

Review of: "Donald Davidson's Theory of Action in Relation to Responsibility: Addressing Crisis of Social Development in Africa"

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This paper addresses the important topic of theoretical action in relation to responsibility and sets out to address the crisis of social development in Africa. The authors rightly point out the deterioration of the continent in terms of its citizens and the poverty suffered by most Africans, who make up 70% of the global poor, despite its rich resources. In the consideration of development, the authors describe lack of mental and ideal understanding which has kept Africa in darkness due to the misuse of political power. Indeed, the amassment of wealth, comfort and leisure of the few are not considered appropriate development for its suffering citizens.

While this topic is important, the paper scope is limited in its addressing of the social development crisis in Africa. In wishing to develop this continent to be more prosperous for its inhabitants, what political, social and economic systems could or should be considered? If no country in Africa has escaped corruption and greed, and personal rule based on ethnic and family affiliations constitute the political models of governance, what needs to happen? What type of responsibility needs to be taken? What type of governance should we be following? Would benevolent dictatorships, for example, support the principles of belief and desire in action? With the diversity we have on the continent, is it plausible to comment on an African way rather than consider the multiple needs of Africans in different countries?

If Africa were to develop an African way, based on caring for its inhabitants, what would that be? We are not getting it right in South Africa, despite the leadership example of Nelson Mandela, for example, and we are suffering from similar woes to Nigeria. While I like the researchers' focus on not blaming outside forces like slavery and colonialism, my suggestions for improvements would be a clearer discussion of alternate African intentional action to lift the continent out of its poverty trap. What beliefs or desires need to happen to make leaders responsible? The paper rightly points out some prerequisites of development: human dignity, raising the people's standard of living, self-fulfilment, provision of man's basic needs, being guided by sound ethical principles, and creative labour. How can we begin to take new steps towards improved and more humane ways of African appropriate systems of governance going forward?