



The Development Myth Audio Archive – Research Brief

Introduction

AFRICA IS PEOPLE

“Let me round this up with a nice little coda. ‘Africa is people’ has another dimension. Africa believes in people. If the philosophical dictum of Descartes “ I think therefore I am” represents a European individualistic ideal, the Bantu declaration ‘Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu’ represents an African communal aspiration: ‘A human is human because of other humans.’. Our humanity is contingent on the humanity of our fellows. No person or group can be human alone.” (Achebe, 1998)

The above quote is the underlying principle to the development of our body of work. Through focusing on communal living and solidarity, we place our customs and traditions as our center. This allows us to clearly identify the ways in which imperialist exploitation has led to underdevelopment in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, that’s not the whole story, communalism has endured in practice and in theory. Looking at the work of Claude Ake and David Osabu-Kle we see how African thinkers have been writing about and imagining alternate realities rooted in solidarity and communalism. This way we develop a repository of our own tools that are useful in unraveling the underdevelopment complex.

Through focusing on community, we show the sharp distinction between individualistic imperialist theories and communal humanistic theories. Unfortunately, the latter has become canon however through this archive we challenge mainstream discourse and provide the tools for development practitioners on the continent to root themselves in. our primary contribution is that community; the people themselves are our greatest ‘asset’



Episode Outlines

	Working title	Research Questions	Content
1	<p>Underdevelopment : Myth & Reality</p> <p>Script writer : Maureen Kasuku</p> <p><i>Main aim: Capturing underdevelopment as a relationship of exploitation</i></p> <p><i>Secondary Aims</i> <i>Highlighting that any definitions that were forced upon communities are harmful and actively contribute to exploitation.</i></p> <p><i>Exploring what our definitions of progress have looked like & what they could look like</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Underdevelopment? What is development? • What does “undeveloped” mean (relative to underdevelopment)and how does it reinforce colonial relations? • How do each of these theorists thinkers define underdevelopment? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Walter Rodney/Samir Amin: Resource extraction (Mineral and Labor) ○ Oyeronke Oyewumi: (Redefinition of gender cosmology, gender roles, and sexuality) ○ Paulin J Hountondji/Kwasi Wiredu (Erasure, diminishment 	<p>For each thinker apply these three questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did African systems look like prior to slavery or colonialism? • How did colonialism affect these systems? • What critique is each author making of colonialism and its idea of development? <p>Rodney</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African models of social and economic organization prior to colonialism (agriculture, trade, education, craftsmanship etc.) • What ideology undergirded these models of organization • Segregation of regions as developed and underdeveloped. Looking at how this is rooted in exploitation. <p>Oyewumi</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yoruba notions around gender prior to colonialism • European ideas around gender and how they destroy African gender systems



		<p>of African epistemologies (ways of knowing))</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The effects of these western ideas around gender on African society <p>Hountondji</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• consider the historic development theories from economy centered to people centered: (ubuntu, social cooperation)• Non- western people centered models of organization and progress• How erasure of African systems of knowing affects African conceptions of knowing<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What is introduced in place of African systems of knowing?○ The role of African Philosophy
2	<p>Barter, Belonging & Borders</p> <p>Script writer: Bryan Ngartia</p> <p><i>Main aim: Exploring alternative narratives to the statehood and belonging beyond arbitrary borders</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How did different African communities interact with each other prior to the emergence of borders?• What is the nation-state?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What is its context within Africa?○ How did the nation-state become the dominant post-colonial organization of African countries?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Looking at trade and movement of people and good prior to the Berlin conference<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Focusing on communities that have been disenfranchised because of these border e.g Ethiopia/Eritrea, The Maasai, Somali, Nubians• Definition of the nation-state• Context of the nation-state in Africa and the emergence of the nation-state as hegemonic organization in Africa• Regional integration as a means of solidarity and subsequently the resistance from the international community



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are the effects of the nation-state becoming the dominant form of organization on the continent? ● How does displacement and border politics contribute to the development of Europe and the underdevelopment of Africa? ● How does disenfranchising the people harm the continent while benefiting the center? ● How have border communities been marginalized relative to communities geographically at the center of the African nation state? ● What other forms of sovereignty have been explored beyond the nation-state? Why did the nation-state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Here read the “Toward African Unity” speeches by Kwame Nkrumah and Haile Selassie (Nkrumah was for pan-Africanism, Haile Selassie was more for the preservation of colonial borders) ○ Also read the intro to Adom Getachew’s “Worldmaking after Empire” – look in folder ● Legacies of exploitation such as The CFA Franc and the repercussions West African countries face when they try to denounce it in exchange for local currency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Senegambia confederation as an example of alternative organisation to counter arbitrary colonial borders/nation-state as the dominant form of organization ● The African Continental free Trade Agreement as a possible vehicle for further integration ● In this part we can also have visualizations of the continent before the berlin conference borders
3	<p>Land,Labor & Liberation</p> <p>Script writers: StoneFace Bombaa & April Zhu</p> <p><i>Main aim: Focusing on people-centered</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How did the colonial state exploit Kenyan laborers and natural resources during the colonial period? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Land and labor as central factors to liberation struggles around Africa. ● Anglo-Maasai treaties and the long lasting effects on the Maa community in Kenya and Tanzania ● Displacement of Kenyans and placement into reserves



	<p><i>organizing and agitation to redistribute land and generate worker power and counter European colonialism/imperialism</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ In the same period, what did industrialization look like in Britain?○ What kinds of benefits for workers and social services were emerging in Britain?● How have land ownership laws evolved over time (from the colonial period, onwards)?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What has remained? (specific focus on Kenya and Tanzania)● What were the demands of labor movements and land protectors during the colonial period? Were these demands achieved?● Following the end of formal colonialism, to what extent have labor and land movements in Kenya/Tanzania been coopted? In what ways?● Labor movements in the 50s to 80s as liberation struggles● Mau Mau, KLFA, Tom Mboya and labor movements	
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		<p>post-independence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How were these movements and organizations community centric?• What can we abstract that would help us in a post-development Africa?• The question of land disenfranchisement for environmental conservation- highlighting how this model alienates indigenous communities who have been stewards of the land<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ambreena Manji○ Leigh Brownhill○ Morcedai Ogada○ African Ecofeminist movements	
4	<p>Arts, Culture, Education and Folklore</p> <p>Script Writers: LAM Sisterhood</p> <p><i>Main aim: Demonstrate that delegitimizing African</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legacies of oral tradition.• Relating the denunciation of culture for education during colonization to exploitation• Loss of material and immaterial culture• What is the aftermath?• The restitution debate - removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What myths were constructed to delegitimize Oral tradition?<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Forcing us to rely heavily on colonial archives (written in Western languages) as the more legitimate form of information.• How did colonial and imperial machinery erase African contributions to pre-colonial civilisations?<ul style="list-style-type: none">- I.e claims that Great Zimbabwe was built by



	<p><i>arts & culture was a deliberate act of colonial machinery (not a side product). The effects of which are far reaching today in language, knowledge hierarchies and education systems.</i></p> <p><i>In Spite of this, African artists, curators and historians find innovative ways to document, disseminate and reinvent traditions by positing that history is living not dead, pushing back against institutions such as museums and imagining alternative pasts/futures.</i></p>	<p>of objects and archives from the continent. Claims that Africans cannot take care of their history</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This creates a power imbalance in which the West positions itself as knowledge keepers and experts on African histories / cultures. • Looking at artists today who are reclaiming folklore and oral tradition 	<p>Phoenicians</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Destruction of Benin City and looting of artifacts - followed by claims that Africans could not have made them - Denial that ancient Egyptians were a black civilisation (refer to the work of Cheikh Anta Diop) • Arts and culture in post-independence curriculums (take Kenya for example) - Aimed at civilizing (cooking, cleanliness, home science) - Destruction of Archives to erase evidence of colonial violence in Kenya (See Operation Legacy) - Removal of Arts from 844 under Moi government? Delegitimizing of Arts in favor of sciences - Banning of African languages in schools (Shame, stigma and punishment around this) • Look at the ways in which African artists reclaiming folklore and oral tradition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Museum of British Colonialism - Women's History Museum Zambia - Wanjiru the Storyteller - Too Early For Birds - Minne Atairu
5	<p>Community is all we have</p> <p>Script writer: Karwitha</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has development meant for revolutionary African people? • What does a people-centered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Populist Theorists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Amilcar Cabral ○ Thomas Sankara



<p>Kirimi</p> <p><i>Main aim: Asserting that progress in Africa has always been people-centered and people led.</i></p> <p><i>Highlighting that communalism endures as a system of organization in the face of capitalist-imperialist expansion</i></p>	<p>development model look like?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What does development rooted in (international) solidarity and community (care) look like?• This consequently, highlights that division is necessary for exploitative structures to endure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Josina Machel (FRELIMO and community care)○ Sylvia Tamale (Afrofeminism and Decolonisation - read from pg 378)• Examples of Revolutionary African Communities<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Umoja Community○ Abahlali baseMjondolo (eKhenana Occupation)<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ https://www.newframe.com/trouble-in-the-promised-land/■ https://mronline.org/2022/01/21/a-place-of-hope-in-a-time-of-spiralling-crisis/■ https://www.slideshare.net/oskare10/building-autonomy-solidarity-from-below-on-the-ekhenana-occupation○ Maragua Women Farmers○ African Ecofeminist and smallholder farmer Resistance<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ https://womin.africa/stories-of-struggle-and-resistance/■ https://feministafrica.net/2019/08/15/disrupting-orthodoxies-in-economic-development-an-african-feminist-perspective-2/■ https://msmagazine.com/2017/11/15/women-speak-ruth-nyambura-feminist-political-ecology/■ https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/sep/22/ecofeminism-
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Research Questions

- A) What did development look like in East Africa prior to colonialism? Who created and stewarded these systems? Who did these systems benefit? What was the ideology undergirding these systems? (Consider social services, agriculture, trade, education across various African societies (don't be limited by borders, as borders themselves are colonial))
- B) How did colonizers exploit African knowledge, labor and natural resources during the colonial period?
- C) In what ways are Africans redefining development/subverting underdevelopment in the post-colonial period?