



The African Development Dilemma and the Tarker Golozo's Perspective in Orature

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Abstract

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Over the past six decades, Africa has faced a myriad of development challenges, arising mainly from clashes between tradition and modernity, vicious politics, ineffective governance, power imbalances, extreme poverty, varying degrees of infrastructure deficiency, economic disparities, internal conflicts, urban-rural imbalances, and industrialization and environmental sustainability concerns. This multitude of issues form the African development dilemma that persists alongside intellectual egoism thriving with self-indulgent blame game amongst dominant scholarly views. Despite the significant potential of oral perspectives to supply alternative answers to issues like clashes between tradition and modernity, they face marginalization from dominant perspectives. The paper explores Africa's development dilemma and Golozo's perspective in orature, reflecting a nuanced blend of tradition and modernity. Golozo's perspective highlights the conflict between traditional values and modern demands and contradicts dominant narratives as he advocates for a pragmatic approach that prioritizes action. It is fascinating to see how a Tiv folksinger, Tarker Golozo, used his art to convey the developmental travails faced by the agrarian community in Benue State, Nigeria. The paper suggests a shift from blame narratives to perspectives promoting action, reconciliation, and collaboration, emphasizing the importance of orature in offering culturally grounded insights. Ultimately, embracing Golozo's finesse and pragmatic approach can offer valuable insights into addressing Africa's complex development challenges.

Keywords: Orature, Dilemma, African Development, Cosmological Perspectives, Golozo's Display of Orature.

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INTRODUCTION

Africa's rich oral tradition contains invaluable knowledge that not only inspires but also offers alternative perspectives that challenge dominant narratives surrounding the continent's complex development challenges, including entrenched poverty, heavy debt burdens, military coups, civil strife, widespread corruption, flawed elections, political instability, infrastructure deficits, crime, poor education and skills acquisition, high mortality, food insecurity, preventable disease-related deaths, and governance crises. The World Bank (2023) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (2021) both recognize these persistent issues and highlight Africa's weaker economic performance relative to other developing regions.

Mlambo (2021) further supports this view by arguing that Africa continues to rely on its former colonizers for political and economic direction. While dominant schools of thought like modernization and dependency theories attempt to explain Africa's underdevelopment, they often devolve into intellectual egotism and a self-serving "blame game" (Kutor, 2014), marginalizing alternative insights rooted in African orality. These dominant paradigms, though illuminating, however with their narrow focus on either internal or external factors, fall short of offering sustainable solutions. In contrast, orature presents a culturally grounded, holistic framework for understanding development, as it not only challenges mainstream narratives but also encourages the 'hybridization of traditional and modern values' (Akpomuvie, 2010). Within this

context, Tarker Golozo's oral reflections exemplify the delicate balance between tradition and modernity, providing a nuanced lens that counters dominant development discourses, even as his views have been marginalized, including within his own Tiv community. This paper seeks to elevate Golozo's voice by adopting a cosmological approach that affirms the value of orature in shaping meaningful responses to Africa's enduring development dilemmas.

Golozo's Contextual Background

Golozo's oral navigation and its implications for addressing the African development dilemma are best understood within the context of his lived experience and socio-political environment. Raised in colonial-era Tivland and emerging as a prominent social commentator and community mobilizer in the 1960s, a period marked by escalating crises in Nigeria and across Africa, Golozo used his songs to voice deep concerns about development and governance, aligning with broader continental discourses of the time (Ker, 2002). While his worldview extended beyond Nigeria, Tiv society remained his primary focus and intellectual anchor. As a kin-based society tracing its ancestry to *Takuruku Anyamazenga* (Wuam, 2013), the Tiv people rely on oral traditions (Golozo's sphere of influence) to preserve and transmit shared aspirations rooted in historical migrations, colonial encounters, ethnic struggles, and the continuous quest for democracy and development within Nigeria. Geographically located in central Nigeria, Tivland benefits from fertile river systems like Benue and Katsina-Ala, offering significant agricultural potential, with farming employing about 75 percent of the population (Nda and Obande, 2015). Socially and politically, Tiv society espouses egalitarianism grounded in the myth of origin and expressed in the axiom "no man passes another," alongside the *ya na angbian* (eat and give your brother) philosophy that promotes justice, equity, and communal well-being. However, persistent contradictions, such as exclusion, inequality, envy, poverty, political inertia, and limited upward mobility, continue to undermine these ideals. These complexities form the thematic fabric of Tiv orature and constitute the central intellectual terrain of Tarker Golozo, whose oral compositions critique societal failings while envisioning a more just and developed Tiv society.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Orature encompasses the various forms through which individuals outside of written traditions engage in intellectual practices that generate and preserve valuable knowledge. Popularized by Kenyan novelist and playwright Ngugi wa Thiong'o, the term initially described imaginative works within the oral tradition (Oxford Reference, 2023), but has since evolved to include storytelling, folklore, proverbs, poetry, and other verbal expressions still vital in many societies (Finnegan, 2016). Although modern communication technologies and Western education have diminished the role of oral traditions in knowledge transfer and emotional expression, especially in the West, oral tradition remains deeply rooted in Africa, particularly within culturally grounded communities

(Ogundokun, 2015). African orature plays multifaceted roles in socio-political analysis by embodying African cosmology, the complex web of beliefs, practices, and perspectives that underpin African philosophy (Lajul, 2017). It functions as an indigenous source of ethical and moral guidance, shaping behavior, decision-making, and communal progress. Moreover, African orature's cosmological orientation recognizes the interconnectedness of humans and natural forces, promoting environmental consciousness and offering sustainable alternatives to modern challenges (Ogundokun, 2015). Importantly, it serves not only as a custodian of tradition but also as a dynamic framework capable of integrating cosmological insights with contemporary realities, thereby facilitating culturally resonant and pragmatic solutions. Golozo's perspective of orature aligns with this broader conceptualization, grounding his oral reflections in a worldview that bridges tradition with modern African development concerns.

Development

The absence of a universally agreed-upon meaning of development poses a challenge in framing the concept, especially within the African context. Scholars, analysts, and advocates who specialize in studying and discussing development have varying perspectives and interpretations, making it more difficult to show a consensus on its definition and parameters. Despite the absence of consensus, development is widely recognized as a process involving improvement and transformation. While there may be differing interpretations and understandings of development, the overarching idea is that it involves progress and positive change. From this standpoint, the effective development process emphasizes enhancing human well-being, easing social transformation, achieving economic prosperity, and developing the ability to sustainably address challenges at both individual and societal levels. This operational framework for understanding human development combines the diverse scholarly perspectives with the oral viewpoints put forth in Todaro and Smith (2011), Rodney (2009), and African orature, respectively.

African Development

Within this framework, African development is best understood as a deliberate pursuit of positive change and transformation, encompassing economic, social, political, and cultural dimensions. This multidimensional vision resonates with the aspirations articulated in Making Africa Work (Mills *et al*, 2017), which advocates a dynamic, future-oriented approach tailored to the continent's unique realities. Development, in this context, involves not only fostering institutionalized democracy, good governance, and sustainable prosperity but also prioritizing social transformation, environmental stewardship, and human capital investment. It emphasizes technological innovation, social security, and regional cooperation to overcome challenges and harness opportunities (RES4Africa Foundation (RES4A), International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), 2022). Historically,

development emerged as a focal point in African discourse following decolonization in the mid-20th century, shaped by the continent's efforts to navigate political independence alongside economic dependency. This post-colonial development agenda encompassed goals such as economic restructuring, nation-building, infrastructure expansion, and human and social advancement (Frankema, *et al*, 2023; Parashar & Schulz, 2021; Kassaye Nigusie & Ivkina, 2021), all of which continue to inform contemporary development paradigms.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research approach was adopted in analyzing Golozo's oral reflections, involving close textual analysis and contextual interpretation of his songs within the broader socio-cultural framework of Tiv society (Smith, 2008). This method enabled the identification of recurring development themes, such as agriculture, democracy, and good governance, embedded in Golozo's repertoire, while also uncovering the cultural significance and contextual meanings within the songs (Smith, 2008). The selection of specific reflections and issues for analysis was guided by their prominence in Tiv oral tradition and their relevance to Africa's development challenges, with emphasis placed on those that offered enduring and progressive insights (Smith, 2008). The study prioritized reflections that resonated with development discourse in Tiv society, particularly those that illuminated Golozo's conception of orature as it relates to African development (Smith, 2008). Nonetheless, the research acknowledges several limitations: interpretations are inherently subjective and shaped by the researcher's cultural background; reliance on existing translations may obscure subtle meanings in the original Tiv texts; and the limited sample size may exclude lesser-known yet insightful compositions. Despite these constraints, the study offers valuable perspectives on Golozo's contribution to orature and its relevance within Tiv and broader African development discourse.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Steve Case's review of "The Next Africa" by Bright and Hruby (2015), captures the dual perspective on African development, acknowledging its historical perception as both a challenge and a realm of opportunities. This nuanced view underscores the intricate dynamics and potential within the continent. Prospectively, Africa's abundant and diverse natural resources present immense potential for industrialization, manufacturing, and a market-based economy, which are crucial for achieving economic prosperity in the contemporary global context. Highlighting Africa's abundant natural resources, the African Natural Resources Centre emphasizes the region's significant wealth in this domain. Africa boasts the world's largest arable landmass, the second largest and longest rivers (the Nile and the Congo), and the second largest tropical forest. The fisheries and aquaculture sector alone contributes an estimated USD twenty-four billion in total value added. Moreover, approximately thirty percent of global mineral reserves are in Africa, with the continent holding eight of the world's proven oil reserves and seven of natural gas reserves.

Minerals play a key role, constituting an average of seventy percent of total African exports and around twenty-eight of gross domestic product (African Development Bank Group, 2016).

Mills, *et al* (2017) emphasize the significant growth in Africa's human resource base, expecting a population to double to two billion by 2045. The projection of over half the population living in urban areas highlights a shift, and the connectivity through mobile devices among the predominantly young demographic signifies a potential for increased global and regional interaction. Relatedly, The UN Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, in its 2023 report, aligns with the perspective, highlighting Africa's youth-driven demographic with around sixty percent under the age of twenty-five. This demographic profile positions the region as an emerging hub for consumer markets and products emphasizing the potential economic impact of its youthful population (UN Office of the Special of the Special Adviser on Africa, 2023). Additionally, while African creative industry, especially in music, is making global impact, its rich cultural diversity offers a unique advantage for leveraging a contemporary knowledge-based economy. Moreover, the wealth of cultural insights can play a pivotal role in shaping institutions and policies that effectively address the region's distinct governance and technological requirements, fostering a more inclusive and tailored approach to development both in short and long terms.

African Development Dilemma

The paradoxes faced by African nations in harnessing opportunities for inclusive and sustainable progress manifest in various forms, making up the African development dilemma. The dilemma is complicated by a complex web of challenges and contradictions that surround the development process across the region (Frankema, Hillbom, Kufakuriani, & Selhausen, 2023). For instance, development policies concerning the control and utility of natural resources have been confronted by conflicting objectives and tensions between different interests or stakeholders like ethnic and religious groups in Africa. Finding a way to navigate among these conflicting interests and competing priorities, along with factors like violence, corruption, and poor governance, has hindered progress in resource-based countries in Africa. These countries, including Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Horn of Africa, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, have met significant resource-based conflicts that have further impeded their development (Agbo, 2023; Alao, 2007). Moreover, establishing inclusive governance structures, achieving fair political representation, fostering political stability, and implementing effective resource allocation have also been significantly challenging in resource-based conflict nations in Africa. Closely intertwined with these challenges is the issue of environmental sustainability, which also introduces other uncertainties surrounding the exploitation of natural resources, mineral resources, and the process of industrialization and future needs in places like Ogoni, in Nigeria. The African development dilemma further manifests in a persistent and severe cycle of poverty characterized by squalor

and deprivation (Okunlola & Okafor, 2022). As of 2023, the World Bank reported that more than four hundred million people spread over Sub-Saharan Africa continue to endure extreme poverty. This phenomenon is more pronounced in rural communities, where marginalization is clear in the preference for urban centers, further worsened by the division of government resources. Urban areas receive more attention, while ghettos, teeming with individuals struggling for their daily sustenance, are densely populated. Oral expressions such as the song "African poverty" by Chiti Zone (2022) provide further support for this fact, highlighting the connection between poverty and other detrimental factors like crime in Africa.

Indeed, African poverty is challenging because of its cycle perpetuates limited access to quality education, hindering skills development and the ability to secure better employment opportunities with higher incomes, leading to continued poverty. Insufficient healthcare and social services worsen poverty by escalating medical costs and diminishing productivity. Additionally, insecurity sets back livelihoods, particularly in agriculture-based communities, resulting in decreased income and heightened economic vulnerability. The impact of terrorism and armed banditry violence is currently plain across Africa, with poverty worsening the effects of these conflicts.

Furthermore, an additional development challenge facing African ethnic groups is the delicate balance between preserving cultural heritage and embracing modernization (Akpomovie, 2010). As societies progress towards modernity, there often emerges a tension between safeguarding traditional practices, languages, and customs, and adopting contemporary ways of life. Achieving harmony is essential for maintaining cultural richness while actively engaging in global development efforts. African oral tradition serves as a poignant reminder of this dilemma, shedding light on the threats posed by modern development initiatives to the erosion of cultural practices. Consequently, this impedes inclusive progress across economic, social, and political spheres. For instance, the diminishing value placed on oral traditions by educated elites diminishes the potential for harnessing cultural diversity and gaining a holistic understanding of issues such as political instability within the framework of Indigenous history, values, and perspectives deeply rooted in broader belief systems and worldviews. Moreover, this situation underscores the challenge stemming from the decreasing intergenerational transmission of Indigenous knowledge and wisdom, thereby limiting the capacity for locally driven solutions.

Perspectives on African Development

The discourse surrounding African development revolves around the competing paradigms of modernization and dependency theories. Modernization theory, as championed by figures like W. W. Rostow, posits a linear trajectory toward development, advocating for the adoption of Western norms and practices as a means to progress (Rostow, 1960). It emphasizes the shift from traditional to modern society marked by technological advancement, industrialization, and urbanization (Rostow, 1960). Similarly, "Making Africa Work"

underscores the necessity for African nations to reach specific milestones to transition from underdevelopment to development, attributing impediments to inhibitive values and beliefs.

In contrast, dependency theory, championed by scholars like Ake and Walter Rodney, critiques the modernization approach by highlighting oversimplifications and neglecting historical, cultural, and structural factors (Ake, 1981). It emphasizes the influence of external forces, power imbalances, and unequal relationships on development outcomes, challenging the simplistic modernization narrative (Ake, 1981). Rodney's underdevelopment theory further stresses the imperative to address historical injustices and structural inequalities for self-sustained development and to sever Africa's dependency (Rodney, 1972). Additionally, Joshua Agbo's (2023) critique of Rodney's thesis underlines Africans' agency in development struggles, emphasizing internal factors like corruption and civil strife. Agbo's perspective further illuminates the intricate dynamics between Africa and its colonizers, albeit remaining a minority viewpoint within the dominant scholarly perspectives, particularly the dependency theory.

Both modernization and dependency theories present limitations in addressing the African development dilemma comprehensively. Modernization theory oversimplifies by neglecting the diverse historical, cultural, and structural factors shaping development outcomes in Africa, promoting a uniform model of progress (Easterly, 2001). Dependency theory, while highlighting external influences, may overlook internal dynamics and agency within African societies, potentially leading to a deterministic view of development (Frank, 1967). Thus, a more nuanced approach is needed, one that considers the complex interplay of historical, cultural, political, and factors in shaping African development outcomes.

Mzhehemen as Indigenous Development Thought in Tiv Society

Tiv oral tradition articulates a cosmological perspective on development rooted in the indigenous concept of *mzhehemen*, which transcends narrow economic definitions to embrace a holistic vision of societal advancement across political, economic, social, and cultural spheres. Rather than viewing development as fragmented, *mzhehemen* imagines progress as a communal journey, yet its realization, particularly in the socio-economic realm, remains elusive in Tivland due to structural obstacles such as historical legacies, contentious politics, inequality, cultural dynamics, and external influences (Jibo, 2021). As an indigenous paradigm, *mzhehemen* aligns with African-centered development thought articulated by Claude Ake and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, who underscore indigenous agency and knowledge. It affirms the interconnectedness of agriculture, employment, poverty reduction, governance, unity, and social cohesion, themes poignantly echoed in Tondo Kumbur's song "*Mzhehemen gba Tiv mgba kweren*" (Tiv are seeking progress that has evaded them), which metaphorically frames development as a hidden treasure hanging from a tree in a competitive and uncertain environment (See Appendix I, Song by Tondo Kumbur).

Kumbur's imagery of a ladder erected by the Tor Tiv for Padopas Awunah, along with the call for unity among Tiv sons and daughters (*ontiv ve kase shin tine*), reflects the dual emphasis on leadership and cooperation and illustrates the interplay of competition and collaboration among Tiv socio-cultural institutions such as *Mzough u* Tiv, which mobilize both individual and collective energies toward communal goals. This blend of collectivist ethos and competitive striving is evident in the Tiv synthesis of traditional values with modern economic aspirations, reflecting Adam Smith's view that constructive competition can spur innovation and productivity. Golozo's proverb, "*or a hemban or tar a doo ye*" (one should surpass another for the world to be good), further emphasizes that individual excellence and communal well-being are mutually reinforcing. The metaphor of development as hidden treasure also resonates with Walter Rodney's (1972) assertion that Africa's underdevelopment is historically rooted in exploitation and disinvestment, suggesting that achieving *mzehen* requires collective resilience, investment in infrastructure, education, and innovation. Moreover, traditional rulers, oral artists, and age-grade associations are pivotal actors in Tiv development discourse, functioning as cultural custodians and advocates for locally grounded progress. Their involvement emphasizes the need to integrate indigenous knowledge into development policy, especially in rural contexts where conventional frameworks may falter. In essence, *mzehen* exemplifies an African-centered, participatory, and culturally anchored vision of development, rooted not in imported models but in the lived experiences, oral philosophies, and communal wisdom of the Tiv people.

Tarker Golozo's Perspective in Orature and the Dilemma of African Development

Tarker Golozo's oral compositions engage deeply with the African development discourse, with a broad focus on development communication, value reorientation, and promotion of solutions to societal challenges within Tiv society, including agricultural modernization, democratization, and individual as well as community empowerment. While undertaking this social responsibility, Golozo demonstrates his adeptness in navigating the delicate balance between tradition and modernity within Tiv culture through his oral communication. He seamlessly integrates traditional wisdom with contemporary values, showcasing a nuanced understanding of their dynamic interplay. This is exemplified in his meticulous analysis of contentious subjects such as the conflict between fertilizer and *Imborvungu*, as well as the contrast between extreme egalitarianism and modern individualism. His approach serves as a beacon for the Tiv community, urging them to embrace positive modernization while preserving their cultural legacy. He arguably embodies a thoughtful strategy for navigating the developmental challenges in Africa, arising from the intersection of tradition and modernity. He advocates for a harmonious coexistence of both elements to enhance the welfare of the community. The way he achieves this will be explored in the subsequent sections.

The Conflict between Fertilizer and *Imborvungu* in Tivland

The conflict between fertilizer and *Imborvungu*, an apotropaic deity, in Tivland, stemmed primarily from the need to transition towards modern agricultural practices, necessitating the abandonment of deeply ingrained traditional beliefs. Golozo's compositions on agriculture underscore the strategic importance of this transition, emphasizing the leveraging of Tiv society's comparative advantage in the agricultural sector, given its location in the fertile plains of the Rivers Benue and Katsina-Ala. His argument focused on the potential benefits of modern agricultural practices to Tiv society, including increased productivity, food security, job creation, higher family incomes, and ultimately, poverty alleviation and socio-economic development in the long term. This viewpoint, exemplified in his songs such as "*Agorococa doo*" ("Importance of Agriculture") (Appendix I, Song 1), aligned with the principles of Nigerian government agricultural transformation initiatives and the perspectives of scholars and economists like Gunnar Myrdal (Todaro and Smith, 2011). It underscored the crucial significance of the agricultural sector in fostering sustained economic growth, especially in developing communities.

Regrettably, cultural beliefs prevalent in Tivland, which attribute progress to luck allegedly governed by protective deities like *Imborvungu*, posed considerable obstacles to the adoption of modern agricultural methods, including the utilization of fertilizer. Embracing the ethos of modernization, Golozo actively challenged the status quo by advocating for the use of fertilizer instead of continuing with the worship of *Imborvungu*. His stance endorsed an innovative approach to progress through hard work and the utilization of technology, rather than relying solely on luck from deities, as had been the practice in the past. Golozo promoted his viewpoint through songs like "*Fetelaiza doo hembra Imborvungu*" ("Fertilizer is better than *Imborvungu*"). Grounded in a comprehensive understanding of the advantages and consequences of applying fertilizer to crops and depending on deities, his perspective embodied a rational and well-informed approach towards modernity. This was evident in his persuasive declarations such as "*Imborvungu ka ci*" ("*Imborvungu* is fertilizer") and "*or a de civir Imborvungu ga, ne civir fetelaiza*" ("Nobody should worship *Imborvungu*, but they should worship fertilizer"). Golozo's statements, imbued with positive propaganda, were designed to raise awareness, and rally the Tiv community towards embracing modernity, especially by harnessing new agricultural techniques to amplify their capabilities. His advocacy for agricultural modernization was not merely theoretical; Golozo personally experienced the benefits of these practices and confirmed their value through his own observations and interactions. By sharing his firsthand experiences and insights, Golozo sought to encourage his community to consider the potential advantages of adopting modern approaches while also acknowledging the importance of preserving their cultural heritage.

It is paramount to stress that Golozo underscores the significance of technology in agriculture, juxtaposing it with

deeply ingrained yet harmful traditional beliefs. This highlights the ethical dimension inherent in the adoption of modernization for development in African communities, shedding light on the potential social hostility and violence associated with harmful traditional practices such as devotion to deities like *Imborvungu*, which is linked to bloodshed. Golozo confronted the negative impact of these traditions and advocated for a more harmonious and forward-thinking society by calling for the abandonment of rituals that perpetuate conflict and violence within the community. He expressed this sentiment through his words: "*or a de civir Imborvungu ga, ne civir fetilaiza*" ("Nobody should worship *Imborvungu*, but they should worship fertilizer") (Appendix I, Song 2).

In contrast, he suggested that modernity, particularly the use of fertilizer, has played a pivotal role in facilitating wealth accumulation. He supported his claim by referencing both agricultural experts and farmers like Biam Ala (see appendices), a respected farmer in Tivland, to bolster his argument. Therefore, with concrete evidence articulated in accessible language and reasoned arguments, Golozo effectively made a compelling case for embracing modern agricultural practices while simultaneously challenging entrenched cultural norms that could impede its transformation in Tivland. With this approach, Golozo diverged from dominant perspectives that stand in isolation while offering solutions. Golozo's understanding of the conflict between fertilizer and *Imborvungu* is deeply rooted in ethical principles and a pragmatic comprehension of the local environment and its developmental needs. His fervent advocacy for forsaking detrimental traditions in favour of benign modernization reflects his knowledge and commitment to the well-being and progress of the Tiv community. By considering the long-term implications and aspirations of the community, Golozo emphasizes the importance of aligning traditional practices with modern advancements, especially in agriculture while maintaining ethical integrity and respect for cultural heritage. Summarily, from a cosmological standpoint, Golozo has pinpointed one of the most intricate hurdles of African Development: the clash between traditional values and the imperatives of modernity in the ongoing social transition within the Tiv social framework. This underscores the core argument of the cosmological view of African orature and its significance in the discourse on African development, highlighting the intricate interplay between tradition and modernity. In alignment with this cosmological perspective, Golozo has also proved the wisdom and skill to navigate this complex terrain to adapt to its genuine demands by using familiar and persuasive language. Thus, his insights suggest that through insider's wisdom and skillful deliberation, obstacles stemming from local beliefs will be surmounted, paving the way for the flourishing of progressive ideas, as exemplified by the widespread adoption of fertilizer in present-day Tivland.

Golozo's Challenge to Dominant Perspectives on African Development

Golozo's oral discourse addresses the value-related challenges of development by reconfiguring traditional values,

promoting cooperative politics, and fostering a collaborative ethos as essential foundations for enduring progress in Tivland. His key concepts, such as *tar sôrôn* (repairing the land) and *or a hemban or, tar a doo ye* (one should surpass another for the world to be good), serve as philosophical tools for envisioning a just society that balances individual rights with communal advancement. Crucially, Golozo's perspective challenges dominant narratives in African development discourse by moving beyond repetitive blame on colonialism; while acknowledging colonial impacts in his songs, he emphasizes internal factors like division, betrayal, greed, and short-sightedness as critical in understanding post-independence underdevelopment. This realist orientation is encapsulated in his assertion: "*Se oron kwagh u mbavia yum, se sor tar ga*" (if we keep talking about others, we will not repair our country). Through another metaphor, "*Ka we tema ya a aboki man wea va pav ya wou kpa, u soron ya wou, er yange nana va due kpa, nana tom hen we yo*" (when you stay in a compound with a friend and later decide to settle on your own, you keep your compound clean so that when your friend visits you, he would be envious of you), Golozo advocates for self-reliance, responsible governance, and constructive pride in African societies (see Appendix I, Song 4). While not dismissing the legacy of colonialism, he reframes former colonizers as *aboki* (friends), suggesting a future-oriented, partnership-based alternative to the disengagement stance of dependency theorists. Furthermore, Golozo recognizes the limits of his own knowledge, posing critical questions such as "*Er nan I lu zuan a mkurem ga, man I lu hi tar u Najeria I eren mkurem?*" (Why is there a scarcity of fuel when Nigeria is a fuel-producing nation?), and appeals to *mba ve fe takeda* (the learned people) for insights, thus calling for interdisciplinary collaboration and a pragmatic rethinking of African development studies that bridges traditional wisdom with modern expertise (See appendix I, song 3). Overall, Golozo's political thought offers an alternative framework rooted in the fusion of indigenous values and contemporary challenges, advocating for internal transformation, inclusive cooperation, and the reconstitution of African agency as indispensable pathways to holistic and sustainable development.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the paper's findings highlight the necessity of practical measures and collaboration between dominant and cosmological perspectives, such as orature, to navigate the complex landscape of African development. Golozo's perspective, rooted in the Tiv version of African cosmology, underscores the importance of delicately balancing traditional values with modern theories to drive progress effectively. By advocating for the integration of modern agricultural practices and emphasizing internal initiatives, Golozo shifts the focus from solely attributing challenges to external factors to promoting internal efforts for African development. Furthermore, his call for brotherhood, cooperation, and ethical politics within Tiv society and across Africa promotes harmony and constructive discourse, laying the groundwork for sustainable progress. Ultimately, Golozo's approach exemplifies the potential for integrating traditional

wisdom with contemporary ideas to drive political and socioeconomic transformation in Africa.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To overcome the persistent uncertainties of development in Africa, there is an urgent need to promote the integration of traditional values with modern approaches, particularly by leveraging orature as a source of indigenous knowledge and strategic insight. By drawing from oral traditions, such as those advanced by Tarker Golozo, policymakers and development practitioners can identify areas of synergy between cultural heritage and contemporary innovation, thereby creating more sustainable, context-sensitive strategies. It is equally critical to elevate oral perspectives in development discourse by recognizing the vital role of orature in conflict resolution, governance, and community mobilization, and by embedding these perspectives within formal policy-making frameworks. Moreover, there is a pressing need to challenge prevailing blame narratives that focus exclusively on external factors or leadership failures. Instead, African societies should embrace action-oriented models that prioritize reconciliation and inclusive collaboration. Golozo's synthesis of traditional wisdom with modern critique exemplifies a practical template for fostering cooperative, internally driven development. By adopting such recommendations, African countries can harness the transformative power of orature to drive holistic, culturally grounded, and forward-looking development agendas.

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