

AN OVERVIEW OF AFRICA'S SOCIAL HISTORY IN THE CONTEXT OF "HISTORY FROM BELOW": THE EXAMPLE OF AFRICAN SOCIALISM

AFRİKA'NIN TOPLUMSAL TARİHİNE "AŞAĞIDAN TARİH" YAZIMI BAĞLAMINDA BİR BAKIŞ: AFRİKA SOSYALİZMİ ÖRNEĞİ

Yıl 4, Sayı 2, ss.01-13.

Year 4, Issue 2, pp.01-13.

Makale Türü: Araştırma Makalesi

Article Type: Research Article

Geliş Tarihi: 03.11.2023

Submitted: 03.11.2023

Kabul Tarihi: 27.05.2024

Accepted: 27.05.2024

DOI: 10.58851/africana.1385892

Atf Bilgisi / Reference Information

Yılmaz, Ö. (2024). An Overview of Africa's Social History in The Context of "History From Below": The Example of African Socialism, *Africana Dergisi*, 4 (2), 01-13. <https://doi.org/10.58851/africana.1385892>

Özgür YILMAZ

İstanbul Üniversitesi, ozguryilmaz955@gmail.com,

ORCID: 0000-0003-3020-8550

Abstract

This study offers an in-depth look at the complex social history of Africa using the perspective of "history from below". This approach foregrounds the stories and experiences of marginalized groups that are often overlooked in traditional elite-centered narratives. African socialism, as a distinctive form of socialism based on pre-colonial social values and Pan-African ideals, provides a compelling case study to illustrate the value of this perspective. The study uses the methodology of comparative historical analysis based on a range of primary and secondary sources, and the term "Africa" refers to the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. The work questions the Eurocentric narratives that have long dominated African historiography. By centering the voices of marginalized groups, it reveals the complexity and diversity of Sub-Saharan African societies that are often obscured by colonial and post-colonial perspectives. The study reveals the social dynamics that have shaped Africa's history by examining the interplay between power relations, cultural practices, and economic structures. It also highlights the diversity of African socialism and the influence of local contexts. It shows the role of women and marginalized groups in shaping African socialism. The study questions interpretations that view African socialism as simply an imitation of European models and shows how this ideology was shaped by local traditions, cultural values and political contexts. As a result, the study offers a multidimensional and rich understanding of African socialism and the social history of Africa using "history from below" and comparative historical analysis. These findings provide valuable insights into current debates about development, social justice, and the role of government in Africa.

Keywords: History from Below, Social History, Africa, Socialism, African Socialism.

Öz

Bu çalışma, "aşağıdan tarih" perspektifini kullanarak Afrika'nın karmaşık toplumsal tarihine derinlemesine bir bakış sunmaktadır. Bu yaklaşım, genellikle geleneksel elit merkezli anlatılarda göz ardı edilen, marjinalleştirilmiş grupların hikayelerini ve deneyimlerini ön plana çıkarmaktadır. Afrika sosyalizmi, sömürge öncesi toplumsal değerler ve Pan-African ideallere dayanan özgün bir sosyalizm türü olarak, bu perspektifin değerini göstermek için çekici bir vaka çalışması sunmaktadır. Çalışma, bir dizi birincil ve ikincil kaynağa dayanan karşılaştırmalı tarihsel analiz metodolojisini kullanmaktadır. Çalışmada kullanılan "Afrika" terimiyle Sahra Altı Afrika ülkeleri ifade edilmektedir. Çalışma, Afrika tarih yazımında uzun süredir egemen olan Avrupa merkezli anlatıları sorgulamaktadır. Marjinalleştirilmiş grupların seslerini merkeze alarak, sömürgecilik ve sömürge sonrası perspektiflerle sıkça gölgelenen Sahra Altı Afrika toplumlarının karmaşıklığını ve çeşitliliğini ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Çalışma, güç ilişkileri, kültürel pratikler ve ekonomik yapılar arasındaki etkileşimi inceleyerek Afrika'nın tarihini şekillendiren toplumsal dinamikleri açığa çıkarmaktadır. Ayrıca, Afrika sosyalizminin çeşitliliğini ve yerel bağlamların etkisini vurgulamaktadır. Çalışma, kadınların ve marjinalleştirilmiş grupların Afrika sosyalizminin şekillenmesindeki rolünü açığa çıkarmaktadır. Çalışma, Afrika sosyalizmini basitçe Avrupa modellerinin bir taklidi olarak gören yorumları sorgular ve bu ideolojinin yerel gelenekler, kültürel değerler ve siyasi bağlamlar tarafından nasıl şekillendiğini göstermektedir. Sonuç olarak, çalışma, "aşağıdan tarih" ve karşılaştırmalı tarihsel analiz kullanarak Afrika sosyalizminin ve Afrika'nın toplumsal tarihinin çok boyutlu ve zengin bir anlayışını sunmaktadır. Bu bulgular, Afrika'daki gelişim, sosyal adalet ve hükümetin rolü hakkındaki güncel tartışmalara değerli içgörüler sağlamaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Aşağıdan Tarih, Toplumsal Tarih, Afrika, Sosyalizm.

STRUCTURED ABSTRACT

This study delves into the intricate social history of sub-Saharan Africa, employing the lens of "history from below" as a guiding framework. This approach prioritizes the narratives and experiences of marginalized groups, often overlooked in traditional, elite-centered accounts. By adopting this perspective, we gain a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the region's rich social fabric. African socialism, a unique form of socialism rooted in pre-colonial communal values and Pan-African ideals, serves as a compelling case study to illustrate the value of "history from below." The study employs a comparative historical analysis methodology, drawing upon a diverse range of primary and secondary sources. In the study, the phrase "Africa" is used to describe the countries in the sub-Saharan region.

The study challenges Eurocentric narratives that have long dominated African historiography. By centering the voices of marginalized groups, it unveils the complexity and diversity of Sub-Saharan African societies, often obscured by colonial and post-colonial perspectives. The study uncovers the intricate social dynamics that have shaped Africa's history. It examines the interplay of power relations, cultural practices, and economic structures, revealing the resilience and adaptability of Sub-Saharan African communities. The study highlights the agency of marginalized groups in shaping their own destinies. It demonstrates how these groups have resisted oppression, adapted to changing circumstances, and actively contributed to the region's social and cultural transformation.

African socialism is presented as a diverse and locally influenced ideology, challenging simplistic interpretations that portray it as a mere imitation of European models. The study underscores the role of grassroots movements and popular mobilization in shaping socialist experiments in Africa. It highlights the agency of ordinary citizens in advocating for social justice and challenging entrenched power structures. The study's emphasis on "history from below" and comparative historical analysis offers valuable insights into the diverse experiences and perspectives that shaped African socialism. By examining case studies from various countries, the study reveals the adaptability and contextual variations of African socialism, challenging the notion of a monolithic ideology. It demonstrates how local traditions, cultural values, and political contexts influenced the implementation and outcomes of socialist policies.

Moreover, the study highlights the role of women and marginalized groups in shaping African socialism. It challenges the traditional portrayal of African socialism as a male-dominated movement, revealing the active participation of women in political, economic, and social spheres. The study also sheds light on the experiences of ethnic minorities, Indigenous groups, and other marginalized communities, often overlooked in mainstream narratives of African socialism. Furthermore, the study's comparative approach allows for a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by sub-Saharan African socialist experiments. It reveals the impact of external factors, such as global economic conditions, Cold War politics, and the influence of superpowers, on the trajectory of African socialism. The study also examines the internal dynamics of socialist regimes, including power struggles, economic constraints, and the challenges of balancing ideological principles with practical realities.

The study emphasizes that sub-Saharan African socialism is not a homogenous entity but a collection of varied practices influenced by local contexts and traditions. By examining specific case studies, it highlights how different regions adapted socialist principles to their unique cultural and historical circumstances. This approach not only broadens our understanding of African socialism but also challenges the conventional wisdom that often oversimplifies the ideology. The study also underscores the importance of grassroots movements and local initiatives in the success and failures of socialist policies. It highlights how ordinary citizens, through their collective efforts and mobilization, played a crucial role in shaping the direction and outcomes of these policies. This grassroots perspective provides a more democratic and

inclusive view of African socialism, emphasizing the active participation of all societal members.

In conclusion, this study provides a rich and multifaceted understanding of Africa's social history and the complexities of sub-Saharan African socialism. By employing the lens of "history from below" and comparative historical analysis, it unveils the diverse perspectives, experiences, and challenges that shaped the continent's post-colonial trajectory. The study's findings offer valuable insights for contemporary debates about development, social justice, and the role of government in sub-Saharan Africa. This comprehensive approach not only enriches our understanding of African history but also offers practical lessons for contemporary policy-making and social development strategies. Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of inclusive historical narratives that recognize the contributions of all societal members. By highlighting the voices of marginalized groups, the research advocates for a more equitable and just representation of sub-Saharan Africa's past, ultimately informing a more inclusive and democratic future.

Introduction

History from below and social history have gained recognition in current Turkish literature. History from below focuses on unveiling the untold stories, challenging the official historical narrative. While social history shares a similar purpose, it is often not used interchangeably. This study discusses both concepts together, exploring what history from below is, how it differs from traditional historiography, and provides examples.

This study is based on the method of comparative historical analysis. The basic strategy of comparative historical analysis involves focusing on specific sets of cases that exhibit sufficient similarity to be meaningfully compared with one another. While this approach may face criticism from those advocating for universalising knowledge, comparative historical analysts persist in asking historically delimited questions due to the limitations of universal theoretical approaches. They argue that such questions offer significant analytic advantages, especially when compared to the often too general ahistorical concepts generated by universalising programs of the past and present. By examining cases and processes at a less abstract level, comparative historical analysts derive lessons from past experiences that speak to present concerns. Although their insights remain grounded in the histories examined and cannot be directly transposed to other contexts, comparative historical studies provide more meaningful advice regarding contemporary choices and possibilities than studies aiming for universal truths but lacking critical historical details (Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003, pp. 7-10). When Africa is mentioned in the study, the Sub-Saharan region is meant.

In summary, history from below empowers the voices of marginalised social classes and emphasises their acts of protest. Social history is a variation of history from below, explores how people shape their lives within a cultural and societal framework. The relationship between history from below and the understanding of social history is integral to a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to studying the past. History from below represents an historiographical perspective that endeavours to reveal and comprehend the experiences of ordinary individuals who have traditionally been overshadowed by political elites and major institutions in conventional historical narratives. This approach is driven by the recognition that most people throughout history were not the architects of grand political strategies or the architects of monumental events, but rather individuals with unique stories and struggles. History from below redirects the historical lens towards the lives of common people, shedding light on their day-to-day existence, challenges, and contributions. This shift in focus aligns closely with the broader framework of social history, which is concerned with the study of society and its various facets. Social history, in contrast to political or military history, emphasises the social structures, cultural practices, and everyday experiences that shape the lives of people from different social classes. The synergy between history from below and

social history becomes evident as both perspectives strive to challenge and diversify historical narratives. By exploring the perspectives of those often excluded from mainstream historical discourse, these approaches provide a more nuanced understanding of the past. Social history, enriched by insights gained from history from below, becomes a powerful tool for unravelling the complexities of societies, offering a more holistic and democratic account of human history. The relationship between history from below and social history is symbiotic, contributing to a more inclusive and empathetic exploration of the human experience across time.

Theoretical Framework

In the ever-evolving landscape of historical scholarship, there exists a compelling imperative to present the narratives of the past through a lens that seamlessly integrates history, and social history. The traditional delineations between these disciplines are gradually giving way to a more comprehensive approach that recognises the interconnectedness of historical events, societal structures, and cultural expressions. This conceptual shift is not merely academic; it reflects a broader recognition that to utterly understand the human experience, we must explore history as a multidimensional tapestry. By contextualising the conceptual transitions from conventional historical narratives to the incorporation of social and cultural dimensions, we embark on a journey that transcends traditional boundaries, offering a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of the complexities inherent in the human story. This integrated perspective allows us to appreciate history not as a linear sequence of events, but as a rich tapestry woven with the threads of social dynamics and cultural intricacies, providing a comprehensive and interconnected narrative of our collective past.

The history from below was first used in English by Edward P. Thompson in 1966 as the title of an article published in the Times Literary Supplement (de Oliveira & Courier, 2022, p. 3). According to this usage, the approach to history from below explores the historical experiences and existences of people whose existence is ignored in the mainstream historical narrative. The experiences of the masses, who are inaccessible or unimportant, not seen as a problematic in historiography, are important. History from below is based on the need to reconstruct ordinary people's experiences, to understand the man in the past. Diaries, memoirs, and political manifestos are used that use the history from below approach. The approach of history from below is under the influence of Marxism. It focuses on the history of the labour movement, and in this context, it differs from the modern understanding of political history: It moves away from the general chronological narrative. It synthesises a richer historical understanding that combines peoples' everyday experience with more traditional forms of history. The approach of history from below therefore implies that there is something to relate "above" (Sharpe, 2001, p. 26-34).

History from below aims to re-establish the agency of subordinate social classes from oppressed geographies—for example, the Middle East and Africa. Therefore, it focuses on their protest actions. The approach of history from below feels the influence of Michel Foucault in the analysis of marginals, prisoners, prostitutes, insane in the context of examining the oppressed (Cronin, 2008, p. 1-11). The history from below approach considers the wider context of popular life, including daily habits and associations, memories, and traditions, as the only way to understand the motives or motives underlying popular actions (de Oliveira & Courier, 2022, p. 4).

The idea of history from below is positioned in opposition to nationalist historiography or modernisation theory: In this way, it becomes opposed to the understanding of total history (Çetinkaya, 2014, p. 15-16). So, history from below is against the "great man" narrative. The great man approach deals with certain events from the perspective of leaders (Harman, 2013: 9). In this total understanding of history, the "underlying" is excluded. In this understanding, elite forms of history are examined, not popular forms (Uslu, 2017, p. 99).

Eric Hobsbawm is associated with the concept of history from below. His approach involves focusing on the experiences and perspectives of ordinary people, marginalised groups, and social movements, rather than solely concentrating on political elites or traditional sources of historical narratives. Hobsbawm, along with other historians like E.P. Thompson, contributed to the development of social history and the exploration of the lives of common people throughout history. In his works, such as "The Making of the English Working Class" Thompson emphasised the importance of understanding history from the perspective of those who are not traditionally considered central figures in historical narratives. This approach aims to provide a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of the past. History from below is a history rooted in the experience of the subordinated, oppressed, and dispossessed. In this context, history from below draws closer to the postcolonial criticism advocated by Subaltern Studies (de Oliveira & Courrier, 2022, p. 5-6). Both currents consider subalterns as active rather than passive subjects (Fick, 2004, p. 10). Important Subaltern Studies theorist Dipesh Chakrabarty (2010, p. 30) draws attention to the relationship between Subaltern Studies and history from below:

“Subaltern historiography necessarily required the separation of the history of power from the history of any universal capital, the critique of the nation form, and the questioning of the relationship between power and knowledge (hence the archive itself and history as a form of knowledge).”

The idea of history from below, as outlined by Chakrabarty, serves as a critical perspective that challenges both historicism and Eurocentrism. Eurocentrism, characterised by the belief that Europe is the central determinant of world culture and progress, is scrutinised within the framework of history from below. Chakrabarty argues that Eurocentrism perpetuates an understanding of a single modernity rooted in European experiences, disregarding alternative modernities that may have originated from diverse cultural contexts (Bhambra, 2007). This critique of Eurocentrism aligns with the rejection of the notion that Europe is the exclusive starting point for progress and modernity. In addition, Afrocentrism developed by Molefi Kete Asante (2000, p. 195) and Asia-centrism approaches put forward by Yoshitaka Miike (2010, p. 190-215) can be presented as alternatives to the Eurocentric perspective. These approaches support the idea that history should be understood not only from Europe but also from other parts of the world.

Moreover, Eurocentrism, as a theoretical construct in world history, is implicated in sustaining ideas of European superiority and a predetermined destiny. It has influenced various social theories and ideologies, emphasising Europe's uniqueness and expansionism as central factors (Alatas, 2006). This critique, in turn, intersects with the broader approach of history from below, which seeks to shift the focus from traditional historical narratives dominated by elites to the experiences and perspectives of ordinary individuals and marginalised groups.

The development of social history as a variant of history from below reflects a broader historiographical shift that challenges traditional perspectives and Eurocentric frameworks. Social history, once marginalised within historical disciplines, expanded its scope to incorporate diverse topics such as women's history, gender studies, medicine, crime, and consumerism. This expansion aligns with the inclusive goals of history from below, emphasising the importance of recognising the experiences of ordinary individuals, particularly workers, and understanding their identities rooted in the context of the workplace (Magraw, 2002).

Examples of Social History in Africa: African Socialism

In this part of the study, African socialism will be examined. First, the article starts with the example of African socialism. African socialism emerged as an anti-colonial project in the colonial process. African socialism or Afro socialism developed differently from traditional/Orthodox Marxist practices. The reason for this is that socialist movement practices in Africa are based on different social structures and historical experiences. For example, when the first socialist movements of the 20th century came to power, Africa

was still under colonial rule (Shire, 2019, p. 27).

Due to its anti-colonial stance, African socialism is rooted in Pan-Africanist ideals. Diverging from conventional Marxist ideology, African socialism draws inspiration from longstanding ethical codes prevalent in African societies over centuries. The foundational principles of African socialism are grounded in the practices of mutual aid and solidarity observed in African communities (Mboya, 1963, p. 17). Widely embraced during the initial years of independence, African socialism found traction in several nations, including Ghana, Guinea, Senegal, and Tanzania. The term “African socialism” itself holds multiple connotations, with proponents explicitly highlighting their divergence from communism. Some proponents even asserted that they do not align with Marxist principles (Akyeampong, 2018, p. 69). Julius Nyerere (1987, p. 5), one of the pioneers of African socialism, emphasises the difference of Africa:

“Since the appearance of millionaires in a society does not depend on its affluence, sociologists may find it interesting to try and find out why our societies in Africa did not, in fact, produce any millionaires for we certainly had enough wealth to create a few. I think they would discover that it was because the organization of traditional African society, its distribution of the wealth it produced was such that there was hardly any room for parasitism. They might also say, of course, that because of this Africa could not produce a leisured class of landowners, and therefore there was nobody to produce the works of art or science which capitalist societies can boast. But works of art and the achievements of science are products of the intellect which, like land, is one of God’s gifts to man. And I cannot believe that God is so careless as to have made the use of one of His gifts depend on the misuse of another!”

Some of the countries where socialism was implemented in Sub-Saharan Africa and their implementation years are as follows: Tanzania (1960s-1980s), Mozambique (1970s-1980s), Angola (1970s-1990s), Ethiopia (1970s-1990s), Benin (1970s-1980s), Zimbabwe (1980s-1990s), and Madagascar (1970s-1990s). But first, the typical characteristics of African socialism will be discussed.

In the expression African socialism, the word Africa is not used to describe a continent to which a foreign ideology would be transmitted. It bears the African roots of a system that is characteristically African (Mohan, 1966, 220). African socialism is not simply a copy of one or another form of European socialism. In fact, socialism must be seen in its different forms in practice, in doctrine, in geographical areas, and in history. But all forms of European socialism have a common denominator. Beyond the different currents of socialism, there are everywhere a certain number of common features that gradually build up modern socialist thought. Of these features, only man's eternal revolt against the injustice to which he is subjected, but against the self-imposed idea that this injustice is natural and incorrigible, is indicated. European socialism in its various forms is a historical fact in the sense that it emerged at a particular time in history that was particularly painful for the workers and inspired them with a profound humanitarian ideal and a program of action. The reason for the emergence of these forms of socialism has been the effort of man to get something back for his fellow man. It is an intellectual socialism: it arises from the phenomenon of industrialisation, as something to meet a dramatic situation. But this classical understanding of socialism is not at all the same as what Africans call African socialism.

African socialism is not a fortunate invention, a means to meet this or that crisis, to combat this or that human condition: it is the result of African humanism, which aims to give everyone what they need. The African world is a world in constant socialisation, and a black person is a socialised being. African socialism is not a reaction against anyone. The problem is not a class struggle, as society is not characterised by the existence of warring classes. The problem is to prevent the rise of a sharply stratified society that will eventually lead to such a struggle. The problem in African socialism is a return to the source. African socialism has experienced the shock of colonisation for a certain period and is now a reality that needs to be rethought in the context of evolution (Kanoute, 1964, p. 49).

African socialism was influenced by black ideologies such as humanism, ujamaa, and *négritude* (Ottaway, 1978, p. 477). The concept of ujamaa comes from Swahili for extended family or family, which is distinguished by various basic characteristics such as how a person becomes a person through people or community. *Négritude*, on the other hand, put forward the idea of an identity for Black people around the world as a response to the alienated position of Black people in history. As a result, it can be said that African socialism is an attempt to recapture and modernise the communal way of life practiced by the traditional African way of thinking (Alofun, 2014, pp. 69-72).

After gaining independence in 1961, Tanganyika's merger with Zanzibar in 1964 drew global attention to its new President, Julius Nyerere, affectionately known as Mwalimu (the Teacher). Under his leadership, the concept of Ujamaa, meaning "familyhood" in Swahili, gained international recognition and became a tangible reality for the Tanzanian people. Since then, Ujamaa has remained a focal point of discussion when analysing Tanzania's postcolonial history. Julius Nyerere introduced Ujamaa in the late 1950s, defining it in his essay "Ujamaa – the Basis for African Socialism". With the adoption of the Arusha Declaration in 1967, Ujamaa became the official policy of the single-ruling-party TANU (Tanganyika African National Union) and the primary development strategy, which persisted until the late 1970s, despite its eventual economic shortcomings. However, as argued by numerous scholars, Ujamaa's legacy transcends its historical context and continues to influence the present. To grasp its impact, it is crucial to delve into its foundational principles and its relationship with African socialism. Although Julius Nyerere referred to Ujamaa as "the basis of African socialism," the term is often used interchangeably with African Socialism, albeit with Tanzanian nuances. African Socialism emerged as a socialist doctrine in various African nations, including Senegal, Ghana, Kenya, and notably Tanzania under Nyerere's leadership, in the wake of French and British colonial rule in the 1950s and 1960s. African Socialist leaders aimed to achieve economic development, social control, and the promotion of African identity by drawing on precolonial communal ideals. However, the term lacked a clear definition and manifested differently in each country. Nyerere's interpretation of African socialism found expression in ujamaa, core tenets of which he outlined in an essay. Emphasising communitarian values, Nyerere traced their roots to a precolonial era where individuals lived, worked, and supported one another within a communal framework. This communal ethos extended to the idea of communal land ownership. Additionally, Ujamaa underscored egalitarianism and equality, harkening back to a time when wealth distribution within the community was equitable, irrespective of individual differences in wealth acquisition. Moreover, participation in nation-building was paramount, as Nyerere envisioned a collective effort where every citizen contributed to the nation's prosperity for the benefit of all (Boesl, 2023, p. 2). During the 1970s, Tanzania's Ujamaa policy faced challenges and failed due to internal conflicts, opposition, and agricultural difficulties. Despite government efforts, including villagization and nationalisation, conflicts arose between different interest groups, hindering the policy's success. Additionally, erratic rainfall led to crop failures and food shortages, prompting costly imports and coercive measures. These factors, compounded by forced villagization, contributed to the policy's downfall (Keskin et al., 2019, p. 299).

The attainment of independence by Mozambique on June 25, 1975, marked a pivotal moment in the nation's history. It served as an interlude between the oppressive Portuguese colonialism and the devastating war of destabilisation that Mozambique would endure until the early 1990s. For the revolutionaries of the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), this transitional period was a time to celebrate their hard-fought victory and envision a promising future. Their aim, as declared by FRELIMO's inaugural cabinet, was to eradicate all remnants of colonialism and imperialism to eliminate the exploitation of man by man and establish the political, material, ideological, cultural, and social foundations of a new society. FRELIMO's project of "scientific socialism" and "popular democracy" found favour among many leftist Western observers and was lauded in numerous books examining Mozambique's revolution and socialist transition. However, some questioned how a Marxist-oriented revolution could occur in Mozambique, given its underdeveloped economy and social conditions. Nevertheless, rural unrest enabled the radical fringe to assume control and propel society towards a Marxist-inspired transformation

(Robinson, 2003, p. 131). The collapse of socialism in Mozambique was a complex process. The early mistakes and excesses of the FRELIMO government, combined with the economic and social challenges faced by Mozambique after independence, contributed to the failure of socialism. Additionally, the destabilisation war waged by Renamo, supported by South Africa, undermined FRELIMO's policies and severely weakened the country's economic and social infrastructure. FRELIMO's delayed response in acknowledging and correcting its own mistakes further exacerbated the problems and contributed to the collapse of socialism. Consequently, the collapse of socialism in Mozambique occurred because of the complex interplay of internal and external factors (O'Meara, 1991, p. 102).

The emergence and development of socialism in Angola is closely intertwined with the country's struggle for independence and subsequent political processes. The independence movement of Angola, particularly under the leadership of MPLA (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola), embraced a structure and form of resistance based on socialist ideals. During the struggle for independence, MPLA's ideology was shaped by Marxist-Leninist principles, and socialism became the primary goal of Angola's liberation. MPLA received support from the Soviet Union and other Eastern Bloc countries, and with this support, it adopted a socialist state model. With the declaration of Angola's independence in 1975, MPLA seized power and began taking steps to structure the country as a socialist state. MPLA embraced a one-party rule and sought to regulate the country's political, economic, and social life according to socialist principles. However, MPLA's socialist policies and one-party rule led to instability and discontent in the country, leading to increased opposition. Particularly, other political groups such as UNITA opposed MPLA's rule and initiated a separatist rebellion in the eastern part of the country. The development of socialism in Angola faced challenges by the late 1990s, including the collapse of the Soviet Union and international economic pressures. During this period, the MPLA government was forced to transition to a multi-party system, implement economic liberalisation, and market reforms. In conclusion, the emergence and development of socialism in Angola are deeply connected to the country's struggle for independence, MPLA's rise to power, and subsequent political transformations. Socialism played a significant role in shaping Angola's political and economic structure for many years and had a profound impact on the country's modern history (Camba, 2018).

The emergence of socialism in Ethiopia began with the overthrow of Haile Selassie in 1974 and the establishment of the military government known as the Derg. The Derg emerged as a response to social inequalities and economic exploitation. Upon coming to power, the Derg implemented radical policies such as land reform and the nationalisation of the economy. However, during this period, tensions among ethnic groups in Ethiopia escalated, and separatist movements gained strength. Particularly, demands for independence rose in the regions of Eritrea and Tigre. This clashed with the state's centralising policies. The Soviet Union provided military and economic support to the Derg regime, making Ethiopia a Soviet ally. However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, this support waned, leading to economic hardships in Ethiopia. In 1991, the Derg regime was overthrown, and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a coalition government, took its place. The new government abandoned old Marxist ideals, transitioning to a market economy and initiating democratic reforms. However, the country still grapples with ethnic tensions and political instability. Issues like ethnic conflicts between different regions of Ethiopia and Eritrea's quest for independence persist (Clapham, 1992, pp. 108-116).

The roots of socialism in Benin can be traced back to the period following its independence from France in 1960. Like many newly independent African nations, Benin sought to establish a distinct national identity and pursue economic development that prioritised social welfare. Leaders such as President Hubert Maga and Prime Minister Sourou-Migan Apithy initially embraced a mix of socialist and nationalist principles, advocating for state-led economic planning and social justice. However, the early attempts at socialist policies were short-lived, as political instability and power struggles characterised much of Benin's post-independence era. In 1972, General Mathieu Kérékou seized power in a military coup, marking a

significant turning point in the country's trajectory. Kérékou, influenced by Marxist ideology, embarked on a radical transformation of Benin's political and economic landscape. The Kérékou regime declared Benin a Marxist-Leninist state and instituted far-reaching reforms aimed at centralising state control over the economy. Key sectors such as agriculture, industry, and finance were nationalised, and the government promoted collectivisation and cooperatives as part of its socialist agenda. Social services such as education and healthcare were expanded, and efforts were made to redistribute wealth and reduce inequality. However, despite these ambitious goals, the socialist experiment in Benin faced numerous challenges and contradictions. Economic mismanagement, corruption, and inefficiency plagued the state-controlled economy, leading to stagnation and decline. Moreover, the authoritarian nature of the regime stifled political dissent and undermined democratic institutions, contradicting the socialist principles of equality and participatory governance. By the late 1980s, mounting internal discontent and external pressure from international donors forced the Kérékou government to reconsider its socialist policies. Economic crisis, coupled with growing demands for political reform and democratisation, culminated in widespread protests and strikes in 1989 and 1990, leading to the collapse of the Marxist regime. The transition to democracy in Benin marked the end of the socialist experiment and ushered in a new era of political pluralism and economic liberalisation. The legacy of socialism, however, continues to shape Benin's political and social landscape, as the country grapples with issues of poverty, inequality, and governance (Allen, 1992, pp. 65-70).

The emergence of socialism in Zimbabwe began in the 1980s when the country gained independence, with socialist ideals and social equality emphasised during the struggle for independence. During this period, freedom fighters advocated for a socialist vision that embraced broad segments of society. However, after independence was achieved, the establishment and implementation of a truly socialist state faced practical challenges. In the post-independence period, the development of socialism in Zimbabwe progressed gradually. The new government implemented various policies to ensure social justice and reduce economic inequalities. Steps such as land redistribution and expanding access to education and healthcare were taken. However, these policies drew criticism from international capital and strained the country's economic balance. The decline of socialism in Zimbabwe can be attributed to pressure from international capital and internal political instability. The reaction of international capital hindered the country's economic growth and development. Additionally, internal political disputes and governance uncertainties prevented the effective implementation of socialist policies. In conclusion, the collapse of socialism in Zimbabwe had a profound impact on the country's economic and political future. This process shaped Zimbabwe's domestic policies and foreign relations and influenced the country's social and economic structure (Meisenhelder, 1994, pp. 83-87).

Madagascar's transition away from socialism marked a significant turning point in the country's political and economic history. The collapse of socialism was driven by both internal and external factors, primarily economic failures and political repression. Challenges in implementing socialist policies, economic imbalances, and a growing external debt burden weakened the economy and lowered living standards. Additionally, authoritarian rule and repressive methods used by socialist leaders to suppress dissent exacerbated public dissatisfaction and political instability. External influences, particularly the end of the Cold War and increasing Western influence, also contributed to the decline in support for socialism. International community demands and financial institutions further shaped domestic policies, leading to the downfall of the socialist regime. Consequently, Madagascar initiated democratisation and economic reforms, focusing on democratic governance and market economy principles (Gow, 1997, pp. 409-411).

Furthermore, political repression and authoritarian rule played a role in the downfall of socialism. Socialist leaders resorted to oppressive methods to suppress opposition and maintain power, leading to increased discontent among the population and deepening political instability. External factors also contributed to the collapse of socialism. With the end of the Cold War, many countries like Madagascar fell under the influence of the West, leading to a decline in support for socialism. Demands from the

international community and financial institutions influenced the country's internal policies and contributed to the collapse of the socialist regime. In conclusion, the collapse of socialism in Madagascar marks a significant milestone in the country's political and economic history. This period paved the way for democratic reforms and economic restructuring. Today, Madagascar continues its journey towards democratic governance and market economy reforms (Gow, 2011, pp. 439-439).

Evaluating the connection between social history and history from below in a postcolonial context is one of the topics that will develop critical theory. Critical theory must decolonise and bring into question what is below. The traditional understanding of history includes a racialization project unlike the understanding of history from below. This project is based on the ignorance of the peoples of Asia, Latin America, and Africa. The peoples of these three continents are dehumanised by traditional Western philosophy. The colonial narrative also leads a knowledge production process. The oppressed peoples are left unaware of their own roots and are thus condemned to the knowledge of the coloniser. To get rid of this racialization project, the colonial logic of traditional history must be liquidated by the method of decolonisation. In the process of this decolonisation method, historical narrative from below and examining the social history of peoples have a prominent place.

Countries like Tanzania, Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia, Benin, Zimbabwe, and Madagascar have experienced socialism at separate times, resulting in various outcomes. Tanzania and Mozambique attempted to embrace socialist ideals and implement them. However, they faced challenges in economic development and political stability during their socialist periods. External interventions and internal authoritarian regimes contributed to the failure of socialism in these countries. In contrast, Angola and Ethiopia saw socialism implemented in a more authoritarian and militaristic manner. Their socialist experiences ended in prolonged internal conflicts and economic collapse, showcasing the consequences of using warfare and repression to enforce socialist ideals.

While Benin, Zimbabwe, and Madagascar achieved some successes in economic development and social justice during their socialist periods, they eventually succumbed to political instability and economic downturns. The failure of socialism in these countries can be attributed to internal political repression, external interventions, and shortcomings in economic governance. Overall, the experiences of Tanzania, Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia, Benin, Zimbabwe, and Madagascar offer important lessons for the feasibility and effectiveness of socialism. These experiences underscore the need for socialist ideals to be grounded in a strong political and economic foundation to succeed in real-world conditions.

African countries like Tanzania, Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia, Benin, Zimbabwe, and Madagascar embraced socialist ideals in the post-independence era, each charting its own unique socialist path. However, most of these socialist experiments faced external pressures, internal conflicts, and economic challenges, resulting in failure or the inability to achieve desired outcomes. When viewed in the context of "history from below," African socialism reflects the demands and struggles of the lower strata of society and workers. However, the influence of political leaders and elite groups made it difficult for these demands to be fully realised or implemented.

In Tanzania, Julius Nyerere's Ujamaa policy encouraged societal solidarity and development. Yet, challenges in implementation and economic failures limited its impact and drew criticism. Mozambique and Angola adopted socialism as part of their independence struggles. However, internal conflicts and external interventions prevented these countries from realising their socialist goals. In Benin and Zimbabwe, socialist policies reflected the society's aspirations for equality and development. However, economic hardships and political instability constrained these countries' socialist experiences. In Madagascar, Didier Ratsiraka's regime became a symbol of socialism's failure and economic collapse, leading to widespread discontent and resistance among the lower strata and ordinary people.

In conclusion, when examined within the framework of "history from below," African socialism underscores the significance of demands and struggles from the grassroots, but external influences and internal conflicts have hindered the realisation of socialist ideals.

Conclusion

History from below and social history aim to use the narratives of the below as historical methods, which opposes the traditional understanding of history. In this way, there is a possibility of resistance against the colonial historical fiction. These narratives of the social history are intertwined with the cultural. The geographical historical materialist method provides a valuable tool in this context, making it easier for the researcher to turn his/her gaze to subaltern geographies.

An overview of the historical context and the concept of African socialism provides valuable insights into the evolution and outcomes of socialist experiments in Africa. Throughout history, African nations have grappled with the challenges of post-colonialism, economic dependency, and political instability. The concept of African socialism emerged as a response to these challenges, aiming to address socio-economic inequalities and promote national development. However, the implementation of socialist policies varied across different countries, influenced by factors such as colonial legacies, internal power struggles, and external pressures from global superpowers.

In the context of "history from below," the experiences of African nations highlight the importance of grassroots movements and popular mobilisation in shaping political change. The struggles of ordinary people against oppressive regimes and socio-economic injustices have played a crucial role in shaping the course of history. From anti-colonial movements to labour strikes and civil unrest, bottom-up movements have been instrumental in challenging entrenched power structures and advocating for social justice.

When examining the intersection of "history from below" and African socialism, it becomes evident that the success or failure of socialist experiments in Africa cannot be attributed solely to ideological principles or top-down policies. Instead, a nuanced understanding of historical dynamics, including the agency of ordinary citizens and the complexities of local contexts, is essential. Moreover, the legacy of African socialism underscores the need for inclusive governance, grassroots empowerment, and sustainable development strategies that prioritise the well-being of all citizens.

In conclusion, the historical trajectory of African socialism reflects a complex interplay of socio-political forces, economic imperatives, and ideological aspirations. By contextualising socialist experiments within the broader framework of "history from below," African socio-political dynamics, and employing a comparative historical analysis methodology, we gain deeper insights into the challenges and opportunities facing the continent. The quest for social justice and inclusive development remains central to Africa's ongoing journey towards a more equitable and prosperous future.

REFERENCES

- Akyeampong, E. (2018). African socialism; or the search for an indigenous model. *Economic History of Developing Regions*, 33(1), pp. 69-87.
- Alatas, S. F. (2006). *Alternative Discourses in Asian Social Science Responses to Eurocentrism*. Sage.
- Allen, C. (1992) 'Goodbye to all that': The short and sad story of socialism in Benin, *Journal of Communist Studies*, 8(2), pp. 63-81.
- Alofun, G. O. O. (2014). African socialism: A critique. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 19 (8).
- Asante, M. K. (2000). Afrocentricity, race, and reason. Manning Marable (Ed.), *In Dispatches from the ebony tower: Intellectuals confront the African American experience* (pp. 195-203).
- Bhambra, G. K. (2007). *Rethinking Modernity Postcolonialism and the Sociological Imagination*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Boesl, H. (2023). The concept of Ujamaa and its impact on postcolonial Tanzania. *Voices from Tanzania*, 4, 1-10.
- Camba, T. (2018). *The History of Politics in Angola: from Nationalism to the Totalitarian Single-party System*. Redalyc. <https://www.redalyc.org/journal/5863/586364252007/html/> Accessed: 13.05.24.
- Clapham, C. (1992). The socialist experience in Ethiopia and its demise. *The Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 8(2), pp. 105-125, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523279208415149>
- Cronin, S. (2008). Introduction. (Ed. Stephanie Cronin) *Subalterns and Social Protest History from Below in the Middle East and North Africa*. Routledge.
- Çetinkaya, Y. D. (2014). *1908 Osmanlı Boykotu Bir Toplumsal Hareketin Analizi. İletişim Yayınları*.
- de Oliveira, J. C. M. & Courrier, C. (2022). *Ancient History from Below: An Introduction*. (Ed. Cyril Courrier & Julio Cesar Magalhães de Oliveira) *Ancient History from Below Subaltern Experiences and Actions in Context*. Routledge.
- Fick, C. E. (2004). *The Making of Haiti the Saint Domingue Revolution from Below*. The University of Tennessee Press.
- Gow, B. A. (1997). Admiral Didier Ratsiraka and the Malagasy socialist revolution. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 35(3), pp. 409-439, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X97002486>
- Harman, C. (2013). *Halkların Dünya Tarihi*. 3rd Press. (U. Kocabaşoğlu, Trans) Yordam.
- Kanoute, P. (1964). African Socialism. *Transition*, (13), 49-51, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2934431>
- Keskin, İ., Abdalla, M. J., (2019), The Sociological Analysis of The Failure of Ujamaa Policy, *ARHUSS*, 2(3): pp. 297-313.
- Magraw, R. (2002). *France, 1800–1914 A Social History*. Longman.
- Mahoney, J. & Rueschemeyer, D. (2003). *Comparative Historical Analysis: Achievements and Agendas*. (Ed. James Mahoney & Dietrich Rueschemeyer) *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mboya, T. (1963). African Socialism. *Transition*, (8), pp. 17-19, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2934729>
- Meisenhelder, T. (1994). The Decline of Socialism in Zimbabwe. *Social Justice*, 21 (58), pp. 83-101.
- Miike, Y. (2010). Culture as Text and Culture as Theory: Asiaticity and Its Raison D'être in Intercultural Communication Research. (Eds Nakayama, T. K., & Halualani, R. T.) *In The handbook of critical intercultural communication*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Mohan, J. (1966). Varieties of African Socialism. *Socialist Register*, 3, pp. 220-266.
- Nyerere, J. K. (1987). Ujamaa: The Basis of African Socialism. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 1(1), pp. 4-11.
- O'Meara, D. (1991). The Collapse of Mozambican Socialism. *Transformation*, (14).

- Ottaway, M. (1978). Soviet Marxism and African Socialism. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 16(3), pp. 477-485, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X00002536>
- Robinson, D. (2003). Socialism in Mozambique?: The 'Mozambican Revolution' in Critical Perspective. *Limina: A Journal of Historical and Cultural Studies*, 9, 131-151.
- Sharpe, J. (2001). *History from Below*. (Ed. Peter Burke) *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*. Polity Press.
- Shire, M. A. (2019). Afrika'da Sosyalist Rejimlerin Doğuşu: Somali Örneği 1969-79. [Unpublished Master Thesis]. Ankara University.
- Uslu, A. (2017). *Siyasal Düşünceler Tarihine Giriş Tarih Yazımı, Temel Yaklaşımlar ve Araştırma Yöntemleri*. Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları.