

BEYOND STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT: THE INTELLECTUAL AND POLICY CHALLENGES OF RENEWAL

In several ways, Africa's development prospect is, wedged between a variety of neoliberal discourses and practice and post-modern deconstructionism-as-an-end-in-itself. Related to both is are Left discourses and politics that speak on behalf of the people but remain firmly aloof from public policy and the state. In many ways, the three strands share a common tendency for acute pessimism about the feasibility for Africa's autonomous and inclusive development—it is a pessimism that is present within state structures and the civil society. The last 25 years have involved not only the 'structural adjustment' of Africa's economies but of its society and politics. The implications for Africa's renewal have been profound—both intellectual and in policy terms.

At an intellectual-cultural level, a whole generation of young Africans have emerged, raised on a daily cultural diet of pessimism and account of unmitigated development failure. The prevailing search for cosmopolitanism belies constant anguish of distancing from the *African-Self*. This pessimism is manifest at the policy level with a debilitating *self-disempowerment*—the language of 'partnership' becomes an alibi for a wholesome outsourcing of policy-making. On the other hand is a Left politics-of-opposition that combines *pessimism of the intelligence* with *pessimism of the will*, and a Left praxis *without* dialectics.

The challenge of Africa's renewal requires transcending not only the pessimism of the intelligence but that of the will. In intellectual-praxis terms it requires a vigorous venture in *self-knowing* and a judicious mix of the role of the agency's *will to be* and the constraining structural impediments that define the challenges of the 21st century. Fundamental to this is the need to go beyond mistaking intellectual's autonomy for social-distancing from our *collective Self*. At the policy level, central to my analysis is that *leadership matters*; so does *policy*. Both (intellectual and policy) are amply illustrated by drawing on the lessons that can be learnt from the last fifty years within and outside Africa.

The quest for renewal is premised on the imperative of an inclusive, democratic development (economic and social policy) project—across the spectrum of our gender, nationality, religions, and related fault-lines.