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GRAYING OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD: EMERGING POLICY ISSUES

G. ADOBEA OWUSU¹

ABSTRACT

A graying of populations is occurring the world over due to demographic and epidemiologic transitions. Although the effects are already being felt in Africa and in the rest of the developing world, attempts at working towards managing the elderly are very minimal. In fact, issues related to the management of the elderly are not adequately perceived as a challenge by most academicians and governments in the less developed countries. Among other factors, there is paucity of evidence based information to guide policy decisions, and governments are saddled with taking care of competing pressing needs. Ironically, an aging population implies greater disease and economic and psychosocial burdens directly for the elderly and indirectly for the rest of society. Given these, it has been suggested that aging be considered as a development issue since it affects all of society (Leech, 2000).

In developing countries where the provision of basic medical care and other needs is deficient, and in Africa in particular where civil strife and disruptions are rampant, the aged may be marginalized beyond expectation. Cracks in the extended family structure caused by increasing urbanization, modernization, industrialization, the concomitant selective migration and above all, the negative effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic have weakened the valued position of the elderly in Africa and in Ghana. This calls for intensification of research, advocacy, policy dialogue and programs which will forestall an imminent, albeit unprecedented and inadequately appreciated social problem resulting from the increasing elderly population in developing economies.

Key words: aging, elderly, gerontology, developing countries, demographic transition, health.

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INTEGRATION IN AFRICA: AN APPRAISAL OF THE CONSTITUTIVE ACT OF THE AFRICAN UNION

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ABSTRACT

Africa has made several attempts at integration at various levels. These efforts have recorded varying degrees of success and failure. Via an appraisal of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, this study attempts to determine whether this latest attempt at continental integration in Africa can succeed in certain areas where others, notably the Organisation of African Unity, failed. The Constitutive Act is analyzed in the light of prevailing theories of integration and past and existing integration initiatives in Africa. The study concludes that the African Union represents an acknowledgement of the weaknesses of past integration efforts in Africa and expresses a commitment to forestall further failure. Nevertheless, Africa continues to face challenges and concerted efforts must be made to enhance the capacities of the organs of the Union in order to facilitate the attainment of its objectives and to secure Africa's economic and political independence.

Introduction

Integration has become synonymous to development in many parts of the world. Given the economic, political, and social challenges of today's world, it seems no country can escape the need for a stronger regional focus.¹ This is even truer for countries that are relatively small in terms of their economies.

Africa has been a continent with many colonial powers, each having territory over which they exercised political, economic, social, financial, and military control. This was the case from 1884 up to the 1960s when, led

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WORLDVIEWS AND IDENTITIES: HOW NOT TO EXPLAIN COLLECTIVELY INTENTIONAL ACTIONS

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ABSTRACT

What is a worldview? What is a social or ethnic identity? Do these constructs contribute to the causal sequences or networks that result in group acts executed intentionally? Problems emerge when we consider the theoretical details of attributing one worldview and identity to each individual, or a shared worldview to a whole community. Where does one worldview, or type of identity, leave off and another begin? Comparable fuzziness surfaces when we inspect the notion of distinct worldviews as inherently incommensurable, or distinct social identities as inherently antagonistic.

Three proposed explanations of sectarian conflict or ethnic violence are analysed as examples of theories that link intentional group behaviour to the worldviews and social identities of the individuals directly involved. But as will be shown, it is not facts about worldviews and identities as such, but historically specific facts and contingent circumstances that impinge upon those individual agents' welfare (as well as their beliefs and values) which need to be examined in order to explain their group-motivated behaviour—be it violent, conciliatory, or otherwise.

Introductionⁱ

Despite their wide currency, the suggestive terms 'worldview' and 'identity' do not contribute the explanatory power expected of them in statements giving the reasons for collectively motivated action. This paper examines three theories that trace different paths to a single type of cause in their respective attempts to explain all sectarian violence and ethnic conflict wherever and whenever it manifests. The political scientist Donald

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A MARKET AUGMENTING STATE: AN IMPERATIVE FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT IN A GLOBALIZED ECONOMY

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ABSTRACT

The African development impasse is a problem that has puzzled development economists, policy analysts and political leaders in the developed and developing world alike. In particular the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), especially the IMF and the World Bank, have taken this issue as a major priority concern, and have offered several models and approaches to contribute to solving this perennial problem. The results indicate that either the models being offered are insufficient or are unable to handle the problem (World Bank 1994; Amponsah 2000; Amponsah 2006; Amponsah et. al 2007). Yet, certain new nations, notably those in the High Performing Asian Economies (HPAEs) appear to have found appropriate models for their development problems. This paper argues that, there are certain models that may work for Ghana and the rest of the Poorly Performing African Economies (PPAEs) as well, if only appropriate lessons would be learnt from the innovative model followed by the HPAEs. This model, which I prefer to call a *Market Augmenting State* model, may serve the African nations better than the traditional models offered by the IFIs.

Introduction and Approach

In this paper I review some of the salient mainstream schools of thought on the Ghanaian and/or African development impasse. These include the conventional neoliberal or neoclassical paradigm and its critical opposing paradigm, the radical dependency perspective. We do this by critically

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A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF THE FOUR PILLARS OF LIFELONG LEARNING AS A FOUNDATION FOR EFFECTIVE POLICIES IN DEVELOPING SOCIETIES

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ABSTRACT

Lifelong learning is understood as a process of individual learning and development across the lifespan, from cradle to grave and as an idealised goal for education. It has been argued that in today's new economy characterised by industrial change, globalisation, increased intensive competition, knowledge sharing and transfer, information technology revolution, traditional classroom education or training does not always satisfy all the needs of the new world of lifelong learning. Others have the view that the new paradigm of lifelong learning has emerged mainly to support economic fulfilment and a mandatory requirement for advancement in the job market. But given the challenges that prevail in Africa, the transformation from formal schooling to lifelong learning is challenging especially with the limited access to the internet and funding. The growing awareness of lifelong learning for economic renewal, social regeneration and employability has been argued by some researchers as a mechanism of social control mediated by the market and that the strategies for the promotion of lifelong learning are designed for those in "included social categories" with the policies designed for those in "marginal and excluded" positions. It also points out that the attractive vocabulary associated with personal development often masks other economic and social purposes. Lifelong learning negatively impacts on the structure of society through differential quality of labour, productivity and social cohesion. The concept evades definition and is not directly amenable to measurement. Therefore as countries adopt lifelong learning, there is the need for holistic and comprehensive indicators to facilitate broad-based evaluation.

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