

Sakamoto, Kumiko, Ms, Acad, Social Science, Japan, "*Endogenous development and moral economy in Africa- In relation to subsistence and Democracy*"-C

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Abstract

Can the African moral economies save us from an "ecocratic" future? I look into the characteristics of the African moral economies to seek its possibilities for endogenous development and democracy. Firstly, the African moral economies strongly emphasize overlaps between productive and reproductive activities emphasizing the latter, whereas "ecocratic" communities overemphasize productive activities to the extent of sacrificing the reproductive sphere. Secondly, the African moral economies depend strongly on the informal institutions, an alternative that coincides with the global civil society movements. Mutual exchange between the African moral economies and the global moral economy will be a step toward realizing subsistence, endogenous development, and democracy in Africa, and a forming a new global paradigm.

Biography of the author

Presently, assistant professor with the Faculty of International Studies, Utsunomiya University. Ph.D. (thesis: *Social Development, Culture, and Participation*) and M.A. (Economics) from Waseda University. Over five years professional experience with the UN system in Africa, with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Member of Japan Association for African Studies, The Japan Society for International Development, Japan Evaluation Society, Political and Ethical Knowledge on Economic Activities (PEKEA), and TICAD Civil Society Forum (TCSF). Author of "Moral Economy and Endogenous Development" (*Tanzania Journal of Population Studies and Development*, 11(2):117-130, 2004), "Social Development in Tanzania" (*Journal of Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies*, 1:55-82, 2001), and "Human Development and Social Development" (Jun Nishikawa ed., *Social Development*, Yuhikaku, pp. 113-136, 1997).

Introduction

The limits of the mass production-consumption-disposal system based on ecocracy have been alarmed for centuries, yet the majority (who is actually the minority in population) of the industrialized societies continue the lifestyles with additional newcomers. Although this mainstream ecocratic lifestyle and its underlining thoughts based on mass production have not completely stepped down to make way for alternative value systems, intellectual and action-oriented efforts to create alternative paradigms continue from various directions. Empirical and theoretical studies on endogenous development and moral economy have contributed largely to such efforts. Within this context, the paper focuses on the African moral economies and attempts to shed new light on its possibilities and challenges for endogenous development in Africa and its contribution to an alternative paradigm.

Firstly, the paper introduces two outstanding characteristics of the African moral economies. The first characteristic is the extensive overlap between productive and reproductive activities with the emphasis of the latter. The second characteristic is the strong role of informal institutions in comparison to formal institutions.

Secondly, it reviews previous studies of endogenous development in reference to the above two characteristics of the African moral economies. Through the analysis, the areas where the African moral economies synchronize with previous works on endogenous development are introduced. Lastly, possibilities and challenges for the creation of a new paradigm based on the African moral economies are

assessed with focus on subsistence and democracy.

1 Reproductive and Productive Activities

In a healthy human life, productive and reproductive activities overlap and are mutually supportive. Production is possible because humans reproduce, and humans are able to reproduce supported by the production. Diagram 1 illustrates the relationships between productive and reproductive activities in societies, illustrating their emphasis, overlaps, and inter-linkages.

Type A' societies (Diagram 1-1) have close overlaps between productive and reproductive activities. In many cases, productive activities are undertaken in order to sustain their subsistence and their reproductive activities. In other words, reproductive activities are the objective of being.

On the other hand, Type I' societies (Diagram 1-2) over-emphasize productive activities, and as a result, devalue reproductive activities of men and women, and minimize the overlaps between productive and reproductive activities. In such an ecocratic society, production becomes the objective, and the human existence becomes the means for the objective.

Diagram 1: Relationships between Productive and Reproductive Activities

Diagram 1-1: Type A' societies

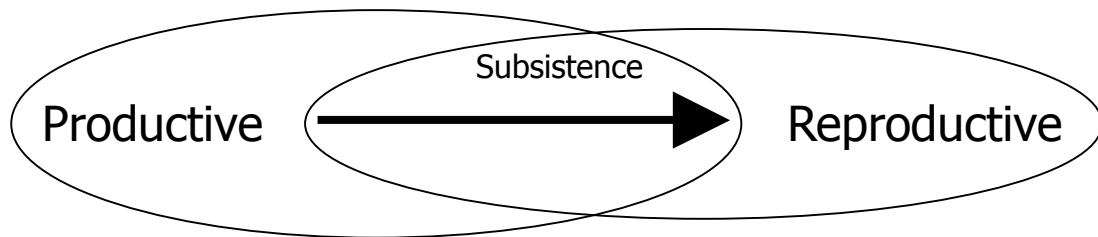
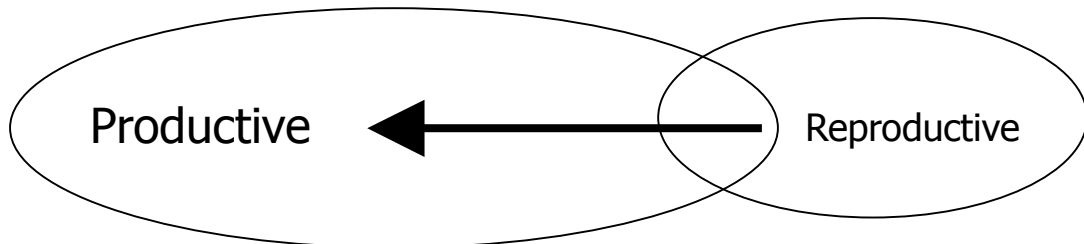


Diagram 1-2: Type I' societies



Source: Sakamoto 2005a, 2005b

The first characteristic of the African moral economies can be expressed as Type A' (Diagram 1-1) with extensive overlaps between reproductive activities and productive activities with emphasis on the latter. Although diversities within African societies exist, this characteristic is found in many African societies.¹

The reason that festivals are valued in Africa – in many cases criticized for excessive consumption of food and time – relates to its importance as rituals related to reproduction. For example, women and men in southeastern Tanzania value adult rituals, *unyago* and *jando*, as an essential part of their life. The rituals are closely related to production in agriculture, and in some cases perceived as the objective of productive

¹ Diversities within various moral economies in Africa (and even within a country) exists tremendously based on various possible factors such as livelihoods, environment, and political situations. Although the discussion of the diversities of the African moral economies will be left for another place of discussion, "moral economy" will be discussed in plural form ("moral economies") to recognize these diversities.

activities in agriculture (Sakamoto 2005a, 2005b). The behavior of the Zaramo people in Tanzania selling land in order to participate in their rituals is also explained as adherent to their value system (Swantz 1969, 1996) – a value system emphasizing reproductive activities over productive activities.

According to Sugimura (2004b), the African moral economies are supported by an unique nature of reciprocity and accumulation. Firstly, the African moral economies are characterized by a generalized reciprocity, distinct from a give-and-take society. Secondly, accumulations are made largely for the purpose of strengthening social relations. Based on such reciprocity and accumulation, labour exchange (Shiraishi 2005, Sugimura 2005) and common consumption through rituals, co-food (Sugimura 2004a), and food sharing (Matsumura 2005) based on moral norms are normal practices even with the influence of the commodity economy.

2 The African Moral Economies

Traditional economic thinking has previously set their perspective and analysis based on formal institutions related to the market or the state. In this sense, neither the neo-classical idea that market facilitates efficient production nor the socialist ideal that envisage the effectiveness of the state explained the reality of Africa (Hyden 1980). Although the role of civil societies which closely relate with informal institutions is gaining its momentum, many analyses on development thinking still lack its recognition (e.g. Ashley and Maxwell 2001).

The second characteristic of the African moral economies is that people were not effectively captured by formal institutions due to their identity and reliance through informal institutions. This was described as the strong “economy of affection” in Africa. Hyden (1980) argued that the state was not able to capture the peasants due to their own delinked mode of production and reproduction. Presently, not only the peasants continue to be uncaptured by the state, but also the urban informal sector adds on the list of the uncaptured, though in this respect by the market (Hyden 2004, 2005). From this perspective, neither the state nor the market was able to facilitate economic development or democracy (Hyden 2002).

Diagrams 2-1 and 2-2 illustrate societies based on their emphasis of activities and institutions. The horizontal axis indicates to what extent productive or reproductive activities are emphasized. The diagonal axis indicates to what extent formal or informal institutions are utilized: formal institutions including both the state and the market. The diagram only expresses the tendency of the emphasis, and does not imply that societies exclusively take on productive activities or reproductive activities (as explained in Diagram 1), through informal or informal institutions as an either-or situation.

In reality, there are varieties of societies combining the two axes. In Diagram 2-1, Type A illustrates a society emphasizing reproductive activities mainly through informal institutions – characterized as the African moral economies. Type W represents a society emphasizing reproductive activities through formal institutions – examples are welfare states such as the Nordic countries that formally emphasize and support reproductive activities. In Diagram 2-2, Type I illustrates a society emphasizing productive activities mainly through formal institutions. Type X societies are societies that emphasize productive activities through informal institutions.

Diagram 2: Typologies of Societies

Diagram 2-1: Type A' societies

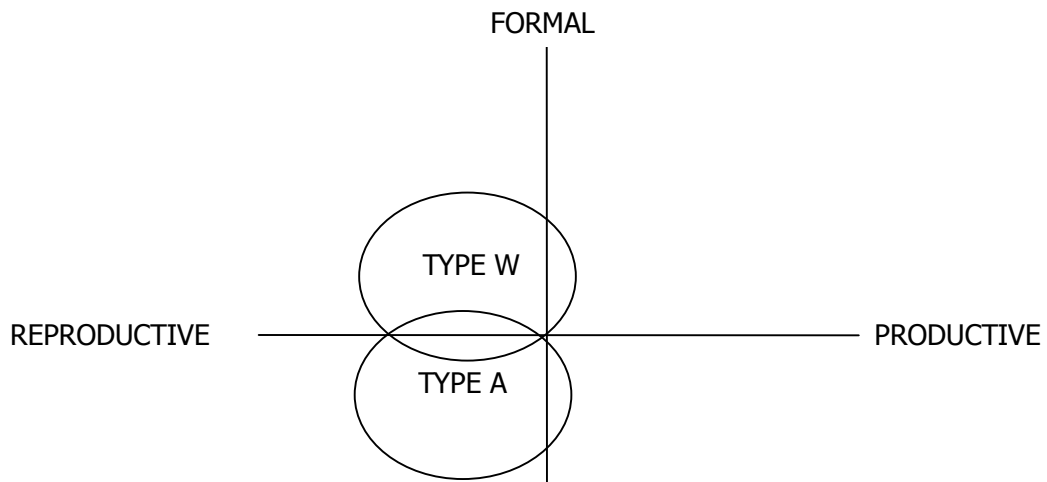
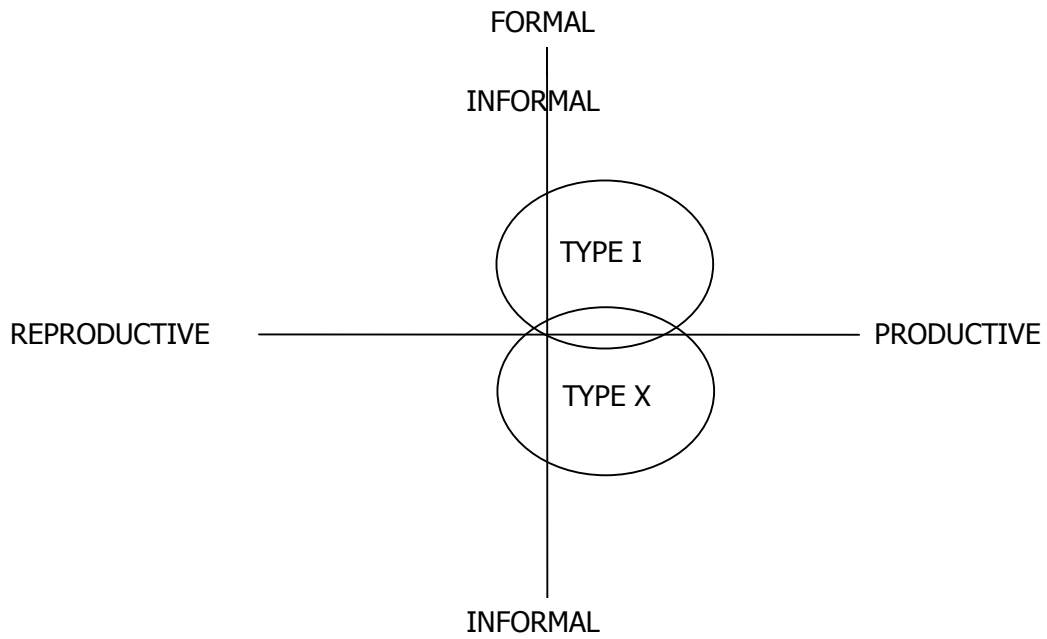


Diagram 2-2: Types I' societies



Source: Reformulated from Sakamoto 2005b

Type A' societies (Diagram 1) include Type A and Type W societies in Diagram 2-1. The major difference between the two is that reproductive activities are emphasized informally by women and men in Type A societies, and formally by the state in Type W societies. As a result, the contents and reproductive activities are self-defined (by societies) and diverse in Type A, and standardized (by the state) in Type W societies.

Type I' societies (Diagram 1) include both Type I and Type X societies in Diagram 2-2. Although the emphasis of productive activities are common between Types I and X, the major institutions and actors differ. In Type I societies, formal institutions such as the state and market have major roles. In Type X societies, informal institutions through social networks and civil societies have the major roles.

3 Endogenous Development and the African Moral Economies

The initial introductions of endogenous development have been by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (1975) as “alternative development” and by Tsurumi (1976) as “endogenous development” respectively. The initially proposed perspectives both analyzed alternatives to exogenous development taking states as units of analysis. Examples of Sweden and Tanzania were given to some extent criticizing the overemphasis of productive activities, but not differentiating between the formal/informal institutions (Hammarskjöld 1975). Although the example of Sweden (Type W) may have been relevant to assess as a state, it can be criticized now that the example of Tanzania (Type A) – where the people are uncaptured – have been irrelevant to analyze as a state. Example of China also concentrated on the model case of China as indicating an endogenous method of industrial development as a state (Type I, Tsurumi 1976).

The unit of analysis later shifts to smaller units as the theory of endogenous development evolved. For example, Tsurumi (1996) bases her analysis of various case studies in sub-units within of Japan, China, and Thailand, and articulates that units of endogenous development should be based on “place” with a common value system, smaller than a state. Nishikawa (2000) further theorizes the role of the endogenous development theory as analysis of civil society at the mezzo level connecting the individual at the micro level and states/firms at the macro level. Practical case studies within Japan also emphasized the importance of human networks (Aichi 1999), and linkages between the rural and the urban (Miyamoto and Endo 1998). Looking at the shifts of analysis, it can be argued that although the endogenous development theory initially concentrated on formal institutions, it presently roots its analysis mainly on informal institutions. Therefore, it synchronizes with second the characteristic of the African moral economies emphasizing informal institutions.

While the mainstream development thinking indicates linear change towards Type I societies, endogenous developments are diverse processes of social change satisfying basic human needs based on respective unique natural environment, cultural heritage, and history (Tsurumi 1996). Practical cases studies of endogenous development focuses on regional agricultural or industrial development based on local resources and knowledge (Sasaki 1992, Ploeg and Long 1994, Hobo 1997, Miyamoto and Endo 1998, Kitajima 1998, Aichi 1999, Hobo 1999), bringing the production and reproduction sphere closer. In more radical cases, it questions the present mass production-consumption-disposal system with respect to the ecological limitations (Hobo 1991). More in-depth thoughts of endogenous development delve into the local belief systems based on the respective environmental environment or religion, as a basis for refusing the dominant world system and creating an alternative (Tsurumi 1996, Nishikawa 2001). In this respect, the endogenous development attempts to bring closer the production sphere and the reproduction sphere, and in some cases criticize the over-emphasis of the production sphere, synchronizing with the first characteristic of the African moral economies.

Although there is a difference in stance that “endogenous development” implies change striving for satisfaction of *needs*, and the “African moral economies” refer to analysis of function for *subsistence*, they synchronize on the major characteristics. Although endogenous development is not exclusively reserved for Type A societies, thrust towards Type A societies (in some cases Type X societies) based on criticism of Type I societies are seen in the thinking of endogenous development. Therefore, the African moral economies have potentials to indicate unique models of endogenous development against the present mainstream value system.

4 Challenges of the African Moral economies for Subsistence and Democracy

African moral economies have strong possibilities to indicate paths for a new paradigm in relation to endogenous development. However, a few critical challenges exist in relation to subsistence and democracy.

To the criticism that the African moral economies stagnates economic development, I have argued that it pauses a different type of development that values reproductive activities. However, how do we explain the phenomenon that Sub-Sahara Africa is one of the worst off when we look at, for example, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), which is closely related to reproduction?

Two responses to the question can be made. Comparison between South Asia and Sub-Sahara Africa highlights the first response. Although both the regions are in a similar status in terms of income poverty, Sub-Sahara Africa performs better in general when we compare the nutrition status (Sen 1999, Ueyama 2003). This underlines the function of the African moral economies that subsist with low production.

Having argued this relative function of the African moral economies for subsistence, the problem still remains in absolute terms. The second response focuses on the divergence of definition and strategy between the global and the local level. While social development - which is related to reproductive activities (Sato 2001) - is rather rigidly confined to sectors (e.g. nutrition, education, health, and water), reproductive activities are actually much more self-defined, overlapping, and diverse within the community level reality. Therefore, strategies for social development need to be defined at the local level based on the African moral economies. One of the efforts to overcome this gap is the participatory approaches.

The relationships between the African moral economies and democracy is also controversial. A few related controversial points on corruption and social inclusion will be discussed. One argument is that the African moral economies which values informal networks and resource distribution facilitate corruption (Sardan 1999).² However, it is not necessarily the African moral economies in itself which facilitate corruption, but the discrepancy between the bureaucratic formal institutions built based on Western models, and the local informal networks (Ibid.). Without the recognition of the structural discrepancy, anti-corruption strategies to improve the governance will be difficult if not impossible.

The second point is related to social inclusion and exclusion. Although women and men, young and old, are entitled to voting in most cases, it is quite common that the relatively weak are excluded from formal decision making processes at the community level (e.g. women and youth in Tanzania, Shivji and Peter 2000). In order to compensate for such exclusion, women value the adult ritual as a “place” and occasion for discussion and formation of strategies exclusively of men (Sakamoto 2004, 2005a). Such complementary relationships between the formal and informal institutions do exist. However, the discrepancies in participation between the formal and informal institutions, and the extent the African moral economies include the varieties of the diverse social groups, such as gender, generation, and social class, need closer scrutiny.

For social inclusion, “participation” has become an important method not only in the project cycles, but also for strategy formulation and for democracy. However, institutionalizing “participation” for inclusive democracy based on local contexts remains a challenge in various places especially in Africa. When we consider the African moral economies, the role of informal institutions in democracy becomes increasingly important. In the global context, the civil society plays a major role in democracy. Within the context of the African moral economies, civil societies need to be defined more widely in order to include various informal institutions.

² See also Nbulube (1997) for discussions of “culture” facilitating corruption.

Conclusions

In this paper, I have introduced the characteristics of the African moral economies, and assessed its possibilities for endogenous development. As conclusion, endogenous development *is* possible based on the African moral economies and it will certainly provide an alternative to the mass consumption-production-disposal system that the industrialized world continues to take.

However, challenges remain in the area of subsistence and democracy. The main reason for the problems of subsistence and democracy in Africa lie under the discrepancies between the formal and informal institutions, and between the global and local definitions. While the global efforts to improve the situation of subsistence and democracy in Africa are morally essential, in-depth understanding of the diverse moral economies within societies is also a prerequisite for it to be effective. Deeper understanding of African moral economies will support the paths for subsistence, democracy, and endogenous development in Africa, and provide lessons for the world in creating a new paradigm based on a global moral economy.

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