

Development in Africa: The Need for a Culture-Sensitive Approach

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ABSTRACT Culture plays a crucial role in the contemporary discourse on development. Policy makers acknowledge that the social and cultural norms of a people can influence their attitude and choices. However, not much research has been undertaken by African scholars on the role of culture in Africa's quest for development. This study seeks to fill that gap. The current study intends to examine the significance of culture in the drive for development in Africa. The research recognizes that the many of the long-term development-related issues in Africa seem to be tied to the deep weaknesses of the institutional structures concerned with development. These weaknesses are a result of static and discriminatory views of African societies and culture which have imposed various negative labels on the society. Today in Africa, scholars are now acknowledging that there should be more constructive approach to understanding the significance of culture in African societies and how culture influences forms of behaviors that can support development. It is in keeping with the current state of affairs that this work suggests that development efforts in Africa be culture-sensitive, as this will guarantee popular participation.