

AN AFRICAN AGRARIAN PHILOSOPHY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: Nurturing Creativity in Science and Society

Raymond Erick Zvavanyange

E: zvavanyanger3@gmail.com

T: [@zvavanyanger3](https://www.instagram.com/zvavanyanger3)

**Presentation in Theme 3 “Keeping Science-Relevant and Future-Focused”, at the Third Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development, 5th – 8th April, 2016,
Johannesburg, South Africa**

Outline

- Introduction
- Strange Inversion of Reasoning
- Creativity Tensions Resolved?
 - On Competence and Comprehension
 - Dunning-Kruger Effect
- Cargo Cult 'Agriculture'
- African Agrarian philosophy
 - Features of an African Agrarian philosophy
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Youth Component
- Conclusion

Introduction

- African agriculture is poised to gain from available scientific and technical knowledge provided it embraces the potential associated risks and benefits.
- The discourse on what individuals or groups of people think, know, and experience, and tend to think, know, and possibly experience, is always new.
- Therefore, we must interrogate motivations, philosophy, and actions of actors, especially, in an “Age of Entanglement.”

Strange Inversion of Reasoning

IN ORDER TO CREATE THE PERFECT AFRICAN AGRARIAN PHILOSOPHY RELATED TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS, IT IS NOT REQUISITE TO KNOW WHAT PHILOSOPHY AND AGRICULTURE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IS.

Adapted from Daniel C. Dennett, 'Examining the Work and Its Impact', pp. 569 – 573.

Creativity Tensions Resolved?

On Competence vs. Comprehension

- Dogma asserts, “Comprehend **in order to be competent**”
- In an “Age of Entanglement”, “**Be competent in order to comprehend**”

Adapted from Daniel C. Dennett, ‘Examining the Work and Its Impact’, pp. 569 – 573.

Dunning-Kruger Effect

- “When people are incompetent in the strategies they adopt to achieve success and satisfaction they suffer a dual burden: Not only do they reach erroneous conclusions and make unfortunate choices, but their incompetence robs them of the ability to realise it.”

Taken from Justin Kruger and David Dunning, 1999, Unskilled and Unaware of It: How Difficulties in Recognizing One’s Own Incompetence Lead to Self-Inflated Assessments, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol. 77 (6): pp. 1121 – 1134.

Cargo Cult 'Agriculture'

“If you make a theory, for example, and advertise it, or put it out, then you must also put down all the facts that disagree with it, as well as those that agree with it (p.11).”

Adapted from the Commencement Speech made by Richard P. Feynman 'Cargo Cult Science', 1974, Caltech, U.S.

An African Agrarian philosophy

- An **African Agrarian philosophy** is agriculture and food systems built upon Moral Ethics, Creativity, and Innovation, and which, unequivocally, identifies with the needs and aspirations of Africans, and those of its Development Partners.
- Different philosophical systems, and their recorded histories enables inquisitive thinkers and doers to view/interact with the world.

(Some) Features of an African Agrarian philosophy

- Prioritises small scale producers;
- Radically changes human thought and action;
- Creates strategic interactions;
- Welcomes innovative ideas (e.g. the use of ICTs, agribusiness incubation, and biotechnology;)
- Creates wealth and builds communities;
- Lasting goals, vision, and interests among actors;
- Nurtures agripreneurs and the development of agripreneurship;
- Creative Reward Systems for Sustainable Agri-Food Systems (CRESSAFS)

Adapted from Zvavanyange, Raymond Erick, (2016) *Philosophy and The Logic of Collective Action in African Agriculture: Perspectives in Africa's Transformation*, LAP

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- There are 17 SDGs and 169 associated targets, which are integrated and indivisible.
- To deliver SDGs for Africa will require innovative action – **collective efforts, financing, commitment, and implementation** – from all stakeholders (Munang, 2015).

SDGs

- The recognition of the contribution of agriculture to the well-being of society is crucial if the world is to realise the SDGs (Marks, 2016).
- Smallholder farmers contribute to global food security and nutrition, and global goals (incl. SDGs) (Nwanze & Fan, 2016).

Youth Component in African Agrarian Philosophy and SDGs

- Youths can be catalysts to rapid human civilisation - convergent/divergent forms of creativity.
- Culture, language, and tradition can serve as both a science and an art in a knowledge-based economy/society.
- Intelligent (and safe) application of lessons learned from social & complex movements – the intersection of food, politics, and economy – worldwide.

Conclusion

- A creative and explicit African Agrarian philosophy is important in the varied actions by individuals or groups in African agriculture.
- An African Agrarian philosophy is a lens with which Africa can implement SDGs.
- Strengthened knowledge and scholarly networks in African agriculture enables for multiple pathways to create new knowledge, intelligence, science, and foresight capabilities.