagging behind its counterparts in Asia and Latin America. Many African countries are rated as democracies despite the existence of autocracy as those in leadership positions alter constitutions where theyhave personal dislikes like presidential term limits. As such, there is too much political violence, tribal conflicts, and wars in places like Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). A few African leaders such as Ghana's Jerry Rawlings, Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda, or Mozambique's Joachim Chissano accepted and respected term limits and stepped down (Crocker, 2019).Moreso, the continent is under threat of terrorism as many anti-investment headlines are burgeoning. For instance, Nigeria is under siege by Boko Haram terrorist groups engaging in mass killings and displacement of thousands. In the natural gas-rich northern region of Mozambique, terrorists have affected many people and entities. Total Energies, a leading French energy company has suspended its US$20 billion natural gas project for an indefinite period in April 2021 to protect its employees (Kar-gupta, 2021).

Unstable politics shun away foreign direct investment (FDI) which is essential for economic growth. Developing countries lack deep financial markets hence have limited credit lines to support domestic production. By *defacto*, FDI is essential in these economies to augment their minimal domestic investments. As noted by Thornton (1991), financial repression is impeding development in developing nations. Financial repression may come in the form of controlled interest rates, control of capital inflows, and directed lending, among others.

Since political instability is causing low FDI inflows in Africa, many member countries have resorted to borrowing both domestically and externally. The continent has amassed excessive debt from international financial institutions (IFIs) like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and African Development Bank (AfDB). China has also emerged as the major bilateral lender for the continent. Debt is good when used for productive purposes like investing in long-term infrastructure projects with the potential to generate income over time. However, most of the accumulated debt in Africa has been used to fund current consumption while some portion has been misappropriated thanks to public corruption.

Domestically, thanks to limited fiscal space, governments are also heavily competing with companies for funds. Too much domestic borrowing by the central government crowdsout private investment (Mankiw, 2000). Most advanced and emerging countries enjoying rising incomes have one thing in common: private-sector-led economies. In most developing nations, the government substantially controls economic activity. Nevertheless, there is resounding consensus among development economists that the 'visible hand' is inefficient in distributing resources. This is the chief reason why Bretton Woods institutions were greatly engaged in structural adjustment initiatives for developing nations in the 1990s. In support Mahuni *et. al*(2020) indicated that Bretton Woods institutionshave prescribed several strategies to African nation- states.

The continent has also a high prevalence of public corruption when compared to other continents using Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index. Embezzlement and grand corruption comes from networks of big people in the society, and these aremore damaging to economic development and resource allocation (Bonga, 2021a).During President Zuma Administration in South Africa, the country faced a massive corruption scandal in what was termed the Gupta family 'state capture'. The period experienced massive economic stagnation, high youth unemployment and the currency (the Rand) performed dismally against other major currencies. In the top oil producer, Nigeria, corruption saw oil money misappropriated and poverty rates widening (Donwa&Mgbame, 2015), the same for Zimbabwe where at some point, about US$15 billion diamond revenue was reportedly misused (Herald, 2016). The continent is rich in widely sort minerals such as Platinum Group Minerals (PGMs) and gold but it is lagging in terms of economic development and growth as revenues are looted. It is estimated that public corruption, which has become a 'new normal' is costing Africa billions of dollars in foregone output annually. Some recorded scandals in Africa include; Cashgate scandal in Malawi 2012, Salary gate scandal in Zimbabwe 2013-2014, Tegeta Escrow Account scandal in Tanzania 2014, Luanda Leaks involving Dos Santos the president of Angola during his tenure, National Petroleum Fund (NPF) scandal in Botswana 2016-2017, Gecamines Scandal in DRC, Lesotho Water Project Corruption in 1999, Biscuit Gate Scandal in Mauritius, Disability Grants Scandal in Swaziland, and Fishrot Scandal in Namibia, among other recorded and unrecorded scandals.

Poverty levels and income distribution

As a result of persistent macroeconomic imbalances, poverty has been taken as normal in the African continent. Africa is lagging behind, stuck atthe bottom in a cesspool of poverty, and the factors exacerbating poverty in Africa are intricately interwoven (Mahuni *et. al*, 2020).Sub-Saharan Africa has both the highest rates of children living in extreme poverty at just under 50 percent and the largest share of the world's extremely poor children, at just over 50 percent (Unicef, 2016). The outbreak of the contagious COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the situation. When the pandemic struck the globe in early 2020, the only way to minimize its spread was to control human behavior. For the first time in decades, companies were forced to close as majorly people were ordered to stay at home. Because of lack of activity and financial distress, millions of workers were furloughed. In Africa, few countries were able to cushion their population because of constrained financial resources. This is increasing poverty levels and an estimated 23 million people are estimated to plunge into poverty (World Bank, 2020). In the developed world, however, governments injected trillions of dollars supporting businesses as well as vulnerable populations.

Since the initial conditions were different, Africa is expected to recover from the COVID-19 induced socio-economic crisisat a slower rate than the rest of the world (IMF, 2021). The expansionary policies which were instituted in the fight against the pandemic are causing fears of a serious wave of inflation to the detriment of mostly the poor (*ibid*, 2021). A high price level reduces real purchasing power. No meaningful policies outside initiatives of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been implemented by the continent to address poverty prevalence as poverty is now being perceived as normal. A renowned social economist, Amartya Sen, posited that low poverty levels positively and significantly affect economic development (Sen, 1987). So, the world should not become accustomed to poverty but work towards correcting this unprogressive normal by disrupting the vicious cycle of poverty and improve the welfare for all.

The quality and inclusiveness of growth are of increasing concern. In many countries,notably resource-rich countries, income and wealth are unequally shared, and strongeraverage income growth does not necessarily reduce poverty (AfDB Market Brief, 2011). Africa is the second mostinequitable region in the world.Resource distribution in neopatrimonial systems is always motivated by the patron's incentive to ensure incumbency (Bonga, 2021). In 2010, six out of the 10 most unequal countries worldwidewere in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly Southern Africa (*ibid*, 2011). The highest rates of poverty can beobserved among young women and youth living in rural areas. Young Africans constitute themajority of the poor. On average 72% of the youth population in Africa lives with less thanUS$2 per day (Africa Economic Outlook, 2011). The incidence of poverty among young people in Nigeria, Ethiopia, Uganda,Zambia, and Burundi is over 80% (ADI 2008/2009, World Bank).

Unemployment rates

It is generally normal for Africa to have a high rate of resource unemployment. The direction of the economy is dictated mainly by politics at the expense of basic economic principles. For the sake of political correctness, many governments are engaging in populist policies which are laser-focused on recurrent consumption and less on addressing domestic production and productivity. The continent brags of high inflows of remittances.The flow of remittances has traditionally been an important contributorto African economies(Chitiyo and Kibble, 2014). However, high remittances are an indication of an exodus of human capital in search of greener pastures abroad. Migration comes with both costs and benefits to the nation (Bonga, 2020). For perspective, thousands of Zimbabweans migrated to Europe fleeing high unemployment as many companies were closed during the hyperinflation of 2008 (Moyo, 2019).

In the last decade, the majority of youth in Africa do not have stable economic opportunities. There are approximately 420 million youth aged 15-35, of these one third, are unemployed and discouraged, another third are vulnerably employed and only one in six is in wage employment (AfDB, 2016). The youth face roughly doubles the unemployment rate of adults, with significant differences by country. The problem is not just unemployment but underemployment, which peaks at just over half of youth in the labor force in low-income countries (*ibid*, 2016). No meaningful development will be achieved in Africa when strong form of neopatrimonialism exist (Bonga, 2021).It is morally wrong to take the high unemployment rate as a benchmark or standard. Governments should implement market-oriented prudent policies to create room for maximum use of factors of production.

Infrastructure deficits

Infrastructure is the engine for economic growth and development as it supports the value chain and aids the distribution of goods and services within and between countries.Growth and developmentcan only be achieved with the availability of economic andsocial infrastructure (Bonga and Sithole, 2020).However, the state of infrastructure in many African countries is rated as miserable.Due to massive infrastructure gaps, Africa lags behind other continents on urbanisation and industrialization (Mahuni*et. al*, 2020).Because of infrastructure deficits in Africa, Bonga (2021) indicated that economic performance for thecontinent remains dismal and prospects for future are bleak.Most of the rural areas have no connected proper road network while in the urban areas, many have no access to clean water. When undertaking a cost-benefit analysis for investing in a particular country, infrastructure comes at the center stage. Empirical evidence shows that those countries with better infrastructure networks tend to receive more FDI and grow at a faster rate than those with dilapidated or lacking vibrant infrastructure (Canning, 1999; Demetriades&Mamuneas, 2000; Esfahani&Ramires, 2003 and Canning &Pedroni, 2008).

However, walking a long distance to fetch water or access a school building has been normalized in Africa. Some member states have the most sort after tourist destinations with the potential to inject billions of dollars annually but are not fully benefitting because of lack of proper infrastructures like airports and roads. With poor roads, it takes more time for factors of production like labor to arrive at production units thus reducing productivity and output. Lack of buildings for office space drives rentals thereby increasing the cost of production. In short, poor infrastructure is one of the causes of low output and subsequent high prices in developing nations. It is time now for Africa to disrupt the normal characterized by rampant infrastructure challenges.

IV. INSTITUTIONS, NEOPATRIMONIALISM AND CRISIS PERPETUATION

It has become normal to have weak institutions in Africa. Institutions are constraints that shape the interactions insociety and provide incentives for regularities of behavior (Viola and Senfelde, 2015).Political scientists and economists provide numerous meanings for the institutions concept. Institutions structurebehaviour and promote social order and trust, which in turn facilitate co-operationfor social and economic progress (Nganje, 2015).There exist economic institutions, political institutions and value institutions; with linkage existing between them.The IMFand the World Bank have for the past two decades emphasised institutions' roles in economic development. The istitutions have also tried to improve the developing nations' institutions asa way of stimulating economic development for the nations. Quality of institutions matters most. Four institutions' quality indicators are namely; government stability, corruption, ethnic tensions and socioeconomic conditions (Osman, Alexiou and Tsaliki; 2012).With the help of facts from Ferrini (2012)institutions support economic development through four ways: costs of economic transactions determination, degree of appropriability of return to investment determination, oppression and expropriation determination, and conduciveness of the environment to cooperation and increased social capital.Acemoglu and Robinson (2008) argued that the main determinants of differences in prosperity across countries are differences in economic institutions.Institutions as reviewed by literature have been shown to have played a significant purpose in technological progress facilitation and hence have led theworld into a modern economic regime.

The institutions existing in many African states are not autonomous from politics, hence inefficient in partaking their roles. A study by Akinlo (2016) found that institution has negative impact on economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa. Some institutions have been formed by politicians themselves to disguise their ruthless leadership. There is dominance of neopatrimonialism in Africa, hence policies are biased. Neopatrimonial policies constitute a political strategy by the ruling eliteto secure support for the state by entering into informal alliances with dominant socialforces, albeit at the expense of formal state institutions, which are turned into resourcesto maintain extensive clientelistic networks (Nganje, 2015).In support Acemoglu and Robinson (2008) indicated that economic institutions are collective choices that are the outcome of a political process. The institutions therefore apart from operating progressively they tend to act in the interest of their masters, the ruling elites. Leadership in many African states have developed their own world in which they benefit more at the expense of the citizens.

The institutions, which are also militarized, are never conducive to economic development. Bonga (2021) stated that institutions are militarized to ensure that they work to the requirements of the political regime.Nganje (2015) narrated that institutional dysfunction reflectsthe prevailing philosophy about political authority, espoused mostly by the old guard ofAfrican leadership, which is a carryover from Africa's colonial past and essentially at oddswith the mechanisms of modern democratic governance. Institutions conducive to economic development reduce the costs of economic activity (Ferrini, 2012).It has been argued thatsuch factors as innovation, economies of scale, education,or capital accumulation are not the causes of growth, butrepresent the growth itself, and that political and economicinstitutions are the fundamental cause of differences ineconomic development (Viola and Senfelde, 2015).

V. CONCEPTS TO RECOVER FROM MACROECONOMICS ANOMALIES

Development of Africa requires greater efforts from Africans. Governance has long been suspected to be a major impediment to African economicdevelopment (Fosu, 2018).The end of colonialism era handed over Africa to the rightful owners, whose efforts to develop Africa is yet to reach highly significant levels. Despite certain imperfections, political institutions in traditional African societies were functional and resilient enough to engender peace, social cohesion and economic development (Nganje, 2015). Modern politics diverted from original agenda to transform Africa on post-colonial era. Politicalwillingness to implement regional programs has been missing (Mahuni, Taru and Bonga; 2020), same as other clean policies.As indicated by Crocker (2019) it is the quality and characteristics of governance that shape the level of peace and stability and the prospects for economic development.The recorded economic success stories for Botswana, Ghana, Mauritius, and South Africa have been brought about by improvement in governance.

Without labelling the macroeconomic bad state found in African countries as "new normals" there are serious reforms only required to re-direct the countries in the right direction.Merely justifying failure as a new normal has no benefit to the ccountries, rather they lead the economies in further economic deeps. Serious reforms are required to revamp the nations; political, economic and social. Bad politics prevail in many states in Africa. Politics have been cited as a major source of problems Africa is facing. There is greater need for political reforms. The political reforms, that does not remove the ruling parties, require a long time to impact economic growth and investment in apositive way even when implementation is done the correct way. Uncertainty is created by any political reform. Zhao *et. al,* (2021) indicated that after political reforms uncertainty is created in the society in thebeginning but when trust of people is restored in political institutions then investors havemore attraction to invest in a favorable environment.

Addressingthe institutional malaise on the continent requires efforts to engender a new generationof African leadership that is not only skilled in the mechanics of modern democraticgovernance but also ethical and transformational (Nganje, 2015).Acemoglu and Robinson (2008) also indicated that solving the problem of development entails reforming these institutions.Commitment is required from authorities with adequate cooperation among stakeholders. Restoring credibility for policy makers is of paramount importance to drive the economies in the right path. It is governance that determines whether there are durable links between the state and the society it purports to govern (Crocker, 2019).

Dealing and addressing corruption at all levels will enable African states to progress in terms of development. Rather accepting prevalence of corruption as new normal, there is greater benefit from it being addressed. Grand corruption has greater effects to the economy while petty corruption if left uncontrolled graduates to serious societal problems impacting development as well. If corruption is not controlled, it becomes so prevalence to become a common practice anddistorts the correct culture and replace it (Bonga, 2021a). Political will is necessary to deal with corruption. Anti-corruption institutions have been set in many African nations to deal with corruption, but however, due to the fact that like other institutions they are not independent from politics they have failed to be effective to address grand corruption in the economies. Rather, they have been dealing with corruption selectively as to the will of the politicians and in many cases concentrate on petty issues. Once corruption is addressed the economies will gain development and momentum. Investment climate requires corruption not to be rampant.

African states, just like other states in the world do engage in policy making to guide the running of their countries. Stakeholder participation in decision making is of paramount importance as it gives everyone a sense of belong. Policies that are made through stakeholder engagement are usually supported and have a low risk of failure. Decision making in autocratic governments usually lack cconsultation and engagement, hence usually risk losing public support and hence they fail. neopatrimonial states consult their isolate group mainly, hence state capture has biased policies towards the elites. For African states to progress in development, they need to promote stakeholder engagement in decisions that affect human lives and their environment.

VI. CONCLUSION

African states have been observed through time, of issues of bad governance that have created a new environment. The results of bad governance have been defended by the authors of such ruling styles and presented as most attainable state of the respective states. States of Africa have been characterized by unfavourable macroeconomic and ssocio-economic environments. Development indicators have shown failure in development, worse in comparison with other states from outside the continent Africa. The gospel of "new normal" has been over preached in Africa to define the unfavourable situation as the best attainable. The gospel is seen coming from the ruling elites and their associates to comfort the general populace who are struggling to survive in the harsh conditions. There is high levels of poverty, high levels of unemployment, unfair income distribution, among other unfavorable conditions in the states. Surely with such statistics, the word normal should never be associated with such. The use of the word "new normal" is abused by way of justifying failure in the continent.

The study makes it clear that the way normal is defined in Africa is not correct. The economic and social conditions prevailing in Africa is a result of bad policies, and hence can be corrected to attain better levels of development. The study suggested some ways that can be followed to bring about development and growth in the economies. Empowering institutions, political reforms, stakeholder engagement, integration, among other ways assist in directing African economies in the right path of development. The study recommends proper policy planning, increased commitment to policy success, increased engagement with the private sector, and increasedengagement with the rest of the world. A new normal should not come as a result of failure or as a result of bad governance. Formally, the trigger for a ‘newnormal’ is characterised by breaks in critical indicators which suggest a new pattern of behaviour inresponse to an event (Amstad, Remolona, andShek, 2017).

In conclusion, the overuse and misuse of the phrase “new normal” by the media, politicians and other institutions in Africa, while describing atypical situations or behaviors, have turned it into a cliché. The economies despite settling on unfavourable outcomes, have great chances of driving their economies into rightful development paths through implementation of effective policies. Genuine reforms are an essential, consultative policies are a necessity, stakeholder engagement is highly encouraged, increased cooperation regionally and internationally is highly emphasized, strengthening economic, value and political institutions critical and political willingness is a must, among other measures. Without correcting the current mistakes in running the states, there should not be any mentioning of the ‘new normal’ in African states.

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