



Nkrumah and Philosophy of African Unity

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ABSTRACT

This article mainly focuses on African unity as understood by Nkrumah. African unity includes the struggle in various fields, political, social and economic. Nkrumah's ideas about African unity were widely defined as a sustainable political strategy for the well-being of Africans across the continent. Such support fought against corruption and things that hold back the development of the continent. Such ideas also helped to develop African identity and social ideologies. The current leaders of independent African nations should learn from the founders of African nations due to their dreams that focused on the well-being all citizens. In the 21st century there is a need for greater cooperation between all countries within the African continent. What is the most important issue now is to promote African identity. This can be done in the implementation of development goals such as ending problems facing contemporary Africa like civil wars, poverty and individualism.

Keywords: Kwame Nkrumah; African unity; African Identity; Contemporary African political thoughts, Democratic political systems, Political instability, Corruption.

INTRODUCTION

In this article we center our discussion on unity in the contemporary African political thoughts. Majority of the democratic political systems we have in Africa have foundations from Western political thoughts. The sense of unity in this operation is overshadowed by the number of factors including ethnicity, regionalism, as well as the lack of capabilities to manage financial resources. The process for identifying genuine leaders as regards to the management of financial resources is a challenge. Not only that but also many unnecessary costs have been incurred during political campaigns.

These western democratic political processes in Africa leads to acts of individualism, corruption, injustice and lawlessness. Politicians struggle to enrich themselves through corruption as it has been witnessed in many African states "Indeed, the need to finance party competition in competitive elections has led to an explosion of grand corruption as those in power desperately seek to ensure that they have the resources to ensure that they stay there. The infamous cases of the Anglo-Leasing Scandal that became public in 2004 and the Goldenberg Affair of the early 1990s are prime examples of this, illustrating how big men in control of the executive use fictional front companies to appropriate funds for personal and political uses¹".

¹ Dan Hough, "Corruption, Anti-Corruption and Governance", Palgrave Macmillan. Basingstoke 2013, 64.

Our arguments do not only focus on how unity impression has been exercised in contemporary Africa, but also takes a closer look at how the dynamics of the African people's way of thinking have impacted radically, changing the meaning and occasionally eliminating unity conception among newly African societies.

African philosophical unity has not been considered in the recent times as much as part of the African values. There is no significant influence shown by politicians that unity is one of the most important elements in the history of African politics. The newly African states can still not be as proud of the unity in politics as it once was, rather African politics at the moment seem to be a field of conflicts, chaos for some reason which may not be constructive but destructive. The simplest interpretation that philosophers can highlight is that current African politics seem to be related to business interests for the few and not for the majority. The indisputable fact is that many politicians use politics as an umbrella to help them do their own things and not to serve their people.

African politics is currently not part of the solution to the various knots but part of the continuation of those challenges. Politicians plan how they will share power but not how to solve people's problems. These upshots violate the exertion of the founders of African nations who fought for the freedom of the people and their resources, to respect and give priority to human dignity. Many of the good things initiated by leaders like Nkrumah of the African unity have not yet been given a decent chance to be practiced. Part of these challenges is the lack of ethics and commitment in serving other people.

PHILOSOPHY AND AFRICAN POLITICS

There is relationship between philosophical articulation and philosophical challenges that exist between unity and African contemporary political thinking. Philosophy and contemporary African politics encompass a vast area where regional differences are commonplace. There has been a context of certain internal issues in Africa that focus on geographical factors that lead to various conflicts of post-colonial African governments. African contemporary politics bring us a complete circle, which shows the importance of a philosophical unity that requires struggle and effort in achieving success. This topic emphasizes on the lives of Africans and how it is important to unite ideologically and even practically to address various social, political and economic issues. Through African political knowledge, axiological, and ontological structures, Africa should insist on unity amid the world to dispel misconceptions and criticisms of the African continent.

The unevenness of development in Africa, both political and economic, is a major problem. Some countries are poor in natural resources; others rich. Some achieved independence comparatively easily, and peacefully; others are still struggling. The obvious solution is unity, so that development can be properly and cohesively planned².

Culture and philosophical anthropology are two parallel concepts. African politics is also embedded in the concept of liberation based on the struggle to maintain African culture. This struggle stimulates the concept of unity in African politics directly. That is why it is important

² Kwame, Nkrumah, *Africa must unite*, Frederick A. Praeger Inc. New York 1963, 53.

for Africans to know and have the habit of learning more about the cultures and fundamentals of their societies so that they can develop and protect them.

Some of the evil actions like corruption done by today's leaders or rather some politicians are out of the really African identity. African development should be brought about by Africans themselves. All things about development will be possible when Africans decide to be just, and truly patriotic. The youth in Africa which are the largest group should have the courage to denounce the evils that are holding back African development. "For this end Africa needs a new type of citizen, a dedicated, modest, honest and informed man. A man who submerges self in service to the nation and mankind. A man who abhors greed and detests vanity. A new type of man whose humility is his strength and whose integrity is his greatness³". Obviously a person who cares for his/her people will always work hard to protect human dignity. This entails standing firm against the evils in the society especially corruption which has serious negative impact on lives of people.

CORRUPTION

Corruption and economic sabotage are part of chronic and serious problems in contemporary Africa. There have been high levels of corruption and misconduct committed by some of African leaders and government officials. These actions lead to extreme poverty for citizens and cause citizens to distrust their governments. Such misconduct by government officials has created tensions and unfriendly relations between the government and the people. Justice is lost and selfishness is extreme, so Africa with these trends cannot bring people together socially, economically or politically. The common belief in the legitimacy of the democratic political system in Africa is still being questioned over its lack of clarity. It is questionable because it is not so easy to trace where the accountability is, transparency among other democratic elements are. It is unfortunate that "...corruption and nepotism soon prevented the building of stronger and more effective institutions⁴".

The challenge of rampant corruption is rampant in all its forms cannot be solved by self-deception, it cannot work. African society must acknowledge that corruption exists, and the only way to solve this problem should start at the lowest level in our society gradually to the highest level. This is the only way corruption can be fought fiercely in the community, since, it brings serious consequences that can cost the society in the long run. It divides people and undermines democratic and good governance. There must be systems in place that will help the next generation to get rid of corrupt practices. In South Sudan for instance "Corruption was a hot topic at the famous commanders' meeting at Rumbek in late November 2004, when Salva Kiir opposed Garang: Corruption, as a result of the lack of structures, has created a lack of accountability which has reached a proportion that will be difficult to eradicate⁵". For more explanation in relation to that Johnson opines.

³ Kwame, Nkrumah, "*Africa must unite*", 130.

⁴ Hilde F. Johnson "*South Sudan: The Untold Story from Independence to Civil War*" I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd. New York 2016, 16.

⁵ Hilde F. Johnson "*South Sudan: The Untold Story from Independence to Civil War*", 25.

Reverting to this issue later in the discussion, he said: I would also like to say something about rampant corruption in the Movement. At the moment some members of the Movement have formed private companies, bought houses and have huge bank accounts in foreign countries. I wonder what kind of system are we going to establish in South Sudan considering ourselves indulged in this respect?⁶.

These systems should educate children about the past of their countries as well as what is considered to be important values, culture and ethics. It should include stories that people will have to talk about the struggle for the liberation of their countries and the importance of conserving and preserving the country's resources for the benefit of the current and future generations. Politicians, leaders and the entire African society should re-think critically and evaluate contracts and other important matters before any act. This will help to prepare better way forward for African continent. With the similar idea Hough states.

Kenya's post-independence polity has become riddled with corruption. Transparency International Kenya states that corruption has reached endemic proportions, whilst Lando Ogwang describes it as pervasive with many Kenyans seeking public office with the specific motive of looting public resources. The conclusion of the African Peer Review Mechanism's 2006 report on Kenya states that corruption pervades the executive, legislature, judiciary and military, as well as the civil service, summing the situation up presciently. Similar statements can be found in more or less every analysis of Kenyan politics and the effect is evident if one looks at TI's CPI data for Kenya during the period 1998-2011⁷.

Different scholars have done research on corruption and discover two types which include grand corruption and petty corruption. "Stories of grand corruption and the looting of the state are also legion, and despite the exhortations of external organisation such as the World Bank the IMF both of which threatened, and in one case actually refused, to release money to Kenya until something was done about these processes, they remain fundamental parts of Kenyan political life"⁸. This high-level of corruption is a type perpetrated by top officials such as presidents, ministers, deputy ministers, principal secretaries of ministries and directors during the implementation of government development projects just to mention a few.

This corruption directly affects the country and its effects are far-reaching. A good example is on infrastructures which we call public goods like construction of the modern tarmac roads and railways in the continent. Some unscrupulous and dishonest public officials share funds allocated and approved by the government through parliament and ultimately spend small amounts to build substandard infrastructure which cost the government great loss of the billions of moneys.

Another type of corruption is known as petty corruption. This type of corruption is mostly prevalent in areas where social services are provided such as in courts, police stations, schools, markets, hospitals among many others. In general these types of corruption are fueled by the

⁶ Hilde F. Johnson "South Sudan: The Untold Story from Independence to Civil War", 26.

⁷ Dan Hough, "Corruption, Anti-Corruption and Governance", Palgrave Macmillan. Basingstoke 2013, 63.

⁸ Dan Hough, "Corruption, Anti-Corruption and Governance", 64.

bureaucracy of the offices which put the chain and difficulties in accessing the services and making a person to bribe so that one can speed up and serve time.

Across the African continent these actions are not new because corrupt government officials act unscrupulous affecting the lives of civilians. Some of the effects include such the increase in deaths from road accidents or even lack of good public medical services. For East Africa Kenya has been the main culprit for such acts especially for traffic police. Solicitation of these petty bribes have caused citizens to lose good relations with police, by not showing co-operation in criminal activities or road safety laws violators. "In 2011, for example, 67 per cent of people in Kenya reported that their interactions with the police were tainted with bribery demands. The survey also revealed that more than a quarter of all bribes paid in Kenya went to the police⁹".

Hough divides the Kenyan corruption into three categories very broad, less corruption "petty corruption", more corruption (grand corruption) and out looting¹⁰. Furthermore, Hough argues that;

Kenyans certainly feel the impact of petty, day-to-day corruption almost as much as Bangladesh do, with public servants consistently demanding extra payments either for simply providing the most basic of services, for speeding up bureaucratic processes or in the name of arbitrary, extra levies. This is well illustrated if one analyses any of Transparency International's regular surveys on bribery across East Africa. In Kenya the police are consistently believed to be the most corrupt institution in society indeed, in 2011 the Kenyan police was seen as the most corrupt institution in all of East Africa with a majority of respondents regularly reporting that they themselves have had to indulge in corrupt transactions with them¹¹.

With all these challenges brought by corruption one wonders where Africa is leading to. It is important to know that corruption and lack of good and clear policies continues to undermine Africa in governance. Other barriers for development in Africa include extreme ethnic bias in leadership. These things go hand in hand with corruption. "There is always a danger that former liberators will become complacent beneficiaries of state power. The clearest sign of this is the tendency to resort to ethnicity and patronage as the primary governing framework. This can sow the seeds of ethnic divisions going forward. In the Southern Sudanese case the sense of entitlement also led to monopolization of economic benefits through corruption¹²". When the issues of ethnicity dominate the dream of citizens of one country working together becomes a challenge, hence making regional unity even harder to implement.

UNITY AND AFRICAN IDENTITY

The threshold of unity and African politics is the assertion that politics and powers belong to the "people" and not to the "individuals". It is important that, any politically motivated decisions made take into account the views of the people. This is because most of the African societies do not identify themselves as the 'I' but as 'We'. The concept of African unity is usually also linked

⁹ Dan Hough, "*Corruption, Anti-Corruption and Governance*", 64.

¹⁰ Dan Hough, "*Corruption, Anti-Corruption and Governance*", 63.

¹¹ Dan Hough, "*Corruption, Anti-Corruption and Governance*", 63-64.

¹² Hilde F. Johnson "*South Sudan: The Untold Story from Independence to Civil War*", 21.

to the concept of the ontology of all beings. Such concept is as much an integral part of the African world view as the concept of the communal of the self.

The African worldview does not reject or deny individual uniqueness, but it certainly denies an extreme notion of individualism where the person is construed as isolated from and independent of other persons. Rather, it promotes a communal notion of the self which is encapsulated in the assertion, "We are therefore I exist". This emphasis on the communal embeddedness of man certainly has implications for social and political relations in traditional African societies. This outlook, for instance, explains why the obligations of the individual to the community are generally privileged above the notion of individual rights¹³.

So, any decision made will not be for one person but for all members of the society. In other words, we would say that most people in contemporary African societies those who are leaders and those who are not, those who are politicians and those who are not both should change their attitudes towards addressing social, political and economic matters in the society. In order to make decisions that bring positive results to the citizens' leaders need not to concentrate on their individual interests but on public good. It is unfortunate that leaders use power as a tool to make self-productive decisions for the few at the same time oppressing the majority. It seems that the present breed of leaders is only concerned about themselves; for there is no unity between those who lead and those who are led. This kind of attitude leads to the weakening of the philosophy of unity, weakening a real development and respect for human rights in socio-political and economical fields.

Majority of the founding doctrines of the African nations punctuate the use of "Africanism" as African united patriotism which changes the perception and the whole operating system to be more transparent and accountable. There can be no misunderstanding between people with the same obligations, despite the differences that exist but unity does not give priority to institutions with personal goals and material acquisition. Rather to put emphasize on the African continent connectivity. This makes it clear that, African politics is an important link that can be used for unifying purpose. "The forces that unite us are far greater than the difficulties that divide us at present, and our goal must be the establishment of Africa's dignity, progress and prosperity"¹⁴.

Politicians should have the power for argumentative debate focusing on the expectations of those they represent as the main purpose. While African politics distinguishes itself ideologically, "Africanism" is considered as the basis of the African leadership. With a common purpose, African leadership should be part of a regular study in African philosophy to help the leader know their responsibilities. For a long time, there has been a discussion about African philosophy, and many have interpreted it depending on the lives of their own people, including all areas such as in political, social and economic spheres. It is important to have the leader understand African philosophy because of its focus on the common good among the African commoners. It is an intuitive, rooted concept that understands Africa and its people over the

¹³ Christopher O. Agulanna and Peter Osimiri, *Themes, Issues and Problems in African Philosophy*. Edited by Isaac E. Ukpokolo, Palgrave Macmillan. Ibadan 2017, 339.

¹⁴ Kwame Nkurumah, *Africa must unite*, 221.

past centuries. One can discuss the true meaning of this fact or the clear boundaries that underpin the African philosophical unity.

There is a need to recognize at present the existence of values that should be the basis of any polity that seeks to express itself to be based on the principles of freedom, justice, and equality. We can see in African dialogue and attitudes that such qualities as the ontological connectedness (or unity) of all things, the concept of the communal of the self and the frontage that is most unsubstantial. Usually from this idea is the principle of solidarity, which creates symbiosis, harmony or equality between dichotomies and differences. Such a view is undoubtedly in line with the ideal concept of global brotherhood, the spirit of cooperation and the values of brotherhood. This also reminds us of the popular South African word *Ubuntu*. As the Ubuntu philosophy explains great respect and humanity for others. For modern African societies this view does not seem to be emphasized. So such gap significantly undermines the relationships between man and man, one society and another society within modern Africa. The fact is that the interaction with western cultures has radically changed the reality of African relations¹⁵. However, all these are accompanied with many challenges.

UNITY AND AFRICAN CHALLENGES

The idea of Africanism provides part of the philosophical reflection of what is considered to be an African world view. All Africans are part of some challenges facing Africa although some are beyond our control whether they are the past or the present. Normally problems make people think for better to improve their life situations. These problems should be considered in the process of formulating policies that can benefit and help Africans. It is argued that, there is need for Africans to consider themselves as such, through values in this modern era. Africans of this group should have the concept of African unity in their everydayness.

A closer look at African arguments is a sign of exploring a social, economic and political problems, in a concrete way. Philosophical unity and its breadth focus on the resilience and promotion of African dignity. There are many clear examples that make the political arguments and African philosophical unity to be a continuation of the struggle from oppression and unequal cooperation in the global economy. But also, post-independence injustice and deceptions have remained a challenging phenomenon. These factors counteract the expectations of intellectual performance. It is not that Africa is now stable or should be stable without strategies and commitment no, it is because it is facing various challenges especially those of cultural interaction, and neo-colonialism that further undermine African unity and strong solidarity. The behavior of looking for self-enriches and promotion of individualism should be checked with caution.

a) African unity and the problem of Individualism

African philosophy invites all societies to reflect and refer to the many principles that have conveyed various messages such as proverbs that emphasize the importance of cooperation, mutual support, mutual responsibility, and mutual duty. The well-being of human development depends on the contribution of fellow human beings hence there is a need for interdependence. Life success entails helping each other in various activities, so individualism does not build or

¹⁵ Christopher O. Agulanna and Peter Osimiri, “*Themes, Issues and Problems in African Philosophy*”, 340.

help, it is in this understanding that African countries should not do difficult things themselves but cooperate with other countries to achieve the intended goal or goals, in politics, economic and social areas. This support can be done interchangeably depending on the ability to handle the situation, especially to look at which one is better and where at a time.

Individualism therefore is a possible barrier for development in Africa. This is because individualism is not of African descent. "Individualism refers to a philosophical position, which underlines the centrality of an individual. Generally, modern individualism in theoretical philosophy which is associated with Descartes, who placed the 'thinking thing', at the center of all sciences (center of knowledge). In the Anglo-Saxon philosophy, individualism is connected with classical capitalism and neo capitalism (neo-liberalism). This is a socio economic and political system, which is found on individual freedom and individual ownership of property¹⁶". Despite attempts to establish western liberalism in Africa, it failed and collapsed during African nationalism. On one hand African nationalism was part of the tactics used by African politicians from different countries to unite the people to fight against colonialism. On the other hand, Pan-Africanists including Nkrumah introduced African socialist ideology which was very difficult for whites to destroy.

At the present time the concept of individualism seems to be gaining momentum compared to African Nationalism era. This is common among leaders, politicians, the rich and some African commoners considered to have the selfish tendencies. These behaviors create a great division among Africans and this division also becomes a major obstacle in cooperating and building a strong and united Africa. Regionally, individualism has caused a lot of weird things in socio-political, and economical relations. Most of African countries are failing to move forward due to what is thought to be selfishness that has broken good economic, social and political ties. In such situation, one finds a country intending to exploit another country either indirect or direct for personal (leader) or single country gains. Africans have become the witches of their fellow Africans. The reality of things is reflected in African regional integrations, there are many in Africa that have been undergoing all this that is why some integration has been failing because some member countries are not adhering to the coalition agreements.

There have been various aspects of individualism in post-independence African states that express the existence of individual ideologies in different places. These features have shown some people's attitudes that do not seem to bring development and foster positive relationships. In contemporary time, Africans have been seen glorifying individualism of the imperialists and completely forgetting to praise their origins. The emphasis on collective philosophy has tended to fade due to the failure of Africans themselves to control the moral erosion which begins from the leaders themselves. Individualism has blinded many who do not see the importance of respecting and upholding human dignity and rights instead they are influenced by western mindset. Africans will never refuse to learn from western or eastern cultures, however, our purpose is to preserve and preach humanity in the first place, and Africa cannot go against that in any way. It is unfortunate that war situations in Africa humiliate human dignity.

¹⁶ Grivas M. Kayange, "*Meaning and truth in African philosophy*", Springer Nature. Cham 2018, 132.

b) Civil wars and political instability

The issue of civil wars and political instability remains the challenges facing newly African states despite the existence of continental body of African Union (A.U) and other African regional economic integrations. These bodies have been relied upon by Africans as aid during difficulties especially during wars. Civilians have been going through a lot of suffering and hardships. For example, in a country like South Sudan during the war in 1990s, civilians witnessed many atrocities, as well as human rights abuses by the military, such as burdening young men with weapons and also the looting of food aid used as part of the military strategy. The food aid was provided by international organizations, but at times it does not reach to people in need. Centers were set up near refugee camps where humanitarian activities distributed food. "During the civil war, unpaid soldiers had to rely on help from local people, scrounging food in the bush, looting, and when in trouble, stealing and finding other ways to support operations and feed their families¹⁷".

This situation can be interpreted as the enslavement of Africans by their own people in their own land. Mostly the causes of these wars include regionalism, ethnicity, religion and other things related to them. On the political side it is the struggles for power over which one ethnic group seem to be stronger than the other. Political instability mostly occur as the result of peaceful demonstration and protests against power mongers or authoritarian rule. Some African leaders who emanate from this Western-born democracy don't like to be challenged or criticized. They have viewed their opponents as great enemies, while at the same time singing democracy on stage all over without practicing that democracy.

Democracy, if we are to accept the Aristotelian description, is the law of the state that directs 'that our poor shall be in no greater subjection than the rich; nor that the supreme power shall be lodged with either of these, but that both shall share it. For if liberty and equality, as some persons suppose, are chiefly to be found in a democracy, it must be so by every department of government being alike open to all; but as the people are a majority, and what they vote is law, it follows that such a state must be a democracy.' This description has not been invalidated because our modern world has outgrown the city state and 'all the people' can no longer conveniently participate in government but delegate their right to their parliamentary representatives. The description has, indeed, been revalidated and enlarged to its widest extremity in Lincoln's concept of 'government of the people by the people for the people'¹⁸.

It is unfortunate that African leaders preach water and drink wine regarding the issues of democracy. African politicians usually say what they don't do and do what they don't say. A good leader, who believes in democracy, is one who takes criticism with a positive attitude, as part of the yeast of his/ her leadership and acts on what the critics say. By listening to and acting on the things one is being criticized for either openly or secretly it gives the leader a big credit for his leadership and the appearance of a true democracy. The leader who does this, will never

¹⁷ Hilde F. Johnson "South Sudan: The Untold Story from Independence to Civil War", 25.

¹⁸ Kwame Nkrumah, "Africa must unite", 70

divide people but unite the whole society into one. In a democratic nation, "People must be free to criticize the government¹⁹". Bjerk states.

Opposition must have a real chance to organize, to secure information, and to gain support in public opinions in order to be able to defeat the Government and to form the government in its turn... In slightly different language, it means that political parties must not play for keeps to gain their way at the cost of abolishing the opposition or the rules of the game. That is why the essence of the democratic method is often described as sportsmanship. The method makes peaceful change possible and every election becomes, as it were, a lawful revolution²⁰.

Some African leaders have been stubborn and greedy for power, gross violators of their country's constitutions, trampling on and undermining true democracy instead of stepping down peacefully under severe repression. "I am telling you, let not anyone get hexed even a little to threaten this government. Once we are governing ourselves, we don't want another person to come and start a dictatorship here. We don't rule by dictatorship. If we are no good, then choose another and we'll see²¹".

Understanding the meaning of democracy is also part of the effort towards maintaining peace and unity. There are many people who hear democracy but they don't know it well. A good example is the multi-party system. Currently most African countries have multi-party system and each individual is free to choose which political party he or she will belong as a member based on understanding, and appreciating the party ideology. Interestingly it is not necessary that every political party should hold the power.

In the circumstances which have plunged the world in another holocaust, [*sic*] it behooves Africans and people of African heritage to recognize and assume the responsibility which is theirs in these monstrous times. Unity, Freedom, Independence, Democracy these should be our watchwords, our ideals, and not the barbaric totalitarianism of the Fascists or the perverted colonial "democracy" of the imperialists²².

For a political party to gain the power it is party's effort to convince and have more active members to participate in political affairs. Democracy will exist without a doubt even if one party wins all the seats. "Nyerere, writing as a citizen governed by a TANU government, pointed out that if one of the main parties in Britain won all the seats in Parliament, no one would argue that Britain was not a democracy. This shows clearly that if the majority happen to vote for one party, then this is indeed pure democracy. In Nyerere's insistence on unity and determination

¹⁹ Paul Bjerk, "*Building a Peaceful Nation: Julius Nyerere and the Establishment of Sovereignty in Tanzania, 1960–1964*", 52.

²⁰ Paul Bjerk, "*Building a Peaceful Nation: Julius Nyerere and the Establishment of Sovereignty in Tanzania, 1960–1964*", 52.

²¹ Paul Bjerk, "*Building a Peaceful Nation: Julius Nyerere and the Establishment of Sovereignty in Tanzania, 1960–1964*", 61.

²² D.Zizwe Poe, "Kwame Nkrumah's Contribution to Pan-Africanism, *An Afrocentric Analysis*" Edited By Molefi Asante Temple University. Routledge New York, 2003, 30.

to avoid planting the seeds of divisive violence, TANU sought to absorb conflict through its ability to forge consensus with resonant ideologies of unity and obligation²³”.

It should be noted that, the political parties that granted independence to African countries, do not mean that they should no longer win. We say this because many opposition leaders with their parties in Africa lack effective policies and begin to make baseless arguments by pointing out fingers at the independent parties that they have been in power for so long. The strength of any political party is laid on the basis of good ideology, policy, active members and convincing power. Here Bjerk explains.

The same nationalist movement, having united the people and led them to independence, must inevitably form the first Government of the new state. A multiparty system, built around interparty competition, demanded internal party discipline. In the situation of postcolonial Africa, where successful nationalist movements brought about independence and dominated national politics, such party loyalties would threaten the free discussion that he counted as the basis of democracy. So long as regular elections took place, he concluded, an organized opposition is not an essential element²⁴.

On Nyerere’s side one party is considered the best at building a society of people who are truly united for the development of the country. Nyerere’s idea of a united society was closely linked to that of Nkrumah who had a vision of uniting Africa. In a sense, multiparty system in Africa seems to divide people and they have gone so far by creating enmity among individuals and also groups.

Nyerere presented a one-party state not only as a hedge against civil war, but also as a *more* democratic system for Africa than the multiparty systems of Europe, where feudal class differences had left the legacy of political parties representing their opposing socioeconomic perspectives. He proposed that any real divisions in the postcolonial era were those between patriots and traitors those who supported decolonization and those who did not; any lesser divisions were superficial and could only lead to factionalism. In this Manichean presentation, Nyerere argued, the former was dangerous, leading to existential strife; the latter a waste of time, nothing more than a glorified football match²⁵.

As Democracy interpreted by Nyerere about one party system, Nkrumah was also influenced by Nyerere’s ideas when he was quoted saying, “I am reminded of the words of Julius Nyerere when he spoke of the overwhelming support of the nationalist movement by the people of Tanganyika: The Nationalist movement which fights for and achieves independence inevitably

²³ Paul Bjerk, “*Building a Peaceful Nation: Julius Nyerere and the Establishment of Sovereignty in Tanzania, 1960–1964*”, 53.

²⁴ Paul Bjerk, “*Building a Peaceful Nation: Julius Nyerere and the Establishment of Sovereignty in Tanzania, 1960–1964*”, 55.

²⁵ Paul Bjerk, “*Building a Peaceful Nation: Julius Nyerere and the Establishment of Sovereignty in Tanzania, 1960–1964*”, 55.

forms the government of the new state. It would surely be ridiculous to expect that a country should voluntarily divide itself for the sake of conforming to a particular expression of democracy, and to do so during a struggle which calls for the complete unity of its people. No one should jump to the conclusion that such a country is not democratic or does not intend to be democratic²⁶.

Nkrumah also made it clear that one party has true democracy because it comes from the representation of a large group in society and often has true unity and solidarity. Here he says; "The popularity of the party that brings freedom continues into the period of full independence and is even enhanced where improvements in economic and social conditions are obtained under its government, and its majority grows. Since this overwhelming majority in parliament carries through the government's policy almost without exception, it gives the appearance of a one-party regime. This is the pattern which has resulted in the states emerging from colonialism, a pattern which I have termed a People's Parliamentary Democracy and which the people of Ghana have accepted²⁷".

Nkrumah went on to emphasize that true democracy is one that pursues the true social, economic and political aspirations and that there is an obligation to ensure that every government follows that trend. He cites the example of how the party that gained independence and was leading the government of Ghana at the time, which was popularly known as the C.C.P, was listening and following the proposals of the majority of the people. All this is to show that the government is from the people and for the people. People are the ones who make the proposals to lead the country through the majority democratic representative governance.

The impression that my Party and I drew from much of the criticism levelled against us was that we should have divided up the mandate given to us by the people and handed over part of it to an opposition. If the will of the people is democratically expressed in an overwhelming majority for the governing party, and thereby creates a weakening of the accepted two-party pattern, as, for instance, in Ghana, we, the government, are obliged to respect the will of the people so expressed. We have no right to divide our mandate in defiance of the popular will²⁸.

Conflicts are occurring in the presence of various African bodies and integrations, the questions which are harking the heads of the people about the response of African Union as the continental body and unifying force of all African countries. The questions of observers and actors in African politics fail to understand what the problem with this body is. Is it lack of effective policies for peacekeeping and other administrative matters in Africa? And if so, what is the significance of the existence of such body? These questions and arguments are further compounded by the inability to control these conflicts in the early stage.

Thus, failing to control these conflicts at early stage, later on attracts other foreign groups and fighters to overflow and intensify the war. Ethnicity and religion have been major contributors

²⁶ Kwame Nkurumah, "*Africa must unite*", 69-70.

²⁷ Kwame Nkurumah, "*Africa must unite*", 70.

²⁸ Kwame Nkurumah, "*Africa must unite*", 70-71.

to these conflicts in Africa. Weaknesses in various African bodies and organizations are to be blamed. Other causes of these conflicts stem from the resources available in Africa that have been overlooked and attracted many nations and fueled civil war in order to benefit from these resources unfairly. Unity is the key to continue keeping Africa strong. This is the case in sub-Saharan Africa, and it is a major obstacle to development. Countries like Kenya and Nigeria, for example, are divided along ethnic and religious lines; stability will only be maintained when different ethnic groups take over the leadership of the country.

It is law and authority which transform this situation of co-operation constantly endangered by conflict into a situation of expanding human development. Only a system of rules governing inter-personal behavior, and the enforcement of these rules makes co-operation between men possible and fruitful....But the peace resulting from imposed law is short-lived....The only system of law which brings stable peace is a system which is based on the fundamental human equality of all the people under its suzerainty, and which aims at reconciling to the greatest possible degree man's conflicting desire for individual freedom and the benefits of communal life....Thus there is, and must always be, in every society a balance between that voluntary agreement which is necessary to give stability, and that element of force which ensures that people abide by their own decision to pay the price of social living²⁹.

There are times when it is important to review the various laws governing the citizens. State parastatals should perform its functions in accordance with the principles, rules and regulations. The best leadership is one that gives people the opportunity to contribute and articulate their issues. Fail in controlling firearms by letting them roaming to the streets is a continuation of the peace disturbing and division of people. In relation to this Johnson states.

While progress was uneven in institutional development, it was almost non-existent in healing a society broken from decades of civil war and underdevelopment. Southern Sudan's would not be liberators if they were unable, in the course of their long struggle, to re-think relations between state and society. Military credentials and rank would often be more decisive than political competence and technical skills when allocating ministerial positions. Influence in decision making was often more determined by the prominence of the past than the competence of the present. And in the absence of alternatives, they ended up structuring relations between the state and the citizens more around traditional roles from the liberation struggle and ethnic representation³⁰.

Indeed civil wars have cost the African people so much that is why leaders need to rethink political agendas that focus on well-being of their citizens psychologically, socially, economically and politically.

²⁹ Paul Bjerk, "*Building a Peaceful Nation: Julius Nyerere and the Establishment of Sovereignty in Tanzania, 1960–1964*", 263.

³⁰ Hilde F. Johnson "*South Sudan: The Untold Story from Independence to Civil War*" I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd. New York 2016, 21.

c) Oil crisis in Nigeria

Nigeria has long been plagued by civil wars, caused by ethno-religious violence and, military coup. Another reason is this oil-production where, Nigeria is one of the African states with the largest oil resource. On its northern side Nigeria could have helped Africa significantly but due to the constant fighting and civil strife the country has pushed back the production of that important resource. It is important to note that oil crisis in Nigeria has broken the unity among Nigerians as one people one nation. These wars are largely seen as fueled by internal and external tensions where they are linked to politics and power in Nigeria. "Indeed, there are clear indications that some of the conflicts were sponsored and encouraged by the government, both as diversionary tactics as well as a means to ensure divide and-rule tactics in subduing opposition in the oil-producing region³¹".

A new dimension that has been added to the layers of conflict in the Niger Delta is the threat now being issued by the local population against their own indigenes working with Shell. Local militias have issued warnings to these people that they would face the wrath of the local population. For example, the leader of one of these militia groups, the Ijaw Monitoring Group, Joseph Evah, warns that his group would attack family members of Ijaw people who work with Shell. This, according to him, will make their sons and daughters who work with Shell be forced to look out for our interest. The main implication of youth's revolt in the Niger Delta is the reduction in the amount of oil produced in the country, a situation that has not been made better by the incessant conflicts among the various ethnic units in the region over land³².

Dialogue is a first-class tool for all politics in the world, and Africa must maintain that. Many civil wars have lacked good dialogue to reach an agreement. African communities and their leaders have become conservatives in one way or another. That is why they see the solution as fighting. Lack of a concept of true unity in Africa can be further confronted with this long-running civil war and the escalation of extreme poverty in Africa. About land with abundant natural resources, it is said to be the source of major conflicts between societies in Africa.

This is especially in all Nigerian oil-producing societies, where land ownership has led to conflicts between different communities, such as Itsekiris, Isokos and Ijaws. Closely related to this are disputes over chief's affairs and the mention of local government headquarters, which highlights some of the community conflicts in oil-producing countries like Nigeria. The government should build and not tear down negotiations with the indigenous people where the natural resources available would give Nigeria relief from such a long-running civil wars³³.

With all the resources we have Africa had to be twice as rich. "We have here, in Africa, everything necessary to become a powerful, modern, industrialized continent"³⁴. We have put emphasis on the concept of unity because great and good things come from unity and solidarity.

³¹ Abiodun Alao "Natural resources and conflict in Africa: The tragedy of endowment" University of Rochester Press. Rochester 2007, 189.

³² Abiodun Alao "Natural resources and conflict in Africa: The tragedy of endowment", 186-187.

³³ Abiodun Alao "Natural resources and conflict in Africa: The tragedy of endowment", 187-189.

³⁴ Kwame Nkurumah, "Africa must unite", 23.

This will be compared to famous Swahili proverb that “*kidole kimoja hakivunji chawa*” which translates into English “one finger does not kill a head louse”. Louse in this case is development which has to be promoted by all people. It is a fact that Africa cannot progress if people are fighting with each other all the time. Conflicts within African countries do not mean anything because we are fighting over poles which are supposed to build one house that is one nation and one Africa, hence, leading to poor development in all aspects.

CONCLUSION

We have argued about multiple issues on African contemporary political thinking that have strong ethical connection to the poor African political progress. It is time for Africans now through their communities to know what is good for the society, what one ought to do in accordance with the nature of African societies. Each individual should be responsible to his or her place in society so to prepare the next generation to bring positive changes in society with determination.

Through African morality the states in Africa need to strengthen continental unity and contemporary African political thinking in order to create a climate where human dignity is respected in all aspects. It is important for all members of the society to cooperate through actions that promote development for all. African leaders and every member of the society need to promote the concept of unity and good governance. To kill innocent people for power or money is an unfortunate matter. Why? It is because the action of killing itself is bad. It violates human and individual natural rights. Leaders who deceive people, when they are defending their evils, is to break a promise for personal gain. In the same way to stop stealing but at the same time use government properties for personal gain is corruption. What is important is to avoid individualism and discrimination especially during the allocation of resources, so as to benefit all. Realization by African leaders that good services to all are important is in relation to the philosophy of Nkrumah. So contemporary African leaders are challenged to encourage their citizens to do all they can promote African values that focus on peace, anti-corruption, unity and good cooperation.

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