

# **PARTNERSHIPS IN PROMOTING ENDOGENOUS DEVELOPMENT AND A MORAL ECONOMY: LESSONS FROM THE MATENGO SOCIETY, TANZANIA**

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African endogenous development pathways are able to integrate the productive and reproductive activities of a society. African societies that have utilized informal rather than formal institutions have managed to develop and utilize their resources effectively, even in fragile environments. Despite the fact that moral economies and endogenous development issues are gaining momentum in the contemporary world, many analyses of development programs still fail to recognize their validity. Thus, an understanding of the relationships between moral economies and the informal institutions of African civil society is paramount in assessing development programs.

The Matengo people reside in the Matengo highlands of Tanzania. They cultivate steep slopes using their indigenous farming system known as ngolo. Their land management system is characterized by a few extended families owning and managing a mountain ridge known as ntambo, where they conduct their farming activities. Their indigenous socio-political organization that has maintained the ngolo cultivation system and ntambo land management is known as sengu. Sengu maintains the tripartite relationship between humans, nature, and the spiritual world that is closely implicated in the process of endogenous development in Matengo society. Reciprocity and generosity are some of the salient features of the Matengo moral economy. From the 1990s to the mid-2000s, the Sokoine University of Agriculture Center for Sustainable Rural Development and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (SCSRSD/JICA) have conducted collaborative in-depth surveys in an attempt to understand the practices of farmers of this community, and to call attention to the characteristics of African moral economies, as well as assessing their ramifications in terms of endogenous development. From the experience gained from this collaboration, SCSRSD/JICA has developed the SUA Method as a basis for understanding and establishing intervention and partnerships in rural development. This paper aims to share such experiences, and explain the possibilities for attaining endogenous development based on a moral economy.

**Keywords:** Endogenous development, Moral economy, Matengo, Ngolo, Ntambo, SEengu, SUA Method