

## A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF NKRUMAH'S CONSCIENCISM AS A BASIS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

**Rev. Fr. Ugwuja Godwin Okey**

Department of Philosophy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

&

**Prof. Ogugua Paul I.**

Department of Philosophy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

### **Abstract**

*Nkrumah's Consciencism emphasized African identity, self-reliance, and holistic development as crucial elements for Africa's progress. It is good to engage in a philosophical analysis to explore the relevance and applicability of these principles in contemporary African contexts. This paper scrutinizes the strengths and limitations of Consciencism, considering its implications for addressing the challenges of poverty, inequality, and governance in Africa. By delving into the core ideas of Consciencism, it sought to shed light on its transformative potential in guiding African societies towards sustainable and inclusive development. It acknowledged the historical and cultural significance of African identity and advocated for its reclamation as a source of empowerment and self-confidence. The article also critically examines the practicality of Nkrumah's call for self-reliance, recognizing the resource constraints and structural challenges faced by many African nations. It navigated the complexities of balancing centralized governance with democratic principles, highlighting the potential risks and benefits associated with Nkrumah's vision. It evaluates the feasibility of holistic development as advocated by Consciencism, emphasizing the interconnections among economic, social, and political dimensions of progress. It explore the potential impact of Pan-Africanism and regional integration in fostering collective action and addressing shared challenges. This philosophical analysis of Nkrumah's Consciencism offers valuable insights into its potential as a basis for development in Africa. By critically examining its principles and implications, the article contributes to the ongoing discourse on African development and highlights the need for nuanced and context-specific approaches to address the complex challenges faced by the continent.*

### **Introduction**

Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of Ghana and a prominent Pan-Africanist, made significant contributions to African political thought. His work, **Consciencism**, is a seminal text that presented a comprehensive philosophical framework for decolonization and development in Africa. This paper probed into the philosophical underpinnings of Consciencism and examines its relevance as a basis for development in Africa. This philosophical analysis also investigated the profound significance of Kwame Nkrumah's pivotal work, **Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization and Development with Particular Reference to the African Revolution**, " as a fundamental basis for development in Africa. Through a comprehensive examination of Nkrumah's philosophical framework, the article explored the transformative potential of Consciencism in shaping African societies and fostering inclusive progress.

Nkrumah's Consciencism places a strong emphasis on the reclamation of African identity as an essential step towards development. By embracing and celebrating Africa's rich historical, cultural, and philosophical heritage, Nkrumah argued that societies can regain their self-confidence and assert their own development paths. This assertion of African identity serves as a catalyst for self-reliance, a core principle advocated by Nkrumah. He calls for African nations to break free from the shackles of dependency and pursue economic and political independence. By harnessing their own resources, fostering domestic industries, and reducing reliance on external aid, African countries can cultivate sustainable development and maintain control over their destinies.

Consciencism promotes a holistic approach to development, recognizing that progress should not be limited to mere economic growth but should encompass social and political dimensions as well. Nkrumah's philosophy highlights the eradication of poverty, the provision of quality education and healthcare, and the promotion of social justice as integral elements of a truly developed society. The interconnectedness of economic, social, and political factors is central to his vision of holistic development.

While Nkrumah's **Consciencism** offers a compelling vision for African development, it is not without challenges and critiques. However, its enduring relevance lies in its ability to inspire critical reflections on African agency, cultural pride, and collective action.

## Background

The background of this article lies in the recognition of Kwame Nkrumah's significant contributions to the discourse on African development and decolonization. Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of Ghana and a prominent Pan-Africanist, was a leading figure in the fight against colonialism and a staunch advocate for African unity and self-determination. Nkrumah's work, **Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization and Development with Particular Reference to the African Revolution,** presented a comprehensive philosophical framework aimed at guiding Africa's path to development and liberation. Published in 1964, the book combined elements of Marxism, African traditional thought, and Nkrumah's own ideas to propose a unique ideology centered on African identity, self-reliance, and holistic progress. This article stems from the ongoing relevance and influence of Nkrumah's Consciencism in contemporary discussions on African development. It recognizes the need to critically analyze and evaluate the philosophical foundations of Nkrumah's work to assess its potential as a basis for development in Africa. By conducting a philosophical analysis, the article aimed at the underlying principles, strengths, and limitations of Consciencism, providing a nuanced understanding of its implications for African societies.

It took into account the broader context of Africa's development challenges, including issues such as poverty, inequality, governance, and post-colonial legacies. By situating Nkrumah's Consciencism within this context, the article sought to address the relevance and applicability of his philosophical ideas to the complex realities and aspirations of contemporary Africa.

Overall, the background of the article lies in the recognition of Nkrumah's intellectual contributions and the need to critically assess the philosophical underpinnings of Consciencism in the context of Africa's development challenges. By doing so, the article

contributed to the ongoing discourse on African development and offered insights into the potential of Nkrumah's ideas as a guiding framework for progress in Africa.

### **Objective**

This article provided a comprehensive and insightful examination of Kwame Nkrumah's philosophy as outlined in his work "Consciencism." The article analyzed the relevance and potential of Consciencism as a foundation for development in Africa. By employing a philosophical lens, the objective explored the core principles of Consciencism, such as African identity, self-reliance, and holistic development, and assessed their applicability and effectiveness in driving sustainable progress and inclusive prosperity on the African continent. Through critical analysis and thoughtful reflection, the article contributed to the discourse on African development by shedding light on the philosophical underpinnings and potential implications of Nkrumah's Consciencism.

### **The Philosophical Analysis Of Nkrumah's Consciencism As A Basis For Development In Africa**

Consciencism could serve as a basis for development in Africa because it seeks to create a harmonious society that integrates traditional African values with positive elements of foreign cultures. It also emphasizes the importance of a people-centred ideology, where development is measured not just in economic terms, but also in terms of social justice and equality. Nkrumah's Consciencism offers a unique philosophical perspective on Africa's development. While it may not provide all the answers, it serves as a reminder of the importance of understanding Africa's unique historical cum cultural context in the quest for development. Nkrumah's Consciencism is a philosophical framework which attempts to harmonize the various elements of African society, namely the traditional African, Islamic, and Western. Nkrumah insists that in order for Africa to develop, it must first understand its own philosophical foundations and reconcile them with the elements of foreign cultures which tend to have influenced her greatly.

### **Nkrumah's Philosophical Ideology and the African Development**

The whole effort of Nkrumah in his *Consciencism* was to fashion out an ideology that will decolonise Africa in order to affirm her identity and boost her development. Nkrumah's effort to fashion out an ideology for Africa clearly portrays his desire for African identity, unity and development through his Consciencism. In his *Consciencism*, Nkrumah stated that there are three crises that trouble the African identity. He states that:

In Africa, this kind of emphasis must take objective account of our present situation at the return of political independence. From this point of view, there are three broad features to be distinguished here. African society has one segment which comprises our traditional way of life; it has a second which is filled by the presence of the Islamic tradition in Africa; it has a final segment which represents the infiltration of the Christian tradition and culture of Western Europe in Africa using colonialism and neo-colonialism as its primary vehicles.

It is clear from the above that there is identity crisis in African personality. And this is as a

result of Africa's experience in history. But which among these three will represent the African identity. If Africans chose one out of the three, will that reflect truly the African identity? If Africans chose two out of the three, it still compounds the problem of identity crisis. This clearly portrays the existing problem of identity crisis in African personality. The three segments staring Africa at face has to be integrated. But the question is how? Nkrumah did give the answer that the three should go in, in order to form the identity the African requires.

These different segments are animated by competing ideologies. But since society implies a certain dynamic unity, there needs to emerge an ideology which, genuinely catering for the needs of all, will take the place of the competing ideologies, and reflect the dynamic unity of society, and be the guide to society's continual progress.

Nkrumah's proposition was indeed a good one and geared towards African decolonisation from every external influence. But the question is, was motive achieved? If the answer is yes, I do not think the problem of identity crisis will be plaguing contemporary Africans. It is certain that Nkrumah's aim was not achieved. Afisi laments that:

It is arguable that all these problems besieging contemporary Africa stem from the underlying point of the identity crisis which different African societies are ravaged with. In the first place, the African today does not know who he is. He is neither a European, an American, an Arab nor a fully fledged African. In fact, the African today does not know what it is like to be a pure unadulterated African. Even though the African today acts, speaks, behaves either like a European, an American or an Arab, he is however neither considered nor accepted a European or an Arab. Similarly, he is also not an African; may be only by the colour of his skin, but culturally not one. He has become a hybrid of some sort full of identity problem. He is faced with the crisis of identifying or being identified with a particular culture.

Afisi clearly states what stares contemporary Africa at the face. The identity crisis is what cannot be denied in Africa today. But the question is, why is this problem more complex when Africans managed African affairs? It is simple that the early Nationalists failed to integrate the African experiences. The whole identity crisis in Africa boils down to what I call Africa's impressionist mentality without reservation.

### **Nkrumah's Consciencism as a Basis for the Development of African Nations**

Nkrumah's Consciencism presents a philosophical framework that can serve as a basis for the development of African nations. By integrating African values, historical consciousness, ethical principles, education, Pan-Africanism, and visionary leadership, Consciencism offers a roadmap for achieving sustainable and inclusive development. Nkrumah made it clear in Consciencism when he opined that “our attitude to the Western and the Islamic experience must be purposeful. It must be guided by thought, for practice without thought is blind, thought without practice is empty”. Here we will explore different ways on how Consciencism can contribute vehemently to the development of African nations.

### **African Identity and Cultural Heritage**

The African cultural heritage, in both its material and immaterial manifestations, is not exempt from the dialectical relations between tradition and modernity that permeates contemporary African societies. People's culture manifests in all aspects of life and it unceasingly evolves. Sekou Toure opines in *Revolution, Culture and Pan-Africanism*, that Culture is thus for every society, a frame traced from its attainments which are the fruits of its past and present, a kind of life shaped according to the demands of the present and the future as well as a creative and driving force of which it is at the same time the source and the consumer.

It can be said that culture is deployed and grows based on achievements or setbacks in a particular community. Noticeably, the importance of using the positive aspects of culture for transforming the negative is reinforced in many of Nkrumah's speeches and writings. African identity and cultural heritage are powerful assets that can serve as a basis for the development of African nations. Embracing and promoting African cultures, traditions, languages, and values can foster a sense of collective pride, self-determination, and social cohesion. The African personality, first used by Edward Blyden around 1883 was re-introduced by Nkrumah during his tenure in Ghana. The African Personality “speaks to an 'African People', which Nkrumah referred to as the African masses and which Sékou Touré often called the People's Class. It speaks to the behaviour and character of organized entities in their attempt to establish an optimal zone for continued cultural development”.

Nkrumah's Consciencism emphasizes the importance of African identity and cultural heritage as a foundation for development. Thus, by recognizing and valuing African traditions, languages, and belief systems, African nations can build a sense of collective pride and self-determination. This cultural renaissance can fuel creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship, fostering sustainable economic growth, rooted in local knowledge and resources. Besides, embracing African identity can empower marginalized groups and promote social cohesion, contributing to a more equitable and inclusive society. African identity and cultural heritage provide a solid foundation for the development of African nations.

**Economic Growth:** African identity and cultural heritage can play a vital role in driving economic growth. Africa is a continent blessed with both human and natural resources. By leveraging the rich cultural diversity of the continent, African nations can stimulate tourism, cultural industries, and creative arts. Tourists are often drawn to destinations that offer unique cultural experiences, such as traditional music, dance, crafts, and cuisine. By developing cultural tourism initiatives and supporting local artisans, African nations can generate revenue, create job opportunities, and promote economic empowerment at the community level. Also, African cultural practices and knowledge systems can inspire innovation and entrepreneurship. Indigenous knowledge in agriculture, herbal medicine, and sustainable resource management can be harnessed to address pressing challenges, such as food security and environmental sustainability. By integrating traditional practices with modern technologies, African nations can foster economic development while preserving their rich and wonderful cultural heritage.

**Cultural Renaissance and Self-Determination:** Nkrumah's Consciencism calls for a cultural renaissance that celebrates African identity and promotes self-determination. In

recognizing and valuing African cultures, languages, and belief systems, African nations can establish a strong sense of collective pride and self-worth. This cultural awakening empowers individuals and communities to take ownership of their development, fostering a spirit of self-determination and agency. According to Poe, Nkrumah's political philosophy focused on helping the people of Africa gain economic, political, and social independence. Without independence in these three areas, Africa would be operating with a false sense of achievement. Achieving political independence without economic independence left the door open for neo-colonialism to run murderously. Nkrumah's ideology and philosophy dictated his political career and his quest for national and continental unity. Nkrumah made this clear when he opined that, "The African personality is itself defined by the cluster of humanist principles which underline the traditional African society. Philosophical Consciencism is that philosophical standpoint which, taking its start from the present content of the African conscience, indicates the way in which progress is forged out of the conflict in that conscience.

**Decolonizing the African Mind:** Consciencism emphasizes the need to decolonize the African mind, challenging the dominant narratives imposed by colonialism. Through embracing African cultural heritage, African nations can reclaim their historical narratives, challenge Eurocentric perspectives, and restore a sense of dignity and self-confidence. This process of decolonization enables Africans to redefine their identities on their own terms and promotes a sense of cultural autonomy in the development process.

**National Unity and Collective Action:** Through Nkrumah's Consciencism, African identity and cultural heritage can serve as unifying forces, fostering a sense of shared purpose and collective action among diverse populations. In celebrating common cultural traditions, such as festivals, African nations can strengthen their national identity and promote social cohesion. Cultural events, festivals, and national holidays provide opportunities for citizens to come together, appreciate their shared heritage, and build strong social bonds. Moreover, African cultural expressions often emphasize communal values and collective responsibility. These values can be harnessed to promote social developmental initiatives, such as community-based projects, volunteerism, and support networks. Nkrumah wrote that we need the strength of our combined numbers and resources to protect ourselves from the very positive dangers of returning colonialism in disguised forms. We need it to combat the entrenched forces dividing our continent and still holding back millions of our brothers. We need it to secure total African liberation. As regards defence, he further argued that, if we do not unite and combine our military resources for common defence, the individual states, out of a sense of insecurity, may be drawn into making defence pacts with foreign powers which may endanger the security of us all. This can be seen in the security threats in Africa at moment with the "Boko haram, and herder's men attack". By fostering a sense of collective identity and purpose, African nations can mobilize their citizens towards common goals, such as building a strong security network, poverty reduction, sustainable development, and social justice.

**Education and Intercultural Understanding:** Education plays a crucial role in promoting African identity and cultural heritage. Through integrating African history, languages, and cultural studies into educational curricula, African nations can ensure that future generations have a strong sense of their cultural roots. An Igbo adage says that

“unless you know where you are coming from, you cannot know where you are going to”. This education can implant pride in African heritage, challenge stereotypes, and promote intercultural understanding. Besides, education that embraces cultural diversity can foster tolerance, empathy, and respect for different cultural expressions. Through promoting intercultural dialogue and exchange, African nations can build bridges of understanding between different ethnic groups, promoting social harmony and reducing conflicts rooted in cultural differences. In an article in *Educational Outlook*, he concretely described his understanding of the purpose of education. “Education should lead the individual into the highest, fullest, and most fruitful relationship with the culture and ideals of the society in which he finds himself, thereby fitting him for the struggle of life”. This understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures contribute to a more inclusive and cohesive society.

### **Historical Consciousness and Social Justice**

According to Consciencism, historical consciousness and social justice are essential elements that can serve as a basis for the development of African nations. Consciencism accentuates the significance of historical consciousness in addressing the legacies of colonialism and imperialism. Through understanding the historical forces that have shaped African nations, societies can confront past injustices and work towards social justice. This involves addressing issues such as land redistribution, reparations, and the empowerment of marginalized communities. By rectifying historical inequalities, African nations can build a foundation of fairness and equity, ensuring that the benefits of development are shared by all citizens. That is why Nkrumah stated that:

In the new African renaissance, we place great emphasis on the presentation of history. Our history needs to be written as the history of our society, not as the story of European adventures. African society must be treated as enjoying its own integrity; its history must be mirror of that society, and the European contact must find its place in this history only as an African experience, even if as a crucial one. That is to say, the European contact needs to be assessed and judged from the point of view of the principles animating African society, and from the point of view of the harmony and progress of this society.

Thus, historical consciousness and social justice, within the framework of Consciencism, can contribute to the development of African nations. For Nkrumah, African history can come to guide and direct African actions. Thus, African History can become a pointer at the ideology which should guide and direct African reconstruction.

**Historical Consciousness:** Nkrumah's Consciencism emphasizes the importance of historical consciousness in shaping the development of African nations. By understanding and acknowledging the historical context in which African societies have evolved, nations can learn from past experiences, successes, and challenges. Historical consciousness enables Africans to reclaim their narratives, challenge oppressive structures, and build upon their rich historical heritage.

**Reconciliation and Healing:** Historical consciousness paves the way for reconciliation and healing. Many African nations have experienced periods of colonization, exploitation, and internal conflicts that have left deep wounds within the society. Through confronting historical injustices and promoting dialogue, African nations can foster healing and reconciliation. This process acknowledges past wrongs, promotes forgiveness, and focuses on building a more inclusive and equitable society.

**Empowerment and Participation:** Social justice entails empowering individuals and communities to actively participate in the decision-making processes that affect their lives and the community. African nations can promote inclusivity by creating spaces for marginalized voices to be heard and actively engaging citizens in governance and development initiatives just as it was in the past, “village meeting system”. This empowerment ensures that developmental efforts are people-centered and responsive to the needs and aspirations of the population. It is through the interaction that you can know the mind and the need of the people and the society. Thus, our political participation should be people oriented and not policy oriented.

**Redefining Development Indicators:** Consciencism challenges the narrow definition of development that is solely based on economic growth. Instead, it advocates for a broader understanding of development that includes social well-being, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability. African nations can redefine development indicators to reflect the values and aspirations of their people. This includes measuring progress in terms of improved access to education, healthcare, cultural preservation, environmental conservation, and social cohesion. “Thus, according to Nkrumah, since matter is a plenum of forces in tension, and since tension implies incipient change, matter must have the power of self-motion original to it, without self-motion, dialectical change would be impossible”.

**Pan-Africanism and Solidarity:** Nkrumah's Consciencism promotes Pan-Africanism and solidarity as vehicles for social justice. African nations can collaborate and support each other in addressing common challenges and promoting equitable development. Nkrumah avers that the reason for the Pan-African conference was to exchange views on matters of common interest; to explore ways and means of consolidating and safeguarding our independence; to strengthen the economic and political ties between our countries; to decide on workable arguments for helping fellow Africans still subjects to colonial rule; and to examine the central world problem of how to secure peace. In fostering regional integration, sharing best practices, and advocating for global justice, African nations can amplify their collective voice and influence on the global stage.

### **Ethical Principles and Social Welfare**

According to Nkrumah's Consciencism, ethical values and social welfare are crucial elements that can serve as a basis for the development of African nations. Ethics play a crucial role in Consciencism's developmental agenda. For Nkrumah, “the cardinal ethical principle of philosophical Consciencism is to treat each man as an end in himself and not merely as a means”. Through prioritizing the common good and social welfare, African nations can foster a more equitable and inclusive society. This involves adopting ethical principles that guide economic policies, ensuring that wealth and resources are

distributed fairly. In promoting social safety networks, access to quality education and healthcare, and the protection of workers' rights, African nations can create an environment that supports the well-being of all citizens.

**Ethical Principles:** Consciencism emphasizes the importance of ethical principles as a guiding framework for development. African nations can adopt and promote values such as integrity, honesty, compassion, and respect for the dignity of individuals. Action in philosophical Consciencism is ethical. But philosophical Consciencism cannot issue in a closed set of ethical rules, because philosophical Consciencism is based upon a view of matter which is caught in the grips of an inexorable dialectical evolution. And to the extent that materialism issues in egalitarianism on the social plane, it issues in ethics. Ethical principles provide a moral compass that ensures developmental efforts are conducted in a just and equitable manner, free from corruption, exploitation, and discrimination. For philosophical Consciencism, therefore, ethical rules are not permanent, but depend on the stage reached in the historical evolution of a society, as long as cardinal principles of egalitarianism are conserved.

**Good Governance:** Ethical principles are essential for promoting good governance in African nations. Consciencism emphasizes the need for transparent, accountable, and participatory governance systems. African nations can establish robust anti-corruption measures, strengthen institutions, and promote the rule of law. Thus, Nkrumah opined that, "a society does not change its ethics by merely changing its rules. To alter its ethics, its principles must be different". By upholding ethical principles in governance, nations can create an enabling environment for sustainable development and social progress.

**Social Welfare:** Nkrumah's Consciencism places a strong emphasis on social welfare as a central aspect of development. African nations can prioritize the well-being and quality of life of their citizens by investing in social programs and services. This includes access to quality education, healthcare, affordable housing, social safety networks, and basic amenities. Social welfare policies should be designed to address poverty, inequality, and social exclusion, ensuring that development benefits all segments of society. An egalitarian society places social welfare paramount in its social activities.

**Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Growth:** Ethical principles and social welfare call for poverty reduction and inclusive economic growth. African nations can implement strategies that prioritize poverty alleviation, job creation, and economic empowerment of marginalized communities. Out of world's 41 underdeveloped countries, Africa parades 37, that's how bad African continent has been represented by her leaders. Developmental efforts should be geared towards reducing income disparities, promoting equitable distribution of resources, and providing equal opportunities for all citizens to participate in the economy. Good governance is the government that is people-centred.

**Social Solidarity and Ubuntu:** Nkrumah's Consciencism promotes social solidarity and the African philosophy of Ubuntu, which emphasizes interconnectedness and the well-being of the community. African nations can foster a sense of social cohesion, empathy, and collective responsibility. For Nkrumah, a pervasive strategy for shoring up arbitrary social hierarchies in the history of the West lies in its supernatural accounts of the world and the sacerdotal powers that they facilitate. And thus, when philosophy and science offer fully natural explanations of the world, they undermine this kind of power and could

serve as instruments of social justice. By promoting social solidarity, nations can encourage citizens to support each other, contribute to the welfare of the community, and participate actively in the development process. Nkrumah then explains how this egalitarian principle would work in practice with regard to the relationship between the individual and the community. By reason of its tenet, philosophical Consciencism seeks to promote individual development, but in such a way that the conditions for the development of all become the conditions for the development of each; that is, in such a way that the individual development does not introduce such diversities as to destroy the egalitarian basis. The social political practice also seeks to co-ordinate social forces in such a way as to mobilise them logistically for the maximum development of society along true egalitarian lines.

### **Pan-Africanism and Cultural Exchange**

Consciencism emphasizes the importance of Pan-Africanism and regional integration as catalysts for development. African nations should collaborate and support each other in pursuit of shared goals. According to Consciencism, Pan-Africanism and regional integration are integral components that can serve as a basis for the development of African nations. By leveraging collective resources, expertise, and market potentials, African nations can address economic challenges, reduce dependency on external actors, and strengthen their bargaining power on the global stage. Consciencism promotes Pan-Africanism and regional integration as avenues for cultural exchange and collaboration. African nations can engage in dialogue, knowledge sharing, and cultural exchange to foster unity. By celebrating diverse African cultures, nations can strengthen their collective identity and build networks of cooperation. This cross-cultural interaction fuels creativity, innovation, and the exchange of ideas, contributing to the overall development of African nations. Nkrumah's speech *The Flower of Learning*, given at his installation as the first Chancellor of the University of Ghana, during the inauguration of the University, outlined the role that the University was expected to play in developing a renewed cultural viewpoint—one that would decolonize the African mind. Quoted in Samuel Obeng's, *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah*, he holds;

It is the Government's hope, however, that within a few years, the institute will have a firm basis of African scholarship and that it will become an internationally recognized centre for the advanced study of African history, language, sociology and culture and of contemporary African institutions. I am happy to learn that the Institute of African Studies is already committed to these objectives and I appreciate the efforts being made by the institute to give every student here some courses in African studies. This is vital if we should eradicate the colonial mentality which our contact with Europe has induced in us and rediscover ourselves with confidence and a distinct world outlook.

Nkrumah held that the cultural transformation of the African intelligentsia and the African masses was directly related to achieving sustainable development and ensuring that countries would be administered by African nationals. Nkrumah's political work and speeches reflect his belief that gaining independence, both politically and economically,

was the initial step in achieving sustainable development. Nkrumah in the *Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare* described the relationship between imperialism and neo-colonialism by stating that, "It is precisely the increasing dependence of the imperialist system on neo-colonialist exploitation on an international scale which renders its existence so precarious, and its future so uncertain". Pan-Africanism and regional integration, within the basis of Consciencism, can contribute to the development of African nations in the following ways:

**Economic Integration:** Regional integration plays a vital role in the development of African nations. Consciencism highlights the importance of economic integration as a means to harness the collective resources and potentials of African nations. African nations can collaborate to establish regional economic communities, promote intra-African trade, and develop common markets. This integration can lead to economies of scale, increased competitiveness, and enhanced regional stability, fostering economic growth and development.

**Peace and Security:** Pan-Africanism and regional integration foster peace and security in African nations. Through cooperation, African nations can address conflicts, promote conflict prevention mechanisms, and support peacekeeping efforts. Nkrumah explains that this African personality is one that determines the African attitude in international politics. In reference to what informs what Africa stands for, he writes:

We stand for international peace and security in conformity with the United Nations Charter. This will enable us to assert our own African personality and to develop according to our own ways of life, our own customs, traditions and cultures. In asserting our African personality, we shall be free to act in our individual and collective interests at any particular time.

By working together, nations can create a stable and secure environment that is conducive to development. Peace and security are essential foundations for social progress, economic growth, and the well-being of African nations.

**Collective Influence on the Global Stage:** Pan-Africanism and regional integration enhance the collective influence of African nations on the global stage. By presenting a unified front, African nations can advocate for their common interests, shape global agenda, and challenge unfair trade practices and policies. There are five stages towards the attainment of total political union or integration. These are: a free trade area, customs union, common market, economic union, and finally, political union. What Nkrumah wanted was total political integration. His continental union was to have three main objectives: overall continental planning on a continental scale; a unified land, sea, air, military and defence strategy; and a common foreign policy. This collective influence can lead to a more equitable international order that supports the development aspirations of African nations and promotes global justice.

### **Education and Empowerment**

According to Consciencism, education and empowerment are crucial elements that can serve as a basis for the development of African nations. Education is a central pillar of

Nkrumah's Consciencism, seen as a tool for empowerment and societal transformation. By investing in quality education, African nations can equip their citizens with the knowledge and skills needed to actively participate in the developmental process. Education should go beyond academic learning and encompass the development of critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities. Thus, Nkrumah opines that,

the epistemological consequences of philosophical Consciencism provides an antecedent philosophical justification for such pursuits as the investigation of the nature and functioning of brain....in general, philosophical Consciencism narrows down the extent of academic hermitage. It does this by making research into the nature of one category possible in terms of another category.

Through education, individuals can challenge existing power structures, contribute to social change, and drive innovation and entrepreneurship. Moreover, education can foster a sense of social responsibility and active citizenship, nurturing leaders who are committed to the welfare of their communities and nation. In empowering individuals with the knowledge and pride in their cultural roots, education becomes a catalyst for personal and collective development. Education and empowerment, within the context of Consciencism, can contribute to the development of African nations:

**Education as a Foundation:** Consciencism recognizes education as a foundational element for development. African nations can prioritize access to quality education for all citizens, regardless of their socio-economic background or gender. Education equips individuals with knowledge, skills, and critical thinking abilities necessary for personal growth, active citizenship, and economic participation. Nkrumah argues that the social revolution must be backed by an intellectual revolution that is aimed at the redemption of society. This philosophy must be grounded in the actual environment and conditions under which people live in Africa. The basis of this philosophy is the actual experience of the people and with the emancipation of the continent the people must also be emancipated. From this, he writes:

Social revolution must therefore have, standing firmly behind it, an intellectual revolution in which our thinking and philosophy are directed towards the redemption of our society. Our philosophy must find its weapon in the environment and living conditions of African people. It is from those conditions that the intellectual content of our ideology must be created. The emancipation of the African continent is the emancipation of man. This requires two aims: “first, the recognition of the egalitarianism of human society, and second, the logistic mobilisation of all our resources toward the attainment of that restitution”.

Empowering individuals through education enables them to seize opportunities, participate meaningfully in the developmental process, and contribute to the overall progress of the nation. Through investing in education, African nations can foster a well-educated population that can contribute to the development of various sectors and drive innovation.

**Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:** Nkrumah's Consciencism places

emphasis on gender equality and women's empowerment as crucial factors for development. African nations can prioritize the elimination of gender disparities in education, politics, social spheres and ensure equal opportunities for girls and women. Thales' idea that "everything is water" implies for Nkrumah in the first place that no supernatural explanations for the world are needed, since the material world contains its immanent cause within itself. Secondly, it importantly suggests that "everything is derived from one and the same substance". And so, he concludes, that Thales' thinking implies on a social, political level: "...the fundamental identity of man as well, man according to him being not half natural, half supernatural, but wholly natural. That is to say, on the social plane, his metaphysical principle underlying all of reality amounted to an assertion of the fundamental equality and brotherhood of men". By empowering women through education, politics, training, and access to resources, nations can tap into the immense potential of women as agents of change. Philosophical Consciencism is primarily concerned with how each individual is treated. Nkrumah made it clearly that, "The cardinal principle of philosophical Consciencism is to treat each man as an end in himself and not merely as a means. This is fundamental to all socialist or humanist conceptions of man".

**Civic Education and Active Citizenship:** Nkrumah's Consciencism emphasizes the importance of civic education and active citizenship. African nations can incorporate civic education into the major curriculum, promoting values such as political rights and participation, democratic participation, respect for human rights, and social responsibility. By educating citizens about their rights and responsibilities, nations can foster a culture of active citizenship and civic engagement. Kweku Smith, in his dissertation, *Kwame Nkrumah: Philosophy of Education for Ghana*, observes that ideologies,

Just as Nkrumah's formal philosophy attempts to understand reality as a whole by explaining it in the most transformative, humanistic, and systematic manners, his philosophy of education also seeks to comprehend education in its entirety, interpreting it by means of humanistic concepts that will guide the choice of traditional educational principles and practices for the purpose of participatory democracy in Ghana.

Empowered and engaged citizens contribute to the development of a just, accountable, and participatory society.

**Lifelong Learning and Continuous Empowerment:** Empowerment through education is an ongoing process because learning is a continuous process from birth till death. African nations can promote lifelong learning opportunities for individuals of all ages, including adult education and vocational training. By providing access to continuous learning and skill development, nations can ensure that individuals remain adaptable, competitive, and empowered throughout their active life time. He argued that education was the foundation for the development of Ghana and unification of Africa. He outlined this belief at the Conference of Teachers' Association in 1961 as quoted in *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah*. Samuel Obeng remarks:

In our present circumstances in Ghana, it is not enough that anyone should acquire knowledge for its own sake. We are not impressed by the mere acquisition of knowledge. Such knowledge becomes impressive only when it is applied to achieve positive and practical results for the benefit of mankind.

Lifelong learning contributes to personal growth, economic productivity, and overall societal development.

### **Visionary Leadership and Accountability**

According to Nkrumah's Consciencism, visionary leadership and accountability are crucial elements that can serve as a basis for the development of African nations. Consciencism recognizes the critical role of visionary leadership in African development. Leaders should be guided by ethical principles, committed to the welfare of their citizens, and accountable to the people. They should prioritize long-term goals over short-term gains and have the courage to challenge existing power structures. Nkrumah puts it thus;

The ideology of a society is total. It embraces the whole life of a people, and manifests itself in their class-structure, history, literature, art, religion. It also acquires a philosophical statement. If an ideology is integrative in intent, that is to say, if it seeks to introduce a certain order which will unite the actions of millions towards specific and definite goals, then its instruments can also be seen as instruments of social control. It is even possible to look upon 'coercion' as a fundamental idea in society.

Visionary leaders inspire and mobilize citizens, fostering a sense of national purpose and unity. They promote transparency, inclusivity, and participatory decision-making processes, allowing citizens to have a voice in shaping their own destinies. Thus, visionary leadership and accountability, within the basis of Consciencism, can contribute to the development of African nations through the following ways:

**Visionary Leadership:** Consciencism highlights the importance of visionary leadership in driving development. Visionary leaders have a clear and compelling vision for the future of their nations. They inspire and mobilize citizens towards a common goal, fostering a sense of unity and purpose. African nations can benefit from visionary leaders who have a long-term perspective, are proactive in addressing challenges, and are committed to the well-being and progress of their people.

**Accountable Governance:** Nkrumah's Consciencism emphasizes the importance of accountable governance in development. Visionary leaders promote transparency, integrity, and accountability in the management of social and public resources. They establish mechanisms for citizen participation, oversight, and reaction. African nations can strengthen accountability by implementing anti-corruption measures, promoting transparency in decision-making, and ensuring that public officials are held responsible for their actions. Accountable governance builds trust, enhances the efficiency of resource allocation, and fosters an environment conducive to sustainable development.

**Capacity Building and Human Resource Development:** Visionary leaders prioritize

capacity building and human resource development. They invest in education, technology, skills training, and talent development to build a capable workforce. African nations can focus on strengthening the education system, promoting lifelong learning, and providing opportunities for skill acquisition. For Nkrumah, the aim of African socialists is to remould African society in such a manner that the quintessence of the humanist purposes of traditional African societies is re-enacted in modern society. Nkrumah opines that the doctrine urges humane development, thus, “consequently, socialism in Africa introduces a new social synthesis in which modern technology is reconciled with human values, in which the advanced technical society is realized without the staggering social malefactions and deep schisms of capitalist society”.

**Collaboration and Partnerships:** According to Nkrumah, Visionary leaders recognize the value of collaboration and partnerships in development. They foster cooperation among African nations, regional organizations, and international partners. African nations can engage in mutually beneficial partnerships that leverage resources, knowledge, and expertise. By collaborating with diverse stakeholders, visionary leaders can access new ideas, technologies, and investments that accelerate development efforts. Collaboration also promotes learning, knowledge exchange, and the sharing of best practices.

## **Conclusion**

While Nkrumah's Consciencism offers a compelling vision for African's development, it is not without challenges and critiques. Some argue that his ideas of self-reliance and African socialism were idealistic and difficult to implement. Others contend that his emphasis on centralized governance undermined democratic principles. Nevertheless, Nkrumah's philosophical framework continues to inspire critical reflections on African's development and remains relevant in contemporary debates. As African countries strive to achieve sustainable and inclusive development, Nkrumah's Consciencism serves as a guiding light, reminding us of the importance of African agency, cultural pride, and collective action in shaping Africa's future.

However, it is essential to adapt these principles to the specific contexts of individual African nations, recognizing their unique histories, cultures, and developmental needs. From a philosophical perspective, Consciencism emphasizes the importance of critical thinking and consciousness in African's development. Nkrumah argued that Africans should not blindly adopt foreign ideologies but rather critically analyse their applicability to the African context and adapt them accordingly. To fully realize the potential of Consciencism, African leaders and policymakers must embrace its principles and translate them into tangible actions. This requires political will, effective governance, and the involvement of citizens in decision-making processes.

The new African society will be based on the new identities of the autonomous people who have developed their own culture through Consciencism. This creation of new humanity not based on standards of the colonizer will complete the process of decolonization. For development to come about, the problem must be first identified and that is exactly what Kwame Nkrumah did in his Consciencism. To commensurate the price of liberation and development, sacrifices of men, women, children, young, and old

are inevitable. Decolonization is not a bed of roses or a love story, but a necessary war to ensure longevity, prosperity and development for Africa and her people. The future of African states is uncertain unless a focus on self-reliance is executed as Kwame Nkrumah stressed in his *Consciencism*. To save Africa and her people, the words of Nkrumah must be remembered and lived, of which he stated that the liberation of a people institutes principles which enjoin the recognition and destruction of imperialistic domination, whether it is political, economic, social or cultural. To destroy imperialistic domination in these forms, political, economic, social and cultural action must always have reference to the needs and nature of the liberated territory, and it is from these needs and nature that the action must derive authenticity. Unless this self-reference is religiously maintained, a liberated territory will welcome with open arms the very foe which it has sought to destroy at a cost of terrible suffering.

By leveraging the values and ideas espoused by Nkrumah in *Consciencism*, Africa can chart a path towards sustainable development, social progress, and the empowerment of her people. Through *Consciencism*, Africa can unlock its vast potential and forge a future of prosperity, unity, via self-determination.

#### ENDNOTES

- Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism, Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonisation*, Revised Edition, (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1970), p. 68.
- K. Nkrumah, p. 68.
- O. T. Afisi, "Rethinking the African Identity Crisis", *Nnamdi Azikiwe Journal of Philosophy*, 1, No. 2 (2008). pp. 90-91.
- Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism, Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonisation*, Revised Edition, (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1970), p. 78.
- Ahmed Seku Ture, *Revolution, Culture and Pan-Africanism*, (Guinea West Africa: Press Office at State House, 1978), p. 80.
- Z. Poe, *Kwame Nkrumah's Contribution to Pan-Africanism: An Afrocentric Analysis*, (Los Angeles: University of Sankore Press, 2010), p. 10.
- Z. Poe, *Kwame Nkrumah's Contribution to Pan-Africanism: An Afrocentric Analysis*, (Los Angeles: University of Sankore Press, 2010), p. 105.
- Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism, Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonisation*, Revised Edition, (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1970), p. 78.
- K. Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite*, (London: PANAFA, 1963), pp. 216-222.
- K. Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite*, (London: PANAFA, 1963), pp. 216-222.
- Francis Nkrumah, *Primitive Education in West Africa*. Educational Outlook, Vol. 15, Number 2, January 1941, p. 87
- Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism, Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonisation*, Revised Edition, (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1970), p. 63.
- Cf., Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism, Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonisation*, Revised Edition, (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1970), p. 63.

- Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism, Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonisation*, Revised Edition, (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1970), p. 90.
- K. Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite*, (London: PANAF, 1963), p.132.
- Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism, Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonisation*, Revised Edition, (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1970), p. 95.
- Consciencism*, p.91.
- Consciencism*, p.93.
- Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism, Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonisation*, Revised Edition, (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1970), p. 95.
- Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism, Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonisation*, Revised Edition, (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1970), p. 36.
- Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism, Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonisation*, Revised Edition, (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1970), p. 98.
- Samuel Obeng, *Selected Speeches: Kwame Nkrumah*, Volume 1, (Accra, Ghana: Afram Publications, 1997), p.138.
- Kwame Nkrumah, *The Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare*, (London: PANAF Books, 1968), p.13.
- Kwame Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom: A Statement of African Ideology*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1961), p.128.
- Jean-Paul Rodrigue, *The Geography of Transport Systems*, Fifth edition, (New York: Routledge, 2020), pp. 45-48.
- S. Obeng, *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah*, vol.2 (Centenary Edition), (Accra: Afram Publications Ltd., 2009), p.179.
- Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism, Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonisation*, Revised Edition, (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1970), p. 91.
- Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism, Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonisation*, Revised Edition, (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1970), p. 78.
- Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism, Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonisation*, Revised Edition, (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1970), p. 34.
- Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism, Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonisation*, Revised Edition, (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1970), p. 95.
- Kweku Smith, *Kwame Nkrumah: Philosophy of Education for Ghana, Africa from 1951 to 1966, An Exposition of his Life, Work and Thoughts*. (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of San Francisco, 2000). p. 83.
- Samuel Obeng, *Selected Speeches: Kwame Nkrumah*, Volume 1, (Accra, Ghana: Afram Publications, 1997), p.55.
- Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism, Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonisation*, Revised Edition, (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1970), pp.59-60.
- Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism, Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonisation*, Revised Edition, (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1970), p. 2.