

International Journal of
Philosophy
(IJP)

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Reflection on Ujamaa**



CARI
Journals

Moral Integrity in African Political Leadership: A Philosophical Reflection on Ujamaa

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Abstract

There is a tendency of defining various continental blocks under conventional views. The image of the African is of one desperately wanting to be heard. Trying to outdo himself to show that he actually belongs in the society of humankind, he would eagerly display his prowess in the fields of culture, of sport, of intellect and of civilization. All these efforts seem to meet with a rather listless audience who, it seems, will always require double evidence to doctor their credulity and would then give a complement more from courtesy than from solidarity. The African knows it. This being the case, the Africans leaders and their people in general need to liberate themselves from the chain. They must without option, seek the true freedom; Freedom from both the absolute mechanical coercion of physical force and the relative intellectually or moral coercion of a predetermined end. Freedom here does not mean not acting but a freedom that carries with it a responsibility, in all spheres of undertaking for the common good. This freedom of indifference is not a means to an end in itself. The good society is characterized by the absence of restraint in every walk of life. There is no such thing as the "perfect form of government" on earth, but any other form of government produces even less desirable results than democracy. Until today, no other form of government has been invented that could regulate public affairs better than democracy. Nyerere was trying to bring to his people an identity that was theirs but was lost in at a given point of time. *Ujamaa* was a call to the people of Tanzania to go back to their roots if they are to embark on anything. The family to the AFRICANS was an institution that was so much natural that its age to them was as old as the age of humanity. You cannot talk of the human person without touching directly or indirectly on the family. To this understanding, Nyerere called his people of Tanzania to embrace this noble call of *Familyhood* that helped them come together and stay together. This attitude was shared not only in Tanzania, but also in the Africa proper. Africa's family structure is alive and well. Retirement homes are rare because older people live with their families. Children are greatly valued. Extended family members take care of each other. Many African languages do not even have a word for "niece" or "nephew" because people regard the children of a sister or brother as practically their own children. Life in Africa involves the village, the tribe, the clan, the family. We see individuals and families demonstrate this spirit in every part of life. Not only in Tanzania, in Africa, the village, is the soul of life. We no doubt lack ideals in the present leadership in Africa. Dictators in Africa are under dictators (foreign masters). Morality and integrity, which acted as norms for African leadership are lost (most times, in the name of education and modernization).

Key Words: *Ujamaa, Moral Integrity and African Leadership*

The Background of the Study

Morality is a quality that was highly valued by all traditional cultures in Africa. Indeed, moral values formed the bedrock of the education given to children as they grew up in the African set up. Moral values were also impressed on people who were about to wed or those who were going through one rite of passage to another. As a matter of facts, traditional political leadership was based on moral integrity for every definition of the society depended on man for its essence. Thus, it is a dream of every African leader while assuming leadership, that he or she will raise the living standards of the people. Because of ethnicity, corruption, selfishness, African politics are disabled. We experience battles over the constitutional formula and politicians seek support from their ethnic or sub-ethnic groups, and citizens perceive most political battles to be about dividing the "national cake" among the constituent ethnic groups. Political liberalization has not fundamentally changed this atmosphere. Most obviously, it has allowed ethnic politics to re-emerge into open, public debate. Ruling and opposition parties represent primarily all, some, or coalitions of ethnic groups. To change this attitude, recourse to Ujamaa by Julius Nyerere, as an African socialism is very important.

Literature Review

1) JULIUS NYERERE, "Ujamaa: The Basis of African Socialism," in FREIND-ROSBERG, Eds., *African Socialism*.

Socialism, like democracy is an attitude of the mind. 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 people care for each other's welfare. It has nothing to do with the possession or non-possession of wealth. Destitute people can be potential capitalists – exploiters of their fellow human beings. But a man who uses his wealth for the purpose of dominating any of his fellows is a capitalist. So is the man who would if he could!¹ The *Ujamaa* concept arises from the need to develop people, rather than things. The person is very important in Nyerere's formulation, which describes the *Ujamaa* villages as follows: *Ujamaa* villages are intended to be socialist organizations created by the people, and governed by those who live and work in them. They cannot be created from outside, or governed from outside. No one can be forced into an *Ujamaa* village, and no official at any level can go tell the members of an *Ujamaa* what they should do together, and what they should continue to do as individual farmers.²⁸ Nyerere describes the basis of this society as equality and respect for human dignity, the sharing of the resources which are produced by common efforts, work by everyone and exploitation by none. He makes clear that *Ujamaa* is not intended as a revival of the old settlement schemes under another name; it is a new conception. No doubt, Nyerere is protesting against the injustices of capitalism.

He tried to uphold the primacy of the person over matter, a compromise Nkrumah would gladly make. Nyerere's theory would uphold the spiritual values of man without compromising the

demands of justice and equality: his own African has a destiny beyond the material. He was Catholic by religious belief, as were Senghor and Nkrumah.²⁹ However, Nyerere's views are basically idealistic and never fully reckon with the concrete realities of life where ideals fail to be realized, people become disenchanted or disillusioned, and leaders falter or fail. The Ujamaa experiment experienced severe tests in Tanzania and in many instances did not quite stand up. Another important factor to consider is that what Nyerere envisaged in Ujamaa is the image of a well-run society, where all citizens are happy and contented; thus, it fits any society and cannot be claimed for Africa alone. Despite all that has been said above, the issue of African identity is not yet nearly resolved. One may begin to wonder if the whole business of African identity is not a mere intellectual conception with no footing in reality. In any case, since colour, ideology and the social factors, each taken by itself, have failed to give any conclusive lead, this means that the African or for that matter any person gets lost in the rubble when a whole is reduced to its components and each part is studied in isolation. The entire enquiry must be taken up once again and from a different angle.

ii) Kwame Nkrumah's *Conscientism*

Ghana under President Kwame Nkrumah adopted the political and economic policy of Conscientism. Conscientism emphasized the importance of self sacrifice, home grown economic development and self-reliance. Nkrumah clearly understood international dependence as a form of neo-colonialism. Nkrumah saw neo-colonialism as the last stage of imperialism. Imperialism was a step-child of mercantilism². Under Conscientism, Ghana embarked on the creation of conditions for economic take-off. However, the Nkrumah times were Cold War times. Nkrumah's anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism stand, earned him a CIA inspired coup d' etat in 1966.³ His dream of a united, prosperous and self-reliant Africa was never realized. Imperialism sabotaged Nkrumah's dream. African humanism was more or less synonymous with African socialism. African humanism, on the other hand, is rooted in traditional values of mutual respect for one's fellow kinsman and a sense of position and place in the larger order of things: one's social order, the natural order, and the cosmic order. African humanism is rooted in lived dependencies. This was echoed by Bell that our Negro-African society is a community-based society, in which the hierarchy is founded on spiritual and democratic values on the law of primogeniture and election; in which decisions of all kinds are deliberated in a *palaver*, after the ancestral gods have been consulted.⁴

iii) Stanlake, J. W. T., *Hunhuism or Ubuntuism: A Zimbabwe Indegenous Political Philosophy* (Harare: Graham Publishing, 1980)

Ubuntu is recognized as being an important source of law within the context of strained or broken relationships amongst individuals or communities and as an aid for providing remedies which contribute towards more mutually acceptable remedies for the parties in such cases.

Ubuntu is a concept which is to be contrasted with vengeance, dictates that a high value be placed on the life of a human being and is inextricably linked to the values of and which places a high premium on dignity, compassion, humaneness and respect for humanity of another. It dictates a shift from confrontation to mediation and conciliation, good attitudes and shared concern. *Ubuntu* favours the re-establishment of harmony in the relationship between parties and that such harmony should restore the dignity of the plaintiff without ruining the defendant, thus, favours restorative rather than retributive justice. Promotes mutual understanding rather than punishment and favours civility and civilized dialogue premised on mutual tolerance. He highlights the three maxims of *Hunhuism* or *Ubuntuism* that shape this philosophy: The first maxim asserts that 'To be human is to affirm one's humanity by recognizing the humanity of others and, on that basis, establish respectful human relations with them.' And the second maxim means that 'if and when one is faced with a decisive choice between wealth and the preservation of the life of another human being, then one should opt for the preservation of life'. The third 'maxim' as a 'principle deeply embedded in traditional African political philosophy' says 'that the king owed his status, including all the powers associated with it, to the will of the people under him'.

Other manifestations of *Ubuntu* are that it is taboo to call elderly people by their given names; instead they are called by their surnames. This has the effect of banishing individualism and replacing it with a representative role, in which the individual effectively stands for the people among whom he comes from at all times. The individual identity is replaced with the larger societal identity within the individual. Thus, families are portrayed or reflected in the individual.

A key concept associated with "unhu" is how we behave and interact in our various social roles, e.g., daughters-in-law traditionally kneel down when greeting their parents-in-law and serve them food as a sign of respect and maintain the highest standards of behaviour that will be extended or reflected to her family and all the women raised in that family. Under "unhu" children are never orphans since the roles of mother and father are by definition not vested in a single individual with respect to a single child. Furthermore, a man or a woman with "unhu" will never allow any child around them to be an orphan. The concept of "unhu" also constitutes the kernel of African Traditional Jurisprudence as well as leadership and governance. In the concept of unhu, a crime committed by one individual on another extends far beyond the two individuals and has far-reaching implications to the people from among whom the perpetrator of the crime comes. Unhu jurisprudence tends to support remedies and punishments that tend to bring people together. For instance, a crime of murder would lead to the creation of a bond of marriage between the victim's family and the accused's family in addition to the perpetrator being punished both inside and outside his social circles. The role of "tertiary perpetrator" to the murder crime is extended to the family and the society where the individual perpetrator hails from. However, the punishment of the tertiary perpetrator is a huge fine and a social stigma,

which they must shake off after many years of demonstrating *unhu* or *ubuntu*. We support Stanlake that if the principle of ubuntu is well followed, then, we will have a leader who has *unhu* as selfless, consults widely and listens to subjects. Such a person does not adopt a lifestyle that is different from the subjects and lives among them and shares property. A leader who has "unhu" does not lead, but allows the people to lead themselves, and cannot impose his will on his people, which is incompatible with "unhu".

The classic statement of this position is to be found in Mbiti's *African Religions and Philosophies*:

The individual owes his existence to other people. He is simply part of the whole. Whatever happens to the individual, happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say, "I am because we are; and since we are, I am".⁵

iv) Mazrui, Ali Al'Amin, Seifudein Adem, and Abdul Samed Bemath, *The Politics of War and the Culture of Violence: North-South Essays* (Trenton NJ: Africa World Press, 2008). Although his views do not always sit well with American audiences, Mazrui's powerful writing style has made it impossible for even his harshest critics to ignore the unique perspective he brings to a huge variety of African issues. In reality, colonialization and the West shared the blame for Africa's ills with a number of other culprits in Mazrui's analysis. Rather than presenting an unbalanced view of African issues, Mazrui insisted that part of the intent of the Africans was to restore balance to the overwhelmingly pro-Western coverage of African matters generally seen in America, by presenting a purely African perspective. In spite of the wrath it incurred, the series was widely acclaimed in many other circles, and the accompanying book of the same title was a best-seller in England. In his writing, Mazrui has frequently referred to his own background a combination of Islamic law, Kenyan culture, and a Western education as a reflection of the triple heritage that has shaped modern Africa. Like the range of influences that produced his thinking, the range of subject areas that Mazrui has chosen to study over the course of his career is also extremely broad. In fact, some critics believe that Mazrui writes about so many different topics that none of them ever received the thorough treatment that they deserve. That criticism does not bother Mazrui. His role, as he sees it, is to provoke debate. There is no doubt that he has succeeded in achieving that goal.⁶ Although the writer has for so long written his masterpieces in the west, the researcher concur fully with his elevation of the African identity in eliminating the attitude of hatred and violence.

v) Jomo Kenyatta's *Facing mount Kenya*

Facing Mount Kenya, by Jomo Kenyatta first published in 1938, is an anthropological study of the people of the Kikuyu ethnicity of central Kenya. The book's introduction is by anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski. He mentored Kenyatta while both were at the London School of

Economics. A critically looking into Kenyatta's ideas, there is a contradiction of principles and reality. Being the first highest Political leader, a Prime Minister and later the first President in the independent Kenya, he never went to the millions poor to identify with their communal democracy. Maybe he had spent so long in the west to and in prison that he lost the reality that people were scattered and displaced from what held them together. What they needed was healing first which could only be attained by equal opportunities in getting the national resources. What is seen in Kenyatta's legacy contrary to his well crafted ideas is vast estates, wealth and power, and on the side of the people endless inequality. This is to say the gap between the haves and have-not became the trend. This was aggravated by his capitalistic mentality. Same with many post-independent African Presidents fearing the citizens' reaction after feelings of betrayal by those they thought would alleviate their miseries, Kenyatta surrounded himself with tough security. He became unreachable by the common mwananchi.⁷ This would be emulated by his successor Daniel Moi with his philosophy "Fuata Nyayo"⁸ popularly known as *Nyayoism*.

vi) Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Decolonising the mind*

Ngugi wa Thiong'o work *Decolonising the Mind* gives us a reason as African to believe in our capacities. He famously began his writing career writing in English (publishing under the name "James Ngugi"). He had considerable success, but eventually turned to writing in his mother tongue, Gikuyu (though he did translate and publish these later works in English too). *Decolonising the Mind* is both an explanation of how he came to write in Gikuyu⁹, as well as an exhortation for African writers to embrace their native tongues in their art. The foreign languages most African authors write in are the languages of the imperialists English, French, and Portuguese that were relatively recently imposed on them. (Ngugi does not consider Arabic in the same light, or Swahili). Ngugi makes a good case for the obvious point: that the relation of Africans to those imposed languages is a very different one from that which the same Africans have to the native languages they speak at home. Speaking and writing in the language of the colonizers will naturally be different than in the language one speaks while at play or with one's family. Thus, language and literature were taking us further and further from ourselves to other selves, from our world to other worlds. The local language is an integral part of conveying that experience, often because much of local tradition has been preserved in that language. Ngugi's basic arguments are largely convincing, and his personal experiences, related to explain how he learned and changed his views, make the entire book an interesting read. Occasionally he does go overboard: in the end he maintains that it is: manifestly absurd to talk of African poetry in English, French or Portuguese. Afro-European poetry, but not to be confused with African poetry which is the poetry composed by Africans in African languages. Among the problems with *Decolonising the Mind* is its political and ideological slant. He writes of two mutually opposed forces in Africa today: an imperialist tradition on one hand, and a resistance tradition on the

other. Imperialism for him continues after the colonial period: it is the rule of consolidated finance capital. Ngugi's worldview here is still profoundly Marxist, and one has to question how useful this simple division imperialism versus resistance is at the beginning of the 21st century. (Curiously, he chooses to see the class struggle as universal, never considering that it too might be an imperialist fiction imposed on Africa despite not fitting African tradition, culture, or history).

vii) Oginga Odinga's *Not yet Uhuru*

Oginga Odinga, in his book *Not Yet Uhuru* (Nairobi, 1967), said that every year that passes swells the throng of those who will not put up with the policies of our government as they are now operated. School-leavers become unemployed and the unemployed become the bitter men of the streets. The jobless, the frustrated, the peasants starving on the land, will endure much hardship, but how much more and for how long? He do not imagine for a single moment that these formidable problems are easily solved; but to begin to solve them, one must recognize that these are the key problems-and the Kenya government turns its eyes away from these questions to examine Private Bank balances and the lists of vacant company directorships. He launched a party that will seek for a really just solution for the people of our country, that it will be an easy struggle and that we will not face great difficulties. Throughout the book, Odinga elucidates how difficult it can be for leaders who are fighting for freedom to placate the opposition- he suspected furtive elements were plotting against Kenya. Moreover, as the spate for independence increased several obstacles impeded progress toward uhuru,¹⁰ such as majimbo. Yet, the author fails to address some the mistakes of the leaders of major parties that hampered a united front in developing a new constitution. In the end, Oginga Odinga grapples uhuru, an abstract motif which is hard to define such as justice, love, and equality. More than that, I think that author recognizes a major roadblock to uhuru. Odera Oruka thinks he fails to realize that these iniquities are not vanquished.¹¹

The principle of Fraternity and *Ubuntu*

Socialism, in its various forms and applications, the number of which is naturally indefinite, demands *of the law*, in addition, the realization of the principle of fraternity. The socialists presuppose, with Rousseau, that the law is the foundation of the entire social order.¹² As we know, Rousseau makes society rest on a contract. The principle of fraternity is that which, regarding the members of the great family of man as jointly and separately answerable for one another, looks forward to the day when society, *the work of man*, is organized on the model of the human body, the work of God. Fraternity always implies devotion and sacrifice; that is why it commands our heartfelt admiration. If one says, as do certain socialists, that acts of fraternal devotion are profitable to their author, then they do not have to be decreed. Men have no need of a law to persuade them to make profits. Besides, this point of view greatly degrades and tarnishes

the idea of fraternity.¹³The second principle is that of Ubuntu as discussed above in the literature review under Stanlake J. W. T. Samkange.¹⁴

The Human Person, His Rights in the Light of African Morality

The human person as a rational being

In *Metaphysics* A.1, Aristotle says that “all men suppose what is called wisdom (*sophia*) to deal with the first causes (*aitia*) and the principles (*archai*) of things.”¹⁵ “All men by nature desire to know.” An indication of this is the delight we take in our senses; for even apart from their usefulness they are loved for themselves; and above all others the sense of sight. For not only with a view to action, but even when we are not going to do anything, we prefer seeing (one might say) to everything else.

The reason is that this, most of all the senses, makes us know and brings to light many differences between things. The animals other than man live by appearances and memories, and have but little of connected experience; but the human race lives also by art and reasoning.¹⁶

i) The concept of Integrity

Integrity is a term only proper to the human person. It has to do with consistency of actions, values, methods, measures, principles, expectations, and outcomes. In morality or ethics, integrity is the honesty and truthfulness or accuracy of one's actions. This we deduce from Aristotle's treatment of virtue, when he argues that, “If, then, the virtues are neither passions nor faculties, all that remains is that they should be states of character.”¹⁷ Susan E. Babbitt argues that integrity can be regarded as the opposite of hypocrisy, in that it regards internal consistency as a virtue, and suggests that parties that seemingly hold conflicting values should account for the discrepancies or alter their beliefs.¹⁸ In her argument, she supports the understanding as argued by Aristotle, that is, integrity as a virtue is a state of character.¹⁹ If we would adopt the Latin adjective *integer*, from which the term integrity stems, we would positively embrace the meaning of “whole” or “complete.”²⁰ In this context, integrity is the inner sense of wholeness deriving from qualities such as honesty and consistency of character. As such, one may judge that others have integrity to the extent that they act according to the values, beliefs and principles they claim to hold.²¹ Just as explained above, integrity is proper to people though it is sometimes applied to objects. When it is applied to objects, integrity refers to the wholeness, intactness or purity of a thing, meanings that are sometimes carried over when it is applied to people.²² In our disposition, the human person embraces other non-human objects in building his life though not isolated from other human beings. In this regard, we concur with Marcia Baron in relating integrity to general character.²³

To act with integrity as discussed by Martin Benjamin, who argues that integrity is the completeness or wholeness,²⁴ would bring about what we intend in signification of moral integrity. Through this understanding, moral integrity as wholeness, maybe defined by terms, such as unity, consistency, purity, unspoiled and uncorrupted. This affirms in substance that persons and the human community are capable, by the light of reason, of knowing the fundamental guidelines for moral action in conformity with the very nature of the human subject, and of expressing them in a normative manner, in the form of precepts or commandments.²⁵ Jody L. Graham, argues that one can describe a person as having ethical integrity to the extent that everything that that person does or believes. The actions, methods, measures and principles by the acting being, maybe derived from a single core group of values.²⁶ Generally, the gift of integrity would be the immunity from concupiscence, where concupiscence means an appetite for a sensible good contrary to the dictates of reason. This may cause confusion in the face of the modern understanding of concupiscence as the natural, deliberate desire arising in the sense faculty when confronted with its object.²⁷ Integrity simply is the subjection of the body to the soul and lower powers to reason. This understanding can bring us to a good combination of integrity and morality, especially when it means completeness and unity.

ii) The moral good

To enable any discourse on the human person in regard to his behaviour towards himself, the other, the world and to God, we must touch the moral good. Through this encounter, we will be able to translate the socio-political, moral and economic integration of the African continent, more specifically in regard to oneness. This corresponds to the profound desire of the human person, which as every being tends spontaneously, naturally, towards realizing itself more fully, towards that which allows it to attain the perfection proper to it, happiness (as can be seen in Augustine, who in this regards, agrees with Aristotle).²⁸ Every culture defines for itself the critical values by which it will be judged and motivated. Every culture develops the standards, which determine the degree of variation to be permitted from the accepted norm. Eric Lincoln defends our argument when he concedes:

From time to time the values which undergird and which presuppose normative social behaviour change. The transformation is usually gradual, for it is characteristically, related to changing social experience, which may gradually erode established values. When values are flux, there is a uncertain wavering standards- a pendulum effect- as a social opinion swing back and forth between what is remembered and revered, and what is 'new' and 'progressive'.²⁹

Unfortunately, the human subject can always allow himself to be drawn by particular good desires and choices or do deeds that go against the moral good that he recognizes. He can refuse to surpass himself. It is the price of a freedom limited in itself and encounters only particular

goods, none of which can fully satisfy the heart of the human being.³⁰ It pertains to the reason of the subject to examine if these particular goods can be integrated in the authentic realization of the person: in such a case, they will be judged morally good, and in the contrary event, morally bad.³¹ In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle unambiguously expounds an argument in support of the existence of a natural moral order. Despite this, he says virtue can only be perfected through habit:

Neither by nature, then, nor contrary to nature do the virtues arise in us; rather we are adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit.³²

This natural order ought to provide the basis for all truly rational systems of justice.³³ An appeal to the natural order provides a set of comprehensive and potentially universal criteria for evaluating the legitimacy of actual ‘man-made’ legal systems. In distinguishing between natural justice and legal justice, Aristotle writes, ‘the natural is that which has the same validity everywhere and does not depend upon acceptance.’³⁴ Thus, the criteria for determining a truly rational system of justice pre-exist social and historical conventions. It is in this Aristotle’s understanding of the moral order that we intend to lay down our claim.

The African understanding of morality is based on the “Golden Rule”³⁵ which becomes practical only within the society.³⁶ By this we mean that what the society gauges as good or evil is within the boundaries of the human family as such. Although, Kant’s moral philosophy is based upon an appeal to the formal principles of ethics, rather than, for example, an appeal to a concept of substantive human goods,³⁷ it cannot be realized without considering the moral good. This is the moral good founded on the goodwill of an individual for the common good.

Philosophical analysis of moral deliberations

There is a unique consideration for human society, and it carries with it an excessive burden of human anxiety. The idea of a higher Being, responsible for the entire world, makes any moral deliberation, transcendental. Today we can affirmatively say that moral deliberations and decisions are guided by what Aristotle called practical Reason,

The work of man is achieved only in accordance with practical wisdom as well as with moral virtue; for virtue makes us aim at the right mark, and practical wisdom makes us take the right means...³⁸

From this perspective, we can reason out that moral deliberations relate to human rights, which attach to human beings and function as moral guarantees in support of our claims towards the enjoyment of a minimally good life. While some actions may be labelled intrinsic evils because they are self-contradictory, like lying; and some pursuits are intrinsically good because they are so obvious for human flourishing, there remains a large domain of acts and goals about which there is no logical or intuitive means of reaching agreement. Eric Lincoln argues that,

It is true man has contemplated the ultimate before, and religion itself is a response to the expectation that there will be a termination of terrestrial human experience, but not by human initiative. The difference is very critical. As long as the end of the world – however imminent – was in the hands of God, there was hope for something beyond terrestrial experience, and this hope could be strengthened by an adequate moral response.³⁹

Moral Integrity and African Political Leadership

Mo Ibrahim,⁴⁰ the founder of a Foundation named after him, which placed a prize on any African president, who would be without corruption,⁴¹ blamed lack of good governance for Africa being the political leaders. Ibrahim will earn no prizes for this disclosure; African thinkers and scholars and activists here cried themselves hoarse about it. A journalist Areoye Oyebola,⁴² wrote that very poor leadership in Africa soil, appears to be the black man's greatest problem. A few years later, Chinua Achebe declared that the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership.⁴³ Not even our coup-plotters are blind to this fact. In his speech announcing the Jan 15, 1966, Coup, Kaduna Nzeogwa declared that,

Our enemies are the political profiteers, the swindlers, the men in high and low places that seek bribes and demand ten percent. Those that seek to keep the country divided permanently so that they can remain in office as ministers or Very Important Persons (VIPs) at least, the tribalists, the nepotists, those that make the country look big for nothing before international circles, those that have corrupted our society and put our political calendar back by their words and deeds.⁴⁴

In Africa where democracies are growing through constitutions that are being promulgated after peoples' input, good leadership, become a basic for the success of any sovereignty. No one can make anyone a leader or make a leader into a more effective one. They can only help those who want to become more effective. Sometimes group members (here we have in mind the governing elite) attempt to have leaders decide on the best solution. Instead of working as a community, for the community, some leaders become misguided. When a king, a president or any leader whatsoever, has good counsellors, his reign is peaceful. Surely, this is a good indication that the moral good in leadership makes him work for the good of the people. The integrity portrayed by such a leader, makes the entire society integrated, advanced and recognized. In our assessment, that is why Mo Ibrahim as seen above, has not found any successful winner of that prize. We can only talk of a good socio-political leader if and only if, his moral integrity is beyond the 'benchmark' as laid down by the community or society within which he is leading. Here, we arguably concur with the instructions which were given by the great mind Ptahhotep (c.2370BCE)⁴⁵ when he said,

If thou are a leader and command multitudes, strive after every excellence, until there be no fault in thy nature. Truth is good and its worth is lasting. Truth is one since the day of its creator, whereas he who transgresses its ordinances is punished. It lies as a path in front of him that knows nothing wrong doing hath never yet brought its venture to port. Evil indeed wins wealth, but the strength of truth is that it endures, and is the property of God.⁴⁶

i) Leadership in Ancient Africa

A major challenge we encounter in African leadership is whether African nations are really sovereign or they are just western projects. To tackle this major challenge, we maybe incensed by Chinwezu specifically, in one of his chapters, titled '*Divine Kingship and African governance: the example of Pharaonic Egypt*'. He believes that one of the reasons for the dire condition of Africa is the inability of the current leadership and elite to update or build the enduring values in order to better the conditions of their people. He sees elites as more focused on ruling their post-colonial states (or 'bantustans' as he scornfully dubs them) on their own behalf and on behalf of foreign powers.⁴⁷ Morality and integrity, which acted as norms for African leadership are lost (most times, in the name of education and modernization). Analyzing Chinwezu, his search took him back to the earliest known African state (thousands of years ahead of any Western or Eastern State) that of ancient Egypt/Kmt (Kemet: the land of the blacks),⁴⁸ which produced not only some of the world's first recorded political leaders, but also, at over 4,000 years, probably the longest-lasting state in the world. Given the material conditions at the time to support a largely agricultural society, Chinwezu considers the ideology that inspired the Egyptian State, the role of the Pharaoh within that vision of State and the mechanisms for producing an ethnically guided leadership that would in turn manage in the interests of its people, thus guaranteeing its legitimacy, material survival and succession.⁴⁹

We may be tempted to conclude that the pharaoh's leadership was a one-man show. This assumption maybe cleared by understanding the ideology underlying the leadership and the fruits benefited in that ancient African country. We may say that the situation developed by Julius Nyerere in Tanzania, using his Ujamaa socialism,⁵⁰ reintroduces that ancient Africa (as seen in Egypt), in which the good of the entire community or society was the focus. The truth of any leader can only be understood or experienced if the leader's vision, goal and the good, are directed to the common good of the society. People have accepted codes⁵¹ to which they commit their sentiments with the potential for creating an idealized sense of social cohesiveness. The latter, however, always remains a potential because of the inevitable conflicting interpretations of laid down norms. That is, the disputers of everyday existence and crises in institutional structures being people together with conflicting interpretations of the norms (code)⁵² which in the end must be consensually resolved. This historically continuous process of coming together to resolve conflicting interpretations gives a society moral order. The symbol representations often,

although not invariably, involve rules and practices about commensality, which for the overall process of interpretative debate and consensus, constitute a metaphor. It is generally lacking at the level of the nation-state in modern African societies. What is the problem facing Africa today in the field of leadership?

Kenyatta⁵³ tries to answer this question although he is wary of the conception of the African man as lazy folks who idle during the day. The focus was everything in order to succeed in life. Kenyatta explains again, the process by which men work in the land in groups to make work easier and quicker, starting very early in the morning, and finishing by noon, after which they may spend the afternoon celebrating the completion of work. Kenyatta is at great pains to distinguish Gikuyu⁵⁴ landholding from Western, fully alienable ownership. This can be contrasted with land owning in Tanzania. The Gikuyu follow a trusteeship model: the current tenant manages the property for past and future generations of his family. This tenant is nonetheless the undisputed “owner” of the land in the present. This model had of course prevailed in the West until the rise of capitalism destroyed it, re-emerging (and then at the societal level) only in response to the environmental crises of the later 20th century.⁵⁵ We can affirm therefore that, there is no leadership outside humanity, and there is no humanity outside reason. Yet, reason for humanity and within humanity is a precept, pre-liquisite and mandatory for leadership.

ii) Ancient Africa political Leadership related to the divine

The African people, it seems were ruled by their leaders on behalf of God. All activities⁵⁶ were related to the divine and thus, why there were so many shrines, holy seasons and some people like the aged, were taken to be holy. It is something that those who colonized the black people, really undermined. African leadership, (kings, Chiefs or whatever title was endowed upon them), was an avowed theocracy. Every member of the society together with their leaders believed that their very being was founded by the gods (though in plural to accommodate the diversity African cultures, most of them were monotheists despite giving their God many names). Notably, the God of the African was always alive, and ruled the people and provided for the wellbeing of the people. God gave the people happiness. The same understanding is a paradigm even today. That is why John S. Mbiti, said that Africans were and are notoriously religious.⁵⁷ The African people had a force that though within, it's striving seemed to be without. This is happiness, which they merited in their undertaking with God. To stay as if God did not exist or was not there was truly unheard of. Atheism was not known in Africa. The happiness, the goal, which was connected by the living presence of God can be compared to that of Aristotle. For Aristotle, happiness (eudaimonia)⁵⁸ is the activity of the soul, which functions in accord with excellence. Happiness thus is the highest good since it is desired (or ought to be desired) for its own sake and is the end toward which all other goods strive. This state attained is a soul that is flourishing. Aristotle says that living well and faring well is being happy. Eudaimonia is more than just a state of being for

Aristotle. Thus, happiness and achieving it will always be in reference to the fulfilment of bodily needs to some extent. To fulfil one's bodily needs -whereby one reaches eudaimonia requires living in accord with certain intellectual and moral virtues, all of which are governed by means of rational judgment.⁵⁹

The good that is capable of giving a person his ultimate perfection by fulfilling his every need, is objective happiness. This is God alone, who by His infinite goodness can satisfy creatures. The actual possession of God, on the other hand, in the beatific vision, is the subjective happiness. The actual perfection experienced by the person through a realization of his potentialities is subjective happiness through a realization of his potentialities is subjective. African leaders were edified as sons or representatives of God to the people in a way to objectify this happiness. In other words, no happiness in the community, unless, this connection with God is express. They (the leaders were helped by counsels of elders – a group composed of the oldest members of the society, like the case of the kikuyu in Kenya. The age factor was important, arguably that, you have passed the age of sinning/ defilement or thinking more of worldly glory)⁶⁰ had to lead the people on behalf of God. This is evident, especially in the leaders' constant consultation with the diviners or sending (sometimes accompanying) the elders to sacrifice to God during the time of calamities, celebrations and even thanksgiving. Chinweizu⁶¹ supports this when he asks, what did the Pharaonic Egyptians regard as the purpose of their state? What ideology (body of beliefs and values) guided its leadership during all those millennia? The purpose of the Pharaonic state (same with the pre-colonial Africa⁶²) was to maintain and restore Maat-rightness in nature and righteousness in society as normatively instituted in the cosmic order established by God (the gods), that is, when they initiated civilization in Egypt.⁶³

We cannot, in any way define the Africans in any epoch without relating them to the divine. God was never out there but part of the individual and communal life of the Africans. Nevertheless, the dead and spirits were part of the community. This connectedness with God made even leadership to be modelled towards the divine. Mbiti emphasises that,

Traditional concepts on the law keep God both in the background and on the frontline of justice. People formulate the laws within their religious Cosmology. Some of the common attributive names of God are Judge, Ruler, Chief, King, and Giver of Justice. So, we have proverbs like: "It is God Who installs a talented leader as chief and commits the townsmen and townswomen to his care." This clearly points out that, in the area of law and order, those who exercise authority over others are ultimately under the law of God. It is God, who sets them up as chiefs to care for "the townsmen and townswomen". And the same God can dethrone those that meddle with justice through corruption, nepotism, or otherwise. God's concern with justice, would be expressed in proverbs such as:

“God is not asleep. God sees everything and brings it to book,” and, “It is God who drives away the flies for the tailless animal.”⁶⁴

The so-called primitive Africa had a structured ‘school’ so to say, whereby different age- groups were imparted or instilled with the moral order. These had a ‘curriculum’ of oral literature, applying ethical standards and engaging into activities pertaining to different age-sets. The oral literature⁶⁵ lends drama to the mundane admonishment of the socialization process. Children’s tales were told around the fire as the mother prepared the evening meal. The adventures of ordinary people, sometimes transformed into mythical cannibals or other villainous forms, invariably brought mixed responses of laughter, horror and surprise, indicating the provocative stimulation of thought about moral issues involved.⁶⁶ The adult tales, unlike the children’s always ended with specific moral dicta. These were told whenever adults gathered for meals or conversation as well as at critical points in making policy and settling disputes.⁶⁷ These enlightenments are put to show the noble requirements of an African leader in leading the people into success harmoniously, peacefully, progressively even economically and politically. The Ashanti Kingdom had the custom of publicly admonishing a chief as follows, especially during his installation ceremony:

Tell him that, we do not wish for greediness, we do not wish that his ears that he should curse us, and we do not wish that his ears should be hard of hearing. We do not wish that he should call people fools. We do not wish that he should act on his own initiative. We do not wish that things done as in Kumasi, and we do not wish that he should ever say, ‘I have no time, I have no time’, we do not wish personal abuse and we do not wish personal violence.⁶⁸

As we grapple with issues of development, we need to place them in the appropriate historical and social context. In the case of Africa, this context is determined by the encounter of two cultural and ethical paradigms that sometimes may seem contradictory. The position of our work is that whereas we may perceive a contradiction in the conceptualization of the paradigms, the social reality is that they co-exist. According to Kigongo, who we are much borrowing from here, this contradiction and co-existence calls for a critical inquiry from which we can discern fundamental elements vital for development.⁶⁹ The problematic of the old moral order, speaks of the tendency to fail to appreciate the relevance of African traditional ethics for contemporary African society.⁷⁰ He further argues,

We need to recognize, the meeting of the African ethical tradition and the European ethical tradition when we conceive ethics in the contemporary African context. This meeting causes conflict in our ethical conception and empirical experience. African colonial experience shook the traditional conceptual

paradigms and institutions bringing into question the African cultural foundation.⁷¹

The Principle of Human Unity

As we have indicated above in the argument of the concept of integrity, the idea that unity is fundamental in the human person. Also argued is the fact that we can only talk of morality, if the human person is the subject of our inquiry. Thus, we are faced by the “being”, possessed by the human person in relation to the self, the other, the world and God. According to John Mbiti,⁷² it is only in terms of other people that the individual himself is conscious of his own being, his own duties, his privileges and responsibilities towards himself and towards other people: “I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am.”⁷³ This is “a morality of ‘conduct’ rather than a morality of ‘being,’”⁷⁴ or personal morality. We must note that African communities believe that their future depends on the moral or ethical conduct of their members. Because of this fact, each member of the entire community is required to demonstrate a unity with the entire community. This can only be possible if, and only if, he has an inner unity, harmony and integrity. Thus, one embraces a morality of conduct in the sense that it is one’s relationships, which in the social sphere dictates one’s sense of morality. This morality occurs in contrast to emphasizing an individual’s sense of self, autonomy or being, that is, of the self, which does not place much value on the social relationships. The former was a strong awareness of one’s existence and relationship with others in the community, a strong sense of “social self.” The support of others was more important than one’s capacities to achieve one’s existential ends, hence the value of corporate existence.

To bring about a harmony between the human inner wholeness and morality, Benezet Bujo emphasises the need for education to promote the good of the community. He argues,

The methods used to teach virtues vary in accordance with the age of the children and young people; for example, the fairy tales and legends that are told to children again and again, with special emphasis on the vices and virtues of protagonists. The children are to internalize these as lessons for daily dealing with their fellow human beings.⁷⁵

This emphasis of the importance of enlightenment to each member of the society shows that the issue of unity and morality was vital if the society needed any record of development. To this regard, the formation of the children and young people became the bedrock of the unity of the nation. An indication of early enlightenment, can be seen in a proverb shared by most of the African communities, but we shall take the Bahema in the Eastern Congo and Kikuyu in central Kenya, which says: “If a tree is not set in an upright position very early on, it remains crooked forever.”⁷⁶ If God created the human person in a harmonious whole, and He also supports the whole creation to remain in harmony, then, we the human beings endowed with the gift and

faculty of reason, need to recognize, utilize and embrace unity in morality. This can only be a precept of freedom.

Conclusion

No one regardless of where he is, colour, ideology, learned or unlearned, developed or undeveloped, does not through the dictates of reason, do not know the Golden Rule, “Do unto others the way you would want be done to you!” It is this rule that truly indicate that to be good is not an external law, but it is as natural as the human subject, endowed with reason. Another aspect unique with the African people is that their life is communal and continuous. The African life is communal in that you cannot talk of an individual existence, independent of the community. That is why Desmond Tutu says, “You are because I am, and I am because you are.”

The very life is continuous in that, one is born by, and in the existing society. After joining this life, one live in the society, looking forward to life after death which is not an annihilation, but continuation in the other world, which is not far from the living, but part of it. With this in mind, we realize the importance of understanding the moral integrity in the life of every member of the society before embarking on any paradigm that touches the society at large. These paradigms are among others sociological, psychological, economical, political, and anything that touches the wellbeing of the human person if he is to attain his ultimate goal, happiness. Thus, our endeavour in this chapter was to underline on moral integrity, as a requirement in the African political leadership, as founded in the community itself. To attain this political orientation, the next chapter, we shall deal with Julius Nyerere’s Ujamaa socialism.

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Endnotes

¹ J. K. Nyerere, "Ujamaa: The Basis of African Socialism," in Friedland and Rosberg, (eds.), *African Socialism*, 238.

² an economic system developing during the decay of feudalism to unify and increase the power and especially the monetary wealth of a nation by a strict governmental regulation of the entire national economy usually through policies designed to secure an accumulation of bullion, a favourable balance of trade, the development of agriculture and manufactures, and the establishment of foreign trading monopolies

³ At the time of independence from Britain in 1957, the Ghanaian leader, Kwame Nkrumah, enjoyed moderately friendly relations with the U.S. However, his position on the Congo crisis of 1960 led to a noticeable chill on the part of Washington. By the early fall of 1961, Kennedy was telling one of his top State Department officials that he had "given up" on Nkrumah, who was seen as having taken an "ugly lurch to the left" in both foreign and domestic policy. A short time later, Kennedy asked for a report, to be prepared "on a rush basis," about "Ghanaian subversion in Africa"; this seems to have led to a decision to offer military training to junior officers, in addition to the "very helpful contacts" already in place with "moderate pro-Western" groups.

⁴ Bell, Richard H., *Understanding African Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 38-40.

⁵ This is the cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of man. Cf., Mbiti, (1969), 108 – 109.

⁶ Ali Al'Amin Mazrui, Seifudein Adem, and Abdul Samed Bemath, *The Politics of War and the Culture of Violence: North-South Essays*, (Trenton NJ: Africa World Press, 2008).

⁷ A swahili term meaning citizen.

⁸ 'Follow the footsteps', a phrase meaning following as in a disciple following his master. This he coined referring to his predecessor Jomo Kenyatta's ways.

- ⁹ Kenya's leading ethnic group's indigenous language.
- ¹⁰ The term 'Uhuru' is a Swahili word meaning freedom.
- ¹¹ H. Odera Orika (ed), *Oginga Odinga: His Philosophy and Beliefs* (Nairobi: Initiatives Publishers, 1992), 6.
- ¹² Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1712-1778, *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality Among Men*, commonly referred to as the Second Discourse.
- ¹³ Frederic Bastiat, "Justice and Fraternity" in *Political Economy*, Edited by George B. de Huszar (New York: Irvington-On-Hudson, 1848).
- ¹⁴ Stanlake J. W. T., *Loc. Cit.*, 106ff.
- ¹⁵ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Translated with an Introduction by W. D. Ross, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1925), 981b28
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.* Part 1.
- ¹⁷ Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, Translated with an Introduction by W. D. Ross, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1925), Bk. II: Ch. 5.10
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- ²⁸ Augustine. *De beata vita 2.10; The Ethics of St. Augustine* edited by William S. Babcock (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1991), Introduction section, this is in reference to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk.I.7-9.
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- ³¹ *The Search for Universal Ethics*, no. 41.
- ³² Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II: Ch. 1.20-25
- ³³ Davis, Michael. *The Politics of Philosophy: A Commentary on Aristotle's Politics*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996), pages 3-4. With ref. to Book V: Justice and Fairness: a moral virtue needing special discussion.
- ³⁴ Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*, 189. Book I
- ³⁵ The *Ethic of Reciprocity* often called the *Golden Rule* in Christianity simply states that 'we are to treat other people as we would wish to be treated ourselves.' Almost all organized religions have such an ethic. It is normally intended to apply to the entire human race. This origin of this rule, is not known, despite its wide range and universal application. Cf. <http://www.religioustolerance.org/reciproc.htm>
- ³⁶ P. H. Coetzee and A. P. J. Roux (Ed.), *The African Philosophy Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998), 278.
- ³⁷ Jens Timmerman, *Kant's Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals: A Commentary* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 38-54.
- ³⁸ Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, translated by W. D. Ross, Bk. VI: Ch. 12.1144a, 5-10; Ch. 13.1144b
- ³⁹ C. Eric Lincoln, 229
- ⁴⁰ Established in 2006, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation supports good governance and great leadership in Africa. The Foundation works to: Provide a framework and tools by which citizens and governments can assess and measure progress in governance, Recognize excellence in African leadership and provide a practical way in which leaders can build positive legacies on the continent when they have left national office, Stimulate debate on the quality of

governance and major governance issues in Africa and develop leadership and governance capacity in Africa. This can be seen in www.moibrahimfoundation.org/en/section/the-ibrahim-index.

⁴¹ Ibrahim Mo. *The Ibrahim Index of African Governance: A comprehensive assessment of African countries, according to the quality of their governance*. Compiled annually, in partnership with experts from a number of African institutions, the Ibrahim Index aims to be African's leading assessment of governance that informs and empowers citizens, civil society, parliaments and governments to measure progress. See www.moibrahimfoundation.org/en/section/the-ibrahim-index.

⁴² Areoye Oyebola. *Black Man's Dilemma*, (University of Virginia: Board Publications, 1976), ii -18.

⁴³ Ongoing-concern by Tolu Ogunlesi of Nigeria, March 9, 2011. <http://234nex.com/csp/sites>.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Ptahhotep was an ancient Egyptian official during the late 25th century BC and early 24th century BC. Ptahhotep was the city administrator and vizier (first minister) during the reign of Djedkare Isesi in the 5th Dynasty. He is credited with authoring *The Instruction of Ptahhotep*, an early piece of Egyptian "wisdom literature" meant to instruct young men in appropriate behaviour.

Cf. <http://wiki.answers.com/Q/Why.did.ancient.Egyptians.call.their.land.Kemet>

⁴⁶ *Under the Tree of talking: Leadership for change in Africa*. Ed. Onyekachi Wambu. Forward. John Githongo (London: Galloways, 2007), 15.

⁴⁷ Chinweizu, *The West and the rest of us: white predators, Black slavers, and the African elite*, (Lagos, Nigeria : Pero Press, 1987), chapter indicated.

⁴⁸ The ancient Egyptians called their land Kemet because of the dark soil left by the Nile's flood. Kmt means Black Land. See <http://wiki.answers.com/Q/Why.did.ancient.Egyptians.call.their.land.Kemet>

⁴⁹ Chinweizu. *Op. Cit.*, 34-36.

⁵⁰ Cf. J.K. Nyerere, 'Socialism and Rural Development' in *Freedom and Socialism*, (1967), especially 342-344.

⁵¹ Rules, norms and codes regulate human behaviour and management approaches.

⁵² Eilis Ferra. "Corporate Law, Codes and Social Norms - Finding the Right Regulatory Combination and Institutional Structure", *Journal of Corporate Law Studies*, vol. 2001, no. 2, (December 2001). posted: March 04, 2002.

⁵³ Jomo Kenyatta. *Facing Mount Kenya* (New York: Random House, 1962), 78.

⁵⁴ Gikuyu is the largest community in Kenya from which Kenyatta came from.

⁵⁵ Jomo Kenyatta. 79

⁵⁶ When we use the quantitative "All", we mean that the activities were either toward God, hence, blessing, or against God, hence, a curse.

⁵⁷ John S. Mbiti. "when you follow an elephant, you do not get entangled with creepers" a Paper at the Conference on: "The Idea of an African University" at The Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, 24-27 May 2011.

⁵⁸ Aristotle. *Book I*, Chapters 11 & 12, "On Happiness."

⁵⁹ Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics Book I. Sect. 2,4.*

⁶⁰ The words in brackets indicate my emphasis, having come from the same community.

⁶¹ Chinweizi, *chronology, Pharaonic Egypt. vol. II.*

⁶² This is my own adding as an emphasis of sameness.

⁶³ Anthony D'Souza. *Leadership*, 19

⁶⁴ John Mbiti, "When you follow an Elephant, you do not get entangled with creepers", a paper presented at an International Conference on "The Idea of an African University", at Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, 24-27 May, 2011.

⁶⁵ Isidore Okpewho *African Oral Literature: Backgrounds, Character, and Continuity*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), ix.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ John Hamer, "Commensality process and moral order", *Africa. vol.64.no. 1* (1994), 126-44.

⁶⁸ Musamaali Nangoli. *The African cause: I speak to Mother Africa* (N. Jersey: African Heritage Pub., 1992), 63

⁶⁹ An article by James K. Kigongo "The Relevance of African Ethics to Contemporary African Society" in *Ethics, Human Rights, and Development in Africa*, (Kampala: Uganda Comm. Press).

⁷⁰*Ibid.*

⁷¹*Ibid.*

⁷² John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 2nd edition, (Heinemann Educational Books, 1992), 200-245.

⁷³*Ibid.*

⁷⁴*Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Benezet Bujo, *Foundations of an African Ethic: Beyond the universal claims of western morality*, Transl. by Brian McNeil, (Nairobi: Paulines Pub. Africa, 2003), 45.

⁷⁶ In the Kilendu language: *Nza nga dani rero tsu nanga dani vi nzi*. In Kikuyu language: *Muti urungugwo wi munyinyi*.



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