

PHILOSOPHY AND THE ART OF NATION BUILDING

Anikpe Anthony Mbah, PhD*

Abstract

In the face of the consistent failures of many multi-nation states especially in Africa and Asia to homogenize their ethnic diversity into united and viable nations and the need to defend and promote the relevance of philosophy after the academic discipline has severally been accused of contributing nothing to society. This study interrogated how philosophy can contribute to nation building. Deploying the documentary and analytic methods for data collection and analysis, the study argued that philosophy as a discipline has four fundamental things to contributing to nation building: develop the goals of nation building, educate the leadership and citizenship necessary for nation building, provide the critical and analytic skills required for nation building and encourage separation when homogenization fails. To this extent, the work maintained that while science and technology maybe the engine of nation building, philosophy is the sailor and navigator's mast and therefore indispensable to nation building. It therefore recommended that the success of every state requires that philosophers should be given lead roles in nation building but since power is not given but taken, the onus is on philosophers to find a way of giving to the society what their profession makes them most qualified for.

Keywords: Nation building, state building, development, philosophy, Homogeneity, social cohesion, segregation, polarization

Introduction

Two things inspired the title of this study: a recent renewed interest in the concept of nation building and the question on whether philosophy is still useful as an academic discipline. To start with, nation building is an old concept, perhaps as old as the concept of nation itself. As Alberto Alesina and Bryony Reich (2014, p. 2), put it, "History, starting from the time of the Greeks has witnessed a multitude of efforts to 'nation build' that is, policies enacted by rulers to build homogeneity amongst their populations. Tilly (1975, p. 8), also observes that:

Almost all European governments took steps which homogenized their populations: the adoption of state religion, expulsion of minorities, and institution of a national language, and eventually, the organization of mass public instruction.

Unfortunately, European elites did not enact such policies in their colonies (Christopher, 1988; Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2012). Thankfully, once these colonies gained independence in the 1950's and onward, many introduced policies to create a national language and national identity, similar to the policies of 19th Century Europe. The fact that some of these colonies which received independence from European colonial powers were composed of multiple and often antagonistic nations made the homogenization project even more imperative. The failure of this project in most of these countries such as Nigeria has led scholars to redirect their attentions to the work of integration in recent times making nation building one of the most used concept in our time.

The second reason for choosing this title is the search for the usefulness of philosophy in the age of science and utilitarianism. The astonishing achievements of science and the utilitarian nature of this age have led scholars and policymakers to question the academic benefits of non-utilitarian disciplines.

Philosophy is at the center of this intellectual push against none utilitarian subjects as it is frequently accused of being of no use to the society.

In 1995, in a paper presented to the American Philosophical Association, the American philosopher Martha Nussbaum (p. 144) complained:

We are portrayed as both lazy and obscure: when we are not simply playing truant from meaningful activity, we are producing works of interest to nobody but one another, and in most cases not even to one another. Academic journals are portrayed as relatively worthless depositories for the uninspired products of the tenure struggle, the intellectual life as a mechanized life in which the grand old humanistic ideas no longer have any validity. To support such irresponsible unenlightening characters is said to be a waste of public and private funding. In our own days, the threat we all face is the termination of funding, which means the loss of a future for many of our students.

Joachim Jung (2023) captures this sentiment in the abstract of his well-received article, “The Future of Philosophy”:

Higher education worldwide is affected by budget cuts and dwindling financial resources. Today, science and scholarship can only find broad recognition if their endeavors provide material success. If subjected to the rigours of the market, the humanities do not score favorably, and it seems that in the scale of profit-making disciplines philosophy ranks last.

Lamentations like these are not new. As early as 1935 the German sociologist Helmuth Plessner (pp. 150, 176) stated that philosophy had lost its functions and was mainly concerned with “fighting against its own superfluosity.” In 1994, the German physicist Gerhard Vollmer (24/8), expressed himself in a similar vein: “Philosophers have failed to make clear what they can really be used for.”

In the face of the foregoing, Joachim (2023) raised the following questions:

Does philosophy have a future? Is it likely that philosophical research will proceed indefinitely? And is there any well-founded likelihood that our philosophical achievements will still find an interested audience in the next century?

This state of affair has elicited responses from professional philosophers ranging from those who concede that philosophy has not been of much use to this age and needs to reconfigure its policies if it must remain relevant and others who out rightly defended philosophy contending that it is and will always be useful to the society (Russell, 1980; Oladipo, 2008 & Oguejiofor, 2011). Joachim Jung (2023), while arguing that there is much evidence that philosophy as a common human activity will endure because it appeals to a fundamental need: to reconsider knowledge and to go on inquiring when empirical research has reached its limits, still maintains that:

In order for academic philosophy to maintain itself in these times, two goals need to be pursued consistently: a) philosophy should address problems of practical concern — such as society's ethical, social, and even metaphysical needs — presenting them in a commonly accessible fashion; b) philosophers should draw material from other academic disciplines — linguistics, neurophysiology, archaeology, biology, psychology, mathematics, astronomy and other

specializations — for their own speculation, taking advantage of the integrative functions of philosophy to promote the cooperation between all disciplines. The retreat of academic philosophy in our time is due in part to its faulty policy.

While this study has no intention of directly crossing swords with any of the groups in this ongoing controversy, it will indirectly propose three ways philosophy can contribute to nation building (develop the goals of nation building, prepare the leadership and citizenship necessary for nation building, provide the critical and analytic skills required for nation building and encourage separation when homogenization fails) and in doing so challenge academic philosophers to live up to the responsibility of their profession by engaging with the practical demands of nation building. To achieve these objectives, the study is divided into four sections. After this introduction, the second section will do conceptual operationalization of philosophy and nation building in order to prepare ground for the third section which is the nucleus of the study as it shows how philosophy based on its meaning can be applied to nation building. The fourth and last section is conclusion. Specifically, it will summarize the findings of the research and make recommendations.

Conceptual Operationalization

Nation Building

Regular and standard deployment of concepts is the hallmark of scholarship. Nevertheless, integral to the nature of concepts, especially in philosophy, is disputation because disputation is the bedrock that drives the regularizations of concepts. However, an unhelpful multiplicity of tendencies exists in the conceptualization of nation building transcending the usual disputations, which mark conceptual elucidations among scholars. Such depictions currently present the concept as one with indistinct and indeterminate pigmentation. Consequently, though widely used, the concept remains imprecise and contested. As one author suggests:

A decade ago, nation-building became a term of opprobrium, leading a significant segment of American opinion to reject the whole concept. Ten years later, nation-building appears ever more clearly as a responsibility that neither the UN nor the US can escape."⁵ As a result, current literature on nation-building is now much wider in scope, depth, and breadth (Seth & Dobbins, 2006, p. 723).

This definitional challenges notwithstanding, a careful examination of the various approaches to nation building shows that there are at least four major orientations in understanding the concept: as foreign military intervention and reconstruction, as developing every aspect of the state and as national integration or homogenization.

The first orientation is a definition that is currently very popular among international lawyers and in international foreign policy discourses, especially in the US. The approach gained currency since the attacks against the United States in September 2001. In this understanding, 'Nation-building' provides the rationale for militaristic interventions in countries that are deemed to constitute serious threats to the international security, as well as for external engagements with post-conflict countries whose states are considered to have 'failed' or be at risk of 'failure'. The focus here is not on 'nation-building' in the literal sense of building a shared sense of community. Rather, it is about regime change or democratization, as in Afghanistan and Iraq, or the reconstruction of states that have collapsed or been seriously weakened as a result of internal conflict, as in the cases of Timor-Leste or Solomon Islands. Advocates of this version of 'nation-building' claim that it can be organized from outside by the

international community of states and view its principal strategic objective as the enhancement of regional and international security (Ottaway 2002).

This notion of nation building is captured in a highly remarkable definition offered by Dobbins (2003, p.17) where nation building is seen as —the use of armed force in the aftermath of a conflict to underpin an enduring transition to democracy. According to Dobbins:

Nation-building, as it is commonly referred to in the United States, involves the use of armed force as part of a broader effort to promote political and economic reforms with the objective of transforming a society emerging from conflict into one at peace with itself and its neighbors.

This usage has been criticized by some for reflecting America's own historical experience of constructing a political order in a newly settled country without deeply rooted peoples, cultures, and traditions. Reflecting a very different history, European commentators argue that nations need to evolve organically and that they are rarely constructed successfully by external powers. 'Nation-building' is, in other words, an evolutionary rather than revolutionary social process (Dinnen, 2006).

The second approach to the understanding of nation building equates the concept to everything that goes into making a state viable. Amustutz (1990, cited in Olusanya, 2020) endorses this definition when he sees nation building as the name given to a group of processes involved in the growth and development of the nation. He subsequently underlines the indicators of nation building subsumed in his definition thus:

Nation building could be described as an attempt to promote the survival of a nation and build very strong and dynamic nation. It is also an attempt to harness all the potentials of the nation (human and natural resources) for the benefit of the citizens of a nation. Nation building involves the contributions of individuals, groups and organizations in the realm of politics, economics, and religion, social and cultural (pp. 76-77)

The problem with this second definition is that it does not distinguish nation building and allied concept such as development and state building. Conceptual clarification requires that scholars should be able to give each concept a specific identity.

The third approach makes distinction between homogenization and development but maintains that nation building encompasses both concepts. In the viewpoints of Gambari (2008), —nation-building has many important aspects, firstly, it is about building a political entity which corresponds to a given territory, based on some generally accepted rules, norms, and principles, and a common citizenship. Secondly, it is also about building institutions which symbolize the political entity – institutions such as a bureaucracy, an economy, the judiciary, universities, a civil service, and civil society organizations. Above all else, nation-building is about building a common sense of purpose, a sense of shared destiny, a collective imagination of belonging. Gambari (2008, p. 45) further deposes:

Nation-building is therefore about building the tangible and intangible threads that hold a political entity together and gives it a sense of purpose. Even in these days of globalization and rapid international flows of people and ideas, having a viable nation remains synonymous with achieving modernity. It is about building the institutions and values which sustain the collective community in these modern times.

This understanding is further clarified by Oyewole and Adegoke (2018, pp. 25-26) who contend that the purpose of nation-building is to ensure that the resources of the nation are properly harnessed, managed by her people and utilized for the sustainable development of the nation and to enable her people to leave together in harmony and to allow peaceful coexistence with other neighboring nations. Oyewole and Adegoke (2018, p.26) also argue that —the two most notable objectives of nation-building are establishing a representative government and setting conditions which will allow for economic growth and individual prosperity. According to them, nation-building is more successful if the state has had an experience in self-government for several years amidst a viable economy (p. 33).

While this third definition was able to distinguish between homogenization and development, its major shortcoming was that it failed to underline the difference between nation building and state building.

The major contribution of the proponents of the fourth approach is that they take their time to make conceptual specification on the difference between nation building and state building. According to Sinclair Dinnen (2006, p. 1), there is a tendency to use the term ‘nation-building’ interchangeably with that of ‘state-building’. However, he observes that, while closely related, ‘state-building’ and ‘nation-building’ are distinct processes.

‘State-building’ is seen as the task of building functioning states capable of fulfilling the essential attributes of modern statehood. ‘Nation-building’, on the other hand, refers to more abstract process of developing a shared sense of identity or community among the various groups making up the population of a particular state. Distinguished in this way, ‘state-building’ focuses on the practical task of building or strengthening state institutions, while ‘nation-building’ is more concerned with the character of relations between citizens and their state. ‘State-building’ has long been a focus of international development assistance with a wide range of capacity-building programs directed at strengthening key institutions. ‘Nation-building’, on the other hand, has often been viewed as a more nebulous process with a limited role for external assistance.

This understanding agrees with Adekaye’s (1991, p. 6) who defines nation building as “the psychological reconstruction of individuals, a process of infusing into the people of new independent territories who differ widely in languages, religion and values, with a new sense of common belonging and shared identity.” Indeed, Weinstock (2004, p. 51) has suggested that nation building refers to the various attempts in a multiethnic country to —cope with the dual demands of social cohesion and the recognition of diversity. Citing Hippler (2005) Falode (2019, pp. 181-182) posits that:

Nation-building is, on the one hand, a process of socio-political development which allows loosely knitted communities to become a common society with a nation-state corresponding to it. It also connotes the different dimensions through which diverse segments of the society is fused into a functional whole. It has within it, economic integration, cultural integration, political centralization, bureaucratic control and democratization, and establishment of common citizenship.

Falode (2019) also distinguishes between vertical and horizontal dimensions of nation building. With reference to the Nigerian context, Falode (2019, p. 181) sees the vertical dimension as —the progressive acceptance by members of the polity of the legitimacy and the necessity for a central government, and the identification with the central government as the symbol of the nation while —the horizontal dimension involves the acceptance of the other members of the civic body as equal members of a corporate nation.

In the final analysis, it appears nation building as the term implies, should be an unambiguous terminology, devoid of semantics and pedantic hues. It seems to be the process of weaving an indomitable new nation out of a diversity of previously existing national inclinations. It further seems to be a domestically-driven process as different from the uniquely American position which practices nation building as —the use of armed force in the aftermath of a conflict to underpin an enduring transition to democracy (Dobbins, 2003, p.17).

However, this fourth and last sense, which sees nation building as homogenization will not be used in this study because while more technically correct, doesn't bring out the complex nature and institutional interactions that go into the business of a nation. For instance, every nation is dynamic and oriented towards different goals such that what is required to build nation A may not be required to build nation B. Also, even when nation building is taken purely to mean homogenization, integrating the different nations that make up a country often requires the interactions and coordination of other sectors of the countries life including the political, economic, educational, scientific, etc. Based on these dynamics therefore, while it is conceded that nation building technically involves homogenization, the working definition adopted for this study is the second understanding, which sees nation building as building every facet of the nation, politically, economically, socially, morally, etc.

Philosophy

The claim that philosophy is very difficult to define has been so frequently repeated that it has almost become a refrain among philosophers and students of philosophy. It is often claimed that this definitional difficulty derived from the fact that while other disciplines have their subject matter, philosophy has no subject matter making it nebulous and almost indefinable. In the words of one professional philosopher;

The intellectual endeavour called philosophy is not easy to define. This is the case because, it is difficult to identify the subject matter of philosophy the way we can specify the concerns of economics, sociology, biology and political science for example. Also, we cannot pinpoint a method as the philosophical method the way we can talk of scientific method, for instance, consequently, the nature of philosophy is always a subject of debate among philosophers (Oladipo, 2008, p. 2).

Contrary to Oladipo's claim, philosophy has both a subject matter and a method of investigation. Thus, the regular refrain that philosophy is hard to define or has no definition is both erroneous and exaggerated. The fact is that the definition of philosophy like that of almost all academic disciplines is riddled with controversies.

Specifically, the exaggerations of the difficulties involved in defining philosophy is caused by four factors:

1. **Habit:** it has been so often repeated that philosophy is difficult to define that practitioners no longer make effort to check the veracity of the claim.
2. **The influence of science:** most sciences have narrow and specific subject matters and because of the overarching influence of science in our time, the parameter of science is used to measure every academic discipline such that an academic discipline like philosophy that does not have narrow subject matter like science is considered indefinable.
3. **Philosophy has broad subject matter and flexible method:** the subject matter of philosophy is 'reality' and the method, though reasoning is open to the integration of other methods as it can and usually incorporates the methods and findings of other disciplines especially the sciences.

Consequently, it is usually assumed that having a broad subject matter and flexible methodology makes philosophy difficult to define but who says that a discipline with broad subject matter and flexible methodology should be difficult to define? No one has seriously bothered to investigate this assumption.

4. **Wrong approach to the definition of philosophy:** attempts to define philosophy in recent years have become excessively focused on the subject matter of the discipline that so much energy is expended on technicalities such as the etymology of the concept and little attention given to the way practitioners, especially the very first philosophers actually philosophized and what inspired their philosophizing. Approaching the definition of philosophy from the perspective of how philosophers philosophize will likely pay more dividends than the current overemphasis on subject-matter technicalities and that is the approach followed in this research.

Having made these initial clarifications, suffice it to say that evidence from the history of philosophy and the practice of philosophers, shows that the meaning of philosophy though having evolved through two stages has remained the same. What changed during the course of these evolutions is shift in emphasis on methods not meaning of philosophy.

Historically, there has been various efforts by men to understand the mysteries of the universe: mysteries about birth and death, about sorrow and joy, about God, the souls and stars, etc. Various ages have produced different theories throwing light on these realities. This eternal quest for truth is what led to philosophy. However, humanity's first systematic inquiries into the nature of reality took place not within philosophy but in a mythological framework: reality ultimately was to be derived from some sort of special revelation made to special individuals.

However, starting in the sixth century BCE, there appeared in ancient Greece a series of thinkers who conducted their inquiries on everything that exists through reason and observation, rather than through revelation. This first set of Greek thinkers were the very first philosophers. Thus, philosophy in its most primeval form is considered rational inquiry on reality, the science of discovery or the rational interrogation of everything that is. Two points need to be underlined here:

1. That at the beginning, philosophy has clear subject matter and methods. The subject matter is reality/being and the methods are both empirical and rational.
2. That philosophy is the only academic discipline in existence at this early stage. Other academic disciplines would later emerge from philosophy.

Thus, while most ancient, medieval and modern scholars dealt with a wide variety of issues, including Mathematics, the stars, human anatomy, types and kinds of plants and animals, etc. they were all regarded as philosophers because philosophy then was the rational investigation of everything that is. This understanding of the relationship between philosophy and the other academic disciplines was captured in an *Online Etymological Dictionary* (2016), according to which:

Historically philosophy was the term used for many forms of inquiry we today call mathematics, cosmology, geometry, history, politics, ethics, etc. Philosophy encompassed any body of knowledge. In this sense, philosophy is related to religion, mathematics, politics, natural sciences and education. The growth of modern research universities led academic philosophy and other disciplines to professionalize and specialize. Philosophy is the mother of all disciplines. Philosophy came into being through man's desire for knowledge for its own sake. That was why Bertrand Russell declared that philosophy and science were not separated at the evolution: they were born together as one discipline. Many scientific

discoveries were made by ‘Greek Philosopher Scientists’ such as Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes. At the beginning, all disciplines were one: philosophy. For instance, it was difficult to differentiate philosophical writings from the scientific writings in Plato’s and Aristotle’s writings ([http://www. etymoline.com /index.php? allowed_in_frame=0search=philosophy](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=philosophy)).

However, following the revolution in scientific method that was inspired by Galileo, Copernicus, Newton, Kepler, Bacon and others and the departmentalization of academic disciplines that started in the 18th century, the empirical science of nature became independent from philosophy. Thus, in the 18th century, the physical sciences, particularly physics, biology and chemistry were the first to stand on their own. They were then followed in the 19th century by the social sciences through scholars like Malthus, Karl Marx, Ricardo, August Comet, etc. Following this departmentalization, the job of discovery was assigned to especially the natural sciences. Then a debate arose of what should specifically be the function of philosophy? It was somewhat proposed, especially by the analytic philosophers that philosophy should concern itself with interrogating and clarifying propositions or knowledge claims made by other disciplines. This was the second development in the meaning of philosophy. At the first stage, philosophy was the rational interrogation of everything that exists. At the second stage, after the sciences have separated from it, philosophy now becomes or is assigned the function of interrogating and clarifying knowledge claims by other disciplines.

Pertinent to note here is that it is not the meaning of philosophy which has changed. Contemporary philosophers like the early Greeks who started the philosophical enterprise still study all aspects of reality. What has changed is the methods through which this study is done. While the Greeks employed both the rational and the ‘empirical methods in their investigation of reality, contemporary philosophers have this job carried out by the sciences and have assigned themselves with the responsibilities of analysing, critiquing and drawing conclusions from the findings of the sciences. Looked at closely, one finds that this is not a new meaning or job for philosophy. The job of clarifying and interrogating the claims of other disciplines is not new to philosophy because philosophy started off as a discipline that interrogated and clarified traditional claim about reality.

Philosophy and the Art of Nation Building

This section is the nucleus of this paper and as indicated in the introductory part, there are three basic ways philosophy can contribute to nation building, namely: developing the goals of nation building, educating the leadership and citizenship necessary for nation building, providing the critical and analytic skills required for nation building and going for separation when homogenization is not possible. This section will discuss each of these four elements showing how philosophy can through them contribute to nation building.

Philosophy and the Goals of Nation Building

As seen in the conceptualization section, nation building has different meanings for different people. This to a certain extent is caused by the different views of reality by the various sciences, which again is due to the different subject matters and methods of studying reality adopted by these sciences. For instance, the subject matter of Economics is the economy and the method it studies is empirical, therefore, the goal of nation building for the economist would be economic development. The same applies to the politician, psychologist, engineer etc. These see nation building from the limitation of the subject matters/scopes and methods of their disciplines. This implies that any proposed goals of nation building articulated by these disciplines would be influenced by the biases of their scopes and methods and would likely be one-sided without giving a comprehensive view of nation building.

Unlike these disciplines, philosophy on one hand, studies reality in all its aspects, and on the other hand, doesn't restrict itself to the empirical method, rather it is open to both the findings of the sciences and rational analysis as well. In other words, philosophy unlike the sciences is not limited in scope and method but studies every aspect of reality from both the rational and the empirical perspectives. Consequently, philosophy is the only discipline that is most qualified to fashion a comprehensive vision of reality, including the goals of nation building.

Additionally, each society is very unique such that the requirements of nation building in state A are usually different from the requirements of nation building in state B. In this type of situation, "the one size fit all" approach is usually counterproductive. Choosing the goals of nation building in this type of situation requires the type of in depth analysis, which the philosopher is trained to do. Accordingly, Aristotle ("Metaphysics," 982a.15, cited in McKeon, 2001, p. 691) notes that it is the office of the philosopher to order things to their end. This is because philosophers have a broad and perspicacious view of things. In this connection, philosophy would enable the working out of practicable nation building plans that takes the dynamic nature of societies and academic disciplines into consideration. According to A.A. Mbah (2016), Philosophy concerns itself with human existence which undoubtedly deals with the deepest problem and issues of man's environment and his development, in discovering, addressing and improving human conditions through human capabilities for efficient and sustainable decent standard of living.

Consequently, philosophy is like the soul of nation building because it suggests suitable aims from the diversities of life and selecting the means accordingly. Without philosophy, nation building would be a blind effort and without nation building, philosophy would be crippled. This is because the answer to every nation building question is ultimately influenced by the nation's philosophy of life. Although few formulate it, every nation building must have an aim, and the aim of nation building is relative to the aim of life. Philosophy formulates what it conceives to be the end of life; nation building offers suggestions how this end is to be achieved. That is why so much emphasis is placed on value in life while considering nation building and these values are nothing but a philosophy which in the ultimate analysis of life. Napoleon I (1805, cited in Ramirez & Boli, 1987, p. 2), in one of his often quoted sayings captured the importance of education to nation building:

There cannot be a truly established political state unless there is a teaching body with definitely recognized principles. If the child is not taught from infancy that he ought to be a republican or a monarchist, a Catholic or a free-thinker, the state will not constitute a nation; it will rest on uncertain and shifting foundations; and it will be constantly exposed to disorder and change.

Philosophy, Good Leadership and Citizenship

Nation building whether seen as homogenization or development, requires good leadership and citizenship to carry out. On the one hand, philosophy provides proper training for good leaders who will be saddled with the responsibility of nation building. No one would look at the failed state of nation building in many African countries, especially Nigeria and not finger bad leadership as a major contributing factor. The cry for the elimination of corruption and the culture of waste is a testimony to this. Following the Platonic (*Republic*, 5.473d, cited in Hamilton, 1961, p. 712) maxim if nation building must be realized in any nation, the kings in that nation must become philosophers and their philosophers, kings.

The central concern of Plato's **Republic** is knowledge. Knowledge, he claims, is a virtue. Everyone, the ruler or the ruled must be properly educated to function properly in the society. The rulers have a duty to

rule but in order to rule well knowledge is required. Those who are to obey and serve the state must also serve, but they must serve very well too, which requires education. This is one of the reasons nation building has not taken place in many countries. Political leaders have not been faithful in the discharge of the social contract they made with the people. For instance, in Nigeria, electoral promises are nothing more than political gimmicks. Civil servants who form the engine room of the running of government are neither committed nor honest and faithful in the discharge of their responsibilities. The poor attitude to work by the civil servants is strong enough to kill any program of the government. No matter how determined and committed a government may be such a program will fail if the full support of the civil servants is not secured. The masses too are not left out in this matter. Many people in Nigeria are lawless. Simple laws will not be obeyed if the law enforcement agents are not present. Proper education which brings genuine knowledge, and the type philosophy advances, will make people to do what they are expected to do at the right time and gladly. On this Russell (1980, p. 8) writes:

The man who has no tincture of philosophy goes through life imprisoned in the prejudices derived from common sense, from the habitual beliefs of his age or his nation, and from convictions which have grown up in his mind without the co-operation or consent of his deliberate reason.

The right type of education Philosophy teaches lays emphasis on tolerance. It is in this wise that Philosophy is seen as the rejection of dogmatism and extremism. Most of the religious and communal as well as tribal conflicts that have been witnessed in Nigeria are products of intolerance which is also a product of lack of genuine knowledge which Plato sees as a virtue. Science has taught us how to produce and use weapons but it has not taught us how not to use weapons. It has not taught us how to relate well with our fellow humans who do not share our faiths, opinions or views. The Boko Haram, bandits, kidnappers and unknown gunmen's attacks in Nigeria have led to a colossal loss in terms of human and infrastructures, and no matter how it is denied, religious intolerance is a factor in this development. True education and its knowledge production enables people to tolerate one another. This is one area Philosophy can contribute to nation building. Philosophy does not teach how to produce nuclear weapons but it teaches us not to use it, at least against our own village.

Additionally, corruption is one of the greatest banes of nation building especially in Africa. Using Nigeria as an instance, not only that the money earmarked for developmental projects are stolen and diverted for personal use or gain, moral values such as hard work, honesty, tolerance, trust, friendship, love, and so on are negatively affected. It will be near impossibility for a nation to witness development and integration where these values are absent in high measure. Philosophy, particularly, Ethics can be of help to the Nigerian nation in curbing corruption because, according to Wiredu (1998), "any society without modicum of morality must collapse." In a morally corrupt country like Nigeria, the only road to nation building that is open to it is Philosophy, especially, moral philosophy. This is the point Omorebge (1989) was making when he submits that a morally corrupt nation needs moral revival and regeneration to develop. One mistake leaders who claim to fight corruption in Nigeria and other African countries make is their failure to see corruption as an ethical rather than social or political problem. That is one of the reasons the political and legal means to fighting corruption have not yielded positive results. Making people moral is one service philosophy can render to the nation.

Critical Reasoning and Nation Building

Furthermore, philosophy furnishes people with requisite autonomy and confidence to raise questions about the goals, nature and direction of nation building. The point here is that philosophers engage in the serious examination of various aspects of life that are often taken for granted. For instance, some persons have limited the concept of nation building to material improvement and the consequences, particularly in Nigeria has been catastrophic. P. Iroegbu (cited in Idahosa, n. d.) noted that in such society (ies):

...what you have, not what you are, is what counts. In it your title, not your name matters. In it how you speak, not what you speak counts. In it how rich, not how honest is the stake. In it, whom you know, not what you know, decides. In it is how popular, not how pious, carries the day. In it, how fast, not how correct wins. In it, where you come from, not what you contribute to the nation is the criterion for a job. In it, it is what you earn, not what you can contribute makes you somebody.

Iroegbu in this quotation criticizes the materialistic understanding of nation building. In his contention, the understanding of nation building should focus more on human attitude rather than material possession. Here, he demonstrates how the critical and analytic tool of philosophy can be deployed to critique, criticize, analyze and bring out the correct meaning of concepts. Russell (1980, p. 12) does similar thing in his analysis of the concept of philosophy. According to him:

...if we are not to fail in our endeavour to determine the value of philosophy, we must first free our minds from the prejudices of what are wrongly called 'Practical' men. The 'Practical' man, as this word is often used, is one who recognizes only material needs, who realizes that men must have food for the body, but is oblivious of the necessity of providing food for the mind.

Russell hence maintains that philosophy in its contributing role acts as a social and critical tool, a gadfly who awakens people from their dogmatic slumber by questioning the evils that undermine public trust and stagnated progress. Deploying this critical tool of philosophy, Omoregbe (1989, p. 20) asks:

How can there be development in a country in which public funds are embezzled by those who control them and who are supposed to use them for developmental projects? How can there be development in a country in which self-interest is the dominant rule of action? In such society meaningful development is self-deceit and manipulation.

According to Omoregbe, in a country where the forces of tribalism, religious fanaticism, bribery and corruption, abortion, stealing, consumerism and murder have become the order of the day, the philosopher should be at hand with his ethical cum epistemological weapons to know, detect and correct these human aberrations in our national "body politik"

Philosophy also furnishes the general populace of a nation with the autonomy, and criticality that is required to question the actions of leaders. A nation where human rights are violated indiscriminately is not bound for development. In Nigeria, there are many human rights violations committed by the many in the helm of affairs and many Nigerians are not even aware of which of their rights are violated on a daily basis, a testament that the Nigerian society is yet to imbibe the critical attitude of philosophy necessary for nation building. The terrible situation is such as can best be described in Emeka Ojukwu's (1989, p. 178), words:

Followerism has become such that our leaders are seduced and tyrants are made of them. We are sycophants. We even applaud executive imbecility. We genuflect to mediocrity and defend the indefensible executive indiscretions.

A philosophical attitude gives one the confidence to rise up and question such violations. Put simply, philosophy helps people to think for themselves and not slave around. They know when to ask for what they want and demand for accountability from the nation to which they legitimately belong.

When Nation Building Fails

The goal of nation building should not be to impose common identities on deeply divided peoples but to organize states that can administer their territories and allow people to live together despite differences. While organizing such a state within the old internationally recognized borders does not seem possible, the international community should admit that nation building may require the disintegration of old states and the formation of new nation states. The enlightenment, independence and analysis that is required for this recognition must come from philosophy that looks at things without bias.

Taking a look at how the political map of the world has changed in every century since the collapse of the Roman Empire, that, should be proof enough that nation building has been around for quite a while. Molding a glance at the 19th and 20th centuries will reveal that the types of nation building with the most lasting impact on the modern world are nationalism, colonialism, and post-World War II reconstruction. Nationalism gave rise to most European countries that exist today. The theory was that each nation, embodying a shared community of culture and blood, was entitled to its own state. (In reality, though, few beyond the intellectual and political elite shared a common identity.) This brand of nationalism led to the reunification of Italy in 1861 and Germany in 1871 and to the breakup of Austria-Hungary in 1918 (Mishra, n. d., p. 17).

This process of nation building was successful where governments were relatively capable, where powerful states decided to make room for new entrants, and where the population of new states was not deeply divided. Germany had a capable government and succeeded so well in forging a common identity that the entire world eventually paid for it. Yugoslavia, by contrast, failed in its efforts, and the international community is still sorting out the mess. The Colonial powers formed dozens of new states as they conquered vast bandages of territory, interfered with old political and leadership structures, and eventually replaced them with new countries and governments. Most of today's collapsed states, such as Somalia or Afghanistan, are a product of colonial nation building. The greater the difference between the precolonial political entities, and what the colonial powers tried to impose, the higher the rate of failure. Mishra, (n. d., p. 18), made this point forcefully in his claim that the realization that disintegration can be a part of nation building is gradually being recognized especially in Europe and America:

Many European countries, such as France and Spain, grudgingly have recognized the existence of regional cultures. In the United States, the notion of the melting pot has been debunked, particularly as a new wave of immigrants from the developing world have shunned outright assimilation by forming a mosaic of hyphenated Americans. The transformation of West Germany and Japan into democratic states following World War II is the most successful nation building exercise ever undertaken from the outside. Unfortunately, this process took place under circumstances unlikely to be repeated elsewhere. Although defeated and destroyed, these countries had strong state traditions and competent government personnel. West Germany and Japan were nation-states in the literal sense of the term they were ethnic and cultural communities as well as political states

Conclusion

Philosophy may not teach one how to produce chemicals, construct roads and build bridges and how wires and cables are connected to provide electricity, yet, the value of Philosophy in nation building cannot be over-emphasized. Russell (1980, p. 11) advised on how to seek the value of Philosophy thus:

Thus utility does not belong to Philosophy. If the study of philosophy has any value at all for others than students of philosophy, it must be only indirectly, through its effects upon the lives of those who study it. It is in these effects, therefore, if anywhere, that the value of philosophy must be primarily sought (Russell, 1980).

This is the central thesis defended in this paper. The contention of the paper revolves around two central claims, first, that nation building is possible. Mishra, (n. d., p. 18) observes that:

Contrary to the mythology inherited from 19th century Europe, historical evidence reveals that the common identity, or sense of nationhood, that exists in many countries did not precede the state but was forged by it through the imposition of a common language and culture in schools. The Gaul's were not France's ancestors until history textbooks decided so.

Second, that human agents are the drivers of nation building. When resources are available human beings are required to translate and transform them into final products for development. For this to be possible and efficient as well as effective, the human beings involved must possess some tools which Philosophy provides. The paper therefore argues that philosophy contributes to national development in four different ways: it provides nation building planners with the requisite skills to critically choose which plan suites a particular nation. Besides, since leadership and citizenship are the major setbacks to nation building in many countries, philosophy enables the proper training of good leaders and citizens by its emphasis on integral development. And more so, philosophy ensures the autonomy and confidence of the citizenry and offers them the opportunity to exercise their rights and to critique the nation building goals of their countries. Also, philosophy provides for its practitioners and ordinary citizens, skills and foresight to discover when disintegration should replace homogenization as the goal of nation building. In the final analysis, this study is making two recommendations:

1. That since power is taken not given, philosophers should come out of their contemplative chambers and get involved in the practical job of nation building. This will entail getting involved in politics and forming pressure groups and political parties populated and led by philosophers
2. Considering disintegration or formation of nation states as instances of nation building when all efforts at homogenization fail. This may require incorporating into the constitutions of multi-nation states, especially the ones that are prone to conflicts clauses that allow for peaceful breakups.

***Anikpe Anthony Mbah, PhD**

Department of Philosophy
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
Email: mbahsReferences

Reference

Adekanye, B. J (1991) Ethnicity, nationalism and conflicts in African continent. Retrieved from <https://books.google.com.ng/books>

Alesina, Alberto & Reich Bryony. (2014). "Nation Building." National Bureau of Economic Research Paper (NBER) Presented at University College London, pp. 1-55.

Dobbins, J. (2003). Nation-Building: The inescapable responsibility of the world's only superpower. *Rand Review*, 27(2), pp. 16-27

Dinnen, Sinclair. (2006). "Nation Building." Technical Report, Australian National University. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283136264_Nation-Building. Accessed 20/03/2024.

Christopher, A. J. (1988) Divide and Rule: The Impress of British Separation Policies. *Area*, 20, pp. 233-40.

Falode, A. J. (2019). To be and how not to be: The challenges of nation-building in Nigeria *Aristo*, 7(2), 178-203.

Gambari, I. A. (2008). The challenges of nations building: The case of Nigeria. First Year Anniversary Lecture of the Mustapha Akanbi Foundation.

Hamilton, Edith. (1961). *The collected Dialogues of Plato* (New York: Bollingen Series LXXI).

Idahosa Samuel Igue. (n. d.). The Role of Philosophy in Nation Building https://www.academia.edu/11054632/THE_ROLE_OF_PHILOSOPHY_IN_NATION_BUILDING. Accessed, 20/03/2024.

Joachim Jung. (2023). "The Future of Philosophy." <https://www.bu.edu/wcp/maincont.htm> .Accessed, 20/03/2004

----- (1994). Conversation Gerhard Vollmer - Joachim Jung 24.8.

Mbah, A. A. (2016). "Philosophy and Its Quest for Human Development". *Nnamdi Azikiwe Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 8 N0.1. p.25.

McKeon, Richard (ed.). (2001). *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: The Modern Library.

Michaopolous, S. and E. Papaioannou (2012) The Long-Run Effects of the Scramble for Africa. NBER Working Paper No. 17620.

Mishra, Amareswar (Ed.). (n. d.). Political Science, Paper V, Indian Government and Politics: Basics / Political Ideologies: Nation Building). https://ddceutkal.ac.in/Syllabus/MA_Pol_Science/Paper-5.pdf. Accessed, 20/03/2024.

Nussbaum, Martha. (1995). Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association November 1995, Vol. 69 (2), pp. 1-48.

Oguejiofor, O. (2011). Philosophy of Development or Development of Philosophy? : www.ajol.info/index.php/aujal/article/viewfile/67019/55134. Accessed, 20/03/2004.

Ojukwu, Emeka, (1989). *Because I am Involved*, (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.

Oladipo, O. (2008). Thinking about philosophy: A general guide. Hope Publications: Ibadan.

Olusanya F. C. (2020). "Social Studies and Nation Building in Nigeria: Challenges And Prospect." *Journal of African Social Studies (Jass)* Volume 1 (1), pp. 76-81.

Online Etymological Dictionary. "Philosophy". http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=philosophy. Accessed 19 March 2024.

Omorebge, J. I. (1989). *Ethics: A systematic and historical study*. Lagos JOJA.

Ottaway, Marina. (2002). "Nation Building". *Foreign Policy*, Sept/Oct 2002, 16-24.

Oyewole, T. G., & Adegoke, J. A. (2018). Human capital development in Nigeria: Implications for nation-building. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Management Research*, 4(1), 25-34

Plessner, Helmuth. (1935). *Die versptete Nation. ber die politische Verfhbarkeit brgerlichen Geistes*. Stuttgart, Kohlhammer.

Ramirez, F. O. & John Boli, J. (1987). Political Construction of Schooling: European Origin and Worldwide Institutionalization, *American Sociological Association*, 60(1), 2-17

Russell (1980). *The Problems of Philosophy*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Seth G. Jones and Dobbins James. (2006). "The UN's Record in Nation-building." *Chicago Journal of International Law* 6 (2), pp. 650-745.

Tilly, C. (1975). *Reflections on the History of European State-Making*. In *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, C. Tilly ed. Princeton University Press.

Weinstock, D. (2004). Four Kinds of (Post-) nation-building. In M. Seymour (Ed.), *The fate of the nation-state* (pp-51-68). McGill–Queen's University Press.

Wiredu, K. (1998). "The moral foundation of an African culture" in A.P. J.(ed) *The African reader*. Routledge: London.