

Followership in sub-Saharan Africa's Development: Reconstructing the Appendage Game

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Abstract

To address the many challenges of development faced in sub-Saharan Africa, the concentration of attention upon defects of African governments in power continues to be a main focus, as failed leadership is regarded as the primary problem responsible for underdevelopment throughout the continent. Refocusing attention upon followership instead of leadership might provide a remedial alternative. Using critical reflexivity, the role that followership plays in development should be scrutinized just as leadership has been scrupulously evaluated; and if faults be found, let measures be designed, implemented, and assessed using development parameters of choice. 'Followership' in this essay depicts the capacity and power with which every individual is endowed; the proposal here is that by exercising that ability to impact their representatives in elected office, citizens can keep their leadership in check through a dialectical, reiterative protocol of initiative and response between leadership and followership. Inspired by Rousseau, the ideal of 'liberated followership' implies responsible individuals employing their civic freedoms to develop effective leadership, with the potential of ultimately realizing the socio-economic development that Africans so much desire.

Keywords: followership; economic development; African representative governance; democratic leadership

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