

VALUES, PHILOSOPHY, AND GOOD GOVERNANCE: A PATH TOWARDS A FLOURISHING SOCIETY

Charles B. Berebon
Rivers State University
Charles.berebon@ust.edu.ng

Abstract

The interaction between values, philosophy, and good governance is of utmost importance in the goal of a healthy society. This work explores the complex interrelationships between these three pillars, illuminating their significant impact on the advancement of human civilisation. Any philosophical investigation must begin with an examination of the fundamental issues of existence, knowledge, values, and human nature. To foster an atmosphere that promotes human flourishing is the art of successful and moral leadership. By considering the welfare and well-being of all individuals, such governance goes beyond simple administration and promotes an inclusive and just society. The link between philosophy and good government is mutually beneficial. Philosophy helps to create wise policies and effective governance practises because of its intellectual rigour. Philosophical discussion helps decision-makers grasp the ethical consequences of their actions and helps them veer away from quick fixes and towards long-term, sustainable solutions. The pursuit of philosophical objectives depends on effective administration. It makes sure that moral values are not just abstract ideas but are really manifested in how institutions operate and how individuals in positions of authority behave. By ensuring openness, accountability, and responsiveness, effective governance creates a climate in which moral principles may flourish, reducing the possibility of corruption and power abuse. Values, philosophy, and good governance work together to form a potent trinity that determines how civilizations develop. It exhorts government, the people, and thinkers to actively pursue goodness, knowledge, and truth. Adopting these interrelated pillars not only paves the way for a more equitable and successful society, but it also demonstrates humanity's inherent capacity to overcome obstacles and build a world governed by logic, empathy, and justice.

Keyword: Values, Philosophy, Governance, Society, people

Introduction

The components of a flourishing society is constituted when there are values, philosophy and good governance. These constitutive components, which entails embracing the principles of values, exploring the in-depth of philosophy and proper implementation of good governance practices, when properly managed provides a clear path to societal progress and wellbeing. This is undoubtably the solid foundation for growth and development and the wellbeing of the citizenry. This is because values dictate for the individual and society norms, her course of action, a collective behavioural pattern that embraces

or considered what is important and desirable. Philosophy stimulates the rational framework to critically evaluate and shape the values, thereby critically analysing decisions, evaluating ethical implications consequences that are either long or short term. Good governance facilitates ethical and proper management of the human affairs, also ensuring the good utilization of resources for the benefit of the citizens thereby promoting social justice and economic growth. When these constitutive elements align and properly implemented, it gives birth to a just, fair and flourishing society for the people. When these ideas are promoted and properly implemented then societies can strive towards a future coloured with prosperity, progress and harmony. There are also some challenges in the implementation in these essential components in building a flourishing society.

Some of these challenges can be cultural differences, conflicting interests and political resistance. Some Nordic countries like Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland and organizations have prioritized and successfully implemented these values, philosophy and good governance to create positive change. Their governance or political ideas is benchmark on philosophical ideas of social democracy, promoting a high quality of life, well-being, and a fair distribution of resources. Undoubtably when there are values which are the moral compass of the society, philosophy as its intellectual foundation and good governance which is the application of these ideas concrete terms, then there is a thriving society.

The State of the Nation

The nation has functioned in true federalism that haven't offered the dividend as sort by the government and the people, to say the least. The primary cognizance of this examination will be on reasonable partiality as a method to an agreeable and peaceful future. The study assumes this as a way for orientation as against the stead of the federal quota. It's going to permit thinkers of modern-day society (in Nigeria) to grow humans with the idea that the society they live in accepts their way of existence. In perspective, the northern part of Nigeria is Muslim and the Koran guides their way of life. But the global idea has placed a stronghold over their belief which has caused excessive aggressive encounters with the government. It's far the opinion of this study that Muslim rights be constitutionalized with a current tune in their formation and inclusion within the Nigerian constitution, this will integrate the Nigerian society and give voice to that section of the nation, thereby making the nation one in regulation (instituting relevant sections of the sharia law into the constitution). This will be useful in constructing different peace paths with the northern region, as allowing their legal guidelines in the constitution shall allow the nation a robust stake at the negotiation desk in matters like "girl child education."

Moreso, in light of quailing the pursuit for a state without western language, first it is said that having your public philosophy is critical when you're going through challenging instances, howbeit, this should not be at the expense of thy neighbors. This could further be related to the desires in the Niger Delta

where arms-carrying has been resorted to by some youths as a means to an end, but the question that remains to be answered is; how quickly has it taken for militants to return to the creeks, after the amnesty programme came to a halt? Why do they nevertheless have big guns, which were supposedly submitted to the authorities, during the amnesty bargain? If the authorities have failed to persevere on the promises of the amnesty programme and had elicited their return to the creeks then the rehabilitative system done so far was of no use.¹

Before the matter to alleviate this challenge is put forth, may it be made known that the rate to which youths within this region take to carrying arms is alarming and should be frowned at, as this can only be attributed to the “get rich quick” syndrome with little or no job, which has promoted their taste for blood in the name of emancipating the people. That being stated, in rebranding Nigeria for peaceful coexistence and economic growth, the killing of these youths needs to not be a choice, but rather a reorientation of the mindset without the promise of the instant success of fame as preached in the amnesty programme. Legal guidelines have to be instituted that; (i) institute a continual orientation for free for those who feel cheated by the system, that guns can only bring more pain, (ii) station all lawmakers within their constituencies, and (iii) prevent political leaders from patronizing foreign fundamental amenities like hospitals and schools, which they have not instituted of their locality.

This may aid in bringing the authorities to the ensuring these facilities are available and functional. To make certain these legislatures aren't dealt with towards unfair judgment it must be forehand made known to contestants the necessities for such obligation. By so doing, greater basic amenities may be promoted in every constituency thereby, reduce the prejudice of the voters that politicians are there to accumulate weight for themselves.

Values: The Moral Compass of Society

Values are the principles that guide the behaviour and choices of individuals and societies. In the context of a successful person, value is the moral compass that guides society. Some of the most important features of the community are: Justice, empathy, diversity and inclusion. These are navigation markers, guiding morals through the uncharted waters of progress and coexistence. Values are the tapestry of society's character shapes and provides the frame work from which individuals can interact and contribute to the welfare of the society. Value is trans-disciplinary concept which some philosopher's views is still within the domain of Ethics and Ethics is a branch of philosophy that studies values and in some instances, it is interchangeably with ethics. For Maduabuchi Dukor, whenever one honestly seeks for solutions to African political instability, ethnicism, illiteracy or dependency

¹ Alexinfo, What is a Moral Compass? and Why do Nigerians Need One,p, accessed 21 August,2023

syndrome, the enterprise always flashes to two fundamental concepts; ‘value’ and “nationhood”. That both concepts have historically not related to yield virile and complete or near perfect nations is obvious from the history of Black African since the dawn of freedom. The fathers of African nationalism like Kwame Nkrumah, Ahmadu Bello, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Leopold Senghor, Tom Mboya, Julius Nyerere, Kenneth Kaunda and so on never overlooked values as means of sustaining African independence.² A moral compass helps provide an objective standard to help each of us define and address our ethical or moral Stance. In essence, a moral compass helps us define what kind of behaviour is right and wrong in our lives. It guides you toward what you ought to do in a given situation, not just what you want to do or even what others want you to do. The strength of your moral compass defines your character, which determines how people choose to interact with you. A sound moral compass can help you strike the right balance in your life between reason and emotion, practicality and idealism, and your needs as well as those of others. Since the beginning of time, people have wondered what it means to be a good human? While expectations continue to change, this question remains at the same as we try to live a life with true moral and ethical purpose. Without a moral compass, it's more likely that you will make decisions without thinking through the consequences of your actions. In addition, you'll likely be tempted to stretch the truth when it benefits you to do so. With a moral compass, you'll find it easier to resist temptation through principle-based decision making.

In other words, your choices will be based on values you hold to be true rather than on what's easiest to do in the moment. Nigerians believe that the moral state of the nation is very poor, as we are becoming vainer, selfish and dishonest.³

As a country we need to define and adhere to some objective standard for moral and ethical behaviour to help each of us do our part to keep this situation from spiralling out of control. There are benefits to having a well-defined moral compass. If you don't stand for something you fall for anything so the saying goes. Without your ethics and beliefs, it's very difficult to make any moral choices, much less a good one. Following a set of moral values, you provide both yourself and those around you with a sense of consistency. You'll be less likely to succumb when facing moral dilemmas because you can compare to past situations. With an unwavering moral standard, you will have a sense of absolute right and wrong. The greater good is protected by a commitment to moral values, such as justice, kindness and equity.

Treating others with kindness and supporting equitable opportunities for all can help create a more inclusive and empowering society. The more we strive to improve the lives of others – even when

² D, Maduabuchi.(ed) *Philosophy and Politics, Discourse on Values, Politics and power in Africa*. (Lagos: Malthouse Press Limited,2003), xiii

³ Alexinfo, *What is a Moral Compass? and Why do Nigerians Need One*,p, accessed 21 August,2023,<https://www.ng.opera.news/ng/en/philosophy/53fca7d936cf8226a9583bccbe63b9f0>

they're very different from ourselves – the more we are able to build a truly moral society. And the more we steer clear of knowingly causing harm to our fellow human beings, the same is true. Those who operate with the greater good in mind continually question whether their behaviour measures up to their duties and obligations to something bigger than themselves. There's substantial evidence that people with a strong moral compass feel a higher sense of integrity, which leads to increased feelings of contentment, focus, grounding and purpose.⁴

People begin to think more about their moral compass and personal code of ethics the moment they become parents. Most people want to be a good role model for their children, hoping to instil the ethical and moral framework that children need to be happy individuals and productive members of society. But you don't have to be a parent to be a role model. You can also be a coach, a teacher, a mentor, or a faith community leader – and each of these leadership positions requires you to understand your own values and ethical stances so that you can guide the development of others.⁵

To be a trusted leader or role model, you must know who you are and what you stand for – you must have a standard by which you can work through moral dilemmas that test you. In this way, you can define the ethical trade-offs that you are and are not willing to make in a leadership position. People with a strong moral compass have healthier relationships and enjoy closer companionship with those around them.⁶ There are however challenges mitigating values in the human society when it drifts towards relativism, when there is lack of conviction. There also the need to encourage dialogue, bridge contemporary and traditional views. The need for adaptation, reflection and introspection is a key to sustainability, keeping values still relevant as the needs of the society continues to evolves while maintain fundamental or universal principles of values base on natural law. For Berebon, the natural law theorist concerns themselves with the search for an ideal law higher than human positive law. They see the law as a divine order commanding human respect. They link law with ethics and morality.⁷

⁴ Alexinfo, What is a Moral Compass? and Why do Nigerians Need One,p, accessed 21 August,2023

⁵ Alexinfo, *What is a Moral Compass?and Why do Nigerians Need One*,p, accessed 21 August,2023

⁶ Alexinfo, *What is a Moral Compass? and Why do Nigerians Need One*,p, accessed 21 August,2023

⁷ C.B. Berebon, “ This is a court of Law, Not a Court of Justice: Bridging the Legal-Moral Divide in Holmes’ view of Law” *Philosophy and Praxis, Journal of the Association of Philosophy Professionals of Nigeria*, (2) 1(2021), 102.

Philosophy and its influence in the Society

One fundamental identity with philosophy is the association love of wisdom. Philosophy explores reality, ethics, knowledge and existence. This is one discipline that encourages or provides the framework for critical thinking, search and analysis assumptions and beliefs. Invariably philosophical ideas influence decision-making, its ethical foundation in establishing grounds for justice and equality. The role of philosophy then is seen in shaping the values of the society, providing rational justification and intellectual backing, for the promotion of fairness, justice, equality and sustainability of the common good, leading to the establishment of good governance. This is achieved because the individual through philosophy is able to critically analyse, evaluate and consider long-term consequences of actions.

For this reason, to a big quantity, within the scope of this dialogue, we need to realize the truth that philosophers have a responsibility to steer the path of society, to influence it definitely in our lives. In other words, philosophy needs to compare the nature of society, to decide the proper values in the society.

Hence, in this path, a philosophical framework has to be capable of manipulating inequality cautiously inside the concept of justice. A logician must know what sort of society we need. What sort of political institution might be desirable for a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic society like Nigeria? If we fail to check the sort of society, then our discussions on the technique of philosophizing for a proper developmental technique would be meaningless. It will become a workout in futility. As truth seekers, we want to have a protracted view of society, to understand who we are, what we've carried out, and what to attain; and from there make inferences about the future.⁸ The state of affairs of sustainability and reliance as opined by way of Ake, is of route very opposing to classical economics, which sees improvement inside the experience of in step with capita earnings or financial boom. Development is the socio-political and financial well-being of the people. This will be mentioned based on a state shape. A nation with proper democratic concepts and leadership is in process of real improvement, which critically accompanies all its social institutions, monetary systems, and academic training into one of a kind philosophical desires or agendas.⁹

Philosophy, therefore, is a set of idealistic dreams, the pivotal force, or framework for the countrywide coverage formula and evaluation of public policy. Nigeria for instance is organized

⁸ J.C Asike, "Role of Philosophy in Human Development in Nigeria." (UJAH Special Edition (2017), 10.

⁹ C.Ake, Democracy and Development in Africa. (The Brookings Institution, 1996).

following the concepts of federalism, separation of powers, tests and balances, famous sovereignty, restrained government, majority rule, and minority proper. Thus, underneath those elements, Nigeria should be guided by using an advantageous philosophy as a way to go beyond its gift country of development. It must be significantly endogenous, via making the human beings be in rate in their lives through the higher distribution of monetary sources, protection of life and property. Thus, underneath those elements, Nigeria should be guided by using an advantageous philosophy as a way to go beyond its gift country of development. It must be significantly endogenous, via making the human beings be in rate in their lives through the higher distribution of monetary sources, protection of life and property.¹⁰ Nigeria, like maximum African nations, continues to be struggling with the problem of subsistent living which does no longer leave a great deal of room for every person to interact with the company of philosophizing.

This is made greater hard using the crop of political leaders who, as a result of greed and materialistic dispositions, has rubbished the values of tough work, human dignity, honesty, and integrity within the national polity. In this sort of situation, some have even doubted the relevance of philosophy. but because 'know-how saves, and ignorance entangles; considering information liberates, and lack of awareness enslaves, philosophy by using clarifying our political and social principles, empowers the citizens in addition to political workplace seekers/holders with the appreciation of their rights and privileges as well as their duties in the polity. Philosophy can and needs to develop a 'social vision', with norms, dreams, and values for each actor inside the polity to shield against skewed behaviours which can be inimical to social justice.¹¹ Our final idea is that naturalists accept as true that we must use technological know-how to analyse traditionally philosophical questions, however, most could admit that their position is extraordinarily new on the scene. They knew that philosophers have traditionally understood their difficulties remember as pursued by and large thru the usage of intellect, conceptual research, good judgment, and intuition.¹²

Philosophy is a critical factor in the development of good morals in the society, which is an important aspect of development. This is, because, there can be no meaningful national development, if the members of the society are morally retrogressive and underdeveloped. Philosophy thus makes an important contribution to understanding of good judgment in the society. Philosophy helps to solve problems, mundane or abstract, and it helps us make better decisions by developing our critical thinking

¹⁰ C. Berebon, "Philosophy and Science: A Stage for Technocrat" OCHENDO: An African Journal of Innovative Studies ISSN: 26814-0788 (Print) 2814-077X (e). Vol. 3 No. 1. 2022

¹¹ C. Ogbuja. "The Role of Philosophy in the interplay of politics and social Justice in Nigeria." LWATI, A Journal of Contemporary Research, Vol. 9(2012): 201-212.

¹² C. Berebon, "Philosophy and Science: A Stage for Technocrat"

(very important in the age of disinformation). It illustrates by linking influential ideas to mundane activities, such as waking up with Descartes and going to the gym with Heidegger.¹³

Some of the benefits of studying Philosophy includes ability to think logically, ability to analyze and solve problems, ability to assess proposed solutions, ability to write and speak clearly, attending to details and to mention but few. To start my discussion on the roles of philosophy in tackling developmental problems in Africa, I will like to examine Plato notion of the significant of philosophy in every society.¹⁴

According to Plato, “Until philosophers are kings, or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and political greatness and wisdom meet in one, and those commoner natures who pursue either to the exclusion of the other are compelled to stand aside, cities will never have rest from their evils.” From the above notion, we can deduce that philosophy is the main function of the orientation of a person in every society. Philosophy forms the worldview of people, as it largely determines their behavior and approaches to decision-making in particular problem. Philosophy plays a significant role in solving global problems. The above position is getting us close to how much philosophy as a discipline has been tackling developmental issues and problems in Africa.¹⁵

Therefore, philosophy in its attempt to tackle developmental problems in Africa, philosophers proposes ethical awareness as the necessary condition in the fight against corruption since ethical awareness is the necessary condition for human survival and flourishing for without a basic moral norm that protects basic moral values, society itself is impossible. Furthermore, the roles of philosophy in tackling developmental problems in Africa is also vested on how philosophy gives a shedding light on how to help Africa continent alleviating corruption by placing emphasis on the fundamental role of ethics. Africa can eradicate corruption completely by inculcating sound ethical moral values or by adopting an ethical culture given that ethics is derived from the Greek word ethos, meaning, custom, way of life, behavior, namely moral behavior.¹⁶

¹³ Jairus, “Roles of Philosophy in Tackling Developmental Problems in Africa” accessed 25 August 2023, <https://www.schooldrillers.com/roles-of-philosophy-in-tackling-developmental/>

¹⁴ Jairus, “Roles of Philosophy in Tackling Developmental Problems in Africa”

¹⁵ Jairus, “Roles of Philosophy in Tackling Developmental Problems in Africa”

¹⁶ Jairus, “Roles of Philosophy in Tackling Developmental Problems in Africa”

Good Governance: Turning Ideals into Reality and a Sustainable Future

In the intricate tapestry of human civilization, the concept of governance holds a central position. Good governance, characterized by transparency, accountability, participation, and the rule of law, serves as the bedrock upon which flourishing societies are built. It acts as a catalyst, propelling nations toward progress, social cohesion, and sustainable development. This essay delves into the multifaceted ways in which good governance contributes to the flourishing of societies.

Transparency and Accountability:

Transparency and accountability are the pillars upon which good governance stands. When governing bodies and institutions are transparent in their actions and decisions, citizens gain insight into the workings of their government. This fosters trust and confidence in the system, which is essential for societal flourishing. Moreover, accountability ensures that those in positions of power are held responsible for their actions, discouraging corruption and abuse of power. This environment of openness not only attracts investments and economic growth but also encourages citizens to actively participate in the governance process.

Participation and Inclusivity:

Inclusive governance ensures that all segments of society have a voice in decision-making processes. When individuals from diverse backgrounds, including minorities and marginalized groups, are given the opportunity to participate, it leads to policies that reflect the needs and aspirations of the entire society. Involving citizens in decision-making not only enhances the quality of policies but also reinforces their sense of ownership and belonging. Flourishing societies thrive on this sense of collective responsibility and empowerment.

Rule of Law and Justice:

A society where the rule of law is upheld is one where citizens are assured of their rights and freedoms. Good governance guarantees that laws are applied fairly and uniformly, irrespective of one's social status or background. This fosters an environment of trust, where citizens can engage in economic, social, and cultural activities without fear of arbitrary actions. When justice prevails, it nurtures an atmosphere of stability, necessary for societal growth and progress.

Efficient Service Delivery:

A well-governed society prioritizes the efficient delivery of public services. Good governance streamlines administrative processes, reduces bureaucratic hurdles, and ensures that resources are allocated judiciously. This translates into improved access to education, healthcare, infrastructure, and

other essential services. When basic needs are met, citizens can focus on higher pursuits, contributing to the overall development of the society.

Economic Growth and Stability:

Good governance directly impacts a nation's economic growth and stability. Transparent policies attract foreign investments, encourage entrepreneurship, and facilitate trade. When institutions are trustworthy and predictable, businesses can operate with confidence, leading to job creation and increased economic activity. Furthermore, well-managed public finances and anti-corruption measures safeguard the economy from shocks, fostering sustained growth over the long term.

Environmental Sustainability:

Sustainable development is a cornerstone of flourishing societies, and good governance plays a pivotal role in achieving this balance. Effective governance ensures that environmental regulations are enforced, natural resources are managed responsibly, and policies are enacted to combat climate change. By prioritizing environmental sustainability, societies can pass on a healthy planet to future generations while simultaneously reaping the economic benefits of green innovation.¹⁷

For Ebun-Olu Adegboruwa, The United Nations Economic and Social Commission defines 'governance' as 'the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented.' According to a World Bank Report in 1991, 'governance' is 'the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development.' Also, the erstwhile Nigeria Vision 2010 document stated that: 'Good governance means accountability in all its ramifications. It also means the rule of law and an unfettered judiciary; that is, freedom of expression and choice in political association. Good governance means transparency, equity and honesty in public office. In the Nigerian context, good governance calls for Constitutional rule and a true federal system.' Good governance therefore means that the process of decision making is good; that the process by which decisions are implemented is good. Good governance is connected with elements such as dependability, transparency, accountability, prosperity and development.¹⁸

¹⁷ Open AI.(2023). ChatGPT (Mar 14 Version)[Large language model] <https://chat.openai.com/chat>.

¹⁸ E. Adegboruwa, *The Nigerian Tribune Newspaper*, "Democracy, good governance and development in Nigeria(1)" <https://tribuneonline.ng/democracy-good-governance-and-development-in-nigeria-1/> 28 June 2022.

Conclusion

From the discourse, values, philosophy and good governance are intertwined to bring about a Sustainable development, good quality of life, productivity and flourishing society. These core values still deserve continual discussion. Values directs individuals and society to create positive change through education, fostering dialogue, promoting ethical leadership and raising a high quality of life. The clarion call of Plato 'Philosopher King' is also recommended as an action plan, in the search of national development, by proffering postulations, ideologies, mental deconstruction, defining social-political values, conscientizing humanity in pursuance of practical ideas that are relevant and useful for an idle society.