



Rethinking and reclaiming development in Africa

Vusi Gumede, University of South Africa

Introduction

There are many important questions that have been posed but not satisfactorily answered regarding the notion of development. For instance, I have asked: if development is such a desirable end for both African leaders and their so-called partners, why has it been so elusive and tedious to achieve. As argued elsewhere, it is important to further problematize the notion of development, including what development is, in whose interest is it being pursued, and by who as well as how. In addition, I have probed whether there are alternatives to the dominant paradigm of what is generally accepted as development and whether there are alternative routes to the desired end of inclusive development.

This essay is an attempt to pull together the various perspectives on the notion of development and to propose a better approach to inclusive development in Africa. The central argument of the work I have been doing on this subject is that the development that Africa needs is not the development of the market or the one that is dictated from outside. As Plaatjie (2013: 119) puts it, “development is an imposition on the Africans, of a Euro-American ‘truth’ about the idea of development”. The next section broadly looks at how selected earlier writers on development characterize development. I also discuss post-development and modernization as well as functionalism, and also touch on modernity. I then discuss the character and nature of development in post-independent Africa. That is followed by a discussion of how to make development happen in Africa. Before concluding, I propose an approach to development in Africa, taking forward the work I have been doing regarding the possible/new socio-economic development approach for Africa.

What is development?

The debate about what development refers to is an old debate. All countries or regions in the world are concerned with development. Europe, as Prah (2006: 175) discusses, was concerned with the notion of development as “part of the philosophical assumptions of the European Enlightenment”, as an example. This Enlightenment – the age of reason – can be viewed as “a pedagogical movement led by the philosophers to build a new scientifically ordered discourse of nature, authority, social existence and of virtually everything in the universe” (Lushaba, 2006: 6). This is linked to the idea of modernity which has been critiqued by many on different grounds. Lushaba (2006: 3), for instance, makes a point that “Africa cannot possibly develop by modernizing or becoming like the modern west...” It is in this context that many argue that development cannot be equated to modernity – or rather modernity is not an appropriate form of development that Africa needs.

From the 1960s, Japan and the so-called Asian Tigers (Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Korea) grew rapidly in economic terms and in social development resulting to the idea of a developmental state. A developmental state is a state that is preoccupied with development and vigorously pursues development, working in tandem with other sectors of society. Post-independent Africa was understandably very preoccupied with development, and some argue that certain countries in Africa became developmental states in the 1980s before the Structural Adjustment Programmes decimated development in Africa.

However, as many have argued, it is not clear what many refer to when talking of development. Linked to that is what has influenced conceptualization of and approaches to development. As Mokoena (2018: 96) puts it, “the linear stages of development and the continuous suggestions of emulation of Western development by the developing countries is grounded on this logic of progress [Western idea of progress]...This logic of progress informed the constant and unending expansion through ceaseless accumulation, colonization, dispossession and imperialism.” Indeed, as many have argued, development (or lack thereof) and or underdevelopment are normally viewed in Eurocentric lenses. It is also often forgotten that the so-called development of the West was based on the exploitation of the Third World, and Africa in particular as Walter Rodney (1973) explained. It is in this context that some of us argue that what was termed industrial revolution was mainly the plunder and exploitation of Africa (which was informed by the

Enlightenment ideals). To deal with the ‘Western idea of progress’, the hierarchies that characterize relations should be dismantled as the decolonial scholars have been arguing. In addition, for Africa, African agency should be accentuated as Afrocentric scholars argue.

There is also a more fundamental issue: is development similar to progress? Arguably, as Prah (2006) demonstrates, the preoccupation of many countries and or regions has historically been about *progress*. For the purposes of this essay, progress and development are conceived of as similar. This is not the same conceptualization of development or progress as “progress measured in linear temporal terms...” (Mokoena, 2018: 97). Table 1 shows that indeed development and progress can be viewed as implying the same process. Although (indigenous) African languages may have different names for the same concept such as development, the actual meaning of these different but related languages converge to imply a similar process. In the ‘actual meaning of the translated word(s)’ column, development is viewed as ‘progress’.

Table 1: Meanings of the word ‘development’ in selected indigenous African languages

Language	Country/Region	Literal translation	Actual meaning of the translated word(s)
KiSwahili	Tanzania	Maendeleo	<i>Progress/Continuation</i>
Sesotho	Lesotho	Tswelopele	<i>Progress/Continuation</i>
IsiZulu	South Africa	Ukuthuthukisa/Inqubekela Phambili	<i>Continuation/Progress</i>
Shona	Zimbabwe	Budiriro/Kubudirira	<i>To prosper</i>
Bissa	Burkina Faso	Yiure’	<i>To prosper</i>

Prah (2006: 178) explains that “in many African languages, the idea of progress is metaphorically interpreted as a notion of movement forward, or backwards to denote stagnation or retrogression.” Prah (2006) confirms that indeed in the various indigenous African languages, using the examples of what the Ga, the Akan, the Xhosa, the Luo and the Senufo say when referring to progress, that “the idea of progress translates easily as development”.

Examining what leading scholars say about development, as Table 2 shows, there is an overlapping conceptualization of what development is about. Development is about

improvements in wellbeing; involving socio-economic progress. Essentially, development is an indispensable aspect of socio-economic progress and civilization — development should be thought of far more than just economic growth, as I have argued elsewhere.

Table 2: Selected conceptualization of development

Author	Source	Conceptualization
Prah, K.K. (2001: 91)	<i>Culture, the missing link in development planning in Africa</i>	The notion of development prominently implies, the improvement and upliftment of the quality of life of people, that they are able, to a large measure, to attain their potential, build and acquire self-confidence and manage to live lives of reasonable accomplishment and dignity.
Clark, J. (1991: 36)	<i>Democratizing development: the role of voluntary organizations</i>	It is a process of change that enables people to take charge of their own destinies and realize their full potential. It requires building up in people the confidence, skills, assets and freedoms necessary to achieve this goal.
Myrdal, G (1974: 735)	<i>What is Development?</i>	Development must be understood as the movement upward of the entire social system, where there is circular causation between conditions and changes with cumulative effects.
Slim, G (1995: 143)	<i>What is Development?</i>	Development is essentially about change: not just any change, but a definite improvement – a change for the better. At the same time, development is also about continuity.
Sen, A (1999: 3)	<i>Development as Freedom</i>	Development can be seen as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy.
McFadden, P (2005: 271)	<i>Re-crafting Citizenship in the Postcolonial Moment: A Focus on Southern</i>	Developmentalism involves the mobilization of African women’s agencies to define their own futures, on and off the continent.
Ake, C (1996: 125)	<i>Democracy and Development in Africa</i>	Development is not economic growth; it is not a technical project but a process by which people create and recreate themselves and their life

		<p>circumstances to realize higher levels of civilization in accordance with their own choices and values. Development is something that people must do for themselves.</p>
--	--	---

Although there appears to be a cross-cutting meaning or overarching view of what development is, the fundamental question about how the concept of development has been used is important to address, at least in the context of Africa. The concept of development in Africa which often hinges and is determined by the notion of ‘good governance’ and respect for human rights has for years been exogenously imposed on African governments. As many others have argued, concepts such as civilization, development, globalization and democratization are some of the buzz words that have been used and perverted by the West to make the ‘other’ aspire to be like them. The West uses these words as barometer to judge other societies according to Western standards which are supposed to be the norm and yardstick for all societies, as the works of Marimba Ani and others demonstrate.

As many thinkers acknowledge, development is relative, and it is also subjective. Swantz (2009: 34) posits that “development cannot be transferred; it has to develop in the social conditions of each place”. Tandon (2015: 145) is of the view that “a major challenge for the theoreticians of not only the global south but also of the marginalized peoples and sub-nationalists of the north is to provide an alternative definition of development”. Latouche, (1993: 460) argues that “development has been and still is the Westernization of the world” while Ziai (2009: 198) sees “development [as] an empty signifier that can be filled with almost any content.”

Ziai (2013) also argues that the concept of development has depoliticized Eurocentric and authoritarian implications – even arguing that the concept of development should be abandoned. This is linked to the notion of post-development which argues that development practice and the concept of development reflects Western hegemony and that development projects and theories of development are not at the benefit of the developing world. Post-development thinking has, like development (or development theory), been critiqued for being not theoretically developed and that it is uneven. Pieterse (2000: 183) also says that “for all those concerned with discourse analysis, the actual use of language is sloppy and indulgent [in post-development thinking].” Ziai (2013: 126) makes a point that “post-development has been widely criticized...for homogenizing

development and neglecting its positive aspects, for romanticizing local communities and legitimizing oppressive traditions, and for being just as paternalistic as the chastised development experts.”

Coming to the discourses of/on development, Escobar (1995: 53) makes a point that “development is thus a very real historical formation, albeit articulated around an artificial construct (underdevelopment) and upon a certain materiality (the conditions baptized as underdevelopment), which must be conceptualized in different ways if the power of the development discourse is to be challenged or displaced”. Further, Escobar (1995: 104) argues that “the discourse of development is not merely an ideology that has little to do with the real world nor is it an apparatus produced by those in power in order to hide another, more basic truth, namely, the crude reality of the dollar sign. The development discourse has crystallized in practices that contribute to regulating the everyday goings and comings of people in the Third World” hence Escobar’s argument that when development is properly conceptualized it has been happening for a long time and driven by the people themselves from below.

Shivji (2006), in the context of Africa, periodizes development discourse into (1) age of developmentalism (1960s and 1970s), (2) Africa’s lost decade (1980s) and (3) ‘age of globalization’ (which is ongoing). In the age of developmentalism, development was a process of class struggle. During Africa’s lost decade, the ‘neo-liberal package’ (i.e. SAPs) reigned supreme. The ‘age of globalization’ was accompanied by pan-Africanist resistance and the discourse sees no role for the (developmental) state. Mkandawire (2011: 7), on the other hand, breaks down development discourse since World War II into two parts;

Almost from its very inception, the post-World War II development discourse has had two strands: the Truman version, for which development involved both geopolitical considerations and humanitarianism, and the ‘Bandung Conference’ version that saw development in terms of ‘catching up’, emancipation and ‘the right to development’.

With regard to development theory (Ziai, 2013: 124-125) “development theory has two roots: nineteenth-century evolutionism and nineteenth-century social technology. Evolutionism assumed that social change in societies proceeds according to a universal pattern while social technology claimed that social interventions based on expert knowledge (possessed by a

privileged group that acts as a trustee for the common good) are necessary to achieve positive social change. Both roots can be found in twentieth-century development theory...” Prah (2006: 185), on the other hand, makes a point that “Western post-2nd World War development theory can be historically identified and periodized as a three-phased phenomenology...the hegemony of Modernization theorists of the 1950s and 60s, the *Dependencia* and the Neo-marxian paradigms of the 60s and 70s, to IMF Adjustment packages of the late 70s and 80s. Today, neo-liberal paradigms hold sway.” It is worth highlighting that Modernization theories were associated with functionalism, the “idea [which] saw societies as harmonized and integrated systems...” (Prah, 2006)

Another important issue relates to the so-called ‘Right to Development’. As Lumumba-Kasongo (2002: 85) puts it, “development should be guided and supported within the framework of rights as defined by the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights adopted by the Organization of the African Unity (OAU) in 1981. They include: political and civil rights; economic and social rights; and the rights of peoples. Peoples’ rights include freedom from discrimination, oppression, and exploitation; and the right to self-determination, national and international peace and security and a satisfactory environment for economic and social development.” A new book by Kamga (2018) goes into a lot of detail on relevant history and debates regarding the notion of the ‘Right to Development’.

Essentially, as Kamga (2018) explains, soon after the political independence in Africa, African countries acknowledged that development in Africa was affected by global inequities characterized by unfair trade rules, global post-colonial arrangements through various global institutions etc. As a response, developing countries and African countries in particular gathered in the G77 and called for the establishment of the New International Order that would enable inclusive development. In 1967 in Algiers, Dudu Tiam, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Senegal, made a statement that “development is human right”. Kamga (2017) argues that the right to development concept is a legal concept in the fight against poverty. It is a composite right made of civil and political rights as well as socio-economic rights all put together in the interest of human dignity. Arguably, the concept was introduced to the academia by M’baye (1972) in an inaugural lecture in Strasburg in France. In 1986, the declaration on the right to

development was adopted by the United Nations. The right to development is now a recognized human right, as Kamga (2013) indicates.

Although many (e.g. Sengutpa, Andreassen and Marks) argue that development is an entitlement (i.e. right to development), many others (e.g. Donnelly, Bello and Whyte) reject the notion of right to development and argue that proponents of the right to development are making up a non-existing right. By and large, the controversy around the notion of the right to development is largely due to the fact that the international community is obliged under the discourse to provide development assistance as well as capacity to the developing world.

Development in Africa

So much has been written about development in Africa. Besides the neo-liberal perspectives that argue for the development of the market or a developmental approach that is dictated from outside, the debate regarding development in Africa has dealt with whether (inclusive) development has taken place or not and if not why not. As indicated earlier, Ake (1996) argued that development was not really in the agenda of the political elite in post-independent Africa while many others argued that development was the main preoccupation of leaders in the early years of political independence. Ake (1996) makes a point that the main reason development has not taken place in Africa is because agrarian revolution (which is an important phase for development) was overlooked. Others have argued that the reason development has been weak in Africa is because of inappropriate policies, wrong socio-economic development approach and that languages and cultures have not been given space to thrive and support development. Among the factors that are said to have constrained development in Africa are: poor economic development which results from lack of appropriate policies/reforms, overreliance on natural resources, absence of an original economic development model, poor implementation etc. Then there are numerous social problems (i.e. unnecessary civil wars, poor educational outcomes, xenophobia etc.) that make development intractable. Then there is a challenge of political and institutional weaknesses (which allow negative external influences and interference, weak leadership, corruption etc.).

Mkandawire (2015), however, is among those who hold a view that we have not fully understood what has constrained development, and particularly economic development in Africa. For the record, Mkandawire (2015) argues that attributing slow economic performance of African economies to neopatrimonialism as an example is problematic. As Mkandawire (2015: 2) puts it, ‘while neopatrimonialism can be used to describe different styles of exercising authority, idiosyncratic mannerisms of certain individual leaders, and social practices within states, the concept offers little analytical content and has no predictive value with respect to economic policy and performance’. Mkandawire (2015: 3) describes ‘neopatrimonialism [as] a marriage of tradition and modernity with an offspring whose hybridity generates a logic that has had devastating effects on African economies’ and that it is factually incorrect that the African economy has not performed well as the neopatrimonialism logic suggests.

At issue should be why economic development has not been fast enough. The related question is: why has economic development not resulted to effective human development. As argued and shown in Gumede (2016), human development in Africa remains very low. Looking at the period from 1980 to 2015, as an example, sub-Saharan Africa’s Human Development Index (HDI) has remained comparatively too low, even compared to South Asia. Comparing sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, the point made above – that Africa remains behind other regions – is glaring.

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Very high human development	0.766	0.791	0.858	0.888	0.889	0.884	0.887	0.890	0.892
High human development	0.614	0.574	0.687	0.739	0.741	0.728	0.736	0.744	0.746
Medium human development	0.420	0.465	0.548	0.625	0.630	0.613	0.620	0.626	0.631
Low human development	0.316	0.356	0.383	0.453	0.456	0.486	0.490	0.494	0.497
Arab States	0.444	0.556	0.578	0.639	0.641	0.684	0.685	0.686	0.687
East Asia and the Pacific	0.428	0.516	0.581	0.666	0.671	0.700	0.709	0.717	0.720
Europe and Central Asia	0.644	0.652	0.68	0.744	0.751	0.745	0.750	0.754	0.756

Latin America & the Caribbean	0.582	0.626	0.68	0.728	0.731	0.739	0.745	0.750	0.751
South Asia	0.356	0.438	0.468	0.545	0.548	0.601	0.607	0.614	0.621
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.365	0.399	0.401	0.46	0.463	0.510	0.515	0.520	0.523

Table 3: Human Development, levels & regions

Source: Human Development Report (2016)

The pace of growth of the HDI for Sub-Saharan Africa is the lowest compared to other regions. In the last four years (2011-2015), the annual HDI level for Sub-Saharan Africa is effectively standing still. HDI levels for South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific have improved relatively faster than the HDI level for Sub-Saharan Africa. Although HDI levels for Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and Central Asia and for Arab States have not grown substantially during 2011-2015, the HDI levels of those regions are high relative to the HDI level for Sub-Saharan Africa.

As argued elsewhere, the crisis of development in Africa is underpinned by the ideological and epistemological confusion and imposition that define the pursuit of development, justice and freedom. The pursuit of development has generally followed a pattern defined by the West, in which a unilinear process is deemed sacrosanct. Following Walt Whitman Rostow's stages of economic growth, development planning efforts in Africa were geared towards the path of a sequential change, progress and transformation on the continent. Also, a Western conception of development ensures that it is seen as a process for a high rate of accumulation and industrialization.

As a project grounded in nationalism, African countries are expected to 'catch up' or achieve 'convergence' with so-called developed countries, as Mkandawire (2011) has put it. This version of understanding development feeds into what Mkandawire (2011), cited in Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni's 2012 Inaugural Professorial Lecture, calls the 'Truman Version of Developmentalism' where development is interpreted as the Euro-American missionary task of developing the global south in general and Africa in particular. An uncritical acceptance of this definition of development has resulted in the subservience of the political elites in Africa to subordination of 'politics to economics'. The demonization of the state as incapable agent of

transformation gave way to the hegemony of market as the more effective agent for the allocation of resources. The ascendance of neo-liberal thought in development discourse has led to emphasis on depoliticization of development strategies, thus giving way to technocratic governance.

It is not surprising that Samir Amin (1990), for instance, argued for ‘delinking’. Amin (1990: 67) argues that in order for Third World countries to experience true development, they should ‘delink’ from the world capitalist system through adoption of new market strategies and values different from the so-called developed countries. Amin’s hypothesis supposes that countries in the Third World can develop economically by changing approaches to production systems. As Mokoena (2018: 87) argues, “the capitalist world system continues to hierarchically and dichotomously configure the world culturally, epistemologically, aesthetically, ontologically at the exclusion, oppression, exploitation of *Othered* populations such as African people thus reproducing the crisis of inequalities...This world’s system is Euro-American-centric, capitalist, patriarchal, hetero-normative, and hierarchical, Christian-centric and characterized by an interstate system.” Oloruntoba (2015: 123) also argues that “inequality remains one of the most fundamental challenges of the contemporary world” and that “capitalism in its current form is unsustainable for the human society. Consequently, the structure of power that informs and maintains the current order must be transformed to foster inclusive development.”

There are other problems with the world capitalist system, as Mokoena (2018: 88), explains:

“Patriarchy and neoliberal ethic of contractual transactions also informs private relationships whereby certain commodities are traded and exchanged with women’s commodified bodies. The marginal position of women in society and struggles relating to material exclusion reproduce women’s dependency on men for survival. Transactional sex, which is common among young women who exchange sex for gifts, is another tool characterizing this neoliberal ethos of trade whereby the body becomes a resource of trade for the disadvantaged.”

It is in this context that Nkenkana (2018: 67) has argued that “Gender equality, especially the rights of women, occupy an increasingly important place in the global and African political discourse and, by implication, has significance for the development discourse as enshrined in the ideals of the futures and visions of Africa.” As many have argued, without gender equality we

cannot talk of true development. Thomas Sankara, among others, elaborates this point in his many speeches (in the context of Burkina Faso) contained in a new book edited by Jean-Claude Kongo and Leo Zeilig.

Taking Samir Amin's view forward, an argument is made that Africa can 'disengage' from the global north for Africa connected with the rest of the world incorrectly – Africa can then re-engage at a later stage on its own terms. I discuss this in detail later.

Realizing Development in Africa

There have been many proposals made aimed at ensuring that development becomes reality in Africa. As I have been arguing, the starting point should be revisiting those proposals, assuming that there is consensus about what does the term development mean for Africa and also assuming that there is agreement on why development has not been inclusive and or effective in Africa. Arguably, African countries should work harder in the pursuit of inclusive development without relying on the notion of "right to development" and such.

Although it is true that the global north makes it difficult for Africa to advance its wellbeing, more thinking and action should go to what Africa itself must do. The rest of the world can contribute. Also, the bigger fight against imperialism and skewed distribution of global power should not distract from what Africa, and Africans wherever they are, should be doing to improve the wellbeing in the African countries. It is in this context that this section focuses on what Africa can do or must do. The notion of Africa adopted in approaching this subject is that Africa means the geographical space in the south of the Sahara and Africans are those originating in Africa as a geographical entity who have had to endure many centuries of brutal Arab and European slavery and other forms of repulsive oppression, plunder and exploitation and have suffered white racism and at the receiving end of white supremacy.

The following points are worth mentioning before delving into the discussion of how to make inclusive development a reality in Africa. It must be acknowledged that development has traditionally been viewed from an economic perspective. This essay rejects that notion of development. So much has been written to make a case that economic development, or the oft-

celebrated economic growth, does not equate to inclusive development. Many countries that have been, on different occasions, listed as having high economic development/growth also have many socio-economic challenges. As argued in Gumede (2016), many high-growth economies in Africa are mineral-dependent countries of which many come from a relatively low base. In other words, these mineral rich countries have not benefited the majority of their citizens and also are growing rapidly because the baseline of economic growth has been low. It is in this context that I have joined those who reject the notion of development as ‘development of the market’.

This is linked to the notion of the African middle-class. Besides that the measure(s) used to classify the middle-class in Africa is/are questionable, there are many issues that suggest that the very notion of African middle-class is an oxymoron – how could a people who have no control over the economies of Africa, a people without consciousness and a people trapped in debt be categorized as ‘middle-class’. There are also those who argue that the black middle class is illusionary because it is simply a midway between extreme poverty and affluence, and does not address power or infrastructure. A similar argument can be made in relation to the bourgeoisie and the corporate sector in Africa. Prah (2001) talks of ‘penny capitalism’. There is a challenge in Africa that the bourgeoisie and domestic capital are not patriotic and predominantly parochial in the sense that capital in African countries is very inwardly looking (though this seems to be changing). For Africa to advance, it is necessary that domestic capital in the various African countries expands to other parts of Africa.

Another important issue worth highlighting before delving into the discussion of how to make inclusive development a reality in Africa is that we must address the question of what do we want to see in “development” in the context of Africa. In other words, what could be features/characteristics of development that are important for Africa? From a pan-Africanist perspective, arguably, development must speak to the people – advancement must mean human freedoms from want, from oppression, from poverty and other ills that engulf many people in Africa. Fundamentally, development should be driven by the communities because communities know what their members value. Put differently, development cannot be effective or inclusive if communities are not empowered to run their affairs in a manner that they prefer. This implies that the language through which development occurs is critical. As Prah (2017: 6) has explained,

“language provides the transactional and vehicular instrumentation for the representation of culture.”

By implication, and as Cheikh Anta Diop (1955) argued (and many others have taken that forward), there is no nation that can develop in a foreign language. Language is central to inclusive development for one cannot know anything which is not in one’s language. Prah (2001: 91) argues that “the notion of development prominently implies, the improvement and upliftment of the quality of life of people, that they are able, to a large measure, to attain their potential, build and acquire self-confidence and manage to live lives of reasonable accomplishment and dignity.” For communities to “attain potential, build and acquire self-confidence and manage to live lives of reasonable accomplishment and dignity”, language is the most fundamental factor in development, so is culture.

As Prah (2001) has been arguing, culture (i.e. “tangibles and intangibles created by humanity or human groups and which provide them with a collective environment in which they transact their everyday lives”) is the missing link for development to take place in Africa. Culture, in its evolving sense, should be embraced and languages must be allowed to thrive, for language is also very critical for it ensures and sustains people-to-people relations. This view that languages must be allowed to thrive, which is Kwesi Kwaa Prah’s argument, is different from what Ngugi wa Thiong’o (1986) and others have proposed (i.e. that Africa needs one single language). I am now more persuaded that all indigenous languages should not be suffocated instead of pushing for one language for the whole of Africa (something I have also been supporting). The works of Cheikh Anta Diop and Théophile Obenga demonstrated, among other things, that indigenous African languages are similar. This implies that it is feasible that different cultural groups can hear each other while using their each respective languages. It might very well be that a *lingua franca* can be cultivated through adopting or creating a common language by sub-regions in Africa and ultimately culminating a single language for all peoples in Africa.

Another important factor for making development a reality in Africa relates to the political or ideological orientation of our societies. As many have argued, there is still an important need for African nationalism in tandem with pan-Africanism. African nationalism brings us back to why we fought for political independence while pan-Africanism reminds us that we must fight imperialism if we are to get anywhere as Africans. To bring about the African renaissance, pan-

African unity is paramount. Linked to this is the perspective that each of the countries in Africa are not able to ensure inclusive development because they were not created to serve all the citizens for each of the countries. Although there are still issues to be resolved about the nature of a single 'African nation', there are no doubts in the minds of many pan-Africanists that pan-African unity is the answer to many of the challenges that Africa and Africans face. Effective development would be better pursued in a single nation of Africa (comprised of all the countries) where all languages thrive, cultures are embraced, communities are empowered and Africans are united in their diversities. If we are able to confront the crisis of a neo-colonial constructs that we call African countries, we would be better placed to advance development.

Approaching Development in Africa

Given all that I have said, the question remains: how should inclusive development be approached in Africa? As argued elsewhere, the starting point has to be to revisit main proposals that have been made. For instance, as discussed earlier, Amin (1990) argued for 'delinking.' Claude Ake (1996) proposed that agrarian revolution is critical for the development of Africa. Some have argued for 'Afro-capitalism'. Some insist that we must dismantle the 'artificial borders'. Many argue for 'home grown' policies, and the importance of social policy and the link between social and economic policies.

With regard to Afro-capitalism, Elumelu (2010) views it as an economic philosophy that embodies the private sector commitment to the economic transformation of Africa through investments that generate both economic prosperity and social wealth while Amaeshi (2013) describes Afro-capitalism as a powerful emotional economic tool for sustainable African economic development which speaks to African identity. It would seem that Afro-capitalism is essentially about the bourgeoisie and capital that is patriotic in Africa. It could also be viewed as complementing or an alternative to foreign direct investment because Afro-capitalism is about capital in Africa investing within Africa.

Back to Amin (1990: 67), he argues that in order for effective development to occur in the Third World countries, the Third World must 'delink' from the global capitalist system. Amin suggests that underdeveloped countries need to adopt new market strategies and values different from the

developed world. The ‘delinking’ agenda is essentially a preparatory phase for the ‘socialist transition’ in the Third World. I am suggesting that Africa must ‘disengage’ from the rest of the world, not just ‘delink’ together with the rest of the Third World. Africa was wrongly integrated to the rest of the world, mainly through (or starting with) slave trade. The process of ‘disengaging’ goes further than ‘delinking’. It is not about preparing for socialism, although it could result to socialism. Disengaging would allow Africa to get its house in order, so to speak, then re-integrate with the rest of the world in its own terms than the terms that were imposed on Africa. Therefore, disengaging is not an economic process like delinking. It goes a step further in a sense that it would not only allow Africa to adopt market and production strategies that are different from the global capitalist system but would also allow Africa to resolve many pressing issues.

Linked to the idea of disengaging is the need for a philosophical or conceptual framework that can guide social and economic relations in Africa. I have been arguing for communalism, rather a modified version of communalism. Rodney (1973:12) defines communalism as a system where “property [is] collectively owned, work done in common and goods shared equally”. This is in sharp contrast to capitalism, which came with colonialism, which, according to Rodney, resulted to “concentration in a few hands of ownership of the means of producing wealth and by unequal distribution of the products of human labour.” Although Marxism is a powerful tool of analysis, Karl Marx and the original thinkers of Marxist theory studied a society that was profoundly different from the African society. Therefore, we should not be preoccupied with preparations for socialism although this is important. For Africa, the opportunity that disengaging provides would be for Africa to think thoroughly about possibilities regarding a socio-economic development approach or model.

Others argue for other ways that can bring about true development in Africa, from a philosophical or conceptual perspective. For instance, an argument has been advanced that African modernity would bring about development in Africa. Communalism is seen as an old way (i.e. traditional) of doing things. The case made for African modernity is problematic given that, as Lushaba (2006: 19) argues, “modernity is nothing more than Europe’s transition from feudal to the capitalist mode of production and its attendant social relations.” That is why it is problematic that “in a bid to develop Africa must modernize where to modernize means

replicating the western historical and development trajectory” (Lushaba, 2006: 23). Interestingly, Lushaba (2006: 49) concludes that our “(the African) struggle to escape from the present and construct own modernity can no longer be a bourgeoisie led one just as national liberation struggles were.” So, by implication, African modernity has a place except that it should be pursued differently. I am not convinced by this, hence I have been arguing for a modified version of communalism.

Although communalism was not only in Africa in the pre-mercantilist era or early Africa, it was overwhelmingly predominant in Africa. It was not an economic system per se but a way of life. Indeed, there is value in the pursuit of socialism and ultimately communism. However, the hypothesis of disengaging suggests that Africa can experiment with any ideological approach. The one I am arguing for is a modified version of communalism. There is no reason why communalism cannot graduate overtime to a class-less society as Marxism envisages graduation from capitalism to socialism and ultimately to a class-less society. It might very well be that decades later all regions will be class-less societies, at a point when Africa re-integrates with the rest of the world. This proposal for Africa to disengage privileges African agency – Africans should do something about their own circumstances. More thinking still needs to go to this proposal. To be sure, I am not arguing that people in Africa cut ties with peoples in other parts of the world. Fundamentally, the proposal is that Africa as a continent should focus on getting its house in order without interference from other parts of the world.

So, what could be the pillars of a different socio-economic model for Africa (operating in the communalism mode)? As argued elsewhere, (1) intra-Africa trade (and regional integration), (2) state ownership, (3) social policy, (4) industrialization and (5) entrepreneurship. These five pillars make up what I have termed an economic renaissance model for Africa. Africa needs to trade among its countries (while there are countries) which would hopefully be gone (and one African nation would exist) when Africa ends disengagement.

To increase or ensure intra-African trade, the different sub-regions in Africa can focus on certain sectors. For example, southern Africa can focus on manufacturing while east Africa focuses on services. Africa can ‘appoint’ anchor economies, say Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya and Ethiopia. These ‘leaders’ can be supported and be capacitated to boost economic development in the

surrounding countries. Linked to this is to ensure that regional integration deals with both economic and non-economic factors. Regional integration focusing on markets and which is top-down cannot advance true development in Africa. Regional integration should also be about people-to-people relations, hence the importance of languages and the need to embrace cultures.

As for state ownership, having governments in the different countries in Africa temporarily owning the means of production and land would ensure that governments ensure proper use of such resources – and empowered communities would guide governments. Maybe we should dispense with the term of government and use ‘council’. In other words, representatives of the people would be ‘councils’ that are constituted through democratic participation. Other aspects of the new approach to development would most likely come naturally as soon as there are no constraints that are imposed by the current governance arrangements and global capitalism. Entrepreneurship, for instance, would thrive when people are able to do commerce in their varied languages. Social policy would also come naturally as an obvious component of advancing wellbeing of those who may not be able to fend for themselves – the key issue regarding social policy is that it should work in tandem with economic policy. Industrialization would be a natural process that would also ensure agrarian revolution that we have overlooked.

The fundamental precondition of all this is pan-African unity. It is not insurmountable. Starting with people-to-people relations and allowing languages to thrive, unity will happen (although it is going to take a long time, for the imperialist forces will do everything possible to stifle unity of Africans). Among other things, mobilization across the continent of Africa and the Diaspora will assist in ensuring that Africans unite again. Critical consciousness and thought liberation, as I have been arguing, are critical. Critical consciousness implies that all Africans would be alive to the realities that put Africans at lower rank than other races globally. Thought liberation implies that Africans would be free from ways of thinking and ways of living that do not advance the interests of Africans wherever we are. All of this is easier said than done. It is still early days.

Conclusion

Although it is still early days, it would seem that there is a groundswell that is pushing for African unity – and many are working hard towards giving meaning to the African nation. Indeed African unity will happen but it would take a while, understandably. In the meantime, indigenous African languages must be allowed to thrive and people to people relations encouraged so that true development can occur. As the works of Kwesi Kwaa Prah show, without embracing indigenous languages and cultures and empowering communities, effective development will remain a pipedream.

It is critical that all aspects that matter for Africa's development are pursued. This essay has viewed development as advancement in people's lives as opposed to the development of the market. The essay draws inspiration and is influenced by the leading African scholars who have engaged with the notion of development and discourses on development in Africa. The central argument of the essay is that inclusive development will not be satisfactory in Africa until Africa disengages from the rest of the world. The disengagement argued for is temporary, say 50 years, so that Africa can get its house in order in the meantime and re-integrate with the rest of the world on its own terms because Africa integrated incorrectly to the rest of the world to begin with.

The essay problematized the notion of development and discourses in development, as an effort to rethinking and reclaiming development in Africa. It also examined the levels of development in post-independent Africa, and came to the conclusion that development – measured through conventional United Nations measures – has been weak relative to other regions. The essay also proposes how inclusive development could better be approached in Africa. Although others argue that Africa's past should not be romanticized and/or that being Africa or Africans should not be essentialized, I argue that there are important lessons that can be distilled from how early Africa was organized and functioned. It is in this context that I have been arguing for a modified version of communalism as a possible philosophical framework that can underpin Africa's (new/different) approach to socio-economic development.

References

Ake, C. (1996). *Democracy and Development in Africa*. Maryland: Brookings Institution.

Amaeshi, K (2013). Africapitalism: Unleashing the power of emotions for Africa's development? *African Argument*. October, 2.

Amin, S. (1990). *Delinking: Towards a Polycentric World*. London, New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd. 1990.

Andreassen, B and Marks, S. (2006). *Development as a Human Right: Legal, Political and Economic Dimensions* Harvard School of Public Health, Francois Xavier Bagnoud Center For Health and Human Rights, Harvard University.

Bello, E. (1992). 'Article 22 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights' In Elias Bello and B Adjibola (eds.) *Essay in Honour of Judge Taslim Olawale Elias*, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, pp.447-484.

Diop, C, A, (1955). *The African Origin of Civilisation: Myth or Reality*. Paris: Presence Africaine.

Donnelly, J. (1985). 'In Search of the Unicorn: The Jurisprudence and Politics of the Right to Development' *California Western International Law Journal*. 1985. Pp 485.

Elumelu, T. (2010). *Why Africa needs capitalism that is aligned with its development needs*, Available at: <http://tonyelumelufoundation.org/africapitalisminstitute/why-africa-needs-capitalism-that-is-aligned-with-its-development-needs/>. Accessed March 25, 2018.

Escobar, A. (1955). *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Gumede, V. (2018). Social Policy for Inclusive Development in Africa. *Third World Quarterly*, Volume 39, Issue 1, pp. 122-139.

Gumede, V (Ed), (2018). *Towards Inclusive Development in Africa: Transforming Global Relations*. AISA & CODESRIA Press. Pretoria & Dakar.

Gumede, V (2016). Towards a Better Socio-Economic Development Approach for Africa's Renewal, *Africa Insight*, 46(1). Pp 89-105.

Kamga, S. (2018). *The Right to Development in the African Human Rights System*. New York: Routledge.

Kamga, S. (2017). 'The Right to Development and the Post-2015 Agenda'. In Zondi, S. and Mthembu, P. (eds.) *From MDGs to Sustainable Development Goals*. Pretoria: Institute of Global Dialogue, pp 43-46.

Kongo, J-C and Zeilig, L. (2018). *Voices of Liberation: Thomas Sankara*. Pretoria: HSRC Press.

Latouche, S. (1993). *In the Wake of the Affluent Society: An Exploration of Post-Development* London: Zed Books.

Lumumba-Kasongo, T. (2002). The National Project as a Public Administration Concept: The Problematic State Building in the Search for New Development Paradigms in Africa, *Africa Development*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 2. 2002. Pp. 63-96.

- Lushaba, L.S. (2006). *Development as modernity, modernity as development*. African Studies Center Working Paper 69/2006. Leiden: ASC.
- M'baye, K. (1972). 'Le droit au développement comme un droit de l'homme'. 5 *Revue des droits l'homme*. 1972. Pp 505–534.
- Meillan, L. (2003). 'Le Droit au Développement et les Nations Unies: Quelques Réflexions'. *Droit en Quart Monde* 14; F. Ougergouz. *The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights: A Comprehensive Agenda for Human Dignity and Sustainable Democracy in Africa*. Kluwer Law International.
- Mkandawire, T. (2011). Running While Others Walk: Knowledge and the Challenge of Africa's Development. *Africa Development*, XXXVI(2). 2011. Pp 1-36.
- Mkandawire, T. (2015). Neopatrimonialism and the Political Economy of Economic Performance in Africa: Critical Reflections. *World Politics*. Pp 1 – 50.
- Mokoena, D. (2018). *Capitalist Crisis and Gender Inequality: Quest for Inclusive Development*. In Gumede, V (Ed), 2018, *Towards Inclusive Development in Africa: Transforming Global Relations*. AISA & CODESRIA Press. Pretoria & Dakar. pp84-102.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. (2012). *Coloniality of Power in Development Studies and the Impact of Global Imperial Designs on Africa*, Inaugural Professorial Lecture. University of South Africa. 16 October. 2012.
- Nkenkana, A (2018). *No African Futures without the Liberation of Women: A decolonial feminist perspective*. In Gumede, V (Ed), *Towards Inclusive Development in Africa: Transforming Global Relations*. AISA & CODESRIA Press. Pretoria & Dakar. 2018, pp. 67-83.
- Oloruntoba, S (2015). Politics of Financialisation and Inequality: Transforming Global Relations for Inclusive Development. *Africa Development*, XL (3), 2015. Pp. 121-137.
- Pieterse, V (2000). After Post-Development. *Third World Quarterly*, 21 (2). 2000. Pp175-191.
- Plaatjie, S.R. (2013). Beyond Western-Centric and Eurocentric Development: A Case for Decolonizing Development. *Africanus* 43 (2). 2013. Pp 118-130.
- Prah, K.K. (2017). *Reflections: On Goldberg's Variations on Africanist Themes*. CASAS. Cape Town.

- Prah, K.K. (2016). *Pan-African Concerns: Keeping our Eyes on the Ball*. CASAS: Cape Town.
- Prah, K.K. (2006). *The African Nation: The State of the Nation*. CASAS. Cape Town.
- Prah, K.K. (2001). Culture, the missing link in development planning in Africa. *Présence Africaine, Nouvelle série*, No. 163/164 (2001). pp. 90-102.
- Rodney, W. (1973). *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Tanzanian Publishing House, Dar-Es-Salaam.
- Sengupta, M. (2002). On the theory and practice of the right to development, *Human Rights Quarterly, Vol 24*, pp 837-889.
- Shivji, S. (2006). *The changing development discourse in Africa*, Africa Notes, Cornell University, the Institute for African Development newsletter (January–February).
- Swantz, M-L. (2009). *What is Development?* In Mikko, P. *Perspectives to global social development*. Finland: Tampere University Press. Pp 32.
- Tandon. Y (2015). Development is Resistance. *Africa Development, XL(3)*. 2015. Pp 139-159.
- Thiong'o, N. (1986). *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Whyte, J. (2007). 'Book Review: *Development as a Human Right*, Andreassen, B and Marks, S. Harvard University Press, *Journal of Sustainable Development 2*. 2007.
- Ziai, A. (2013). The discourse of “development” and why the concept should be abandoned, *Development in Practice, 23:1*. 2013. Pp 123-136.
- Ziai, A. (2009). Development”: Projects, Power, and a Poststructuralist Perspective. *Alternatives, 3*. Pp183-201.