

# Journal of African Union Studies (JoAUS)

Volume 4, Number 1, 2015

Pp 5-24

## **Amilcar Cabral and the Development Paradigms in Africa: Revisiting the Earlier Strategies for the African Union**

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### **Abstract**

From OAU to AU, the embattled vision of the African continent has always been that of generating development for the 'people'. The quest for self-government presupposed the need for development. This was copiously captured in the popular aphorism of Kwame Nkrumah (one of the leading elites of the Organization for Africa Unity) that reads: "Seek ye first the political kingdom, and all other things will be added". The implication of the above statement is that once the African continent successfully wrestled political power from the colonialist, the continent would be on the path to development. Political freedom was conceived as a prerequisite for development. Many years

have passed; meaningful development still remains a quest of the African continent. This paper comes across as a theoretical interrogation of some indigenous development frameworks proposed for the continent. Importantly, Amilcar Cabral endogenous proposal for development is examined with the view of providing a viable theoretical platform for pursuing meaningful and sustainable development for the continent.

**Keywords:** *Development, Politics, Globalization, Regional Integration, African Union*

## **1. Introduction**

The quest for freedom, growth and development has been pervasive in Africa such that it presents itself in all national, state and local discussions on the continent. Policy documents, occasional papers and governments' documents are devoted to issues of national transformation and socio-economic development of the continent. With all of these efforts, the retrogressive nature of the continent has become undeniable except we want to engage ourselves in a form of self-deception. In this paper, we bring Amilcar Cabral's vision for the continent to bear vis-à-vis some policy documents namely the Monrovia Declaration of 1979, Lagos Plan of Action, 1980 and the Final Act of Lagos of 1981 with the intention of making the reader a judge of the performance of the African Union considering the current state of the African continent. With Cabral's involvement, this paper reinforces some abandoned pronouncement of the earlier documents on African development.

## **2. Globalization and Regional Integration in Africa: Cabral's theoretical contribution**

In his address delivered to the first Tri-continental Conference of the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America held in

Havana in January, 1966, Amilcar Cabral gave what could be called an exegetic analysis for both regional integration in Africa and the current wave of globalization in the world. Cabral conceived reality as an interwoven phenomenon. For him, a man's reality is only meaningful within the space of his interaction with other realities. By reality, Cabral possibly was alluding to human existence at the levels of the individual, family, community, state, continent and the global world. He believed that man's reality as a social being can only achieve the optimal goal when he co-exists with other realities (Agbude, 2014).

At the level of the State, Cabral argued that African States are all interwoven into one reality called Africa. The independence of some African States is not complete without the independence of the whole African continent.

There is no independence for Guinea without the independence for Cape Verde. Nor is there independence for the Republic of Guinea, for Senegal or for Mauritania, if they want to be treated serious as countries, without Cape Verde being independent. There is none. Only someone who understands nothing about strategy can think that this part of Africa can be independent with Cape Verde occupied by colonialists. It is impossible. The converse is true. Cape Verde cannot have real independence without the independence of Guinea and without the real independence of Africa (Cabral, 1980: 43).

The pursuit of the continent therefore, for Cabral, should be the total decolonization of the continent because all the States in the continent are interwoven into one single reality called Africa.

In the Monrovia Declaration of 1979, Lagos Plan of Action, 1980 and the Final Act of Lagos of 1981, regional integration became a prominent and fundamental word in the lexicon of African politics. In the Monrovia Declaration of

1979, the Heads of States and Governments, accompanied by African intellectuals and policy-makers declared the following:

That we commit ourselves individually and collectively on behalf of our Governments and peoples to promote the social and economic development and integration of our economies with a view to achieving an increasing measure of self-reliance and self-sustainment; That we commit ourselves individually and collectively on behalf of our Government and peoples to promote the economic integration of the African region in order to facilitate and reinforce social and economic intercourse; That we commit ourselves individually and collectively on behalf of our Governments and peoples to establish national, sub-regional and regional institutions which will facilitate the attainment of objectives of self-reliance and self-sustainment (OAU, 1979)

In the Lagos Plan of Action, it was repeated by the Heads of State and Government that:

We commit ourselves, individually and collectively, on behalf of our governments and peoples, to promote the economic integration of the African region in order to facilitate and reinforce social and economic intercourse (OAU, 1982)

Regional integration became the priority of the African continent upon the discovery that the States within the continent are all interwoven into one integrated whole whose collective existence as a whole is the only possible means of regional development of both individual Member State and the continent as a whole.

In the exercise of his philosophical 'might', Cabral justified his argument for African integration with his doctrine of reality. According to him,

Reality never exists in isolation....a reality is never isolated from other realities. No matter what reality we consider in the world or in life, however great or small, it always forms part of another reality, is integrated in another reality, is affected by other realities, which in turn have an effect in or on other realities (Cabral, 1980: 47).

On the basis of this philosophic analysis of reality, Cabral argued that both Guinea and Cape Verde are realities whose existence must co-exist. In the same vein, as two different realities, they exist within the scope of a wide reality which is West Africa. Within the same reality, there is a wider reality which is Africa as a continent. For Cabral, there is also a wider reality which is the world. He argued that African reality in which they (Guinea and Cape Verde) are subsumed must take a higher priority. With this Cabral concluded that “in many of the things we have to do, we have first to realize that we are integrated with other realities. So we form part of a specific reality, namely Africa struggling against imperialism, against racism and against colonialism (Cabral, 1980: 47).

The task of the AU in the present day Africa should still include the collective freedom of Member States from underdevelopment, internal cum external conflict and importantly from the claw of the cancerous terrorism. Africa States must unite to fight all the monsters confronting the continent including ‘rebranded’ imperialism. In order to ensure that the whole African States gather to rebel and attack colonialism and foreign domination of any kind, Cabral argued that:

But we might struggle in all the Portuguese colonies even to the point of winning our independence, and if racism were to continue in South Africa, with the colonialists still ruling, directly or indirectly, in many African lands, we could not have confidence in real independence in Africa. Sooner or later calamity would strike again. So we form part of a specific reality, namely Africa struggling against imperialism, against racism and against colonialism. If we do not bear this mind, we could make many mistakes (Cabral, 1980: 48)

Cabral foresaw a calamity in the future of Africa if proper decolonization was not pursued jointly by all African States as

realities that are interwoven and intertwined into one bigger reality called Africa. What Africa would have, without a collective battle against foreign domination in the continent, would be “pseudo-independence” given that some of its States would still be subject to foreign domination. According to him, the African history is the same. It is the history of colonialism, imperialism, racism and neocolonialism. In a similar tone, Adedeji (2002) maintained that Africa has been a victim of the four millstones of: Dispossession, Colonization, Dependence and Marginalization. It is not only our skins that unite us but also our common experiences of colonialism, imperialism, racism and neocolonialism.

Cabral concluded that “...all of us, in Africa, form part of one reality – in the world – which has all the difficulties with which you are familiar. Whether we like it or not, we are involved in these difficulties” (Cabral, 1980: 49).

Given that African reality is clothed in the same difficulties, Cabral argued that African States must unite. In the language of the Monrovia Declaration, Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos, this is referred to as regional integration. However, Cabral still opted for the autonomy of the individual Member States. He emphasized national integration and national integrity above regional integration. According to him, “Defence of the political, economic, social and cultural rights and gains of the popular masses of Guinea and the Cabo Verde Islands is the fundamental condition for the realization of unity with other African peoples” (Cabral, 1972: 170). There must be defence of the political, economic, social and cultural rights of their people even while States are pursuing regional integration. In other words, integration should not be to the disadvantage of the citizens of any of the integrating States.



### **3. Prioritizing the People**

African unity is a means to an end and not an end in itself. African unity or regional integration should be in the interest of the people. In Cabral's words:

In Africa we are for African unity, but we are for African unity in favour of the African peoples. We consider unity to be a means, not an end. Unity can reinforce and accelerate the reaching of ends, but we not betray the end. That is why we are not in such a great hurry to achieve African unity. We know that it will come, step by step, as a result of the fruitful efforts of the African peoples. It will come at the service of Africa and humanity (Cabral, 1972: 80).

The only justification for regional integration or the so-called African unity is that it serves the interest of the people and not that of the leaders. It is the means whose end is to foster the general well-being of the citizens. According to him, African unity should not destroy the end. In other words, African unity is only meaningful if and only if the people are at the receiving end of positive impacts of the union or regional integration. The whole idea of African unity should be pursued as an ideology that has the full support and participation of the people according to Cabral. African union should be for the service of Africa and humanity at large. Cabral did not see Africa as a continent that would solely be dependent on the international community. For Cabral, Africa is a unique continent that could contribute to the global economy order not as a beggar but as a contributor. Thus, poverty is not essentially and African 'thing'.

On the nature of poverty mentality and the sense of helplessness in Africa, Ogbimi (2006) contested that the West has worked assiduously to promote the thinking that poverty is an African disease which must not be cured, if the West is to continue to enjoy the advantage it has over Africa. The

African leader, indoctrinated by his Western counterpart is made to cry like a sinking little child believing that poverty is an affliction which the African cannot confront himself without the assistance of the rich donor West which has always been rich (Ogbimi, 2006: 53). The poverty mentality in African States is one of the greatest damages done to the African continent. This mentality has made Africa a beggar among comity of nations.

Cabral continued:

In the CONCP we are firmly convinced that making full use of the riches of our continent, of its human, moral and cultural capacities, will contribute to creating a rich human species, which in turn will make a considerable contribution to humanity. But we do not want the dream of this end to betray in its achievement the interests of each African people. We, for example, in Guinea and Cabo Verde, openly declare in our Party's programme that we are willing to join any African people, with only one condition: that the gains made by our people in the liberation struggle, the economic and social gains and the justice which we seek and are achieving little by little, should not be compromised by unity with other peoples. That is our condition for unity (Cabral, 1972: 80-81).

As noted by Cabral above, Africa is rich in human resources, moral and cultural capacities such that the continent could be a great asset to the rest of humanity not as an object to be exploited but a continent that could genuinely generate ideas and paradigms that would be favourable to the entire human race. However, Cabral noted that Africa's relationship with the rest of the world should not endanger the well-being of the people of Africa. African leaders should not enter into any relationship or co-operation with the West, whether economic or political, that would endanger the lives of the people. Any relationship or co-operation with the West should be such that the interests of Africa and its people are the first priority.



In the same vein, Cabral argued that Guinea and Cape Verde would only be part of African unity if the gains made by the people in the liberation struggle, the economic and social gains and the justice which they seek and are achieving little by little, would not be compromised by unity with other people. He held that they were for African policy which seeks to defend first and foremost the interests of the African people, of each African country but also which does not, at any time, forget the interests of the world, of all humanity. He stated further that, "We are for a policy of peace in Africa and of fraternal collaboration with all the peoples of the world" (Cabral, 1972:81). Cabral called for African integration while still promoting global relevance of the African continent. He continued:

On an international level, we in the CONCP practice a policy of non-alignment. But for us non-alignment does not mean turning one's back on the fundamental problems of humanity and of justice. Non-alignment for us means not aligning ourselves with blocs, not aligning ourselves with the decisions of others. We reserve the right to make our own decisions, and if by chance our choices and decisions coincide with those of others, that is not our fault. We are for the policy of non-alignment, but we consider ourselves to be deeply committed to our people and committed to every just cause in the world. We see ourselves as part of a vast front of struggle first and foremost for our own peoples (Cabral, 1972: 81).

At the time of the colonial war in Guinea and Cape Verde, the Cold War was ongoing. Cabral, like most African leaders States, opted for non-alignment as their policy in international politics. But for him, non-alignment did not only mean not aligning with any blocs but most importantly not aligning with the decisions of others as long as they do not have the tendency of improving the lives of the people. The leaders' focus, in Cabral's view, is not to carelessly buy into any concept or ideology but to "x-ray" the impact of such an

ideology on their own people primarily. The only responsibility leaders have is first to their people and then to the collective well-being of all human beings in the world; but the indigenous people of the country come first.

#### **4. Promoting self-reliance and self-sustainment**

The concept of self-reliance and self-sustainment featured in Cabral's political and development writings. Cabral seemed to be convinced that these twin concepts are the most appropriate paths to true freedom, independence and progress (development) in Africa. The Monrovia Declaration which later culminated in Lagos Plan of Action and Final Act of Lagos emphasized self-reliance and self-sustainment in African region.

According to the Monrovia Declaration:

We, the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity; Having taken note of the Interim Report of the Secretary-General on Development and Economic Integration of African contained in Doc CM/983 (XXXIII) including its annex I – Colloquium of the prospects for Development and Economic Growth in Africa especially to the year 2000 - and annex II – Development strategy for Africa for the Third United Nations Development Decade; Aware of the fact that Africa is a vast continent amply endowed with natural resources of all kinds, provided with a potentially rich human resource base and capable of a rapid transformation of its economies and improvement in the standard of living of its peoples; Determined to ensure that our Member States individually and collectively restructure their economic and social strategies and programmes so as to achieve rapid socio-economic change and to establish a solid domestic and intra-African base for a self-sustaining, self-reliant development and economic growth (OAU, 1979)

This call for self-sustaining and self-reliance in the Monrovia Declaration of 1979 featured in Cabral's writings in

early 1960s. For him, the only way a country can genuinely develop in the present competitive international politics is by relying more on endogenous development as against exogenous development. His analysis of the integrated nature of the world in one single reality notwithstanding, Cabral still believed that Africa, as a collective reality, could only develop genuinely by relying on self-generating development strategies. This further buttresses his genuine sentiment against foreign domination and foreign development assistance. He argued that:

The struggle in our land must be made by our people. We cannot for a moment think of liberating our land, of building peace and progress in our land, by bringing in foreigners from outside to come and struggle for us. In Guinea and Cape Verde we are the ones who must struggle, we are the ones who must buckle down to all the means of struggling. And in fact this is what has happened (Cabral, 1980: 76).

It is important we reiterate again that the concept of “the struggle” as used by Cabral implies the struggle for independence (freedom) and the development of the liberated zones in Guinea during the colonial war. From the above quote, Cabral was arguing for self-reliance among the people. According to him, no one should think of building peace and progress (development) by appealing for foreign assistance. This idea of self-reliance also reflected in Cabral’s ethics of foreign aid where he argued that aid would not develop Africa (Cabral, 1980)

In the same vein, Ake had argued for the integration of self-reliance on all the segments of the African societies in order to reduce reliance on government. On the part of government too, Ake argued for self-reliance or indigenously generated development strategies and plans so as to reduce or totally eliminate foreign manipulation of our development

attempt in Africa. According to him, to realize development, self-reliance has to be practiced at all levels; starting from the level of national policies and the relation between States, it must also spread to the levels of regions, federal units (where they exist), communities, and household,...whatever the difficulties of self-reliance, it is nonetheless true that only when it is taken seriously at every level can development become feasible (Ake, 1996: 140-141). This was the same argument made by Cabral in the early 1960s that a more fruitful path to national development is self-reliance.

On regional integration or African unity for holistic development, in the speech given at the symposium organized by the Democratic Party of Guinea on the day dedicated to Nkrumah on 13<sup>th</sup> May, 1972, Cabral said “Africans have to reinforce vigilance in all fields of the struggle; and pursue the total liberation of Africa and also pursue success in development and economic, social and cultural progress of the peoples, and in the building of African unity (Cabral, 1980: 117). There is a call to re-awaken this vigilance against imperialism and to pursue economic, social and cultural developments for the African people by the African Union. There is a need to intensify our quest for national security by all members through the prioritization of the lives and the properties of the citizens.

## **5. Human Resource Development and Utilization**

The concept of human resource development also featured primarily in Cabral’s idea of development. His dedication and commitment to the education sector was well discussed in the previous chapter. This idea of education was categorized as ‘functionalist and pragmatic theory of education’ which entails the training of people to respond to and fit into some

particular sectors. Cabral conceived education as a tool for social and national transformation. Thus, with the little resources available to the Party [Partido Africano da Independencia da Guine e Cabo Verde (*African Party for the independence of Guine and Cave Verde*) – PAIGC], Cabral promoted the building of the educational sector, clamouring for the need to train the teachers in order to provide quality education that would lead to national transformation in his country. Cabral held on to the importance of education on the basis of socialization, meritocracy and role allocation.

In the Lagos Plan of Action, the statements below were profoundly stated:

The summit takes note of the situation in the development and utilization of human resources in Africa, the principal aspects of which are the high rate of population growth, the growing level of unemployment and underemployment, the shortage of different types and levels of trained manpower, the high level of adult illiteracy, the deficiencies in the educational system and the lack of co-ordinated policies and programmes of manpower training and the funding of training at the national level. It also notes the various recommendations of the regional training development conference that was held in Addis Ababa in December 1979, aimed at providing specific guidelines for achieving development-oriented educational and training systems. Recognizing the need to achieve an increasing measure of self-reliance in the economic and other spheres, the summit stresses the importance of trained manpower as input to activities in the various production sectors and support services as well as in the education and training sector as producer of skills and know-how for its own needs and for other sectors (OAU, 1982: 28).

From the above, the following keywords are worthy of note: the utilization of human resources for development (people-centered development as used by Cabral), training manpower, reduction of illiteracy through vibrant educational sector, funding of training of man power, self-reliance in the economy.

The Lagos Plan of Action identified the central place of building vibrant educational sector in order to train the vast human resources available in the continent to meet the needs of national and regional development. According to the document, "Since Africa's greatest asset is its human resources, full mobilization and effective utilization of the labour force (men, women and youth, both trained and untrained) for national development and social progress should be a major instrument of development" (OAU, 1982: 28). Cabral said:

We can wage the struggle and win the war. But if, once we have our country back again, our people are unable to read and write, we will still have achieved nothing. I don't mean that those with an education are more important than the others; the entire people must learn how to read (Cabral reported in Chaliand, 1971: 35).

He was convinced of the central role education plays in transforming a nation. National liberation (independence) without people who can steer the ship of the country towards holistic development implies another dimension of political and economic repression by foreign domination. The human resources within the State should be developed for the purpose of fostering self-reliance in generating development. Tomori and Tomori (2004) argue that in economic development, the role of education is pervasive. Education is both a goal of development and a means of achieving the associated goals of health, higher labour productivity and more rapid GDP growth, as well as the broader goal of social integration, including participation in cultural and political affairs.

In the Monrovia Declaration, the Heads of States and Governments held:



That, more specifically, we commit ourselves individually and collectively on behalf of our Governments and peoples to: a) Give an important place to the field of human resources development by States to eliminate illiteracy (OAU, 1979: 4).

The elimination or reduction of the rate of illiteracy was considered a *sine qua non* for national and regional development. This was also Cabral's conviction on the importance of education. However, Cabral argued for qualitative education as against quantitative. According to him,

Improving our education means increasing the number of schools. But increasing the number of our schools is not enough to improve our education, and may harm it sometimes. If we make the number of schools too high, then we shall not have enough materials to give to the students and we shall not have good teachers to make the students learn effectively. It is preferable to have a set of numbers of schools, even a few guaranteeing a good education for the students at all necessary levels. Then little by little, as the Party has the resources, we can increase the number of schools, above all when we have the human resources, meaning good teachers (Cabral, 1980: 110-111).

Qualitative education must take priority above proliferation of schools at all levels. Qualitative training should be pursued in order to enhance the level of productivity of the people. Cabral also argued that endogenous entrepreneurs should be sent abroad for training at the end of which they were to return. Most of the health workers working in the liberated areas were trained by the Party in their allies' countries in order to provide robust services for the people. Basil Davidson noted that:

The PAIGC began to found primary schools in liberated areas as early as 1964, planting them in places where, with very rare exceptions, no schools had ever existed under colonial rule. Today [this was 1972] they have 156 such schools with about 250 teachers, as well as one secondary school and a nursery school in the shelter of the neighbouring Republic of Guinea....in these zones before the liberation

war, one may note, non-literacy was almost 100 per cent. In October 1972 the PAIGC had 125 small clinics, nine small hospitals, and three larger hospitals that were staffed by full-trained doctors (at least two of whom are Cuban volunteers) inside the liberated zones of Guinea-Bissau, as well as three clinics and one surgical hospital in (neighbouring) Guinea and Senegal....The total of nurses so far trained in Europe (mostly in the USSR) was 90, with 169 others by the PAIGC inside the country. Eight PAIGC doctors have completed their training in the USSR or elsewhere in Europe.... (Davidson, 1981: 165).

The training of human resources in these two key sectors underscored the importance of education in Cabral's strategy of development. The human beings (the citizens of a country) are the highest resources or assets the country has. Fraternizing with other country either in terms of trade or any other form of co-operation must be with the intention of developing indigenous human resources in order to promote self-reliance and self-sustainment in its development pursuit. Cabral laid emphasis on human capital development as one of the viable paths to development in Africa.

According to the Heads of States and Governments in the Monrovia Declaration, there was a need for "The development of indigenous entrepreneurial, technical manpower and technological capabilities to enable our peoples to assume great responsibility for the achievement of our individual and collective development goals" (OAU, 1979: 5).

Cabral also argued for the training of endogenous entrepreneurs having understood the importance of innovation and creativity in building the economy of a nation. The agricultural sector being the mainstay of the economy of Guinea at the time Cabral, he wrote to the Comrades on the need to promote and train indigenous entrepreneur in that field. According to him:

Comrades, whoever among the population of this area, this locality, produces the most rice this year will receive a prize or a medal from the Party. In addition the Party is going to invite him to go abroad to learn about other lands....The same goes for whoever produces most potatoes, the same goes for the most manioc. This is what is called constructive emulation (Cabral, 1980: 113).

Not only did Cabral endeavour to encourage indigenous entrepreneurs by giving them prizes, he also held that they should be trained in order to enhance their productivity to national development. Again Cabral underscored the importance and the role of human capital development to national reconstruction (development) when he noted that “the return to the country of some dozens of middle level and professional university cadres, who had finished their studies abroad, had the effect of improving the capacity for Party work, in the domain of politico-military struggle and in that of national reconstruction” (Cabral, 1980: 182).

The Lagos Plan of Action recognized the need for the education and training of human resources for national and regional development and emphasized the need for collective efforts in terms of co-operation among member States. It however further emphasized the need for each State to prioritize human resources development as a national goal and objective.

Regarding the immensity of the task of training to be accomplished, lack of training facilities in some fields and scarcity of financial resources, the summit urges meaningful cooperation among Member States in developing and utilizing specialized regional, sub-regional and multinational training and research institutions for training nationals in specialized skill areas by using, wherever possible, existing national institutions as a base. While co-operation and collective self-reliance should be the guiding principles in human resource

development, the summit stresses that the principal responsibility for manpower training and employment promotion should be seen as resting squarely at the national level (OAU, 1982: 29).

Human resource training and development should be the priority of each of the States though without totally neglecting regional contribution of all the member States when necessary. Cabral argued that "The Party could give the best producers the opportunity of visiting foreign countries to learn new types and methods of agriculture and husbandry (breeding of cattle) and to develop their knowledge" (Cabral, 1980: 240). The foreign countries could be within Africa or beyond, what was important was the need to keep abreast with fact that they could help in developing their country.

## **Conclusion**

The African Union should hold to a high premium these components that could assist in building a viable continent that would withstand the external pressure of imperialism and internal crisis of insurgencies. Globalization should be to serve the interest of the people. Regional integration should be indeed taken as a means to an end and not an end in itself. The end is a better living condition of the African populace. What follows from there is the need to re-prioritize the people as the central purpose for which the state exist instead of a governance system that elevates the political leaders above their people.

Importantly, the AU should ensure, in the spirit of the Monrovia Declaration of 1979, Lagos Plan of Action of 1980, the Final Act of Lagos, 1981 and Cabral's contributions to African development, the enforcement of manpower training, reduction of illiteracy through a vibrant education sector and

the promotion of self-reliance in all sectors. Over reliance on foreign aids and loans should be discouraged among Member States. We can conclude that the above are still the unfinished jobs of OAU that the AU must be prioritized.

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