

## (De)Centring Ubuntu? Africa's damaged Dignity in Xenophobia and Afrophobia in Development

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*'Aşo kò bá Omoye mó; Omoye ti rin ihòhò dójà.'*

*[The clothes came too late for Omoye; Omoye already marched naked into the town square.]<sup>1</sup>*

### Abstract

Africa reels from a damaged dignity due to the imperialist's social, political, cultural, and economic blows. It is irresolute of its place in human affairs. The post-colonial Africa and its nuances toe the line in racial identities. The result is a deep embedment of Africaness as analogous to an inferior identity. Perhaps African 'being' juxtaposed to other racial identities may explain xenophobia as a self-preservation mechanism. However, Afrophobia is disconcerting as it displays poor self-esteem derived from global Eurocentric historical power structures. This article addresses the question, how can Africans and Africa instrumentalise history to promote an African agency in ubuntu/communalism in collaborations within and beyond the continent? The paper attempts to nuance xeno-afrophobia using Afrocentrism as a theory and methodology through the exposure of colonial legacies and structures. It untangles the malady of Africans hatred of other Africans as self-projection, self-deprecating actions, and inactions. The article uses secondary data through careful selection of literature to bring forth an awareness of Africans knowing, and knowledge while taking precaution from assuming African communalism is unique to the continent and better than Westernism. The article promotes the idea of embracing the new/modernism while taking precaution to retain certain African communal values anchored in the ontological and methodological communalism.

**Key Words:** *Africa, Xenophobia, Afrophobia, Afrocentricity, Communalism, South Africa, Capitalism, Democracy, colonialism*

### Introduction.

Post-colonial challenges in Africa form key issues in xenophobia and Afrophobia, which when combined, becomes Xeno-Afrophobia. Using post-colonial lenses, Xeno-Afrophobia appears as the hatred of black foreign nationals – 'stranger' from other African countries by local Africans, thus self-hatred. The self-hatred is both manifest and obscure in an individual. Self-hatred occurs in Xeno-Afrophobia, as lactification (physical, social, and psychological 'whitening'), black-on-black negative projection, social relations like unhealthy inter-racial/group relationships based on the idea that humans are divided into distinct groups based on inherited physical and behavioural differences and undermining or exaggeration of one's African identity. In a bid to gain acceptance in the xenophobic modernising world, a black person 'whitens' or lactifies through rejecting blackness and its social cultural aspects.

Biko states that ‘No wonder the African child learns to hate his heritage in his days at school. So negative is the image presented to him, that he tends to find solace only in close identification with the white society’<sup>2</sup> Fanon refers to the close association with the white society as lactification.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, Fanon states that ‘a normal black child having grown up with a normal black family, will become abnormal at the slightest contact with the white world.’<sup>4</sup> Juxtaposing Biko are expressions of blindness to anything that is not African, I dare to say ‘extreme’ ‘Dashikiness’ (wearing of the African material everywhere to counter the Western culture) are no different from ‘blacks want to be whites’ for both measures display a struggle with ‘being’ African, thus the need to convince either the ‘self’ or ‘other,’ of one’s identity. All the above are inferiority complexes in black people which this paper attempts to elucidate in looking at xeno-Afrophobia.

The effects of Afrophobia, also known as black-on-black hatred where black people treat other blacks as inferior, lower beings compared to the whites or non-blacks speaks volumes on the post-colonial heritage. The article argues that colonial and post-colonial hegemonic powers implanted a psycho-malaise of black hatred which blacks perpetuate within and among themselves, hence a need to embrace the ‘old’ African culture (communalism/ubuntu) together with the new global developments. The article dares to propose the death of Africans’ self-hatred through the unity of Africans in social-political, cultural, and economic endeavours that embrace Afrocentrism first and foremost in addition to adapting to the global changes.

### **Afrocentrism as a Theory and Methodology**

Afrocentrism stems from the prism that knowledge and knowing of Africa should begin from the culture, and history of the African people. The root of Afrocentrism is found in the works of scholars like William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (WEB Dubois), Cheikh Anta Diop, Kwame Nkrumah, and Julius Nyerere, among others.

Du Bois showed problems faced by African peoples in his dissertation ... ‘The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America.’<sup>5</sup> In the works he displays a connection between the American slave policy and the colonialism policy of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In the attempt to suppress African slave trade in America, some regions like the North Carolina Province tried to resist the increase in import duties on slave trade from the African Coast that would discourage slavery. Regions like the West Indies and in South Carolina and Georgia not only encouraged slave trade but also had harsh maltreatment of the slaves ranging from Crucifixion, burning, and starvation as legal modes of punishment. Whereas this paper is not about slavery and slave trade, it shows the negative nuances associated with the enslavement of the blacks that threatens the black consciousness creating a need to distance the self from ‘blackness.’

In another work, Dubois, portrays a duality in *The Souls of Black Folks*,<sup>6</sup> faced by the black Americans in a country that was awash with racism. He writes about the ‘twoness,’ the double consciousness that black folks wrestle within their everyday life. The dichotomy is forever present... ‘One ever feels his two-ness—an American, a Negro: two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.’ In the text, the black person cannot exist solely as black, but must

deal with otherness within self. It is this constant wrestle within the self that Du Bois sought to bring forth, the Africaness, blackness which was in a perpetual battle with other consciousness.

Du Bois goes on to state that the controlled mind leads to a person seeing ‘oneself through the eyes of others.’<sup>7</sup> This is what Fanon refers as indoctrination of abnormality of a black child from a normal black family once exposed to the white world.<sup>8</sup> It thus takes a deliberate effort to centre Africaness, African knowing and knowledges. In Du Bois work, the two consciousness are trapped between being an American and a negro/black/slave. One can dare to say that the first identity easily overpowers the second due to its supposed positive attributes compared to the tainted identity of being black.

Du Bois works and later activism the creation of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP), and Pan Africanism, the recognition of the rights of the African and black people was formed.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, Afrocentrism is rooted on the recognition, acknowledgement, and use of African ways of knowing and solving African issues which other scholars spearheaded too.

Diop, looking at the ancient Egyptians history, archeology and anthropology, observed Egyptians as having negroid origins. He is quoted stating that “In contemporary descriptions of ancient Egyptians, this question is never raised. Eyewitnesses of that period formally affirm that the Egyptians were Blacks.”<sup>10</sup> Rooting Egyptians to their negroid origins was a pertinent contribution to Afrocentricity. It exposed racism/racist lenses from Egyptologists who attempted to deny the Egyptians African origins decentering African knowledges. Ngulube observes that Diop’s championship of Egyptian negroid roots was to protect the black people against imperialism.<sup>11</sup> According to Diop, ‘the history of black Africa will remain suspended in the air and cannot be written correctly until African historians dare to connect it with the history of Egypt.’<sup>12</sup> Some of the renown works by Diop include ‘The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality?’<sup>13</sup> Like Du Bois, Diop was involved in scholarship and activism that spearheaded Afrocentricity. Diop, born in Senegal, was among the continentalist Africans that brewed the passion for Africaness. Delving into the history of Africans was critical for it linked all black people whose roots were in Africa, a critical basis for Afrocentrity.

Asante is credited for proposing the Afrocentrism theory.<sup>14</sup> He defines Afrocentricity as ‘a mode of thought and action in which the centrality of African interests, values, and perspectives predominate.’<sup>15</sup> In regards to theory, it is the placing of African people in the centre of any analysis of African phenomena.<sup>16</sup>

Afrocentrism brings the focus on African people and their agency. Like Du Bois and Diop, Asante’s work from the 70s onwards coincided with the struggles of the black people in the continent where imperialism threatened the very fabric of humanity of Africans. Beyond the continent, his work detailed the enslavement of blacks and added to the anti-slavery, racism and segregation movements. Notably, Asante brought to light the centrality of African identity in theory and methodology.

It suffices to say that knowing the African stories and struggles necessitates using theoretical and methodological approaches that focuses on their cultural identity. Afrocentricity ‘challenged the

continuation of white racial hegemony over all symbols and social systems by opposing archaic structures of race based on the imposition of a particular cultural reality as if it were universal.<sup>17</sup> To know Africa and Africans requires decentering Eurocentrism and centering Afrocentrism. It calls for African agency, meaning the ability by Africa and Africans to act independently in their own best interests. The ability to provide the psycho-cultural resources required to avail freedom in the continent. The freedom includes the spheres of social, psychological, economic and political interactions.

The Afrocentricity theory thus cuts across disciplines such as psychology, anthropology, language, history, theology and, philosophy.<sup>18</sup> Afrocentrism, added to them the discipline of communication led to considerations on matters culture and liberal democracy hence easing tensions in tenuous relationship.<sup>19</sup> The emphasis is on centring African history and culture even when looking at the African-American experience.

As noted, 'The Africa centred perspective of history rests on the premise that it is valid to posit Africa as a geographical and cultural starting base in the study of peoples of African descent.'<sup>20</sup> Given Afrocentricity tenets, the question of Xeno-Afrophobia comes in social, cultural and political dialectic in Africa.

### **Demystifying Xenophobia, and Afrophobia in Africa**

Xenophobia stems from the Greek word *Xenos* meaning 'strange'<sup>21</sup> and *phobos* which stands for 'phobia.' Xenophobia is the hatred or fear of the 'stranger.'<sup>22</sup> In modern times xenophobia is associated with inter-ethnicity hence a divide between the 'original' and 'foreign.' The fear of the foreigner is anchored on ethnocentrism where a group is viewed as superior to others. Most scholars view xenophobia as prejudices, attitudes that segregate, vilify foreigners in a community of residence.

Xenophobia thus implies the presence of indigeneity the 'autochthon and its opposite the stranger. Autochthons believe they belong 'to the soil or born of the soil.'<sup>23</sup> An autochthon will thus go with tags like 'son of the soil.'<sup>24</sup> Modern literature however observes an autochthon as 'the first comer to the soil.' It recognizes the idea that all those who occupy the soil immigrated from somewhere. The second definition brings about a tension in the soil.

Given the above, autochthony shows movement in indigeneity hence questioning the whole notion of ownership of the soil. The tension is not in a vacuum, it is propagated by the desired benefits of development in any land and in this context, any nation-state. Therefore, an immigrant has difficulties integrating not to mention belonging. For example a quote from an immigrant in Germany states that 'it does not matter if you've read Goethe, wear lederhosen, and do a Bavarian dance, they'll still treat you as an immigrant.'<sup>25</sup> The preoccupation with autochthony is not about protecting traditional values but to exclude others from new avenues of political, social and economic wealth.

Xenophobia thus comes off as a deep dislike of non-nationals by the nationals of a state. This is for fear of losing social, cultural, political and economic identity status and their benefits. It also promotes a feeling of superiority, a real or perceived threat to nationals economic success, in a

bid to reassure the citizens especially in times of a national crises mostly associated with development.<sup>26</sup>

Development and belonging in Africa takes us back to colonialism, capitalism, democratization and the roots of decentering Africaness. Colonialism was a form of domination, the control by individuals or groups over a territory and/or culture over other individuals or groups.<sup>27</sup> The Marxist-Leninist literature views colonialism as a form of exploitation with the focus being on economic variables. Notably, the exploiter is a foreigner taking advantage of the locals materially, which inevitably denigrates the social and psychological aspects of the dominated. Also, the exploitation takes place forcefully or through slow cultural changes that convinces the locals to abandon their ways due to their primitive nature and adopt the foreigners culture. Secondly, there is the anthropologists who looks at colonialism as a media for culture change. Common to both Marxist-Leninist and anthropology is domination, hence the issue of power.

Colonialism in Africa dominated the Africans and imposed new cultures creating regional/country references such as Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone based on which foreign power colonised a particular country. On the same note, African countries adopted these tags as identifiers with their colonial masters. Additionally, the colonial dominations introduced foreign languages in the continent as the formal modes of communication. Therefore Anglophone countries use English, Francophone use French, Lusophone use Portuguese as formal languages which are then taught in schools.

Along foreign languages are foreign cultures which subjugate local ones with the latter being looked down upon as uncivilized, and barbaric. For example a scholar observes that;

Over the years, different people have proposed that English language teaching carries with it imperialistic influences. At times this has been in relation to the imposition of an outside language on native languages, resulting in their allocation to a secondary status along with the cultures they represent. At other times, the teaching of English was seen as a tool to propagate the economic, cultural, or religious values of dominant world powers.<sup>28</sup>

Colonialism and foreign languages impose cultural imperialism where local languages are viewed as sub-standard. In Africa, people realized that for one to prosper in the colonial order, they had to master the colonists language, imitating their voice even at the expense of the local languages. These forms the roots for preference for colonial languages in the continent. Foreign languages are accompanied by social considerations hence creating class/elitism. Therefore foreign social graces meet local cultures as the opposites of class. The delineation creates class conflicts due to what is deemed as acceptable and unacceptable. But how does language affect development?

A literate mass leads to a developed society and language of the masses<sup>29</sup> is critical for development to occur. Therefore it is not possible for a society to achieve modernity and development where only a minority elites have mastered the educational language of the masses. Throughout history, the surge towards knowledge production and reproduction among societies has been ‘possible when the languages of the social majorities have been centrally placed.’<sup>30</sup>

In attempts where minority languages are used, they receive less substantive responses or absolute rejection. Wa Thiong'o's attempts to use the local Gikuyu language was met with difficulties of absence of the masses to consume his literature. In the end African postcolonial scholars have found it difficult to 'return' to the local languages because the language of the masses is foreign. One can say, 'Omoye has already marched naked to the townsquare.' Africans are already deeply embedded in foreign languages and the global market pays no attention to their languages. It is thus difficult to return to the local languages. However, it does not mean these languages cannot be used together with the foreign ones. For example Mwambari looks at an analysis of research in Africa where the 'expert' is the foreigner while the research assistant is a local who invariably locates and interprets data from local languages but is either silent or silenced in the research. He recommends that 'Africa's next decolonisation battle should be about knowledge.'<sup>31</sup> This has led to a number of African scholars advocating to decentre western education and epistemological paradigms in the continent.<sup>32</sup>

In Africa, the domination of foreign languages has meant decentralising local ones. Language informs culture and vice versa, and the dominant one informs consumption patterns, thus upholding foreign languages elevates their cultures. In the end, poor/underdeveloped countries and their citizens toe the line in the foreign languages and cultures and lack a general acceptability across state borders.

States' cross-border relations mean citizens from poor countries are likely to suffer xenophobic and Afrophobic attacks due to the association with low class/ uncivilised cultures. South Africa is an interesting example because 'the ethnic-based education established by the apartheid era government left in its trail suspicion and hatred for people from different backgrounds.'<sup>33</sup> In this case the apartheid era used a system of education that socially separated as well as legitimated white supremacy. Apartheid produced and reproduced racial hierarchy. In the end, 'the miseducation of black children by the apartheid regime is a major perpetrator of ethnicism which sow the seeds of xenophobia. In the African system, the poor education uprooted compassion, unity, cooperation, and love and replaced it with foreign values.'<sup>34</sup> The resultant was racism in the apartheid regime and black on black hatred in post-apartheid hence xenophobia and Afrophobia, Xeno-Afrophobia.

Xenophobia is mostly common in countries that are in transition, hence the view that it is a postcolonial problem.<sup>35</sup> Some scholars argue that xenophobia contributes to the undermining of the spirit of Pan-Africanism which fought against colonialism, apartheid, and slavery.<sup>36</sup> Another scholar states that 'xenophobia is a consequence of colonial heritage. Colonialism either created or reinforced clashes of identity (race, tribal cleavages, and ethnicity) upon which xenophobia thrives.'<sup>37</sup> Notably, Nkrumah shows the threat of decentring Africaness from the onset of self-determination and independence of African Nation-states in his quote 'We in Africa with its islands are one Africa. We reject the idea of any kind of partition. From Tangier or Cairo in the North to Cape Town in the South, from Cape Guardafui in the East to Cape Verde Islands in the West, Africa is one indivisible.'<sup>38</sup>

From the above quote, Nkrumah foresaw the possible disintegration in Africa based on the multilayered identities within and the threats of colonialism. The end of colonialism did not bring about deconstruction of political and social identities in Africa. Therefore, belonging in

African States is layered with foreign black immigrants especially from poorer countries being at the bottom of the ladder.

One can say, color line problems have dominated the issues of identities from the twentieth century.<sup>39</sup> Arguably, racial and colonial problems persist post the ejection of the colonial administration. Therefore removal of colonialism fails to exhaust the conditions and modes of exploitation and domination.<sup>40</sup> Observably, ‘specific colonial structure of power produced the specific social discriminations which later were codified as ‘racial’, ‘ethnic’, ‘anthropological’ or ‘national’, according to the times, agents, and populations involved.’<sup>41</sup> In these codifications we find xenophobia whose hatred of the other is based on the modes of colonialism where the poorest carry the least power concomitant with underdevelopment and poor civilization. The two bring about the issue of Afrophobia.

Afrophobia is the fear of the African ‘other.’ Similarly, Afrophobia is ‘black on black’ violence.<sup>42</sup> Other scholars define it as ‘the hate or fear of peoples and cultures of Africa (including the African diaspora).’<sup>43</sup> “Afrophobia is Afro-hatred mainly directed at immigrants of African nationalities.<sup>44</sup> Africans would therefore show a dislike to Africans but would not exhibit the same to Europeans and Americans.<sup>45</sup> It shows the specificity of the disliked stranger, in this case an African.

Consequently, Afrophobia is a specific category of xenophobia, hence fear, dislike, vilification, and negative attitudes towards an African from another country. As earlier argued, the dislike occurs in the segregation of nationals from non-nationals. For example, the South Africans antagonism against other Africans is a specific form of Xenophobia hence Afrophobia.<sup>46</sup> It is also found within the context of rights and privileges mostly political, social, and economic. In the case of South Africa, white people are positively identified supposedly due to their ‘contribution’ to the socio-economic well-being in the country. It implies that foreign Africans deplete the economy and undermines development thus xeno-afrophobia.

African development in view of an economic development of the West, is a ‘catch-up’ thesis’ since it seeks to be modern and industrialized like the West.<sup>47</sup> We therefore find the Eurocentric power structure framework as the operative mode within which social relations occur where the history of power is overlooked. A closer look reveals that the majority of the exploited, dominated and discriminated are members from certain races, ethnies or nations like categories of the colonized populations across the globe.

The Eurocentric categories of the colonized in Africa undermines communalism/ubuntu philosophy anchored in the Afrocentric episteme. For example, whereas Europe zeroes in on wealth in things, Africa has at least theoretically prided itself in wealth in People.

Wealth-in-people describes a world in which rights-in-people are the main basis of prestige, power, and access to resources. At the basis of wealth-in-people theory is a theory of value in which people seek to hold rights to other people—to their labor, support, reproductive capacity, or property.<sup>48</sup>

Capitalism, a tenet of Western culture commodifies everything, and sees no value in poor populations. Africa under xeno-afrophobia fails to see wealth in people. Classic examples

include, the segregations of foreign Africans by locals in South Africa post-Apartheid regimes, or in Nigeria under ‘Ghana must go’<sup>49</sup> or in Kenya where Somali nationals face maltreatment due to association with terrorism.<sup>50</sup> This is due to the European colonial world domination, where classification of work in the world was based on the capitalist system, such as salaried, independent-peasants, independent merchants, and slaves and serfs. The work was organized according to racial lines of global social classification. It comes as no surprise therefore that whereas one can find segregation of an African by another African in an African state, the same is not applied to non-Africans who are perceived as ‘rich’ salaried expatriates.

### **Capitalism and Democracy two sides of the same coin?**

Capitalism and democracy begun at different times in Africa, but both appear to support the same course, freedom of something. During colonialism, capitalism encouraged movement of raw materials, and slaves from certain parts of the continent.

After the Cold War and following the US dominance in global politics, African countries were forced to democratize to promote human rights and economic development. Political leaders were to be elected through frequent and fair elections to foster human rights and freedoms within the constitutional framework of each state. This was to guard against the pervasive authoritarianism and demagoguery that was prevalent in the continent from independence period in the 1960s up to early 1990s. History had shown that autocratic leaders were not easily dislodged from power. In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, autocracy is evident in Uganda, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, and Djibouti among other states.

Some scholars argue that African States remain in democratic blues 30 years after embracing democracy in early 1990s.<sup>51</sup> The threat to democratise pushes leaders in the continent to strike a balance between democratic activism and restoration of authoritarian forces. Meaning, candidates vying for presidency or head of state or government, use ‘democratic tenets’ to promote their candidature. However, once in power, the same individual seeks to retain power and revert to autocratic behaviours such as electoral fraud, exclusion or undermining of opponents from electoral competitive positions, repressive actions against opponents, and constitutional coups.

Constitutional coup occurs by modifying the constitution through ‘third termism’s.’ Third term seekers thus autocratise power by manipulating term limits in Africa.<sup>52</sup> Asked how they do it since it requires referendums to change the constitution, the answer goes back to ethnicization of politics.<sup>53</sup>

Political power hoarders use ethnic identities to acquire and retain power in Africa.<sup>54</sup> Ethnicization of states can be argued to have begun in the colonial period especially in the British colonies. The colonial power used local Chiefs to divide and rule. The outcome was elevation of ethnicities instead of statehood. Anglophone countries thus have prevalent deep ethnic identities where state identity comes second.<sup>55</sup> As a result, ethnic strife is common. In Francophone states, ethnic identities are not as elevated as Anglophone countries, however, these countries appear to hold dear their former colonial power France hence fragmenting citizen sovereignty. Although this may be changing with the entrance of Russia in countries like Mali,



Central African Republic, Niger, and Burkina Faso, what is evident is the constant coups and undemocratic power transitions.

Therefore, ethnic identities and strife begun prior to the independence of most African countries. However, they became prevalent with the introduction of multi-party politics. In the early 1990s the call for multi-party politics in Africa saw political leaders use ethnic politics to divide the countries to secure power. It is this failure to tame ethnocentrism that contributes to the crisis of leadership in Africa.<sup>56</sup> In addition, the call to democratise pushed some countries to economic crises especially with the introduction of structural adjustment programs which called for privatization of parastatals. The same rogue leaders went ahead and gave tenders to their political comrades to acquire parastatals hence leading to the failure in the privatisation bid.

Therefore, the call for multiparty politics in Africa steered most autocratic leaders to use any means necessary to retain power. This led most countries to succumb to intra-state conflicts that negatively affected the economic welfare of given conflictual states. In some cases, like Zimbabwe, Somalia, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Ivory Coast, it resulted to mass exodus of people in search for safer and secure livelihoods. The movements affected the host states economically, socially, and politically.

In early 1990s Zimbabwe witnessed mass exodus of Zimbabweans because of what some scholars termed as ‘the transformation of Zimbabwe from breadbasket to basket-case.’<sup>57</sup> By early 2003 it was estimated that there were over 1 million Zimbabweans in South Africa. The latter took a hard stand on immigrants from Zimbabwe. Noteworthy, South Africa gained its freedom from an oppressive Apartheid regime in 1994 meaning majority of the black people were poor.

The 1990s decade was a difficult period for the Southern Africa region. Combining capitalism and democracy in this region was equivalent to the Sisyphus myth or rolling a boulder uphill. Capitalism on one hand emphasizes free movement of goods and services globally where demand and supply regulate themselves as per David Ricardo’s free hand analogy guiding the market. However, whereas goods do move freely, the accompanying services are restricted with people from less and underdeveloped countries facing the most obstacles.

Given the above, citizens from richer countries find it easy to migrate and immigrate but those from poor countries face various huddles in the name of visa restrictions, asylum status and the ability to work in the destined countries. It shows a skewed neoliberal capitalism which has serious consequences for emerging democracies in Africa.

Post-Apartheid, immigrants from Africa who saw an opportunity in South Africa were immediately faced with a pushback from the host state. For instance, Zimbabweans struggled to settle in South Africa due to the host country’s policy restrictions which later saw xeno-Afrophobic responses against them.

Additionally, in 2000, Zimbabwe under the regime of Mugabe expelled white farmers and took their lands forcibly to redistribute wealth to the ‘locals.’<sup>58</sup> Mugabe’s action led to sanctions from the International Monetary Fund, (IMF), and the European Union. The economic downturn in Zimbabwe led to yet another mass immigration of Zimbabweans to South Africa, and Botswana.

In both host countries, the locals blamed the immigrants for high unemployment and poverty rates.<sup>59</sup>

Meanwhile, Mozambique had suffered its own civil war from 1977 to 1992 and because of it, the country's economy was poor hence the immigration of its citizens to South Africa in the mid 1990s too. As one scholar observes that 'in colonial and apartheid South Africa, the 'barbarians' were kept at bay through a sophisticated and very brutal system of pass laws and immigration legislation which determined who had the right to enter the country,'<sup>60</sup> Therefore, Mozambican immigrants to South Africa begun to receive attention in the 1990s.

Similarly, Ivory Coast experienced a downturn in its economy in the 1990s which led to an 'institutionalization of an Ivorian identity.' In turn, the move promoted the resentment of non-nationals with 'Burkinabe's' a pejorative term, referring to immigrants from Burkina Faso<sup>61</sup> facing the most wrath. As a result, about 12,000 immigrants Burkina Faso farmers were expelled from Ivory Coast.<sup>62</sup> The same fate faced, immigrants from Mali.

In Eastern Africa, the 1990s had two significant occurrences, the collapse of Somalia's government in 1991 following the ouster of Siad Barre from power, and the Rwanda genocide in 1994. Both led to a mass exodus of Rwandese and Somalis to neighbouring countries. More than 0.5 million of Rwandese ended up in Tanzania and about 1.3 million in the Democratic Republic of Congo,<sup>63</sup> mostly in Goma in the North Kivu province.<sup>64</sup> Somalis ended up mostly in Kenya at the Dadaab refugee camp.<sup>65</sup>

In both the DRC and Kenya, the governments had prior conflict situations with the refugees' home countries, Rwanda, and Somalia respectively. It meant the acceptability of the refugees in their host countries was problematic and viewed suspiciously as having the potential to disrupt the security of the host. In Kenya, the government made an encampment policy for refugees for security purposes,<sup>66</sup> potentially risking the conflation of refugees with insecurity in the country.

In DRC, the coming to power of Laurent Kabila in 1997 was attributed to the support of the Rwanda and Uganda government. Noteworthy, Rwanda would pursue those who were suspected to have taken part in the 1994 genocide in DRC and the friendliness of Kabila to Kagame appeared to remove any protection that Hutu refugees would have gotten.

Forced migrations and immigrations have dire consequences in Africa. Historically, 'people's flight has negatively affected the socio-cultural cohesion as well as economic and political systems of a large number of African societies.'<sup>67</sup> In States' population expulsions, one thing is clear, the absence or weakness of an African communalism, a philosophy that anchors the very nature of what it is to be African. It begs the question, does African communalism exists in practice or is it mere rhetoric?

### **African communalism as a solution? Back to the past**

African communalism (Ubuntu) is an African philosophy, which emphasizes on communal interdependence and arguably departs from the European and Western angle with the emphasis on the individual.<sup>68</sup> Ideally, the philosophy anchors on the individuals' interdependence in a community hence 'I am because we are, and because we are therefore I am.'<sup>69</sup> Overall,

communalism is not an antithesis for individualism. An individual under communalism retains their space, however the emphasis is on building a community which oversees the individual's wellbeing.

African communalism has similar ontological orientations with the African socialism. The continents forefathers considered African communalism ideologies as a mode of nations reconstruction after colonialism. Africa socialism was a phrase used to refer to the collective ideologies that were sought after. Notably, African socialism brings forth traditional African societies.

Nkrumah thus saw communalism as the 'social-political ancestor of Socialism.'<sup>70</sup> Noteworthy, 'Socialism has characteristics in common with communalism, just as capitalism is linked with feudalism and slavery. In socialism the principles underlying communalism are given expression in modern circumstances.'<sup>71</sup>

Looking at Nyerere, the notion of traditional communalism seems to take precedence over socialism as he observed that 'We in Africa, have no more need of being 'converted' to socialism than we have of being 'taught' democracy. Both are rooted in our own past—in the traditional society that produced us.'<sup>72</sup> The depiction by Nyerere presupposes that communalism is the traditional way of being in Africa and issues of socialism and democracy are embedded within it.

Communalism in Africa risks saying that Western societies lack it. However, the very essence of being human places all human beings in a community of some sought. It thus does not exclude certain geographic regions hence no risk conflating those other regions with its absence and the associated inhumanity that goes with it. Therefore, what Nyerere and Nkrumah are referring to as African communalism goes hand in hand with both ontological and methodological communalisms.

Ontological and methodological communalism address different states of being. The first means 'how humans are in the world and what they are.'<sup>73</sup> The second one means 'no matter how humans are in the world, we are best placed to make sense of their being-in-the-world and their activities attached thereto if we view them through the prism of a community.'<sup>74</sup>

The generalization of African communalism should be used cautiously. It may as well mean being in a community is the typical way of being in Africa, but is it not the same way in other societies? Therefore, communalism as exemplified by Nyerere and to a degree Nkrumah has waned. Given the above discussions on colonialism, capitalism, and democracy, we see how Africa has changed to self-seeking individuals. Otherwise, how do we explain ethnic based conflict? Coup de tats? Terrorism targeting certain groups? Corruption, autocracy, Xeno-Afrophobia, and so forth?

African communalism strains to find a voice, place, and psychological orientation in this globalizing world. Africans have largely discarded communalism in place of individualism. Communalism is the idea that the individual is interconnected to others forming a community.

Communalism upholds terms like ‘we’ ‘our,’ ‘us’ as opposed to ‘I,’ ‘myself,’ ‘me.’ It is in dialectic with individualism often associated with the western culture, and capitalism’s core.

Communalism means the community above else upholds the welfare of the individual and thus an individual is subordinate to the welfare of the community. One may wonder how this notion can be of benefit to the modern-day society. In observing the nature of communalism one scholar states that, ‘There is a solidarity that civilized communities find it hard to attain. The corporate sentiment that trade unions create among their members is but a faint reflection of brotherhood [*and sisterhood,*] found within the Africans’ clan.’<sup>75</sup> This is what regional economic blocks seek to attain. The belongingness that places each nation in the community to a point of discouraging each from rising up in arms against another because, in so doing one destroys the self while attempting to elevate their need and wants above that of the community.

Which community is communalism embracing then? Is it all Africans for Africa? Because communalism seems to portray this lens. But then questions of Xenophobia, Afrophobia throws the notion of communalism in Africa in disarray. This is because, one can say a sub-African community (the insider) versus strangers (the outsiders) embraces communalism but in a sub-set way. But is this the case? The answers are yes and no because protecting one’s own culture and a people is communalism. But the problem in Xeno-Afrophobia emanates where the protection is done against some foreigners, blacks. It then loops us back to the idea that African communalism has eroded in a pervasive manner where Africans take up arms against other Africans in the name of protecting their jobs, economy, and culture. The question to ask is then what is missing in African communalism?

Having discussed the new world order post-colonialism and the Cold War where democracy, capitalism appear to have become a global outfit, one is confronted with the little to non-existent of African communalism in Africa. The answer therefore lies in re-embracing African communalism and not absolute substitution of the modern ways of being. Omoye already marched naked to the town square, one cannot bring clothes (African communalism) and pretend he was never naked. However, one can alert Omoye that he is naked, and provide a solution to the nudity by giving him clothes. The idea that he has already been exposed remains, but he can work to avoid the same in the future.

Africa and Africans need to rethink and embrace the place of African culture and values in the modernising social-political and economic world. Without the continent’s cultures and values, the people risk being forever reactive to the problems that are likely to emanate because, another’s culture will always be better placed where it belongs and will fall short in foreign lands hence problems of Xeno-Afrophobia.

### **Conclusion**

Globalisation, capitalism, and democracy are here to stay and a ‘return to’ or substituting them with African communalism is impossible hence not able to resolve the problem of Xeno-Afrophobia. A suggestion to return to African communalism is not practical because first communalism is not uniquely African and second it is like the Yoruba saying ‘*Aṣọ kò bá Ọmọyẹ mọ; Ọmọyẹ ti rin ihòhò dọjà.*’ Meaning ‘the clothes came too late for Omoye; Omoye already marched naked into the town square.’ Hence Globalisation and its tenets of capitalism, and

democracy have already changed the dynamics in Africa and attempting to remove then in a 'return to Africa communalism' to resolve Xeno-Afrophobia is equivalent to trying to dress Omoye who has already marched naked to the town square or in other words who is already engrained in capitalism, democracy, and globalization. Therefore, to regain a footing, communalism can be adopted as part of the modernizing criteria to counter Xeno-Afrophobia.

Afrophobia is specifically hatred of strangers of an African descent by local Africans hence a sub-section of Xenophobia which is a general term that refers to fear and hatred of strangers. The African continent is thus faced with a particular problem when looking at Xeno- Afrophobia. It is not only the vilification, negative attitudes, and fear of strangers of African non-nationals in a nation but a consequence of the vestiges of colonialism. To be precise, the Africans hatred of other Africans occurs in a social, political, cultural, and economic context. Poor development or underdevelopment, intra-state conflicts spearhead the need for multitudes to cross their borders to other countries.

Underdevelopment appears to push immigration to the countries that are seemingly 'developed' like South Africa. Other push factors involve conflicts which stem from poor or contested leadership. Amidst it all, African governments appear to have copy-paste western modes of development and governance without consideration of the historical roots and routes of the structures. In the end, African agency is either weak or absent in the social, political, and economic development meaning propagation of decentring Africa and Africans.

It is thus critical for the African Union and the subregional economic groups to address Xeno-Afrophobia collectively while intentionally promoting ubuntu/African communalism as Afrocentric countermeasures to these vices. This can be done through tailoring democracy and development to the context in Africa. For example, instead of majoritarian democracy, representative democracy can be adopted. Some scholars have suggested premier governance instead of presidential systems where power is highly centralized.

In the case of development, African governments should promote regional economic blocs to elevate their trading capacity with the outside world. Culturally, a promotion of local contexts through the education system can help to alleviate self-hatred through introduction of curricula that embraces Africanism in addition to the modernising world. In short African governments should incorporate African tenets in every sphere, the political, social, economic, and cultural to avoid attempts to completely westernize which leaves them second to the Western world. The beauty of Ubuntu is that it can mean an ethnicity, race and the whole of humanity hence ontological communism which spearheads for the good of a human collectivist.

## Notes

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