



Nyerere's Ujamaa as Basis for an African Philosophy of Development

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Abstract: This article examines the question of development in Africa drawing inspiration. In his analysis, Nyerere articulates three components for development. These include; the population, natural resources and good governance. It is rather unfortunate that most leaders have the itch and excitement for financial loans and gifts, where these are seen as therapeutic to under-development in Africa. This situation provokes some critical questions. Does the availability of money necessarily lead to development? Have the very donors won the battle of poverty in their own economies? Who experiences development and who pays for it? What steps should be taken towards development in Africa? Here, we contend that the excitement towards money by most leaders arises from greed and narrow-minded conceptions of the right processes of development. With Nyerere, we argue that Africa has the population and the natural resources. But then, poor governance and misguided understanding of development leave more to be desired in Africa. There is a need for Africans to wake up from slumber, engage in hard work and assume responsibility for their destiny. Critics have been too concerned with the failure of Nyerere. However, the questions that fuelled his curiosity paved the way for critical thinking on the plight of African development.

Keywords: Nyerere's Ujamaa; African Philosophy; and development.

General Introduction

At the brink of independence of African States and with the birth of hopes for the reunification of Africa, Julius Nyerere like other African revolutionaries was faced thereof with the preoccupation concerning the future of Africa. The daunting question of development and the task of making Africa great again loomed large. It was necessary to confront the derogatory experiences of slavery and colonialism and to build a piloting system of thought geared towards the alleviation of the poverty rate on the continent. Most African leaders at the time had one objective; the continuation in steam of the black renaissance and the recovery of the dignity of the African. Nyerere was one among the key figures whose vision for Africa was clear and definite. Based on the African idea of the unity and interconnectivity of being, Nyerere stood for the view that the progress of Africa requires a coordinated and concerted effort of all and sundry, an idea that is rooted in his well articulate perceptions in *Ujamaa*.¹ This African concept prompted him to build his idea of African development around the Marxist idea of socialism which is very close to the ideals of *Ujamaa*. But what is Socialism? Socialism as Nyerere defines it is an attitude of the mind, just like democracy. According to him, "in a socialist society, it is the socialist attitude of mind, and not the rigid adherence to a standard political pattern, which is needed to ensure that the people care for each other's welfare."² A

millionaire can be a socialist depending on their attitude towards human welfare, even though a socialist millionaire will be a contradiction in terms. On the other hand, a poor person can be a potential capitalist depending on their mind-set or attitude towards fellow human beings. As such, since *Ujamaa* signifies brotherhood or sisterhood or family-hood, Nyerere found it readily possible to associate it to the socialist ideas from the east. Whatever he advocated for, his objective was to define a path for the development of Africa. And yes, his objective was development. According to Lansana,

The term development is generally understood etymologically to mean 'expansion by process of growth' or 'growth and differentiation of some entity along lines natural to its kind.' The process of transformation and growth described by the term typically apply to biological processes where the stages of growth are usually described as development.³

Moreover, development in the sense of Nyerere signifies an improvement in human welfare, and an African philosophy of development signifies a systematic ideal for the socio-political and economic wellbeing of Africans. Following the Arusha Declaration, a document which defined the pathway for Nyerere's government with the underlying principle of the equality of all human persons in terms of dignity and worth, Nyerere and his

¹ A Swahili word which means familyhood or brotherhood or sisterhood

² Julius Nyeere, *Ujamaa; Essay on Socialism*, Oxford University Press, Nairobi, London, New York, 1968, p.1

³ Lansana Keita, "Philosophy and Development: On the problem African Development- A Diachronic Analysis", CODESRIA, Dakar, 2011, p. 115.

acolytes set out to build a theory of development for Africa, which would minimise injustice, corruption, selfishness, and dictatorship.

1.0 BACKGROUND TO NYERERE'S IDEA OF AN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

Nyerere did not arrive at a theory of African philosophy of development ex nihilo, that is, out of nothing. The *conditio sine qua non* for every effective developmental theory is the apt analysis of the context where it will be implemented. This is because development is a social phenomenon and cannot be successful if it does not take into consideration its social context. This section of the work examines the points that most have influenced Nyerere as he worked towards establishing an authentic theory for the regeneration of the African economies. Here, we hope to analyse the African experiences and social context against which Nyerere developed a philosophy of development.

1.1 Slavery, Colonialism and the Alienation of African consciousness

There is one common characteristic between the pioneer African leaders who were at the forefront in the fight for the independence of African States; a revolutionary distaste for the inhuman trade in human beings (Africans), and the subjection of man (Africans) to sub-standard treatment under the colonial systems of governance in Africa. These two major incidences (slavery and colonialism) that constitute the African tragedy were very definite on Nyerere's mind as he formulated the *Ujamaa*. If he had to build a philosophy for the total emancipation of Africans, he first of all needed to restore the dignity and consciousness of the African, the dignity that was lost during the tragic moments. He must first give the black soul assurance of her self-worth, self-concept and self-esteem; psychological weapons which are indispensable for the realisation of authentic development. As prerequisite, he would have to acknowledge and measure the depth of the damage caused to the African dignity, prior to proffering solutions to the obfuscation. Situating the socio-historic context of Nyerere's reflection point, Magoti explains;

The dehumanisation aspect of many Africans was a crucial factor influencing the formulation and articulation of *Ujamaa*. During the slave trade, the humanity and self-esteem of the slaves were reduced to a bare minimum if not completely eliminated, for instance, at the time they were captured and during their transportation. According to Walter Rodney (2001), slaves were not obtained through trade in the normal sense of buying and selling of goods, but through warfare, trickery, banditry and kidnapping.⁴

In addition to the above tragedies, the colonial educational systems were not built from the perspective of the African realities. And this is quite understandable in the sense that, in matters of education and culture, context or perspective matters a lot. One cannot give what one does not have. In the same way, the colonialists could only teach from their own perspective, because that was all they had. This however, is not in any way a justification of the confusion at the time. Africans were taught that

there existed four seasons; summer, winter, autumn and spring. French Africa reflected French realities, and Anglophone Africa reflected the British culture and customs. Till today, this picture of Africa divided along colonial lines is plain and clear. Colonialism, besides slavery and slave trade, caused a cultural shift in paradigms on the African continent. Being imperialism in form and content, it failed to deliver authentic values akin to the context of its application. Franz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* notes that cultural imperialism is the worst form of imperialism since it effectively intoxicates the originality of a specific being destroying the memory, contextual awareness, values and unique consciousness of the colonized, imposing an alien memory and horizon of vision on them. In Fanon's words;

Every colonized people... in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local originality finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is with the culture of the mother country. The colonized is elevated above his jungle status (in his eyes) in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards.⁵

With such mischief in the prevailing school program, it was but normal that it produced alienated citizens, strange to themselves and incompetent for authentic human development on the continent. The French in particular were quite clear on what citizens their educational system must produce. In the words of M. Brevie, the Governor-General of French West Africa, talking before the Government Council of French West Africa; "From the economic viewpoint we must train the producers and consumers of tomorrow... the content of our school programs is not simply a pedagogical affair. The pupil is an instrument of indigenous politics."⁶ In other words, "Colonialism introduced a dichotomy between the centre and the periphery nations. The periphery nations are exploited by the centre nations."⁷ Nyerere was well aware of all these prerequisites in the colonial enterprise, and the *Ujamaa* is proof of his efforts to erase such misgivings from the African world and propose a new direction for the African continent. Because slavery and slave trade and colonialism made the oppressed Africans doubt their abilities, Nyerere asserted that any future effort for liberation, such as *Ujamaa*, must have as its "vital task...to restore the people's self-confidence"⁸

1.2 Karl Marx's idea of a classless Society

According to Karl Marx, the history of humankind is the history of class struggles. He explained the basis of exploitation in history, and through scientific socialism he expressed his idea of dialectical

⁵ Franz Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth*, Presence Africaine, Paris, 1963, p. 18

⁶ Abdou Moumouni, *Education in Africa*, Praeger, New York 1968, p. 43.

⁷ Stephen Ocheni, Basil C. Nwankwo, "Analysis of Colonialism and Its Impact in Africa. Cross-Cultural Communication," 8 (3), 46-54, 2012, p. 53. Available from URL: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/cc/article/view/j.ccc.1923670020120803.1189> DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/j.ccc.1923670020120803.1189>.

⁸ Evaristi Magoti Cornelli, *A Critical Analysis of Nyerere's Ujamaa: An Investigation of its Foundations and Values*, doctorate dissertation, the University of Birmingham, 2012, p.

⁴ Evaristi Magoti Cornelli, *A Critical Analysis of Nyerere's Ujamaa: An Investigation of its Foundations and Values*, doctorate thesis, university of Birmingham, 2012 p. 56

materialism⁹. There, he proposed a solution which to him, would culminate in the emergence of a classless society and the end of class struggle. This would require revolutionary action because mere reforms cannot bring drastic and progressive change in the society. For there to be equality, justice and right in the society; tenets of a classless world, the masses must congregate and rise up against the masters. Going back to how the human society started and how injustices, strife and class distinction have persisted in the history, Karl Marx developed a therapeutic philosophy to fill the socio-economic gap between the various classes.

Marx wrote in the *Communist Manifesto*, that 'the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle.' ... A critical issue for modern Marxism is whether there is a gradual intensification of class struggle in developing capitalist societies, or whether the embourgeoisement of the working classes undermines their revolutionary role.¹⁰

According to Marx, at the very beginning of human history, there was no class distinction. Humans lived in a type of primitive communal way of life, sharing common natural resources. But as their number increased, there was increase in the scramble for natural resources, resulting in the emergence of the classes of slaves and masters, the former working for the latter. However, this only lasted for a while. With persistent strife between the masters and slaves, there was a reform that transformed slavery to another stage; feudalism, where the Lords owned land and the Serfs worked the lands on lease; an improvement of the situation during slavery. Again, the Serfs still found themselves wanting and manipulated. This pushed them to fight for more reforms leading to the evolution from feudalism to capitalism, with the emergence of new classes; the bourgeoisies and the proletariats, the latter working for the former. Karl Marx then foresaw the stage in which through a revolution, the masses/proletariats worldwide would form a communist party and rise against bourgeoisies.¹¹ This would be the birth of an ideal society; a classless society. Seduced by the charms of such a theory, Julius Nyerere fell in love with the communist ideals and worked towards building an African philosophy of development on the basis of the guiding principles of communism.

With the emergence of new African States, Nyerere saw the emergence of petty bourgeoisies, readying to take over from the colonial master. He saw the emergence of classes on the African continent and the danger of further segregation of Africans, this time, no longer by foreigners, but by fellow Africans. This to him was the consequence of imperialism, which as Lenin put it, is the highest stage of capitalism. Talking about the unfortunate events turning socialists to capitalist without due considerations, Lenin says;

It is painful, in these days of liberty, to re-read the passages of the pamphlet which have been distorted,

cramped, compressed in an iron vice on account of the censor. That the period of imperialism is the eve of the socialist revolution; that social-chauvinism (socialism in words, chauvinism in deeds) is the utter betrayal of socialism, complete desertion to the side of the bourgeoisie; that this split in the working-class movement is bound up with the objective conditions of imperialism.¹²

Inspired by the communist ideas of Karl Marx, and his disciple as in the above ideas of Lenin, Nyerere was determined to make of Africa a classless society and fight the bourgeoisie/proletarian divide. He was also determined to fight against a situation whereby self-proclaimed socialist world wear socialism by day, and capitalism by night. Not that he stood for rigid socialism, but that, he was critical about the extremes of capitalism which would not build an egalitarian society.

1.3 The need for a clearly defined policy for newly independent African States

It is obvious that the coming to independence of African States was the beginning of even more delicate responsibilities. The pioneer African heads of States had as objective, reshaping the entire continent along the lines that would bring development and growth to the continent. This required the building and putting to practice of policies that will bring about radical socio-economic and political transformation on the continent. Most pioneer African presidents had studied abroad and had witnessed a great deal of western development. They dreamt of making Africa great and Nyerere was one of such individuals. He had the plan to develop Tanzania and this required that he designed a clear cut policy that would give substance to his ideals. There was the realisation of the fact of;

the disappearance of the 'attitude of familyhood or brotherhood' which Nyerere believed enabled people in traditional African societies to care for one another. Throughout the colonial period almost all aspects of African traditional culture were undermined but it was the disappearance of the spirit of brotherhood, the spirit that motivated people in community to care for one another, which led Nyerere to think that future policy, such as *Ujamaa* should aim at restoring it.¹³

Besides the aspect of the minimisation of the spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood among Africans, the educational systems put in place in Africa were completely disoriented from African realities. Politically, the systems of ex-colonial masters were surely not going to liberate Africans and severe mutations were possibilities for the establishment of lasting and genuine political system on the continent. From a cultural perspective, there was a need for a cultural rebirth and rejuvenation. Furthermore, the economies of most African States were not at their desirable levels and there was need to initiate local strategies to rebuild the African empire. Such were pressing points that kept Nyerere restless as he reflected on the future of Africa.

⁹ Simon Blackburn sees dialectical materialism as dominant philosophical strain of Marxism which combines materialism as an embracing philosophy of nature and science, with the Hegelian notion of dialectic as a historical force, driving events onwards towards a progressive resolution of the contradictions that characterize each historical epoch. Cfr Simon Blackburn, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, Oxford, Oxford University press, 1996, p. 104.

¹⁰ Simon Blackburn, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, p. 65

¹² V. I Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism; A Popular Outline*, Eth Zurich, Petrograd, 1917, p. 1

¹³ Evaristi Magoti Cornelli, *A Critical Analysis of Nyerere's Ujamaa: An Investigation of its Foundations and Values*, p. 67- 68.

This is the setting for Ujamaa. It was developed against the experience of a people who during more than seventy years of colonialism were not acting on their own accord and will but on those of the colonial administrators. Instead of maintaining the same system Nyerere believed that future policies must protect the independence or the freedom of Tanzanians to act on their own choices and will. Moreover, those future policies such as Ujamaa, must help Tanzanians to realise their own course of action, their own policies without impediments from foreign countries. Furthermore, the policies must help Tanzanians to be masters of their own destiny and not mastered by people from foreign countries¹⁴

With *Ujamaa*, Nyerere hoped to address major issues confronting Africa at independence. One would agree with Nyerere that the first point at independence which mattered most was the need to formulate new policies that would change the face of Africa. Till today, this need remains as alarming as before.

2.0 An Articulation of an African Philosophy of Development

At the time when he was at the helm of leadership in Tanzania, Nyerere noticed that for every problem facing the different sectors of the Tanzanian economy, there was one possible solution in the minds of the citizens; money. If a parliamentary complaint of the state of roads or insufficient water supply in their constituency, they would be expecting the government to explain how it was planning to resolve the problem, and precisely how much the government was ready to spend for each project.¹⁵ In the minds of everyone, money would be the magic solution to every problem they were facing. However, Nyerere saw it differently. As he explains;

It is obvious that in the past we have chosen the wrong weapon for our struggle. We are trying to overcome our economic weakness by using the weapon of the economically strong. Weapons which we in fact do not possess... it is as if we have said money is the basis of development. Without money there can be no development.¹⁶

Reprimanding those insisting on the primacy of money for Africa's development, Nyerere posited the view that, a poor man does not use money as a weapon. "By this, he was suggesting that a poor person who chose money as his 'weapon' to get him out of poverty was doomed to failure because he had chosen to fight poverty with a weapon he did not have."¹⁷ It is with the unity of forces (collective production, general obligation to work) and oneness of focus that Africans need to attain sustainable growth. As such, Nyerere's philosophy for African development is based on the following points.

2.1 The Need to Work Towards Achieving Self-Reliance

As a way forward out of the African tragedy, Julius Nyerere built his theory of African development first by showing the inadequacy of the idea of dependence on the external world for Africa's development, and secondly, he walked along the lines of using the available resources on the African continent for the development of the continent.

On the first point, he showed how misplaced the idea of relying on loans, gifts, aids and foreign private investments are for the growth of the continent. For instance, another country or an institution from a foreign country can give a gift in the form of aid to any African State. In the same perspective, it could be a loan from an external donor defining the time length and the interest rate for the loan to be repaid. Another option could be the opening up of the economy for foreign investments. All these good, if not for the conditions tied to them. Nyerere noticed that a lot of discussion was going on in Tanzania at the time about working towards having external financial support from friendly nations and other donors who could readily lend a helping hand;

Our Government and different groups of our leaders never stop thinking about methods of getting finance from abroad. And if we get some money or even if we just get a promise of it, our newspapers, our radio and our leaders all advertise the fact in order that every person shall know that salvation is coming or is on the way. If we receive a gift we announce it, if we receive a loan, we announce it, if we get a new factory we announce it- and always loudly.¹⁸

Nyerere even noticed that if a discussion was started with an external body in the hope of getting aid or a loan, the news was announced to the public with a lot of excitement that discussions which would bring progress were on going, and the magic solution to the daily problems of everyone was on the way. Such announcements would be made without assurance that the discussions will end up as a fair deal for both parties. But Nyerere was more cautious. He would insist; "do not let us depend upon money for development."¹⁹ According to him, it is stupid, and even more stupid for us to rely on foreign financial aid for our development instead of relying on our own resources. Of course there are countries ready to give out aid and loans, but to what length? Such provisions can never be enough to give African States the needed resources to reach our much desired standards considering that many countries are suffering in the world needing such aid too, and the very donors have not won the battle against poverty in their own economies.

Nyerere even observed that when heavy loans are acquired from outside, loans which often come with huge interest rates and preconditions, the burden always falls on the poor Tanzanians who at some point never benefit from the scheme. For examples, when loans are acquired for the construction of roads, government infrastructure, hospitals etc, most of such constructions take place in major towns and cities, but it is the poor citizens who would have to pay for the loans because very little is produced in towns to earn foreign exchange. It is the poor population at the peripheries who through agriculture cultivate raw materials and other

¹⁴ Evaristi Magoti Cornelli, *A Critical Analysis of Nyerere's Ujamaa: An Investigation of its Foundations and Values*, p. 73

¹⁵ Julius Nyerere, *Ujamaa; Essay on Socialism*, op.cit, p.19.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 18

¹⁷ Evaristi Magoti Cornelli, *A Critical Analysis of Nyerere's Ujamaa: An Investigation of its Foundations and Values*, doctorate thesis, university of Birmingham, p. 45.

¹⁸ Julius Nyerere, *Ujamaa; Essay on Socialism*, op.cit, p. 22.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 22.

agricultural products that are sold outside as exports and from which proceeds are taken to pay loans which most often only benefit those in towns.

It is therefore obvious that the foreign currency that we shall use to pay back the loans used in the development of the urban areas will not come from the towns or the industries... we shall get it from the villages and from agriculture... it means that people who benefited directly from development which is brought about by borrowed money are not the ones who will repay the loan. The largest proportion of the loans will be spent in, or for, the urban areas, but the largest proportion of the repayment will be made through the efforts of the farmers.²⁰

The above scenario to Nyerere is social injustice which should not be watered to grow in a country which cares for justice and equity. On the other hand, it remains relevant to think that going out for money whether in the form of loans or gifts will not solve the problems of Africa if we remain at that level. There is a problem of mind-set at this level, for Africa already has almost everything she needs to grow. In the words of Nyerere;

We are making a mistake to think that we shall get the money from other countries; first, because in fact we shall not be able to get sufficient money for our economic development; and secondly because even if we could get all that we need, such dependence upon others will endanger our independence and our ability to choose our own political policies.²¹

The above point has remained relevant to the development of Africa. In recent days we have witnessed the proliferation of non-governmental organisations with varied programs on how they plan to eradicate poverty, disease and ignorance from the African continent. Their number keeps increasing every new day, and they come with huge financial resources ready to kill poverty on the continent, a claim which seems to be as real as setting out to climb Mount Cameroon in five seconds. Unfortunately, the situation of Africa has not changed significantly, and may even be getting worst. This is proof of the fact that development is self-discovery which does not come from outside, and that the growth and progress of the African continent requires the mobilisation of local resources, good governance and the zeal and drive to make improvement. No one can be as passionate as Africans for the development of the African continent and anything coming from outside can only be complimenting what is already there on the ground. As such, Nyerere devoted his time to working out plans for the building up of local strategies for the growth of Africa with the goal of making Africa self-sufficient.

2.2 Building up of Local Labour and Resources

One of the points emphasized upon by Nyerere as pivotal for the growth of the African continent and which materialises Africa's quest for self-reliance in a way, is the need to build local labour and mobilize local resources. Being a firm believer in the concept of development, which conceives of growth as emergence from within, Nyerere set out to develop the African continent by looking into the interior potentials of Africa. Reviewing popular ideas, he

realised that for the most part, the idea of industries as signs of development has eaten deep into the African people, which to him is misplaced priority. This however, does not mean that Africa is not in need of industries to develop or that in the process of development Africa will not build industries. It is however, a way of putting more emphasis on what should be our priority and the right steps which should be taken, and the right time to take such steps.

Many think that development starts with the establishment of industries, and hence, that we must first borrow money and start up industries to be sure that we are making progress. Instead of building from where we are to where we will like to be, we want to be where we would want to be instantly without the necessary competences. It is development which helps bring about industries, not industries which bring about development. This is more like saying that it is development that brings about money, not money that brings about development;

Development would have enabled us to have industries. The mistake we are making is to think that development begins with industries. It is a mistake because we do not have the means to establish many modern industries in our country. We do not have either necessary finances or the technical know-how... we cannot get enough money and borrow enough technicians to start all the industries we need.²²

Because of the above, Nyerere admonishes his fellow kind to pay attention to the local peasant, to local labour and resources. Africa has an emerging population and enough land and natural resources which are sufficient to take Africa wherever we want to be. All we need is to build what we have. This is in no way saying that there will be no need for money or that African States would not go out for loans when deemed necessary. It only means that people and their hard work are the foundation of development, not money.

Nyerere identified the major prerequisites of development in terms of; population, land, good politics, and good leadership.²³ Africa is not in lack of population. We have rich and fertile land throughout the continent, but do we have good politics and good leadership to organise these resources? If we do not have good leadership and organisational skills needed to put together available resources for the progress of the continent, can we make a step forward from our tragic fortune even if the whole world is determined to pull us out of the snake pit? Even if we receive aid from the whole world, can we make any progress? Do we develop from inside outward, or from outside inward? These are basic questions that must not escape the minds of contemporary policy developers on the African continent, and in posing these questions courtesy to the patriotism of Nyerere and other African development enthusiasts, we have to be as honest as never before, considering that we have failed several times, and at the same spot. Talking at an OAU in Lagos- Nigeria, Nyerere insisted that "it is we, the people of Africa, who experience, in our lives, the meaning of poverty. It is we, therefore, who can be expected to fight that poverty. Certainly,

²⁰ Ibid., p. 27

²¹ Ibid., p., 25

²² Ibid., p. 26

²³ Ibid., 29

no one else will do it if we do not.”²⁴ This is a call to responsibility as means to self-reliance which builds on the development of local labour and available natural resources.

2.3 Empowering the Agricultural Sector and Promoting Hard Work

A fundamental sector which to Julius Nyerere, ensures ready and productive utilization of local resources and labour is the agricultural sector. This is a pertinent idea on the African continent in the sense that a majority of Africans live on agriculture, and there seems to be a relatively small percentage of Africans who have not had an experience in agriculture. This is probably the most likely sector which would yield good fruits if more investment is made towards that direction. There would be the cultivation of food as well as cash crops and the rearing of animals. Building on these, that is, on agriculture as basis for development means that the development of a particular region depends on the people and not on money, which is only a consequence of development. Concentration on the agricultural sector requires hard work and intelligence. According to Nyerere, “everyone wants development; but not everybody understands and accepts the basic requirements for development. The biggest requirement is hard work. Let us go to the villages and talk to our people and see whether or not it is possible for them to work harder.”²⁵

Comparing with other countries that are even more developed than African countries, Nyerere noticed that they even work for longer hours than us who are still striving to reach where they are. We work for about six or six and a half hour a day, and about 45 hours a week. In the eyes of Nyerere,

It is not normal for a young country to start with such a short working week. The normal thing is to start with long working hours and decrease them as the country becomes more and more prosperous. By starting with such short hours and asking for even shorter hours, we are in fact imitating more developed countries.²⁶

If we all look at what is going on, on the African continent, we will notice that there is under exploitation of labour. Laziness and inadequate motivation are keeping Africa behind in the zone of poor productivity. If only Africa could be able to feed herself, that is, produce what can feed the continent, talk less of what to export, a lot more capital would remain on the continent. Unfortunately, with the available fertile lands where by we could go beyond the traditional system of organising labour and other resource in agriculture as with the pioneering idea of Nyerere, to a more mechanised and advanced method given our gradual advancement, we still sleep on the hope of Africa and go hungry, whereas we have all it takes to be a great people. The words of Nyerere instruct us to wake up and work; “in our country work should be something to be proud of, and laziness, drunkenness and idleness should be things to be ashamed of.”²⁷

3.0 Re-Igniting the Ideas of Julius Nyerere

It is in our position today to say how far we have utilised the ideas of Julius Nyerere, and the extent to which we have moved from where he slumbered following the same enthusiasm with which he worked for an Africa of great achievements. In many respects, critics abound as to how far he failed to project the right future for Africa and how he could not go beyond the traditional African conception of development. Wherever we belong, and whatever we say takes us back to same question that fuelled his curiosity; what is it that we must envision for Africa and what are the appropriate steps to achieving this vision? What is it we have to learn from Nyerere’s strength of vision as well as his weaknesses?

3.1 Nyerere’s Adaption to the Sense of Time

Nyerere adopted a dynamic but steadfast spirit that every emerging economy should have for the purpose of growth. At the time when communism was competing with liberal capitalism, Mwalimu, though leaning more on communism, borrowed from both economic systems to build a new Africa.

Many works on Nyerere’s political philosophy, officially referred to as Ujamaa or African socialism – sometimes even “Nyererism” – address Nyerere’s conception of political power and the nation as a coherent body of ideas and principles drawn from various intellectual influences. Certain analyses stress, on the one hand, the traditional values of work, mutual cooperation and solidarity, as well as the reciprocal generosity and egalitarianism of northwestern Tanzania. But scholars have also highlighted his exposure to classical liberalism, British socialism, anti-colonialism and pan-Africanism during his studies in Edinburgh.²⁸

It is this same spirit of Nyerere that must inspire every move for change and development on the African continent. But we must also be cautious of the many trends all over the world, less we become confused and groundless in none. Talking about the obstacles to African development and how we must always strive to strike a balance between the various global trends, P. Hountondji says; “a priori, the obstacles are of different types. But the foregoing draws our attention to one obstacle which is much too often neglected: the absence of thinking, intellectual passivity leading us to follow changing ideological modes like an opportunist.”²⁹ Critical thinking skills would arm Africans on every step they make, and shallow mindedness and retarded intellectual curiosity will be suppressed.

A great example that Africa must not lose sight of in her quest for emergence is China and the methods the Chinese have employed to attain the level at which they are now. Inspired by the Chinese model, Yang and Liu think that “the generation of a farmer cooperative economy organization is accompanied by the evolution of the division of labour, the improvement of farmers’

²⁴ Nyerere, J.K., “Freedom, Non- Alignment and South- South Co-operation: A selection from speeches, 1974-1999”, Dar-es-Salaam, Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 37.

²⁵ Julius Nyerere, *Ujamaa; Essay on Socialism*, op.cit, p. 30

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Julius Nyerere, *Ujamaa; Essay on Socialism*, op.cit, p. 34.

²⁸ Marie-Aude Fouéré. “Julius Nyerere: The man, the word, and the order of discourse,” Mkuki na Nyota, 2016, 9789987753260, halshs01493029, p. 5.

²⁹ Pauline Hountondji, “Dialogue with Lansana Keita: Reflections on African Development, CODESRIA, Dakar, 2011, p . 92.

effectiveness and the development of agricultural specialization.”³⁰ Africa needs to wake up to the reality of the fact that every growing economy takes agriculture and land reforms seriously. While borrowing from the liberal tradition of Europe and the communist tradition of the east, Nyerere did not fail to remind Africans of the need to revamp the agricultural sector. He might have been limited in his view of the nature of the agricultural set up Africa should adopt, but he was surely moving towards the right direction. The idea of cooperatives builds on the conception of humans as social beings who need each other to grow. At this moment when Africa is going through a number of challenges, the idea of Ujamaa, which reiterates the spirit of togetherness for human progress ought to be revitalised and given the room to grow and blossom.

It is to be noted that, emphasizing on the promotion of the agricultural sector as basic for Africa’s growth is not the arriving point, rather it is a strategic point from which we can move to the secondary, and then to the tertiary sectors of the economy. This requires that Africa engages in the development of agricultural technology, first before any other thing.

3.2 The Role of Leadership

Besides the economic moves Africa should take to reach her desired goals is the phenomenon of competent leaders who have conquered the seduction of ill-gotten wealth and who are moved by conviction to take Africa further than where we are now. The spirit with which the pioneer African nationalists took up issues regarding the development and advancement of the continent has drastically lost steam. There is a general breath of low spiritedness among Africans which has not helped Africans. While instituting Ujamaa as founding principle for the emancipation of the Tanzanian economy, Nyerere insisted that socialism is but an attitude of the mind; the feeling of satisfaction when humanity is at peace and harmony, and the feeling of distaste for human misery. He built an economic system that prioritised patriotism, and compassion. However, the state of embezzlement, chronic corrupt governance, mediocrity and the inability of African leaders to clearly articulate and strategise the future of Africa permit us to wonder if African leadership has not failed. It is true that every developed country has a history of strategic building of its agricultural sector.

Lusana Keita talking about the problematic of African development and observing the various possibilities for an emerging Africa made the claim that post-colonial structures, whether economic, social, or political that Africa has adopted have not been acquired through due historical process. As such, such structures have a number of short comings fitting into the African diverse realities;

the result of these post-colonial structures was that most political and economic power accrued to the state, often beholden to the ex-metropolis according to the dictates of neo-colonialism. Under these circumstances, the political

process was necessarily flawed despite he touted superficial requirements of ‘free and fair elections’.³¹

As seen in the above excerpt, power has been confiscated by most States on the African continent and the leaders in such States practice successive regimes of dictatorship, embezzlement and corruption. Such regimes would obviously not lead Africa to the most desired development. That is why Lansana does not relent on the fact that;

in an adequately developed Africa, the goals of the political process would entail the direct involvement of citizens at all levels, especially the local levels. The function of elected officials would be that of attending to the already prescribed functions of government. The most important functions of government for which the citizen would have agreed to support fiscally by way of their own contributions would be the maintenance and improvement of infrastructure, the collective needs of education and the collective needs of health, administered by adequately trained government officials.³²

While advocating for the above, the idea of Lansana remains, that there should as matter of necessity be a distinction between the State and government. With the distinction between State and Government, all workers in the State would have it in mind, that no single individual must trample on that which is collectively owned and shared. This goes in the direction of the line of thought of Nyerere who thinks, that development is the function of population or man-power, natural resources and good governance. Good governance to him as of unique importance in that, it gives room for better management of all other resources or components of development.

Conclusion

Our main preoccupation in this discourse was to make an investigation into Mwalimu Julius Nyerere’s conception of an African philosophy of development. In the course of doing so, we came across Nyerere’s view that development is a function of three components; population, natural resources and good governance. From a general perspective, Africa is neither in lack of population nor natural resources. The greatest handicap of Africa lies on the fact of the poor coordination of the available resources which is the failure of leadership and poor governance. At the moment of independence of African States, Nyerere was already conscious of the fact that political freedom means greater responsibility on the part of the freed. As such, he proposed brotherhood or sisterhood as the conceptual frame of connectivity and interdependence for a developmental theory of Africa. Considering his ideas about the need for more concerted hard work in line with the improvement of the agricultural domain as proper means through which Africa can attain development, this work posits the view that Africa’s quest for development requires a contemporary re-reading of Nyerere’s *Ujamaa*.

³⁰ Dan Yang, Zimin Liu, “Study on the Chinese farmer cooperative economy organizations and agricultural specialization,” *AGRIC. ECON. – CZECH*, 58, 2012 (3): 135–146, p. 135.

³¹ Lansana Keita, “Philosophy and Development: On the problem African Development- A Diachronic Analysis”, *CODESRIA*, Dakar, 2011, p. 126.

³² *Ibid*.

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