

Exploring Efforts of Integrating Progressive Aspects of Cultures into Development and Purging Retrogressive Ones from Development Framework in a Score of African Countries

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ABSTRACT Integration of progressive aspects of cultures into development could be a panacea and some cultural architects believe that it could spur and increase sustainable and meaningful development. The aim of the present paper is to explore efforts of integrating the progressive aspects of culture as well as possibilities of purging the retrogressive ones from the development frameworks. The paper has used a review of literature methodology. The paper indicates that integrating progressive aspects of cultures achieves the following: makes development people-centered and people-centric; increases the principle of inclusivity in development; and grounds society into a state of socialism and communalism. The paper proposes the following aspects of culture to be purged out of development agenda: culture of promiscuity; immoral culture of dressing; culture of laziness and dependence syndrome; faulty belief systems; culture of greed and corruption; culture of violence and animosity among countries; and culture of xenophobia. The paper recommends that Africans undergo a paradigm shift of their mindset to accept integration of cultures as a panacea in development.

INTRODUCTION

Development Become People Centered/ People Centric

Perhaps, it is from the desire to validate the hypothesis that integrating cultures into development is likely to spur and increase African countries' development that prompted this discourse based paper. The converse is also true that lack of integration can negatively affect development and fail to make it sustainable as well as deep-rooted (Robinson and Green 2010; Serageldin 1992). According to UNESCO, culture is the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human beings, value systems, traditions and beliefs (Serageldin 1992: 2). This indicates the holism role of cultures in shaping people's lives and destiny (Afolayan 2004). Perhaps, this is why Kang'ethe (2009a) indicates that cultures determines people's dos and don'ts, their thinking, attitudes and sets pace for the future of a people (Kang'ethe 2009a).

According to Salim (1992:12), the former OAU secretary general, Africa is proud of its rich and

varied cultural heritage whether it be in the field of painting and sculpture, music and dance, literature and archeology (Campbell et al. 2010; Afolayan 2004). However, these aspects of culture were immensely dented under the wind of colonialism that condescended, demeaned, negated and undermined many aspects of the African cultures (Kang'ethe 2009b, 2013a, 2014a) However, they appear to have recovered reparably.

If culture is integrated into different aspects of development, then people easily own their development. They find identity in the new aspects of development and strengthen ownership of development (Campbell et al. 2010; Salim 1992). Perhaps, why many development packages imported from the west fail to bring much development among the Africans could be because these development packages have not contextually considered people's opinions, thinking, and perspectives. Perhaps a good example happened in Kenya in the 1980's when the government in an endeavor to improve the livelihood of one cattle herding tribe decided to heavily invest in the construction of cattle dips in order to eradicate ticks and therefore improve the health of their livestock. The result was that people were not keen to use the new endeavor. Some members of this group had not used the dips, or did not understand how the new milieu

was to add value to their cattle that they held so dearly. To them, cattle occupied a special place in their hearts and mind. They served an ostentatious value. This brings to the reality that this group's views, opinions, values, norms on integrating the new found value epitomized by development into their existing livelihood needed to be sought and their fears allayed. The group might have felt betrayed, demeaned and belittled by the endeavor. This is because the development path did not respect the tenet of development in which the beneficiaries have to be the drivers or have to understand, accept and appreciate the new development endeavor (Robinson and Green 2010; Lombard 1991; Ravitz 1982). This is especially because the values of the Kenyan group described above especially pertaining to cattle wealth were so deeply immersed in cultures (Afolayan 2004). The dilution of such cultures, or some deviations had to be effectuated through strong skills of persuasion, engagements and consultation etc (Trevithick 2005). This also means that solving a community or societal problem did not require a policy input alone, but also a community development approach that allows people's decision making, participation, engagement and understanding. In a fruitful community development endeavor or project, it is sufficient that local people's participation be accompanied by power. Such includes power to understand and make decisions that suits them. This means that development needs to be viewed from cultural lenses also (Kang'ethe 2014a; Afolayan 2004).

Respecting people's cultures, therefore, is of critical importance. This is because many societies especially the traditional ones position their thinking, dos and don'ts and attitudes through cultural lenses (Lombard 1991; Kang'ethe 2009a). Respecting cultures and ensuring development respects it, therefore, make development become people centric, people driven and bolsters the state of development ownership. This researcher thinks that this is one of the gaps that development in many development countries face. This is because many policy makers and elites think that development is a question of bringing the much absent infrastructure to the needy. They view development in terms of material well being especially the sophisticated ones not known or used in the developing countries. While these aspects are developmental in nature and forms the agendas of

many countries, their impacts to the overall development slackens when culture is disregarded.

Problem Statement

African countries, despite having more natural resources than many other countries of the world continue to take a snail's pace in effectuating development. To this end, some development pragmatists suggest that lack of integration of cultures into development is a possibility of such a slow pace of socio-economic growth. This paper, therefore, attempts to justify, validate and advocate for the panacea of such kind of integration and exploring other retrogressive aspects of culture that needs to be purged out of development. This thinking is born from a realization that countries that have adequately integrated their cultures in development are advancing well and scoring sustainable socio-economic development.

METHODOLOGY

The paper uses eclectic sources of literature on various aspects of integrating progressive aspects of cultures in development. It has used government publications, journals on cultures and intuitive experience of this researcher in the field of culture

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

The Panacea of Integrating Progressive Cultures in Development

Cultures Increase the Principal of Inclusivity

Although culture attracts different dimensions of understanding, Kang'ethe (2009a) view it as a way people live their lives, a mirror that reflects various aspects of life that people consider meaningful to their holistic lives. It is also a phenomenon that determines the dos and don'ts in the society that shape people's attitudes and thinking etc. This implies that any development endeavour that bases its roots in culture shapes and strengthens a platform of inclusivity (Robinson and Green 2010). This means that some people will not be left behind the scope of development. Having some segments of the people being left behind is a common phenomenon in many countries of Africa.

In fact, these segments of the population are stigmatized, discriminated, alienated, estranged or largely looked down upon by the people who are viewed as having broadly seen the light. The latter group may have viewed or embraced development without respecting the cultural norms. To this group, culture may be viewed as acts that are barbaric, naïve, backward, and embracing uncivilized ways of living, which in this researcher's view is regrettable (Kang'ethe 2009b). For the group that is culturally grounded, people tend to be more cohesive and bound together strongly by cultural norms subscribed by many. This is positively exploiting the benefits or the panacea of cultures as an asset or platform of development (Kang'ethe 2013a, 2014a). Examples of such communities which have stuck to their cultures include the Basarwa of Botswana and many herding communities of Kenya such as the Maasai, Turkana etc (Kang'ethe 2013a).

Perhaps the advent of colonialists and many decades if not centuries of colonialism succeeded in socializing people to demonize their cultures and replacing them with the new culture of the colonizers. Even today, some Africans still see culture as a tool of backwardness, barbarism, naivety, and anti development (Kang'ethe 2009b). The colonizers were not sincere and they have never been sincere. They wanted the Africans to lose focus, identity and become easily governable. It was a way of indoctrinating the Africans with the western based values, dogmas and ways of doing things (Kang'ethe 2009b, 2013a). They were imperialistic. The irony is that the colonialists even used the churches to persuade the Africans to abandon their ways of worship because it was demoniac, retrogressive, barbaric and represented the dark ages devoid of civilization (Kang'ethe 2009b). Perhaps these are the wrongs that a few cultural architects are trying to correct by indicating that cultures are a panacea with many valuables that can bolster development (Kang'ethe 2014a). Such cultural architects are urging the Africans to consider going back to their roots, craft their cultural niche and to use cultures as tools of development. The progressive aspects of cultures need to be integrated into all facets of development (Kang'ethe 2013 a, 2014a).

Culture is People-centric

As indicated by some cultural architects and pragmatists, integrating cultures into develop-

ment is a panacea in that people's values, norms such as their mode of entertainment; music etc will be reflected in the scope of development (Afolayan 2004; Mathangwane 2009). Development, therefore, becomes people driven. This scenario is likely to make development and culture synonymous. Perhaps many countries that had negated the impact of cultures in development needs to borrow a leaf from countries such as Japan that have richly integrated their cultures into development (Serageldin 1992). The researcher also bears testimony during his 2013 visit to Spain that the country sees development from its rich history and heritage. The development has incorporated a lot of historical and cultural artefacts. This means that cultures have been richly integrated into different facets of development. The Spanish likes defining themselves from their historical achievement such as their conquest of America, their heroes that have made historical achievements etc. These historical facts are aspects of culture. For Spain, these historical sites are sites of economic generation through tourism. They have made them to curve their own historical and cultural niche that has distinguished them from the other nations of the world. Africans, therefore, need to borrow from this and yearn to incorporate their customs, traditions, mores and taboos into different aspects of development (Afolayan 2004).

Culture Grounds Society into a State of Socialism and Communalism

Operationally, the two concepts points to a state in which people generally associate, cooperate and enjoy the fruits of their societies corporately. They connote the opposite of individualism. To say the least, the culture of individualism is wreaking havoc the ship of socialism and communalism. Indubitably, the phenomena of socialism and communalism have immense social capital for African communities (Kang'ethe 2014b). While some decades ago especially in African countries many neighbours would share the joy and bliss that life presented together, it is no longer tenable with the encroaching culture of individualism. Unfortunately a culture where people do not interact or relate with neighbors is encroaching in many countries as the processes of modernization, civilization, westernization, euro centrism and globalization become a reality (Kang'ethe 2014c).

These forces have their darker side in that life is becoming sophisticated with individual differentiation in terms of many factors such as class, socio-economics etc. These run counter the values and social capital that culture has always defined (Kang'ethe 2014b). Although it does not mean that the people who embrace these values have no culture, but their culture has changed goal posts to suit the new adaptation. The new culture may not be strong and is bound to change according to the wind and the whims of these forces.

In fact for those embracing these forces, culture may be looked as a wind of retrogression, backwardness and something that people do not have to embrace. This has seen the traditional food, music, dancing and many other social mores and taboos that may define a particular society being eroded and being replaced with bits and pieces of cultures from the developed part of the world. This has not augured well as far as societal crafting of their identity is concerned. As the Swahili language adage says "*mwacha mila ni mtumwa*" (those who abandon or neglect their cultures are slaves) (Ndalurwa and King'ei 1989), this researcher agrees with the adage and advocates for communities and societies to preserve and maintain their cultures that will define them, demarcate them from the others, and make them be respected because of what they are. Perhaps this is why in 2009, the country of Botswana went to UNESCO to have different aspects of its culture such as dancing be patented. This is to ensure the ownership and identity (Kang'ethe 2014a).

Culture brings and bonds people together, make them embrace the principles of socialism and communalism (Afolayan 2004). If well maintained and respected, it could fight the current spate and wind of individualism that is wreaking havoc the ship of social capital embedded in cultures from below (Kang'ethe 2014b). It is true that the individualism tenet has strained ways people used to relate, enjoy, socialize and feel they belonged to one another (Kang'ethe and Rhakudu 2010). With individualism, life has become superficial, difficult and sophisticated to many people. This is why the cultural architects have realized this great mistake and have started to advocate for people to go back to their roots and embrace socialism and communalism. This will undoubtedly expedite the process of cultural renaissance, cultural renovation and

cultural invigoration (Kang'ethe 2014d). Perhaps the socialism that the country of Tanzania forged under President Nyerere is believed to have left Tanzanians proud of their identity and cultures. President Nyerere used the cultural tool of Swahili language to unite the Tanzanians. Although Tanzania did not do well in fostering economic development during his reign, the prevalence of peace and tranquility that the country enjoys coupled with the ethnic cohesiveness are factors that can be utilized to foster national development. The country remains one of the peaceful countries in Africa. The African proverb that says "I am because we are.." indicates the strength of socialism and communalism that African cherish. There was immense social capital in the interaction (Kang'ethe and Rhakudu 2010; Kang'ethe 2014b).

Perhaps, also the importance of cultures as a tool of development could be ascertained by the advice of WHO in 2002 (WHO 2002) to the developing countries to consider going back to the roots and seek the solutions from their backgrounds. In other words, this is seeking the indigenous path to development. This entails considering aspects of culture and other indigenous strategies to foster and facilitate development.

Indubitably, in some countries, the culture of individualism has fiercely fought the weakening of communalism and socialism making the indigenous ways of solving conflicts and maintaining social virtues such as sexual chastity unworkable. This is through the governments weakening traditional norms and law systems. Perhaps a suitable example is the central government in Botswana where the powers of the traditional chiefs who used to punish the law breakers through whipping has been removed altogether. The replacement of these traditional ways of maintaining discipline by the police and the judiciary have not necessarily done better in Botswana. Crime especially rape is on the increase (Kang'ethe 2009a). This researcher believes that if the traditional custodians of culture are given back their powers to discipline law breakers and also maintain cultures, Botswana would not slide into the state of individualism that is encroaching in many countries of Africa. The consequences of individualism have been grave, with each minding their own business. It is this individualism that the law breakers are exploiting. This is because even if a person shouts for help, the neighbours who may not know one another may not feel obliged to

answer for help. This is one of the perfidious effects of individualism.

Purging Some Perfidious/Retrogressive Aspects of Cultures from Development

As much as integration of cultures into development can be a solution to strengthening development in African countries, perhaps it is important also to indicate that the retrogressive aspects of cultures do not have to be integrated into development. The following discussions point to some aspects of cultures that need to be purged out.

Culture of Promiscuity

Although most African cultures had sexual mores and taboos that prevented illicit sexual encounters (Kang'ethe 2014a), today a new culture of promiscuity appears to be encroaching most African cultures. The researcher calls it a new culture because the practice appears to be increasingly practiced by many, though not openly. Therefore, it is becoming a latent aspect of a culture. Today, illicit sexual encounters outside the institution of marriage do not appear to attract a lot of condemnation. However, some scholars do indicate that the current culture of sexual encounters outside marriage may have been informed by the practices of yester years in societies such as those of Kenya and Botswana. For example, the following proverbs/adages have formed a platform of making such scapegoats.

The Kikuyu people of Kenya had the following proverbs:

Gutiri njamba ya mwera umwe (There is no cock that can only mate with one hen meaning that a man should have freedom to associate with multiple and concurrent sexual partners)

Mundurume ndahingagirwo gichegu ta mburi (A man cannot be locked in a kraal like a goat meaning that a man should have freedom to engage with multiple sexual partners)

Kuhanda itimu (sticking the spear outside the hut in which a man is having love affairs with a woman who is not his wife). Traditionally many decades ago, a man could seek or engage in sexual affairs with a woman married to one's age mate and it was sanctioned by one having to stick his spear in the hut where he is sleeping. He was then considered safe from the husband

of the wife he was engaging sexual affairs with (Barra 1974)

In the same vein, the Batswana had the following proverbs that if literally followed could form a scapegoat of condoning sexual engagement with more than one partner:

Moona poo gaa agelwe lesaka (A man like a bull, cannot be confined to one kraal. This means that he should not be tied to only one woman for love affairs)

Monna phahana o a hapaanelwa (a man is like a shared calabash of alcohol, he rotates among different women).

monna ke selepe oa adimanwa (a man is an axe and different parties can borrow from one another)

moona ga abotswe kwa otswang teng (A man should not be asked where he spent the night) (Maudeni and Mookodi 2009; Kang'ethe 2013a).

Although the proverbs above are neither fashionable nor emphasized by the current generation, they indicated the yester societies' thinking about a man's physical freedom with multiple partners. It is regrettable that their hangovers could continue to inform some people of the existent of such freedom. This is because the messages embedded in these proverbs find themselves in contemporary cultural practices such as in songs and other aspects of cultures. Since these aspects of cultures are now considered retrogressive and perfidious in that they pose a challenge to the fight against sexual chastity and efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, these do not need to be integrated into aspects of development. This researcher wishes and hopes that these aspects of cultures are completely forgotten. However, the advocates of plurality of sexual partners like some religious organizations that allow multiple marriages may have a bone to crack. For example the African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa (AIPCA) allows multiple marriages of wives. However, it needs to be made clear that perhaps it is not the plurality of marriage that poses the challenge of chastity or vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, but the way all the party adheres to the tenets of good moral and ethical behaviors (Kang'ethe and Gaseitsiwe 2012).

In many contemporary African societies, the culture of having mistress outside the marital bed is increasingly becoming rampant. In Botswana, for instance, the mistresses are re-

ferred to as “small houses”. In Kenya, the situation is being referred to as “*mpango wa kando*” (secret illicit love affairs). These cultures need to be purged away as they run counter the success of combating HIV/AIDS and STIs. Perhaps the faith based organizations are better placed to tackle these undesirable aspects of cultures that are increasingly threatening to weaken the family institutions (Byamugisha et al 2002).

Immoral Culture of Dressing

The researcher challenges the Africans to consider reverting to the modest and dignified forms of dressing. The culture of especially women wearing transparent or “see through clothes” has horrendous and pinching effects that drive men into a sexual trap. Such cultures cannot escape blame when many men are driven to a state of wanting sex. With the increasing prevalence of rape especially in Southern African countries, wearing of modest and dignified clothes needs to be encouraged. This should attract cultural architects, leaders of faith based organizations as well as policy makers to advocate for a paradigm shift that will give people a sense of pride, dignity and sexual chastity through wearing clothes that are not sexually seductive. While issues of the contemporary clothing style may be an influence of the west, then this is one of the many perfidious effects of globalization, westernization, eurocentrism, and to some extent civilization (Kang'ethe 2014c)

However, wearing modest clothing does not mean wearing sackcloth, hides and skins. It is wearing sexually unprovocative clothes. It is not proper for men especially to be provoked to think about sex at any moment in time. Angered by some behavior, cases of men tearing the clothes of women wearing see through or sexually provocative clothes have not been uncommon in cities such as Nairobi. The clothes that expose nudity especially of women constitute a cultural disgrace. The state of being almost nude is the height of immorality and need to be discarded altogether. The cultural architects alongside the ministry of culture of different countries should fight tooth and nail to extinguish this horrendous culture. The culture of nudity is like reverting the society to the Stone Age era when the state of half nudity could have been condoned. These are aspects that do not need to be incorporated and integrated into development. De-

velopment should embrace a dignified human face (Maguire 2002).

Culture of Laziness and Dependence Syndrome

Some societies need to be lambasted for not inculcating the virtue of hard work into their livelihood. Although unemployment and lack of opportunities could be exacerbating the situation, the culture of laziness needs to be purged from the society. Indubitably, the phenomenon is religiously, socially and culturally frowned upon (MacArthur 1997). This is because it lags behind workable community development endeavours (Lombard 1991). In Kenya, the spirit of hard work is associated with the slogan “*Uhu-ru na Kazi*” (democracy can only be maintained through corporate hard work) that was emphasized by the founding father of the nation, Jomo Kenyatta (Mutua and Gonzalez n.d.). Realizing the importance of hard work and other virtues surrounding it, countries have come up with strategies to motivate hard work. To this end, Botswana government has come up with some pillars of development that are progressive and anti-laziness. These includes: *botlhaga* (hard-work), *botswerere* (skillfulness) and *boisanape* (innovation) (Government of Botswana 1997). All these are to make the society active and development minded. However, critics of the social welfare system indicate that introducing social welfare grants to the vulnerable members of the society without concomitant education could also bring reluctance to work, spur a state of drowsiness, slackness and low motivation to work. In South Africa, for example, people on grant welfare system are increasingly yielding to the culture of dependence syndrome. This is a situation in which people feel they cannot do things on their own but only expect the government to help them. This kills the spirit of being initiative, hardworking, vision and self-reliance (*vukuzenzele*) (Kang'ethe 2013b).

Purging Out Faulty Belief Systems

Although belief systems are important components of cultures, some belief systems are faulty and retrogressive and need to be purged out. They need not be integrated into development frameworks of the societies. For example although traditional healing system has been operationalized since time immemorial among the

Africans (Kang'ethe 2009b), the system need to be modernized so that the traditional diviners (Sangomas), healers and spiritualists need to take responsibility of their actions. This is because many traditional practitioners have been documented to having been misleading people in the societies (Kang'ethe 2012; Mbuya 2000). For example, Hellen Jackson (2002) documents cases of many traditional healers that tell their clients to sleep with virgins as an intervention to heal them of HIV/AIDS (Jackson 2002). Some of these belief systems although they may have been important especially before the advent of the modern medical systems constitute retrogressive aspects of culture that should be purged out. However, it is difficult to discern good and bad traditional practitioners. This is because some traditional practitioners have been in the trade for long and people have relied on them for their medication purposes (Kang'ethe 2009, 2012; Mbuya 2000).

Culture of Greed and Corruption

On development, societies in Africa are moving at a snail's pace. This could be attributed to many factors. For one, the leaders have been engulfed by the culture of greed. This has resulted in rampant spates of corruption, and lack of accountability and responsibility. Perhaps this is why according to Transparency International (TI), it is many African countries that are most corrupt in the globe. However, the country of Botswana is the least corrupt country in Africa and scores favourably even when compared with the countries of the western world (UNDP 2004). This culture of greed needs to be purged out in development. Unfortunately, it is the western world countries that appear to be strong in advocating for transparency and accountability, not the African countries.

Culture of Violence and Animosity Among Countries

African countries have not been able to promote their bilateral trade effectively. This is because of embracing the culture of animosity among them and frequently being at the fringe of war with one another. Although this spate of animosity appears to be quelling especially due to increased global reconciliation and efforts by some leaders to preach the message of peace, still countries have not learnt to understand the essence of peace especially in promoting bilat-

eral and regional trade. Perhaps it is this state of affairs that has made Africans to impose visas to their fellow African countries while the western countries have opened their borders to their neighbours. The effect has made it difficult for Africans to take advantage of one another in terms of resources and instead it is the western world that seems to benefit more from African countries (Mulinge and Mufune 2003). It is this culture of animosity and violence that needs to be purged out of development agenda. While efforts towards a United Africa through countries embracing pan African ideals are gaining momentum, the forces are still weak and not making significant inroads. However, the efforts being unleashed by the current Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta a need to be commended for working to strengthen pan African ideals of cooperation, trade and peaceful co existence. It is high time that African countries emulate the Western World countries that have even agreed to the use of a single currency in order to facilitate and stimulate trade and bilateral ties.

Culture of Xenophobia

It is surprising that after African countries attained independence from their colonial masters, some Africans still view their brothers from other African countries as enemies that they need to eliminate. This has resulted in spates of xenophobia. A good example is South Africa which in 2008 saw many people from other African countries, or the so called Black immigrants being killed, mistreated and their properties looted by the local South Africans. This is a culture that does not have to be integrated into development frameworks of the countries. The culture is anti-developmental and retrogressive. The 2008 act of xenophobia may have developed some negative repercussions in that potential investors may divert their investment plans to other countries. It may also make the immigrants some of whom could be offering specialized skills to live in fear and despondency (Kang'ethe and Duma 2013).

CONCLUSION

Africa needs to appreciate its cultures as a panacea that if integrated into modernization can spur and stimulate effective development. Africa needs to borrow from countries such as Japan that have successfully integrated their culture into development. Perhaps what needs to

be battled on is the mindset that cultures are anti-developmental. People need to view cultures as a panacea with potential to effectuate development. However, integration should be emphasized on progressive and positive aspects of cultures, while the retrogressive cultures such as those of laziness, xenophobia, indecent clothing need to be purged out.

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