



NEGATIVE POLITICS AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA: AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED KISWAHILI LITERARY TEXTS

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Abstract

Despite her vast resources, Africa still struggles with development issues. Africa, arguably, remains the least developed continent. Her numerous natural resources have not been fully exploited internally for the benefit of the continent. This state of underdevelopment leaves most people poor and struggling in life. Yet most African leaders do little to change this state of affairs. Instead, most politicians ride on the poverty status of the citizenry to attain and remain in leadership positions. At independence there were promises of fast development in every sphere of life. To date, this still remains a dream in many of the African countries. The same promises of development have been and are being repeated every election year, but are forgotten as soon as the aspirants win political seats. Literary artists have made an effort to present Africa's development woes in their works. This study analyses development problems that Africa faces, from a literary perspective. The analysis is based on two Swahili literary works namely, *Kufa Kuzikana* (Ken Walibora, Kenya) and *Amezidi* (Said Ahmed Mohamed, Tanzania). The purpose of the analysis is to show how literary artists look at issues of governance and development in Africa. In many countries around the world, politics drives many aspects of human development. Herein then, an effort is made to show how negative politics leads to underdevelopment as depicted by writers of literary works in Kiswahili. Light is also shed on how the situation can be changed, from a literary perspective, to enable Africa develop. Such an analysis is important insofar as it helps expand the understanding of the relationship between politics and socio-economic development.

Key words: Africa, countries, underdevelopment, development, governance, management

Introduction

A renowned African literary artist, Chinua Achebe, once asserted that Africa is corrupt through and through. This assessment of Africa made at the dawn of independence for most African countries seems to have withstood the test of time and holds water to date. Many African countries still grapple with governance issues that continue to negatively impact on development aspirations of Africa. For all countries, including those in Africa, politics affects all aspects of life. It is politics that determines how education is run; it is politics that determines how the economy is managed; and, it is the same politics that determines the social life of the countries. In effect, whether Africa develops or not, has for long depended on the type of politics that has shaped the respective countries. Coincidentally, though unfortunately, for most countries, the story has been one of negative politics. Indeed for some, the situation has been so tumultuous that development has been crucified on the cross of politics. This state of affairs has been analyzed by many scholars, from different fields including Swahili literature, who have been keen on assessing why Africa remains underdeveloped after many years of independence. Similarly, the current work bases its analysis on two Swahili literary texts namely *Kufa Kuzikana* (Ken Walibora) and *Amezidi* (Said Ahmed Mohamed). The purpose is to uncover how the writers of the two works handle the interplay between governance and security issues on one hand and development on the other.

Before delving into the analysis, it is worthwhile to gain a general understanding of what development is so that when talking about underdevelopment we have a common understanding of whatever is being missed by African countries and their people. There is no universally accepted definition of development. However, the United Nations sees human development as measured by life expectancy, adult literacy, access to all three levels of education, as

well as a people's average income which is a necessary condition of their freedom of choice (Human Development Report, 1996). Generally then, human development means the well-being of individuals - be it social, economic or political. Indeed, the United Nations Development Program sees ingredients of human development as being threefold: people, opportunities and choices. Development should focus on improving the livelihoods of people. It should also accord people more freedom and opportunities to live lives they value. Finally human development has to provide people with opportunities to make choices. Underdevelopment then means that people lead a low quality of life, have few opportunities and their choices in life are minimal. In short, the people's well-being is undesirably low. A people who are underdeveloped suffer from food insecurity, have political and governance issues, have problems accessing quality education and quality healthcare and are not adequately enabled technologically.

Approaches to the analysis

The two works have been purposively selected since the writers tackle the subject of politics and development at length. However, this is not the only theme that they dwell on. As such intensity sampling was applied to get excerpts that are rich in the description of the interplay between politics and development. The texts were then subjected to content analysis to tease out the relevant governance and development issues as presented by the writers. The analysis is anchored on sociological approaches to criticism. Sociological approaches place the literary work in the cultural, economic and political context in which it is written or received. The critic then makes sense out of the texts based on the cultural, economic and political situation in which the text is located. Specific ideas and concepts employed are drawn from absurdism, Marxism and postcolonial theory. In absurdism, the main line of argument is that the human being is viewed as an isolated existent who is cast into an alien universe; the human world possesses no inherent truth, value or meaning; and human life is represented in its fruitless search for purpose and significance, as it moves from the nothingness whence it came toward the nothingness where it must end (Abrams and Harpham, 2012). The existence of the human is thus viewed as anguished and absurd. Such conception of life is important in understanding the disgusting inaction that is prevalent in *Amezidi* and which the writer laments is the cause of underdevelopment. According to Wright (2005), the central idea in Marxism tradition is the concept of class. Traditional Marxism explains this concept with reference to the mode of production in society thereby splitting it into two antagonistic camps – the bourgeois and the proletarians. The concept of class is better understood as an adjective since 'camps' in human society will always have relations. These class relations are oftentimes punctuated with conflicts. It is upon such conception of society that we have analysed both *Amezidi* and *KufaKuzikana*. Finally, the analysis has also made use of ideas from the postcolonial theory. Postcolonial theory attempts to explain the hidden implications of colonial and imperialist relations between former colonizers and the people that were colonized (Hawthorn, 2010). Among other things post-colonialism considers the effects of the colonizers on the people that were colonized, continued forms of colonialism, exploitation and cultural imperialism.

Mohamed and Walibora can be considered some of the most prolific Kiswahili literary writers in East Africa. Their works span virtually all the genres of Kiswahili literature. Similarly, their works have been studied and critiqued by many scholars. Both write mainly from a realist perspective and examine at length social, cultural, political and economic issues of society. In analyzing *KufaKuzikana* for example, Bertoncini-Zubkova (*Swahili Forum* 14, 2007) observes that the novel deals with two main issues – ethnicity and how friendship can overcome feelings of ethnicity. Another critic who looks at Walibora's works is Gromov. In a paper where women characters in three novels by Walibora are analysed, Gromov (*SwahiliForum*, 3, 2015) argues that Walibora portrays women as victims of a cruel and unfair patriarchal society. Evident from this is the fact that Walibora's themes are mainly sociological. Some other works of Walibora's literary works are: *SikuNjema*, *NdotoyaAmerika*, *KidagaaKimemwozea* and *MbayaWetu*. Similarly, Mohamed deals with socio-cultural and political subjects in most of his works such as *DuniaMtiMkavu*, *KizaKatikaNuru*, *Utengano*, *BabuAlipofufuka*, and *Janga la Werevu* among others.

Politics, Governance and Underdevelopment

The interplay between politics and governance directly affects development in virtually all countries. This subject is discussed at length by the writers of the two selected works. The unfortunate aspect about African politics is that politicians ensure it affects all sectors including education, health, agriculture, infrastructure and the economy in general. These sectors are not left to professionals to run them accordingly. Instead, they are dished out to political cronies of those in power who eventually run them down.

First, we examine how politicians get into positions of power. Walibora's view is that the African politician ascends to power on the tribal ticket. They stir tribal support and not policies. This is the approach that Johnstone Mabende in *KufaKuzikana* uses. During his campaigns, he asks his tribe's people (the Korosho) to get rid of their neighbouring tribe, the Kanju. The writer captures this scenario in the following words:

“*Hatutakimadoadoahapa. Wakanjusharti wahamenakurudikwao Kanju.*” (pg. 2)

(We do not want undesirable elements (people from outside) here. The Kanju must leave and go back to their homeland, Kanju.)

These words are uttered by none other than a political aspirant and he directs them at the people from his tribe (the Korosho). In turn they respond to his direction jubilantly, apart from only one Korosho man, Teacher Alex, who soon after the incident suffers mental illness. Only Teacher Alex opposes Mabende to his face but no one takes him seriously. Note that Mabende uses the obligatory modal auxiliary verb, *sharti* (must) to indicate that he is serious about what he is asking his people to do. There are no options for the Kanju but to leave. He labels them (Kanju people) as Zionists, only interested in snatching land from the Korosho. With this he stirs emotions of his tribe against their neighbours. Clearly, Mabende uses class differentiation to set one community against the other. At the surface level he bases this on what the Marxists call the base (in this case, land, which is a primary means of production). However, at a higher level he is manipulating his community at the level of the superstructure to his own selfish gain – to get power and retain it (Hawthorn 2010, Wright 2005). Thus class relations cannot only be seen at the economic level but at an even more complex human level where class antagonisms are not only a result of struggle to control the basic means of production but also social differentiation even within one class. Some members of the same class may cunningly exploit members of their own class to their individual benefit. As Marx and Engels put it, “the modern bourgeois society...has not done away with class antagonisms but has established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of old ones” (Marx and Engels, 2008). What we see in *KufaKuzikana* then is an ever evolving case of class differentiation and the struggle to keep one's class. This class differentiation is replete with antagonisms.

Mabende manages to be elected and once in power he pursues his campaign against the Kanju. Soon there is ethnic violence in which many Kanju people lose their lives. Mabende remains in power and ironically appointed the minister of internal security! As a result of the ethnic animosity and violence, all development that had been hitherto achieved is reversed. The health system collapses; roads become dilapidated; agriculture is brought to its knees; and virtually everything stops working. This is how bad politics based on tribal affiliation can get.

The picture that Walibora paints is reminiscent of what happened in Kenya during 2007/2008 General Elections and the ethnic clashes that followed. The events measure so closely that one wonders whether the writer had a premonition of those events. Such incidents are not a rare occurrence on the African continent. The ethnic skirmishes of 1994 in Rwanda clearly attest to this. As recently as 2015, politics caused insecurity in Burundi. Sudan has had ethnic clashes based on politics for so long that the Sudanese have grown weary of the situation. Even the youngest nation in Africa, South Sudan, has already fallen victim to fighting as a result of jostling for political power. Many African countries suffer from effects of personality rule instead of collective governance a situation that undermines development.

Bad political leadership does not only remain at the political level but also permeates the government departments supposed to serve the common citizen. For instance, at the hospitals, one is forced to pay a bribe for them to be attended to. Also, insurance firms are victims of corruption. They hardly pay dues to beneficiaries as is expected. Dues meant for the late Akida's mother for example, have delayed so much that he has to make a visit to the insurance firm's offices to enquire about the payment. But even after Akida makes this effort, it yields little as the secretary receives him coldly and offers no good response. Another claimant, Yusuf Matuko, has had such a long wait for his claim that he gives up. When he fails to get a satisfactory answer from the same insurance firm that Akida has visited, he decides to commit suicide by jumping down a storey building.

Additionally, the police department gets compromised as it fails to serve all impartially. At the height of ethnic clashes, one of the characters, Tom, is escorted by the police to go and bury his late father at his ancestral home as per his wish (he is one of the victims of the ensuing clashes, pg. 91). After burying Mzee Mangala, Tom is accosted

by a group of about twenty marauding Korosho fighters. This group is escorted by a police officer who happens to be senior in rank to those who had escorted Tom. This police *boss* orders the junior officers who were protecting Tom's company not to interfere with the attackers, but leave them to do whatever they wished (pg. 103). Therefore, instead of the junior officers protecting him, they are made to simply watch Tom being attacked by the Korosho men before being left for dead. After this, the police *boss* orders the junior officers to leave Tom at the scene of the attack and immediately go back to the capital city, Tandika, from where they had come. It is Akida who decides to remain behind and stealthily takes the injured Tom away for treatment. In any country, the role of police officers is to maintain law and order. They work with society to restore peace where there is none. This does not happen in Baraki and Kiwachema at large. Contrary to our expectations, the police abet violence. What the writer emphasizes here is that political leadership based on tribalism is immensely destructive to the country. It destroys all organs of the government such that not much can be achieved especially in the absence of peace and harmony in the country. In the absence of peace in any country people cannot engage in meaningful economic activities and this retards a country's development. Social life is severely affected making human resource not play its rightful role in bringing about development.

From a post-colonial understanding, the widespread misuse of power can only be seen as one of the effects of colonization. Having taken the reins of power, the former colonized people either copied what they saw happen to them (the colonial masters oppressed them so in turn they use that as a strategy of leadership) or that attitude simply got implanted in their minds. Power is then used selfishly by the new local 'masters'.

In *Amezidi*, Mohamed blames underdevelopment in Africa on two major issues – corruption (*ufisadi*) and the dependence syndrome (*utegemezi*). Acts of corruption range from *wivu* (laziness or failure to go to work); *ubadhirifu* (extravagant life and celebrations) to *wizi* (sheer looting of government resources).

The loathsome dependence syndrome and laziness that we encounter in *Amezidi* can be well understood within the realm of absurdism. As already observed earlier on in this work, absurdism conceives the human world as having no value or meaning; and as such, a search for meaning and significance in the world is worthless. It is this perception of life that dictates the life of the two main characters, Ame and Zidi. In scene 2, we encounter the main characters having not been on duty for two weeks for no good reasons. Their boss looks for them so that they can attend to work that has piled up but fails to get them. Yet they are not engaged in any useful work at home apart from just resting and chatting about how blessed they are. On realizing that this can cost them their jobs, they decide to seek assistance from a government medical officer, Dr. Vuai (pg. 16). Getting a medical certificate from a government health institution would help offer a genuine reason as to why they have been away from duty for so long. This off duty medical certificate is a fake one and is obtained on the basis of the two having a relationship with Dr. Vuai who is also a government employee. These three government employees collude to defeat government policies on attendance of duty. At this rate, the government cannot attain its development goals since those expected to assist are failing in their duties.

Ame and Zidi are 'drowning in meaninglessness' (Ionescu, 1951 as quoted in Abrams and Harpham, 2012). They find it worthless to make any effort to produce food for themselves, carry out any technological discoveries or exploit their natural resources for their own advantage. This is why when one looks at their lives; one can only appreciate their suffering with derision. Indeed, this is a feature of the absurd. Throughout *Amezidi*, we do not find the characters making any effort to deal with issues that assail them. Instead they exhibit either sheer laziness or unwillingness to employ own effort to change their conditions of life. They are unable to build a house for their residence, cannot acquire furniture and fail even to cook the little food they have before consuming it. Rather they eat it raw. The education system is not exploited well enough for technological advancement. Ame and Zidi's response to this inaction is that it is needless to make any effort. They would rather use whatever they have in its current form without improving it. On matters of technological discoveries, they argue that there is no need to make any effort since all they would discover has already been discovered by the Western world and as such their part is just to buy from Western countries. In effect everything is meaningless to these characters. Such an attitude among people can hardly spur any development in a country.

Another avenue of understanding this state of affairs (laziness and inaction) is by considering the post-colonial theory. According to theorists such as Gayatri Spivak (2012) and Edward Said (1979), colonialism does not end with gaining independence. Rather it continues to rear its head through new forms such as economic oppression, socio-cultural oppression, psychological oppression and political oppression. Many of these new forms of colonization are

quite evident in *Amezidi*. One can comfortably conclude that the former colonized people such as those depicted in *Amezidi* are imbued with Western values so much so that they utterly depend on the Westerners. They depend on Western education systems without making them relevant to their situations, rely on importing all they need from the Western world, export all their raw minerals to the West and when in problems turn to the West for assistance such as food donations during times of famine. As Ame and Zidi sit by, the Western nations are exploiting their countries economically. They export their mineral resources to the West oblivious of the fact that it is one way of enriching the West since products made from the minerals are economically more valuable than the raw mineral resources. This way they expose themselves to economic exploitation. Apparently, the former colonizers ensured that their subjects internalized the fact that they (the Europeans) are superior all-round. It is the West that can come up with any technological discoveries and sell to its former colonies; it is the West that should work and produce all that the "Others" need. As a result of internalizing such mentality, most Africans fail to make use of their human resource effectively and instead depend on the West. It is for this reason that we find in *Amezidi* simple items like match sticks, clothing, furniture and even technical services have to be sourced from outside Africa.

Non-attendance to duty is not the only way of slowing down development in a country. In government offices, both those in charge of departments (bosses) and procurement officers (their assistants) collude to defraud the government they are serving (scene 5). The Boss and his Assistant come up with an inflated list of items they are supposed to buy for running the office. The long and expansive list (*orodhandefu... orodhanono*, pg. 44) is meant to serve their interests. They expect to get a kick back of ten percent and that is why the prices are inflated. The list is equally long for the same reason, so that they can reap maximally from the procurement process. Two ills are evident here, extravagance and defrauding the government, and both are executed by government employees! The same extravagance is witnessed during the Independence Day celebrations. During the previous year, twenty million shillings was spent. The current year's celebrations are expected to gobble forty million shillings from government coffers (pg. 73). It appears that no one is keen on moderation in many African countries. At all levels of government, expenditure is unchecked. Yet this expenditure is not going towards development projects. Instead all of it is channeled to recurrent items- running the office, entertainment, various celebrations and so on. What becomes clear here is that such practices by government officials pull down development of their countries.

Government officers understand how the government works. They know that auditors would come to inspect books of accounts. But they are not disturbed at this since they know how to "handle" them. So when the government auditors eventually visit their offices to inspect their books of accounts, they treat them as best as they can (scene 6). The auditors are first feted on hot drinks (pg. 49) before they embark on their work. Therefore, when a shortfall of one million shillings is discovered in the accounting documents, the Boss becomes worried as it can lead to his prosecution and eventual imprisonment (pg. 50-51). Since the Boss does not want such a fate to befall him, both agree on a bribe of a half a million shillings to be given to the auditor to cover up the discovery of the lost government funds. Ironically, the bribe is to come from the same government account. When all is done, they destroy the accounting documents by burning them to get rid of any evidence should other officers be sent to inspect the same accounting documents.

Once the bribe is executed, both the auditor and the audited celebrate since they have escaped impending danger by permanently sealing any evidence whatsoever. Mohamed details the rot in government offices on matters of financial expenditure with such minute detail that one finds it hard to comprehend how African governments are able to survive with such loss of huge sums of money. It is disgusting that Africans themselves can do such things to their own countries with no shame at all. It shows minimal levels of patriotism, if any. It is disturbing that this is done by officers who are trained and entrusted with the wealth and resources of the country to manage on behalf of citizens. They are expected to practice prudent ways of governance yet they fail due to selfish interests which they put first. Such men and women are saboteurs of the process of law to the extent that they bring down the governments they are serving. Structures of governance are weak at all levels not because they are lacking but because those who manage them lack patriotism and devotion to country and humanity.

Thus, we come across so many issues of governance in African countries as represented by the two literary artists. The issues are seen at both the level of political leadership and across other management levels. From whichever angle one wants to consider the issues, problems abound that stand in the way of development for African countries.

Governance Issues in Education

A country's all-round development is dependent on the existing system of education and how that education is managed. A system that is incompatible with the development needs of the country cannot serve it well. Equally, if the system of education is relevant to the country but is poorly managed then the country will fail to benefit from it. In *Amezidi*, the writer raises issues that touch on both curricular designs used in African countries as well as implementation issues. These two, in Mohamed's view, serve to severely undermine development aspirations of most African countries. To understand this situation, one may turn to the postcolonial theory. This irrelevant system of education was either inherited or imposed on the colonized nations by the colonizers without much regard to its efficacy in dealing with local problems. On gaining independence, some of the former colonies carried on with the inherited systems of education without interrogating them to see whether they were in synch with the aspirations of the nations. It is such system of education that Mohamed writes about in *Amezidi*.

Curricular designs found in most African countries are faulty (*Amezidi*, Scene 4). Whatever the curricular contain is more of a repetition of what has been around for long (pg. 29). Such content in the curriculum does not offer much in terms of turning around the economies of African countries. This is aptly captured by the Student when he argues with the Teacher on the relevance of whatever they are learning. The student feels that whatever they are learning is not useful to them since at the end of the course they can neither secure employment nor improve the food security of their countries (pg. 38). As result of such faulty curricular, Africa continues to suffer food insecurity (pg. 35) whose effect is starvation and loss of human life. The dignity of Africans is lost since they can hardly afford such basic commodities as food yet they have vast acres of arable land. Due to their perennial reliance on rain-fed agriculture, they are unable to avoid the vagaries of nature when the rains fail. In essence, the education system has not helped Africans improve their food security and is therefore ineffective. They continue to rely on Western countries such as America, Britain and France and the United Nations for food donations (pg. 35). This is not quite a positive picture.

Similarly, the curricular designs fail to inspire Africans to exploit their vast natural resources (pg. 33-34). Instead, they perpetually depend on donations and are even dying of hunger yet they live in a continent endowed with such vast resources such as human resource, coal, copper, gold, silver, oil, iron and uranium. Indeed, to date, Africa exports large quantities of these resources to Western and Asian countries. Little effort has been made to process these minerals here in Africa and export value added products. This is why Africa is the source of such immense wealth yet it still remains poor. Such a scenario can only be blamed on an education system that has failed to produce people with expertise to bring about technological creativity and innovation to be used in exploiting the vast resources fully. Instead, the system of education advances the dependence syndrome where the African sleeps since he possesses the raw materials and others think for him (pg. 34). The African celebrates this state of affairs as he counts himself rich since he has the resources that others do not have. It is this that makes him sing the song of riches (pg. 33-34). Yet it is laughable that whereas Africa has all these resources, it still depends on those who have little or none. This is because Africans lack the technical knowhow to fully exploit the resources to their advantage. They have to depend on the technological advancement of the outside world to benefit from the raw materials that they possess. Raw materials are exported at low returns only to buy products from the raw materials produced locally at very exorbitant prices.

Apart from the curricular designs being faulty, the pedagogical approaches employed in implementing the curricular are also questionable. The Teacher (Zidi) relies on rote learning in executing his lesson (pg. 29). He makes his students recite the *Archimides' Principle*. He is satisfied when the Students (represented by Ame) are able to correctly recite this principle. However, the students are not happy with this. They question the significance of reciting knowledge that was discovered long ago for many years. What the amazement by students brings to the fore is that in Africa, people continue to rely on obsolete knowledge. Such knowledge should only act as a catalyst for coming up with other new ways of improving economies or even coming up with own knowledge and ways of improving our economies (pg. 30). Apart from requiring his students to recite what he has taught them, the Teacher also instills fear in the students. He walks into class with a long stick (pg. 29) possibly to be used against those who have not memorized what has been taught. Again this approach does not bring the best out of a student. In effect, rote learning combined with fear makes the students fail to develop creative and innovation skills. As such they can hardly be innovative at the end of their course. They can only recite, the same way tales are remembered and recounted. Evidently, students are weary of both the curriculum as well as its implementation. No wonder they repeatedly pose this question to their teacher:

Hivi...hivibaadayakukaririmawazoyaArchimideskwamiakamingi, kwaninihatujawezakuundany ambizi?(pg. 30)

(So...so having recited the Archimides Principle for so many years, why have we not been able to come up with our own submarine?)

This same question is asked by two different students twice showing how fed up they are with an education system that fails to turn around their countries economically. Subsequently, they are asking their leaders to rethink their education system and come up with a more progressive system of education.

The system of education depicted in *Amezidi* ends up being boring since it is neither challenging nor satisfactory to the students. This boredom is depicted by the Teacher and Students having a nap in between the lesson((*dakikatanozakulala... Tunzayenu*(Five minutes of a nap...your reward)pg. 35)). Instead of education being a panacea to Africa's problems, it becomes a problem in itself.

In *KufaKuzikana*, the education sector is riddled with corruption. When Akida, the main character, goes to attend the Prize Giving ceremony at the end of his primary school education, he learns that two of his competitors are from families of senior government officials. He reads foul play here. They may not have performed very well but some games were played to make them emerge at the top nationally. This means that undeserving cases are rewarded with the best schools and progress in education. Corrupt deals rule the education sector hence the country cannot develop since the right brains are not made to progress so as to benefit the country.

Unquestionably, education is the key to the development of any country. It unlocks the creative and innovative potentialities of the people who then change the state of affairs in the country. Yet when education is left to get riddled with so many problems, the consumers fail to benefit from it fully and eventually the country suffers in terms of development. These issues are discussed at length especially in *Amezidi*.

Evidently, governance issues at the political level as well as management (administrative) level continue to assail many African countries. It is for this reason that after many years of independence, Africa's quest for development only remains marginal (Ibrahim and Cheri, 2013). The people's well-being is low and they have few choices to make in many spheres of life.

What is the Way out for Africa's Underdevelopment Situation?

Solutions offered by Mohamed and Walibora can be better comprehended in view of the postcolonial theory. It is incumbent upon the African to realize that most of the problems assailing Africa are as a result of the mental disposition of the African which in part has been affected by long years of being colonised. Ngugi observes that the modern world is a product of European imperialism which has to be waged against (WaThiong'o, 1993). The African has to shed off "the Other" mentality which clearly is a result of colonialism. Such mentality is the one that leads the African to feel weak, less civilized (so African culture is uncivilized), inscrutable and wicked (Said, 1979). The African should not feel that he is subaltern (Spivak, 2012). This is a making of the West. The African should thus develop confidence in the self – his abilities, culture, vision and creativity. These abilities are to guide the continent in its development aspirations.

In *Amezidi*, Mohamed seems not to offer solutions directly. This is because he writes his play based on absurdism, an offshoot of existentialism. In absurdism, man is surrounded by many problems whose solutions are hard to find. The world in which this man lives offers no solutions. As such there is no point in the same man seeking solutions to his problems. This is exactly what the characters Ame and Zidi do. They do not seek solutions to their problems of disease, hunger, underdevelopment and lack of technological advancement. Instead, they are comfortably depending on whatever solutions can be offered by developed nations such as America, Britain and France. Alternatively, they accept the situation as it is even if it endangers their lives. And indeed this is what they opt to do. On failing to seek a solution to their food security situation, they are left depending on food donations from Europe. Some of the food donated is bad and harmful to their health. Yet they celebrate as they are dying meaning they have accepted their *status quo* without seeking workable and practical solutions based on their rich

environment. It appears that this is one of the ways in which some African countries have chosen to go yet it is not the right one.

Indirectly, Mohamed suggests that for Africa to develop, its people have to shed off the imperialist dependence syndrome that seem to have so much sunk in the minds of many Africans as a result of being colonized. Again the African has to recover his self-identity and cultivate self-confidence. He needs to reclaim his selfhood in a conscious way and know that he has the ability to turn around his situation. Thus, Africa can only develop when it chooses to exploit its vast natural resources itself instead of exporting them. This would call for technological advancement that can only be realized through an education system that is right for the development that is envisaged. It calls for designing practical curricular and implementing them in a way that brings out creativity and innovativeness from minds of its consumers. The two, curricular and implementation are central to changing Africa's development options. The right education will lead to effective exploitation of Africa's natural resources by Africa for Africa. On achieving this, what remains is working on governance and management issues so that Africa's wealth does not go to waste by benefitting only few individuals but instead it should help develop African countries. Strong government institutions would thus be required. However, since these institutions cannot run themselves, it calls for Africans to re-examine their consciences and develop a sense of patriotism to their countries. Africa's development can only be brought about by Africans themselves hence the need to hold very high levels of integrity in their service to their countries.

However, Walibora in *KufaKuzikana* offers a number of practical solutions to Africa's underdevelopment. The overriding one is unity. He fights tribalism and divisive politics at all costs. This is seen in him bringing together two young men from the two tribes that have been divided by politicians. Akida is from the Kanju community whereas Tim is from the Korosho. The two young men are great friends and even Tim hosts Akida when he travels to Tandika to receive his award. Even when Tim's father, Zablon Mapisi, participates in the ethnic violence that occurs and actually murders Akida's father, Mzee Sululu, the relationship between the two remains unshaken. The writer in this case posits that it is only unity among all Africans that can lead to their development. This calls for shunning tribalism. For this reason, the main architect of tribalism, Johnstone Mabende, is killed. It means tribalism has to be done away with at all costs. International brotherhood has to be promoted in all countries, not only Africa. This accounts for why another character, Johnson Muyaka (Jerumani), kills a German racist while he is away for studies in Germany.

Another solution offered by Walibora is investing in education. Akida, the main character, travels to the capital city (Tandika) to receive an award having performed highly in his primary school examination. Tom, after receiving education in Canada, comes back to his home country in Africa, Kiwachema, to contribute to its development. The writer emphasizes here that good education is paramount in the development of a country. The leadership of the country should therefore do all it can to ensure its citizens receive the best education possible. It is such education that can help bring about development in a country. This education should be given devoid of nepotism, tribalism and other prejudices. Those who are able to attain it should be given maximum support.

Further, Walibora posits that having strong government institutions that serve people impartially can help spur development in Africa. This is why he paints the picture of a great city (Tandika) when Akida visits it for the first time. Strong government institutions offer the right policy and governance environment that is useful in directing development. It is this understanding that makes Walibora castigate the police and health institutions when they fail to measure up to what is expected of them.

Conclusion

It is evident from the analysis that Africa's underdevelopment, in the view of writers of the analyzed texts, is caused by Africans themselves. Africans seem to put their selfish interests ahead of those of their countries. This state of affairs has to change so as to realize development. Political power should not be used for personal advancement. Rather it ought to be used in order to advance collective well-being of the people. The rule of law has to be promoted and not personality rule (Agbude, Exllence-Oluyee and Godwyns-Agbude in *Open Journal of Leadership*, 3, 2014). At the centre of development is education which has to be nurtured with great care by ensuring that every citizen gets an opportunity to access it to the highest level as per one's ability. Further, the curriculum should be designed and implemented in such a way that it promotes creativity and innovativeness.

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