

INTERCULTURAL PHILOSOPHY AND NATION BUILDING IN AFRICA: AN INTEGRATIVE SPECTACLE

Solomon, Kingsley Christopher Ph.D

Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike Ikwo

Solomonkingsley222@gmail.com

Stephen O. Aigbonoga Ph.D

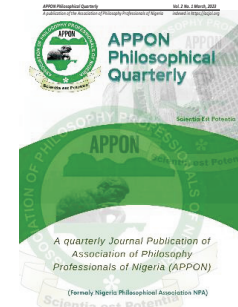
Alex Ekwueme Federal University

Ndufu-Alike Ikwo

Excelstev01@yahoo.com



Copyright: © 2023 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)



Abstract

The quest for Nation Building has increasingly become one of the profound yearnings of many citizens around the world. Africa is not insulated from this palpable desire for sustainable development of nations around her territory. This is more the case, where many African nations are largely embroiled in the imbroglio of conflict, crisis, tumult, self-polarity, ethnicity, tribalism and diverse measures of socio-cultural and religious crisis that remains detrimental to the progress and development of such nations. The consistent division, nepotism, corruption and hegemonic polarity of many countries in Africa, has left some units who perceive marginalization, to consistently seek for cessation and the dis-membership of such units from the whole. These sordid traits in many African nations, has become enigmatic and largely detrimental to the peace, progress and development of Africa. The call for Nation Building becomes very germane, urgent and necessary, as scholars must galvanize efforts in proffering measures for coexistence of various units in Africans. In doing this, Philosophy and indeed Intercultural Philosophy remains indispensable as veritable tools of Nation building. This work therefore attempts to address the quest for Nation Building in Africa through the spectacle of Integrative Humanism and Inter-cultural Philosophy.

Keywords: Intercultural Philosophy, Nation Building, Integrative Humanism

Introduction

The quest for Nation Building has increasingly become a legitimate yearning of many scholars, researchers and citizens around many countries of Africa. This is so because although Africa is known for her rich human and natural resources, yet many countries of Africa have largely been plagued with poor leadership, mismanagement of resources, incessant coups and poor infrastructures. This has largely impacted the

lives and existence of Africans negatively.

Nigeria as a nation state has had its fair-share of the problematics of nationhood. She has remained characteristically plagued with the civil unrest, poor leadership, socio-economic and political instability. Leadership failure and inequitable distribution of resources is not unconnected to the many reasons surrounding the agitation of citizens, and call for cessation of some groups in Nigeria.

Philosophy and indeed Intercultural Philosophy, is an essential tool of National Development. The conversation on Nation Building remains inevitable for a progressive development of many nations in Africa. Leadership can be affirmed as a veritable tool of Nation Building, as the rise and fall of nations is largely dependent on leadership and the quality of such leaders.

Suffice it to state, that the Philosophical enterprise, is that which is often channeled towards nation building and the well being of humans in general. Kwasi Wiredu affirms this when he avers that: “the function of Philosophy everywhere is to examine the intellectual foundations of life, using the best available modes of knowledge and reflection for human wellbeing” (62)

Philosophy encapsulates contemplations on Nation Building and National Development. These critical Intellectual Contemplations burrow into effective leadership, and how such can immensely enhance the existence of humans and citizens around the nations of the world. This work affirms that Intercultural Philosophy mirrored in the light of Integrative Humanism can adequately aid nation building.

Intercultural Philosophy: Thematic View

The progressive development of humans, ideas, cultures, societies and nations around the world cannot be without the confluence, dynamics and intermingling of various Philosophical dispositions and contemplations. It is this interwovenness of ideas and Philosophical synthesis, devoid of isolation and polarization that enhances continuous progress and coexistence of views. “Man is neither a self sufficient being, nor a being in isolation. The realization and acceptance of one's dependence and requisite support by another is an inevitable tool of

progressive development” (Solomon, 164). Plato in his Republic, affirms that the individual is not self sufficient but has needs which he cannot supply by himself (117). 'Anyone who lays claim to self sufficiency and non relevance of others is either a sub-human or a Super-human' (Aristotle, Politics, 60).

Intercultural Philosophy is a Philosophical framework which seeks the interplay of Philosophical discourse from the perspective of cultures. It believes that various cultural worldviews have distinct contributions which can aid the progressive existence of humans and nations. As a Philosophical standpoint, it offers a proper exploration of cultural potentials in addressing Philosophical, socio-cultural and Political problems. Intercultural Philosophy provides the ambience of discourse that projects the uniqueness of various cultures and their Philosophical points of relevance, and how such can be galvanized in tackling human existential problems. Oluwagbemi Jacobs observes that the possibility of attaining a viable Philosophical communication from various Philosophical and cultural background through the interplay of various cultures providing a distinct and robust discourse (303).

Proponents of Intercultural Philosophy like Heinz Kimmerle, Fornet-Betancourt, Ram Adher Mall and Franz Martain Wimmer discountenance the view and claim of a single origination of Philosophy, from a particular culture and race. Philosophy which is a childbirth of quandary, is spectacted from various cultural standpoint. Hence Philosophical enterprise can immensely flourish through interdependence of cultures and communication of same. The explication and perception of reality from various cultural reference frames, have the propensity of enhancing and providing a stream of views

that can meaningfully contribute not just to the our epistemologico-ontological interpretations, but to the pool of resource that can adequately handle human existential, socio-political problems.

Integrative Humanism: A Concise Overview

Integrative Humanism is a Philosophy which advocates the harmonious integration of various units of reality from their points of relevance. It is the brain child of Godfrey Ozumba, a Professor of Philosophy from University of Calabar. As a Philosophy, Integrative Humanism gains its inspiration from the Igbo-African cultural worldview – *Njikoka Amaka*, which means- to integrate is better than to disintegrate. Integrative Humanism therefore is a Philosophy of integration, which believes in a proper identification of various units of existence and integration of same from their points of existential relevance. 'It sees reality as having both physical and spiritual dimensions, past and present, as well as harmonized future framework in which seemingly opposed variables unite without contradiction to achieve progress and epistemic wholeness' (Ozumba 6).

Integrative Humanism is *ratio-empirico-spiritocentric* in approach. It explores physical and spiritual insights in providing relevant answers to questions that confront man's daily existential experiences. As a Philosophy of Integration, Integrative Humanism holds that reality is multidimensional, and its multidimensionality can adequately be appreciated when all its units are perceived from their points of distinct relevance. The methodical expression of Integrative Humanism are contextual, analytic, complementary and mutual integration. It integrates realities of various forms primarily from their points of contributory relevance.

Ozumba affirms that this Philosophy enhances the management of relevant variables in a context-dependent dynamic network for resolutions of tasks that would rather prove difficult for non-sequestered and non contextualized theoretic frameworks. It bridges the gap between one culture and another and between one Philosophical tradition and another (Ozumba 6).

Integrative Humanism advocates for theistic Humanism. In thus regards, it affirms the complement of spiritual realities with the physical, and the complement of faith and reason. As a brand of Humanism, it believes that all ideas, views and values must be galvanized towards the protection of the existence and interest of Humans.

Integrativism remains central in the interpretation and expression of this Philosophy. This for Ozumba implies 'harnessing, processing through engrafting of different components of knowledge. It is a method of Circumspective inquiry with the sole end of systematic and purposeful welding of ideas' (Integrative Humanism 41). Suffice it to state, that Integrative Humanism promotes the 'harmonization, unification and integration of various distinct realities towards the profitability of man' (Solomon 73).

Intercultural Philosophy, Integrative Humanism And Nation Building

Nation Building has essentially become one of the major concerns of citizens and scholars around the world. The desire for a prosperous united nation has predominantly characterize the quest of many genuine citizens in African nations.

Nation Building is the act of adequate structuring or restructuring of a state for effective, progressive development. It entails

the formation and preservation of national identity and interest through the power of the state. Nation Building is often aimed at the enhancement of political stability and viability. Abraham Gambari affirms that Nation-building, 'is about building a commonsense of purpose, a sense of shared identity, a collective imagination of belonging. It is building the tangible and intangible threads that hold a political entity together and gives it a sense of purpose' (3). Building a nation is identified by Walker as the most common form of a process of collective identity formation with a view to legitimizing public power within a given territory (Walker 8). For Elaigwu,

Nation Building can be viewed from two perspectives. One closely linked to state building which refers to the acceptance by members of the polity of a legitimacy of a central government as a symbol. Secondly nation building involves the acceptance of other members of the civic body as equal fellow members of a cooperate nation a recognition of the rights of other members to a share of common history, resources, values and other aspects of the state. (18)

A successful Nation building process produces a cultural projection of the nation containing a certain set of assumptions, values and beliefs which can function as the legitimizing foundation of a state structure (William 12).

Nation building requires a conscious conscientious effort of unifying and integrating the various composite units for a successful co-existence and productivity. It is a patriotic activity that requires vision,

creativity, self-determination, altruism, the projection of common good beyond personal gains. Iyase and Egberi affirms that a successful actualization of Nation building requires a lot of effort, one of which is the creation of Integrating Ideology. In their words,

‘a nation as one of the preconditions of Nation Building requires some form of ideology that legitimizes and justifies a national self interpretation of the respective community...a uniting, unifying and integration ideology does not necessarily replace previous ideologies and identities, but has to exist and to be strong enough to convince the members of the subgroups that they have also something in common, which is meaningful and important' (44)

Nigeria as a nation state is in dare need of progressive development and national unity. Like many African states, it is bedeviled with tensions, the fear of disintegration, corruption, infrastructural decay and humongous insecurity. Many live in fear of the unknown, as the economy takes a downward turn, and poverty grows amongst many citizens. Nigeria and indeed many countries of Africa, is plagued with the problem ethnicity. The polarity, ethnicity and tribalism prevalent in Nigeria and many African countries, is alarming. The polarization and identification of citizens from ethnic inclinations, immensely truncates the unity of the country, thus propelling divisiveness and unhealthy contest and hegemony. Michael Nwokedi and Ngwu observe that; “Nigeria's eighteen years of civilian rule has been dotted with incessant ethno-nationalist agitations which have often threatened the peace and tranquility of the

Nigerian State and the orderly conduct of public and private businesses” (2).

The ethno-religious and political tension have in no mean measure polarized the nation in fragmented units and thus provided a more devastating ethno-religious perspectival undertones that threatens the unity and national identity of the nation state. Michael further affirms that:

under the current democratic dispensation, aided in huge measures by crisis of rising expectations, the tensions between nationhood and state-building have become even more pronounced. This has resulted in the spate of ethno-nationalist conflagrations that have engulfed the country for the most part of this dispensation. In essence, the increasing neglect of several ethnic and minority groups and the failure to resolve the national question in which equality of power and resource distribution have been central to have been the cursor of ethnic conflict since 1999” (8).

The struggle of supremacy amongst various ethnic groups, catalyzes disharmony and engenders socio-cultural and political strife. This in turn precipitates economic instability, poor leadership and unproductivity.

Intercultural Philosophy, as a Philosophical framework which seeks Philosophical contemplations from cultural standpoints cannot be undermined, but utilized as an essential weapon of conflict resolution, nation building and profitable development. Intercultural Philosophy through effective dialogue has the capacity of providing tangible solutions to the myriad socio-

cultural, political and economic problems that has bedeviled the Nigerian state and indeed Africa. Various cultures must be given the pride of contributory relevance. Proper Intercultural dialogue is not only essential but profoundly urgent in addressing socio-political and cultural malady in Nigeria and Africa.

In the light of this therefore, Ozumba's Integrative Humanism as a brand of Intercultural Philosophy provides the desirable ambience for the integration of Philosophical ideas and solutions provided from socio-cultural discourse. Integrative Humanism acknowledges the contributory and complementary relevance of the various cultural structures and their distinct Philosophical positions towards addressing national problems. It believes strongly that distinct human and natural resources from various cultures can be harnessed, harmonized and complementarily integrated to proffer solutions to national challenges, thus enhancing nation building.

Nigeria and indeed African countries must without segregation, denigration and marginalization of its member groups, provide equal opportunities for people of various ethnic groups to contribute meaningfully to national development. Talents and ideas must be complementarily integrated without the notion of ethnic nor cultural background. Infrastructures must be equitably distributed for the betterment of citizens. Diverse cultures, skills talents and ideas must be adequately identified and integrated towards nation building. One cannot but affirm, that the Integration of cultural and ethnic groups, ideas, philosophical dispositions has the propensity of catalyzing socio-cultural, political and economic development and progress.

Diverse ethnic, political and religious group that constitute the Nigerian nation state, must be allowed to flourish in the consciousness of relevance and the view that their unique existence can contribute meaningfully to the progress of the whole. Nation-building requires the conscious formation and promotion of a common identity. In the light of this therefore, the various units and groups in the Nigerian nation state must bear and promote the Nigerian identity. The elevation of ethno-cultural identity and consciousness far above national identity as Nigerians, remain detrimental to the progressive sustainability of the Nigerian state.

Nation Building in Nigeria and indeed Africa must be a consciously determined and patriotic activity. Various composite units that make up various African nations must properly be integrated and given a proper pride of place to flourish. One cannot but affirm, that the productive contribution of these units can immensely enhance the progress and sustainable development of the nation states and indeed Africa.

The place of Leadership in Nation-building cannot be undermined, as it plays a central role in the progressive development of any nation. Nigeria and indeed other African countries need effective leadership. In this light, altruistic leaders with profound passion for the promotion of unity, integrative coexistence and the desire for the common good of the populace must be properly elected and given the mandate to pilot the affairs of the nation. These leaders must have the mandate of unifying and integrating the various ethnic groups and units of national existence towards a peaceful profitable coexistence. This implies therefore that in generating and distributing national resources and infrastructural development, the various ethno-cultural groups and states, must be

given a fair share. No state, ethnic group or socio-religious units must be elevated in relevance and preference above others. All units therefore must be given equal treatment on profit sharing and burden bearing. It must be noted therefore that all ethnic groups and indeed states are uniquely endowed with human and material resources, therefore a proper integration of these groups, galvanization of idea and the harnessing of the distinct human and material resources therein can largely lead to the progressive development of the nation state. The duo of Intercultural Philosophy and Integrative Humanism remain indispensable tools of Nation Building, Socio-political and Economic sustainability and development.

Conclusion

In concluding this paper, one cannot but affirm that the task of Nation Building is largely achievable. The sustainable development and continuous progress of nations in Africa is largely dependent on its leadership, and its capacity to harness the contributory relevance of all units towards the profitability, productivity and progressivity of the whole. Leadership is a task of responsibility; hence it must be taken seriously and altruistic leaders given the opportunity to lead positively.

Nigeria and indeed African nations can rise to its greatest potentials and contribute meaningfully to the developmental wellbeing of its citizen. To build formidable nations where peace and tranquility, equity, justice and rule of law is upheld, and where Socio-economic, infrastructural development are made, all units, factors and categories of progress must be harnessed from the points of relevance. This implies therefore that the denigration and segregation of ethnic groups and the hegemonic entronement of some against others, must be brought to an end. All

composite units must be allowed to flourish, contribute and benefit equally from the common wealth.

The conscious galvanization and harnessing of resource – human and material, must be properly undertaken and units of existence properly integrated for profitability and progressive development. One cannot but affirm therefore that Intercultural Philosophy from the spectacle of Integrative Humanism, where all units of reality and constituent units are given a pride of place from their points of contributory relevance, can largely aid sustainable development and productive nation building in Africa.

Works Cited

- Aristotle. *The Politics*. Trans by T. A. Sinclair. New York: Penguin Books Ltd, 1962.
- Elaigwu, John. I. *Topical Issues in Nigeria's Political Development*. Jos: AIIA Publishing House, 2011.
- Kwasi, Wiredu. *Philosophy and an African Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., 1980.
- Ikyase, JohnKennedy Tersoo, Egbari Anthony Ejue. “One Hundred Years of Nationhood and the Challenges of Nation Building in Nigeria”. In *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* Vol 20, Issue 2. Feb 2015.
- Ibrahim Gambari. *The Challenge of Nation Building: The Case of Nigeria*. 29th March 2018.
- Michael, Nwokodi and Elias ChukwuemekaNgu. “The Challenge of Nationhood and State Building in Nigeria's Fourth Republic”. In *Afriliterige Research Working Paper Series*. Print 18th Nov, 2021.
- Ozumba, Godfrey O. *NjikokaAmaka Further Discussions on The Philosophy of Integrative Humanism*. Calabar: 3rd Logic Option Publishing. 2014.
- Oluwagbemi-Jacob, DorathyUcheaga. “Intercultural Philosophy, Africa's Predicaments and Globalization: Finding the missing-link”. *Annals of Humanities and Development Studies*. Vol1, No 2. China: Linghua Tongxing Culture Communication Ltd, 2010.
- Plato. *The Republic*. Trans by T. A. Sinclair. New York: Penguin Books 1974.
- Solomon, Kingsley Christopher. “The Challenge of Intercultural Philosophy and Integrative Humanism”. In Ozumba G. O. *Journal of Integrative Humanism*. Vol 3, No 1, 2013.
- Solomon, Kingsley Christopher. “Nation Building: A Spectacle of Spiritocentric Humanism”. *International Journal of Integrative Humanism*. Vol 10 No 2. 2011.
- Walker C. *Nation Building or Nation Destroying*. London: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- William K. *Nation Building in Comparative Contexts*. New Brunswick Alderic Transaction, 2013