

Integrating Social Solidarity Into Economic Development

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Abstract

The concept of socialism is very broad and because of this, it has been misunderstood and demonised as a phenomenon that undermines development. Capitalist thinkers are the culprits. Their demonisation of socialism is predicated on an insular understanding of it. However, besides politico-economic socialism, which capitalist thinkers are critical of, there is also cultural or traditional socialism.

This paper argues that African Societies practised their socialism before the Western, politico-economic conception of socialism ever saw the light of day. The paper focuses on the Jopadhola in Eastern Uganda and how they practised their traditional/cultural socialism under the rubrics of “misingo” and “wretch” to achieve communal wellbeing and community development. It further argues that the current model of economic development being pursued by the government of Uganda, under which several economic policy interventions (Entadkiwa, Plan for the Modernisation of Agriculture, Bonna Baggaggawale, NAADS, Operation Wealth Creation, Youth Livelihood Programme, Women Empowerment Programme, etc.) have been made, may never achieve the stated goal of transforming societies socioeconomically, unless Ugandans are returned to the traditional conception and practice of socialism/collectivism.

Keywords: community development, cultural socialism, African traditional socialism, African socialism, social solidarity, community, inequality, *Misingo* and *Wretch*.

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