

# Cultural Rejuvenation for National Integration and Sustainable Development in Africa

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**Tunde Babawale**



Cultural Rejuvenation  
*for* National Integration *and*  
Sustainable Development






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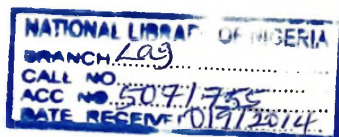
Tunde Babawale

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## Foreword

The main task of the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC) is to continually and consistently explore ways of promoting, preserving and propagating Black and African Cultural heritage in all its ramifications. To achieve the above lofty goals, the Centre engages in research, seminars, conferences and symposia among other things. It is in fulfilment of its statutory mandate that the Centre hosted the National Conference on Cultural Rejuvenation for National Integration and Sustainable Development in April, 2008. There is certainly no gain saying the fact that the theme of the conference is not only insightful but also thought provoking. It is a reminder of a neglected but vitally important gap in Nigeria's attempts at attaining development and national integration. That missing link could be simply expressed as the failure to fully articulate the concept of culture and the important role it could play in facilitating development and national integration. This is however a surprise because, examples abound worldwide, of countries which made and are still making giant strides in terms of culture centred development. In this regards the inspiring success stories of the Asian Tigers readily come to mind. The important lesson to be learnt from such countries as Malaysia, Korea, Japan, China and India is that, except culture is made the bedrock of development it may forever remain a wild goose chase, wishful thinking that is entirely based on false optimism. This book therefore draws attention and re-emphasize the point that Nigerian's culture could only be neglected at its own peril.

Accordingly, we want to gratefully acknowledge the contributions of those people who supported CBAAC towards the materialization of this publication. Our first gratitude goes to

the Honourable Minister of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation whose contributions went a long way towards making the national conference and this publication which emanated from it a huge success. I also want to thank the renowned scholar and foremost sociologist Professor Onigu Otite for delivering the keynote paper at the conference.

## Preface

This is the first edition of the publication titled *Cultural Rejuvenation for National Integration and Sustainable Development*. It is the product of a two-day international conference hosted by Centre for Black and African Art and Civilization (CBAAC). At the conference, a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of culture was adopted. The need to deliberate on culture for societal rebirth and sustainable development arose out of the awareness of and desire to incorporate culture into our national development efforts. Put otherwise, our development efforts and quest for national integration has suffered reverses because of a vital lacuna. That is, the failure to incorporate culture into such efforts. The national conference was hosted to fill this all important missing links. To do this, the conferences adopted a comprehensive and inter disciplinary approach to culture.

Thus, in the chapters of this book the reader will find the following:

- Arts and Culture as Tools of National Integration.
- Youth Mobilization Strategies for Political Participation
- Traditional Socio-Cultural Systems as models for Stability and Security in African Societies
- Maximizing the Economic Potential of the Calabar Cultural Carnival.
- Integrating African Arts and Culture into the school Curriculum: models, challenges and prospects.
- Envisioning values based leadership: an exposition of the concept of Mutumin Kirki.
- The State, Values and Development towards re-orientatng Nigerian Youth for leadership.

- Strengthening Democracy in Nigeria: Lessons from Traditional Political Systems.
- Rejuvenating Community Spirit for accelerated socio-economic development.
- Culture as an instrument for sustainable development and National Integration.

Though it may not be said that, in the lines of this work, the last words on culture, national integration and sustainable development have been stated, yet they open fresh vistas of inquiry and research. Herein lies its strength as an important source material on culture, national cohesion and development not only in Nigeria but indeed also in the entire African Continent.

Students and teachers in tertiary institutions, scholars and researchers will find it useful in their search for more understanding on the vital and critical linkages between culture, national integration and sustainable development.

Tony Onwumah Ph.D  
Director Research and Publications  
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## Contents

*Acknowledgements*

*Foreword*

*Preface*

Chapters

Page

1. Arts and Culture as Tools of National Integration.  
- *A.A. Muhammad-Oumar* 1
2. Youth Mobilization Strategies for Political Participation  
- *Ekanem M. Ekanem & Dukana B. Ikpe* 13
3. Traditional socio-cultural systems as models for  
stability and security in African societies  
- *Adeyinka Aderinto and Akeem Ayofe Akinwale* 31
4. Maximizing the Economic Potential of the  
Calabar Cultural Carnival. - *Dr. Eze Bassey Eze* 55
5. Integrating African Arts and Culture into the school  
Curriculum: models, challenges and prospects.  
- *J. B. Bilesanmi - Awoderu* 71
6. Envisioning values based leadership:  
an exposition of the concept of Mutumin Kirki.  
- *Daiyabu Muhammad Hassan* 91
7. The State, Values and Development towards  
re-orientating Nigerian Youth for leadership.  
- *E. Remi Aiyede* 103

8. Strengthening Democracy in Nigeria: Lessons from Traditional Political Systems. - <i>Wale Are Olaitan</i>	119
9. Rejuvenating Community Spirit for accelerated socio-economic development. - <i>Ayo Olukotun</i>	137
10. Culture as an instrument for sustainable development and National Integration - - <i>Prof. Steve A. Nkom</i>	147
<i>Index</i>	165

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# Introduction

## Cultural imperative in our development process\*

- Onigu Otite<sup>#</sup>

### Introduction

I endorse the wisdom and the intellectual maturity of those who decided that a sociologist-social anthropologist should be part of the discussion today. This key note address concerning the theme, cultural rejuvenation for national integration and sustainable development is very much in order. I have titled it "*cultural imperative in our development Process.*"

The audience in this hall consists of people with different cultural backgrounds. But we all speak and understand English, a language which is a core trait of a foreign invading culture which we had to adopt officially through the uninvited forces of British colonialism. We have different cultures because we have different societies which inherited and developed such cultures. And because culture covers all areas *of a people's life, different specialists emerge to build or speculate on different aspects of*

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\*Text of a Keynote Address at the National Workshop on Cultural Rejuvenation for National Integration and Sustainable Development, organized by the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization. National Theatre Iganmu Lagos 17-18 April 2008.

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our cultural realm. Religious philosophers and researchers, specialists in performing or theatre arts, choreographers, teachers and researchers in songs and music, art historians, folklorists and palaeontologists, etc., lay claims to expertise in handling the concept of culture. Essentially, however, such claims are inappropriate. It may well be that it is because culture is sometimes equated with dance, song, choreography, crafts, and sculpture, that it has not been taken seriously as the *content* and *context of our social* relationships. We must, distinguish between substance and appearance.

The Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC) came into being through Decree 69 of 1979 with the main purpose of "spearheading the promotion of global understanding and appreciation of Black and African culture." As a professional teacher of social anthropology and culturology, I appreciate CBAAC's invitation under Professor Tunde Babawale to present this keynote address. First, what is culture?

### **Concept of culture**

As a social and political anthropologist, I define culture as a system of symbols which distinguishes one group of people, from another, and which, when fully decoded, consists of shared strategies for adapting to, and exploiting the social and physical environments for individual and group survival.

Let me give another definition, that which UNESCO adopted in Mexico in 1982, that is that culture is "the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group, (and) includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs."

My third and last definition of culture which social anthropologists adopted and modified for decades was introduced into English by Edward B. Tylor in 1871. He stated thus: "culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits

acquired by man as a member of society.”

This limited choice of definitions indicate the two main aspects of culture, that is material culture or things which are concrete and visible such as artefacts and gadgets or implements and appliances, etc., and non-material culture or invisible acquisitions such as educational and socialization processes, language and philosophy.

There are two other sides of culture. The first is that a substantial part of our culture is received or inherited from the past - for example, ritual songs and modes of sacrifices at altars and shrines of supernatural beings, deities and ancestors. Thus we are culture bearers. The second side of culture consists of the ongoing changes and creativity as we adopt and exploit our environments. New inventions and technology are designed to enable us utilize the resources of our environments, respond to political and economic changes, and enrich our cultural baggage; an issue which emphasizes the point that no culture can be static. We are thus also culture creators. Culture and society are two sides of the same coin.

Cultures cannot remain the same all the time when social structural changes occur as a result of political and economic development. Changes in the social structure lead to more complex social differentiation, which generates subcultures in societies. Examples are class cultures “durbar culture” or “canoe culture”, “club culture” and subcultures of rural farmers, cattle herders, criminal gangs, and of the professions.

Our holistic conception of culture indicates that it is not a commodity for sale. It is not a programme of dance entertainment for urban elites and dignitaries, or organized welcome for visiting tourists and heads of states. It is a more serious central concept in anthropology, relevant for perceiving and explaining the contents of the life of a people.

Although, some primatologists argue that the concept of culture be extended to other animals, such as gorillas, apes, and chimpanzees, we restrict the word here to human beings, living in societies. Primates may have vocal communication, use of signs and body language, but these do not constitute culture. Culture may not be regarded simplistically as a way of life.

Culture represents a complex integrated content of a defined structure of social relationships. And it may not be defined only in terms of its manifestations in the arts, crafts, or dances.

## **Multi-culturalism**

Many cultures and societies have now been inextricably encapsulated in new states, such as Nigeria and Kenya, by European colonial powers. They have had to remain with new identities within the new artificial boundaries. Nigeria, like many other African countries, is thus defined by multiculturalism. Current research revealed 389 ethnic-bound cultures and societies (Otite 2000) co-existing in our Nigerian geopolitical space, held together by one constitution and our federal government political and administrative arrangements.

Socialization under multi-culturalism in Nigeria predisposes people to perceive things differently with particular reference to access to scarce political and economic resources at the national and state levels. Individual and group conflicts are natural and inevitable under such circumstances.

People react to the social phenomenon of multiculturalism in a positive or negative way. Under the minority rule in South Africa, for instance, the apartheid regime designed a policy ostensibly of separate development of Africans and non Africans, which was a policy of social-cultural segregation, as if to respect cultural differences. In that process, the more powerful white minority undertook land seizures and forced the relocation of Africans into Bantustan homelands. There was structured inequality of cultural groups with reference to access to land as well as the political and economic power and policy formulations.

Under democratic setups, such as Nigeria, we have free access to power and economic resources, although there are events of ethnic alliance-building and ethnic majoritarian power, which the elite-politicians use to subvert our democracy. Although there are cultural differences which the politicians exploit for their survival, yet there are cultural traits which Nigerians share.

## **Common cultural traits in Nigeria**

A cultural trait is the smallest identifiable unit of culture. An analysis of Nigerian cultures reveals that the following ten traits are found in our cultures, particularly among those of us who live in the rural areas.

### ***Respect***

Our cultures enjoin us to respect our parents, elders, and those in constituted authority. Respect contributes to orderliness and oils the chain of authority in society.

### ***Work***

Our cultures contain injunctions that everybody must engage in work, hard work, not only to maintain himself or herself and children, but also to promote the welfare of others in society. Only babies, children, and the sick.

### ***Morality***

Morality forms the content of, and the context for, most of our daily activities - reciprocity, trading activities, marriage and marital life, governance, etc. We do good to others, promote the wellbeing of society, and avoid doing evil as much as possible. We have moral responsibility in parenting and live in a spiritualized atmosphere which is believed to be supervised by, superhuman beings who reward good deeds and punish bad and evil acts. There is a high moral dose of self-discipline.

### ***Hospitality***

This is a well-recognized feature of our cultures. We welcome visitors and strangers and entertain them with kola, drinks, food, etc. Conviviality and commensality are part of this trait.

### ***Communication and harmony***

We talk with one another freely and engage in dialogue to settle quarrels. Talking, punctuated with laughter and humour, acts as social medicine, reduces tension and contributes to harmony and peace in society.

### ***Communalism***

The lifestyle involved in communalism is prior to anything else. The communitarian ethos supercedes other principles of life. It lays emphasis on the community, the commonwealth and the welfare of people committed as one group.

### ***Transparency and accountability***

We are enculturised to acknowledge and protect our commonwealth. It is morally reprehensible to mismanage or steal from the commonwealth and the local community associational purse. Incomes and expenditures must be properly accounted for, and people rule with clean hands. In our cultures we are required to avoid situations and circumstances which may lead to distrust or mistrust associated with public financial matters. Nowadays, people may not steal from the purse or wealth of their local community or town union, but may do so with impunity from the new state government treasury.

### ***Popular participation***

Government and economic affairs of the community involve every adult. Rulers and elders engage the people in policy making and implementation. There is generally a moral concern about good governance and adequate welfare and prosperity of the society.

### ***Mutual dependence as social insurance***

The fact that no person can live an isolated exclusive life is well

acknowledged in our cultures. There is no individual self sufficiency. Being our brothers keepers is acknowledged as a cherished trait in our Nigerian cultures. There is morality and social satisfaction in giving and receiving food items, provision of money, clothes, and essential living materials when in need. The rich and the not-too rich voluntarily assist those in need at all times, and particularly at moments of disasters, food shortages and loss of human capital, including breadwinners. This normal and spontaneous kind of social insurance is endemic in our social structure, and is hedged about and promoted by morality in mutual support and assistance.

### ***Mental creativity and reflection***

One of the greatest features of our cultures is the ability to be creative in responding to new challenges of the environment. Challenges posed by our different environments in the grassland, forest and riverine areas, motivate people to reflect on apparently insurmountable problems and improvise strategies or adopt new technology to overcome them. Our creative energies are sources of success in our survival in difficult and threatening situations.

Good parenting is expected to inculcate these values firmly in children and wards through words and actions. Otherwise, men, women, youth and children cannot become good leaders and servants.

### **Cultural basis for national integration**

Although in 1914 Nigeria became one state through the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Provinces within which diverse peoples lived, yet the often argued artificiality of its boundaries is questionable. Hambly (1935: 390-480) and Arikpo (1957:32) re-examined Awolowo's concept of the geographical expression and artificiality of Nigeria (1947) when they pointed to a substratum of shared Negro culture in the southern parts of Nigeria, with long socio-cultural contacts and homogeneity, with long complicated migratory and settlement histories and natural oneness. The northern inhabitants similarly share broad areas of

culture.

Kay Williamson strengthened this argument through personal communication to me in 1971. Her research showed that there are three main "language families" in Nigeria, that is the Niger-Congo sub grouped into several languages such as Busa, Buriba, Chamba, Edo, Igbo, Fulani, Nupe, and Yoruba; Afro-Asiatic, with sub groups such as Angas, Bachama, Bura, Hausa, and Mergi; Nilo-Saharan which includes the subgroups of Dendi and Kanuri. People who speak the same language share the same culture in a distinct territory and speakers of Nigeria's three main language groups thus lived together as 'neighbours for centuries with linguistic changes and cultural trait borrowing under socioeconomic and socio-political mutual influences.

The above light from history and linguistic formations indicate that Nigeria's multiculturalism and our 389 ethnic group identities must be recent and relatively contemporaneous. Any pluralisation of Nigeria's cultural past and social history must be time-bound.

If we accept this kind of argument we may therefore also admit that the ten cultural traits identified earlier in this address, and more, must be accepted as constituting sound bases for integrating and developing Nigeria as one entity.

These traits are not expected to change in the near future even under our changing political party-propelled democracy.

However, mere linguistic, cultural, and historical arguments are not sufficient factors for the integration and development of Nigerian socio-cultural groups. Strategies to strengthen these fundamental factors are necessary because of the scarcity of political and economic resources over which access individuals and socio-cultural groups struggle. These strategies should include the following amongst others:

- i. There is need to advance an adequate and equitable distribution of social amenities and services by the three tiers of government. The development of any territory is often regarded as the development of the social and cultural units therein. This will create a sense of belonging by citizens in different parts of the country;
- ii. Government should be more adequately constituted to

- reflect our multicultural structure, not state units, and governance must be transparent and accountable;
- iii. The phenomenon of internal colonialism must be totally discouraged. No government should function, and no ethnic-cultural group should act in ways which suggest inequality and exploitation of the less privileged or less politically powerful areas of the country. No traditional ruler may be allowed as overlord over those cultural groups who are not subject to him or do not accept his sovereignty and jurisdiction;
  - iv. Every culture should be recognized by government. Without any form of discrimination, every culture and its people's language should be researched and documented in detail, protected and preserved. The beauty and attraction of the Nigerian society is its cultural diversity. The inherited and created devices in our multiplicity of cultures empower us to successfully exploit and utilize the different and peculiar resources available in our territories. Besides, there are well-known culture-bound occupations such as fishery of the riverine people like the Ijo, animal husbandry of our grassland inhabitants, such as the Hausa and Fulani, palm oil and Kernel producers in our southern forest zone such as the Urhobo and Isoko, and iron and smithies and works of the Awka-Igbo, which our multiculturalism promotes. Cultures are designs for living in unique environments;
  - v. Our political, economic, and other leaders must be educated and cautioned to avoid manipulating our ethnic-cultural differences to promote their individual and class interests. Mobilizing our different cultural groups for personal support is a source of conflict and disintegration in Nigeria. It is not often the case, rather rarely the case, that whole cultural' group's or individuals in them gain from the political antics and spoils of the elite in competition. Some Marxist scholars perceive this as elite exploitation and manipulation of culture-ethnicity as an opium for the people, to achieve their own upper class goals. Here, culture becomes a device for depriving the masses of their rights and benefits in a

particular ethno-territory;

- vi. In order to promote national integration and development, the phenomenon of conflict should be minimized. Thus we need a strong national conflict management commission to handle promptly conflicts between and within cultural groups before they get out of hand. Conflicts are natural and inevitable in multiethnic-multicultural societies, like Nigeria, such as those between farmers and pastoralists, multiple users of limited land resources, and contested claims over territories in which valuable oil resources or minerals are found. The restoration of harmony and mutual understanding through dialogue and third party intervention in conflict resolution, helps to promote national integration and peace for development;
- vii. Respect for other cultures. Immigrants and strangers should always appreciate and respect the cultures of their hosts. This will avoid the conflicts such as that which occurred between the Yoruba and Hausa in Sagamu in 1999, Nupe-Yoruba conflict in Kwara State in 2000, and to some extent, Zangon-Kataf conflict in Kaduna State in inter-ethnic conflicts in Kano in 1966/1967, and Jukun-Tiv conflicts in Benue and Taraba States. Mutual understanding and acceptability are strong keys to national integration and development;
- viii. Inter-ethnic inter-cultural horizontal associations are needed as instruments for building bridges across socio cultural boundaries. It must be realized in this connection that cultural boundaries are not fixed or rigid, but characterized by the phenomenon of shading off of traits as we move from the core area or centre to the periphery. Cross-cultural associations have the potential of impelling members to relate to themselves and be integrated accordingly, instead of being divided through man-made political barriers. Horizontal associations of multi-cultures promote a meshing together of disparate groups that nevertheless share some traits together where they overlap in such areas as kinship marriage and language symbols at their marginal ends. Horizontal associations help not only to integrate cultures

and peoples but also serve as means of securing loyalty to the nation. They help in consensus building as well as developing a pool of political and cultural resources for complementary economic activities which promote national integration and development. They promote economic empowerment across cultures. They encourage local and national economic cooperation and complementarities for development. Building our development on our cultural traits as iron pillars will be relatively sustainable. It is development and growth from within.

## **The economy of our cultures**

Since we are part of the world as one complex society, the uniqueness of peripheral parts of our cultures have been monetized. We market our cultural resources through eco tourism. In the process, some of our cultural traits become bastardized as we make them attractive to entertain peoples of other cultures. If tourists have the time and are interested in the genuineness of our cultures, they could be conducted to rural and urban areas and sites where we live our cultures as we engage in palm oil production, fishery, sculpture, religious rites and rituals of kingship, biodiversities, and festivals which are, involved in our socioeconomic life, instead of dragging peasants and local specialists inappropriately from their sustainable abode to entertain foreign visitors and urban elite exploiters. It is disrespectful and disorganizing to the local practitioners of their indigenous cultures to be pulled out to entertain dignitaries for ten to twenty minutes in urban audiences in stadia, conference centres, and five-star hotels, and asked or dismissed to return home in trucks or buses, if not abandoned to be on their own.

As part of the commoditizing aspects of our cultures, we may commercialize our museums, art galleries, monuments and other heritage resources etc.

In economic terms, our social systems carry resources for economic co-operation across cultures through associations to exploit our land resources, promote our occupational,

specializations, with their monetization and commercialization through well-organized tourist engagements.

## **The youths in all of this**

Although they are Nigerian citizens, the youths have become more and more non Nigerian culturally. They do not generally have cultural security. The category of youth is not necessarily defined by chronological age of 20 to 35 years or by mere physical growth or development, but by attitude to life in society. A young elder can be regarded as a youth if his or her attitudinal configuration defines him or her as such. A person can behave or act as a youth now and as an adult or elder at another occasion.

There has been a rising trend in urbanizing our rural youths in the search for urban - located jobs, and under the false impression that the more urbanized and westernized you are, the better the quality of life calculated in strange materialistic terms. Our rural youths should be made to appreciate our cultures and be empowered economically to mobilize them as sustainable devices for turning their rural environments to prosperous and attractive habitats.

Western education has become a warrant for bread and relative material well being. Culture is pushed aside, and those, the elders, who practise their cultures are generally regarded as retrogressive, old-fashioned and irrelevant. Culture thus vaporizes, creating a vacuum which unguides the lives of youths. Our traditional religion as promoter of our morality is condemned by certain western teachings and their religious organizations, thereby weakening our cultural roots. Certainly our traditional religion is not a religion of idol worshipers.

Most of our youths were born during the past military regime and are enmeshed in the culture of violence and the gun. Violent conflicts and reduced value for human life and its dignity generally dominate the minds of the youth. Cultural institutions and practices were subject to military operation. The Nigeria which the military controlled and left has been unhealthy in cultural matters principally for the youths.

A society defines certain goals for its members, and certain cultural means of achieving such goals. If and whenever such means are not available, some youths take antisocial means to attain the goals. Many of the youths of today are quite impatient for one main reason. The adults in their society demonstrate before them the attainment of new goals of rabid materialism, and revel in conspicuous consumption, outrageous vanity, and immorality. This new crazy material goal of society attracts the youth and it is a source of crime for those who are unemployed or seek more personalized wealth by any means, good or evil. In the new world of materialistic competition, the youth disregard and disrespect elders and even parents, and constituted authority, as well as the cultural-moral tone of society. They want to get rich very quickly with or without the cultural value of hard work, and rule the world around them. Their cultures are disregarded if they obstruct their new path and anxiety to mischievously and treacherously outdo others. They are strengthened in this desire as some members of society praise them for their ultimate success when achieved.

Education will help change the youths. But social change is not a mechanical phenomenon. The main problem is that the youths have not sufficiently undergone enculturation. They have inherited little from their parents and elders and they have little to pass on to the next generation in matters of culture.

### **Strategies for rejuvenating our cultures**

First of all, we must accept the argument that there is need to retain and preserve our cultures. No one wants to remain 'cultureless. We need to guide our cultural identity, while we develop. Our culture should not be construed as brakes to modern development. Instead they can facilitate development. The dualism in the simultaneous existence of our cultures and western cultures can enrich our lives.

Although we should think globally, we must act locally and preserve our local cultural identities. Democratization as a development process, science and technology are not alien to our cultures and societies. Development must be conceptualized not

only in economic, but also in political, social, religious, and other terms. We need cultural security to make us stable while we develop.

In his 1979 JB Danquah Lecture in Accra, Professor A.A. Kwapong referred to state recognized (declared holiday) portable shrine called *mikoshi* being carried along in one of the busiest streets (Aoyama-Dori) in central Tokyo with police direction and protection of enthusiastic worshippers and celebrants under heavy traffic, and surrounded by skyscrapers, complex super expressways and modern technology.

Similar to Japan's *mikoshi*, chiefs are carried along in palanquins in Ghana during annual *Odwira* festival to commemorate ancestors and appeal for land purification, reunity, and blessings for the present and future generations. *Keiro no hi*, a holiday dedicated to the aged, is a recognition of filial piety and respect for elders in Japan. The transformation of Japan is traced to the Meiji restoration in 1868 after the society was closed to the outside world for about two and a half centuries during a strictly purposeful military regime established by General Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1603. Japan finally opened up and between 1880s and 1890s officials and scholars were sent abroad to study the secrets of western science and technology such as medicine in Germany, law in France, and naval science and railway in England. The Japanese got what they needed and built it into their culture. Japanese familyhood philosophy, family-oriented social system which characterizes not only education but also big business corporations, universities and industries in which managers play the role of parents and workers' children, a practice that reduces the likelihood of confrontation. According to Kwapong, Japan reveres today great historical and religious centres like Kyoto and Nara, and the shrines of Ise, Nikko, and Kamakuru. Thus, although Japan is a modern giant in science and technology, yet there is a simultaneous and tenacious retention of cultural practices including language, food habits, dress, religion, music, dance, and several cultural traits.

The case of Japan, like that of the Chinese, and to a large extent, the Indian, shows that science and technology succeeded

most because the people preserved their own culture to express their national identity, self-respect, national pride, and dignity. We may accept Kwapong's assertion therefore that "a nation cannot achieve much in its national life if it completely gives up its precious national cultural heritage" (1979: 12). Japan achieved the status of an economic superpower within three to four decades and started to export science and technology back to the West in automobile engineering, electronics, micro-computers, etc.

To some extent, countries formerly under colonial rule, including Nigeria, have followed the example of Japan's push to excellence, and practise the western and indigenous cultural lifestyles. In this respect, we practise medical pluralism, political pluralism, and religious pluralism in our cultural contexts. In some cases, for instance in Zaire, there is a complex referral system involving patients from one traditional medical practitioner to another, on the one hand, and between western medical science and traditional medical practices on the other.

In her Reith Lecture in 2000, in New Delhi titled *Poverty and Globalization*, Vandana Shiva argued that farmers in the regions of Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, and others, were committing suicide as a result of crippling debts from forced change from their culture-bound agricultural practices and products such as pulses, millets, and paddy, to buy hybrid cotton seeds sold by "seed merchants" and referred to as "white gold". The new genetically engineered seeds were supposed to turn the local farmers into millionaires. Vandana Shiva found, however, that instead of this luring hope, the farmers became paupers engulfed in increased costs and ecological risks. Globalization, through global economy, has a detrimental way of ruining our rural culture-bound economies and sustainability.

It is essential that while we must change to respond to our changing technological-scientific world, we must devise means of rejuvenating our cultures and maintaining our identity:

- i. We must return to our cultural policy for inspiration. The 1988 edition of *Cultural Policy for Nigeria* states what most social anthropologists would accept, that "Culture comprises material, institutional, philosophical

and creative aspects...(and that)...culture is not merely a return to the customs of the past. It embodies the attitude of a people to the future of their traditional values faced with the demands of modern technology which is an essential factor of development and progress” (page 5). In 1985, I titled my inaugural lecture at Ibadan “The Presence of the Past” to underscore the point that many aspects of our past have not passed. We live our past, our culture, as a daily necessity. Our national identity and development must depend on the understanding and promotion of our cultures with their political and economic consequences;

- ii. We must continue to live our culture on a daily basis mostly in religious, political and economic affairs. We must visit and become energized by our museum, art galleries, archives, monuments, palaces, historical buildings. We must develop pride in our cultures, antiquities in wood, fabric, stones, etc.;
- iii. Ethno-cultural groups, through their associations, may be redefined and empowered to serve as unique civil societies, independent of government financial support. They can act as counterbalancing forces, whip up governments to their responsibilities, at the local levels, and check national abuses of inequitable distribution of development indicators from built-up capital resources. They should function to prevent government or state from being uncaring to the multiplicity of culture-bound interests and needs. They can facilitate transparency and accountability in the private and public domains. Their community-based organizations (CBOs) should assume the responsibilities of checking the performances and excesses or failures of government and NGOs at the local and national levels;
- iv. As we mentioned earlier, government should recognize and develop all our Nigerian’ encapsulated cultures and languages. Our languages are central factors for promoting and transmitting our distinct characteristics

of multiculturalism to our next generation. This is one strong means of integrating' and sustaining us in, performances in different spaces and spheres in our cultural, political and economic life;

- v. We must encourage and facilitate all our culture-bound occupations for the development of local and national resources, using our indigenous technologies;
- vi. We should continue and strengthen our legal judicial pluralism and also participate in our political pluralism. The two faces of our social reality must recommend a stronger more visible constitutional position for our traditional rulers, many of whom are also highly educated in the western sense. They are key to our social stability as cultural trustees in Nigeria;
- vii. I crave your indulgence to repeat my earlier suggestion in March 2002, that we should establish a Family Day, as a holiday in the year during which parents and children of whatever generation, meet to examine how far they have succeeded or failed in practising their cultural values, and the effectiveness of parenting. The cultural roles of all must be reassessed. In order to keep up our moral-cultural capital, a Family Day should not coexist with funny days like valentine day in which untraditional, immoral, and essentially obscene moral turpitude are rehearsed and practised by youths with uncommon enthusiasm in an advertised spirit of modernity. Any events that are unlikely to enable us live with moral integrity may not be permitted to occur in Nigeria;
- viii. We must be bound by Mbonu Ojike's cultural thrust to "boycott the boycottables" such as the killing of twins in some of our cultures, any cultural practice or trait that acts as a brake to our local and national integrity and development should be discontinued;
- ix. We should utilize western science and technology to advance our cultures, for example using western musical instruments, electronics, and auto mobile engineering and vehicular products to promote our cultural

practices. Western science and technology may be utilized but should be made consistent with our local and national cultural values. We should build on our own human and material resources in order to be sustainable;

- x. We should discourage rural youths from leaving their areas where surviving cultural practices are at their best and encourage urban and urbanizing ones to migrate there through systematic ruralization of industries for employment and as catalysis for general development;
- xi. One key strategy for rejuvenating and sustaining our cultures is education. This should be addressed as a key investment in both adults and elders and their children. Continuous adult education should be formalized to meet the cultural needs of adults who are the already westernized component of our population. Many of such adults look down on our cultures, and exhibit western cultural traits in language and dress. They are counterfeit Europeans and cultureless Nigerians. They need to be rescued and integrated into their cultures. Think of limelights like J.B. Danquah, a 1928 PhD of London University who is an embodiment of western education and indigenous cultural traits and moral excellence.

For the children - pupils and students - government should strengthen its laudable intervention through social studies as a compulsory subject in the first nine years of primary and junior secondary schools. Through social-cultural studies our different cultures and their common traits and values such as respect for parents, elders, humaneness and human dignity, dignity of labour, positive moral and religious values, and civilization; and also how our cultures can serve our modern needs. Our positive communitarian principles should be inculcated in the children. Our cultures should be taught as promoters of science and technology and the contributions of our indigenous technology and skills to world cultures should be taught in social studies

to challenge contemporary corruption and moral indiscipline, and promote the effective management of our local and national resources for development. Education should take the form of training from within to distinguish what is bad, evil and anti social, from what is good and beneficial to the community, using the faculty of reason. Education becomes evil and condemnable if it is used to subvert rules and regulations and laws made to promote the prosperity of society and welfare of individuals. Apart from the adults and the so called educated and westernized elite, boys, girls, and women should be made special targets. Boys and girls will grow up socialized as good citizens;

- xii. Government should fund cultural activities by promoting research, publications, and documentations as well as self reliance and social development in line with Chapter 11 of our 1999 constitution on Fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy;
- xiii. Our cultural festivals should continue to be vigorously organized as periodic re-enactments of our cultural values in our different communities. In some cultures, formal and informal opportunities are provided for satirical songs with full immunity; and licensed dances and displays are directed to correct the immorality or misgovernance, of key actors. The Yoruba talking drum (not sycophants) or the Urhobo *Inorha* or *Ughovwa* at periodic institutional rituals and festivals, like a free press, or Fred Omu's freedom of the drum, single out the immorality of individuals and misdemeanour of rulers and leaders. These should be encouraged and celebrated as critical events of moral purification of society.

A content analysis of Fela Anikulakpo Kuti's songs shows the extension of this mode of criticism of the cultural-moral betrayal of failed State and unresponsive governments to modern times. Fela's "Afro beat songs" are of an engaging conscientizing brand of international popular music nurtured in a critical context of Nigerian

Cultural Rejuvenation  
*for National Integration and*  
Sustainable Development



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*Edited by*

Tunde Babawale

m a l t h o u s e 

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## Foreword

The main task of the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC) is to continually and consistently explore ways of promoting, preserving and propagating Black and African Cultural heritage in all its ramifications. To achieve the above lofty goals, the Centre engages in research, seminars, conferences and symposia among other things. It is in fulfilment of its statutory mandate that the Centre hosted the National Conference on Cultural Rejuvenation for National Integration and Sustainable Development in April, 2008. There is certainly no gain saying the fact that the theme of the conference is not only insightful but also thought provoking. It is a reminder of a neglected but vitally important gap in Nigeria's attempts at attaining development and national integration. That missing link could be simply expressed as the failure to fully articulate the concept of culture and the important role it could play in facilitating development and national integration. This is however a surprise because, examples abound worldwide, of countries which made and are still making giant strides in terms of culture centred development. In this regards the inspiring success stories of the Asian Tigers readily come to mind. The important lesson to be learnt from such countries as Malaysia, Korea, Japan, China and India is that, except culture is made the bedrock of development it may forever remain a wild goose chase, wishful thinking that is entirely based on false optimism. This book therefore draws attention and re-emphasize the point that Nigerian's culture could only be neglected at its own peril.

Accordingly, we want to gratefully acknowledge the contributions of those people who supported CBAAC towards the materialization of this publication. Our first gratitude goes to

the Honourable Minister of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation whose contributions went a long way towards making the national conference and this publication which emanated from it a huge success. I also want to thank the renowned scholar and foremost sociologist Professor Onigu Otite for delivering the keynote paper at the conference.

## Preface

This is the first edition of the publication titled *Cultural Rejuvenation for National Integration and Sustainable Development*. It is the product of a two-day international conference hosted by Centre for Black and African Art and Civilization (CBAAC). At the conference, a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of culture was adopted. The need to deliberate on culture for societal rebirth and sustainable development arose out of the awareness of and desire to incorporate culture into our national development efforts. Put otherwise, our development efforts and quest for national integration has suffered reverses because of a vital lacuna. That is, the failure to incorporate culture into such efforts. The national conference was hosted to fill this all important missing links. To do this, the conferences adopted a comprehensive and inter disciplinary approach to culture.

Thus, in the chapters of this book the reader will find the following:

- Arts and Culture as Tools of National Integration.
- Youth Mobilization Strategies for Political Participation
- Traditional Socio-Cultural Systems as models for Stability and Security in African Societies
- Maximizing the Economic Potential of the Calabar Cultural Carnival.
- Integrating African Arts and Culture into the school Curriculum: models, challenges and prospects.
- Envisioning values based leadership: an exposition of the concept of Mutumin Kirki.
- The State, Values and Development towards re-orientatfng Nigerian Youth for leadership.

- Strengthening Democracy in Nigeria: Lessons from Traditional Political Systems.
- Rejuvenating Community Spirit for accelerated socio-economic development.
- Culture as an instrument for sustainable development and National Integration.

Though it may not be said that, in the lines of this work, the last words on culture, national integration and sustainable development have been stated, yet they open fresh vistas of inquiry and research. Herein lies its strength as an important source material on culture, national cohesion and development not only in Nigeria but indeed also in the entire African Continent.

Students and teachers in tertiary institutions, scholars and researchers will find it useful in their search for more understanding on the vital and critical linkages between culture, national integration and sustainable development.

Tony Onwumah Ph.D  
Director Research and Publications  
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# Contents

*Acknowledgements*

*Foreword*

*Preface*

Chapters

Page

1. Arts and Culture as Tools of National Integration.  
- *A.A. Muhammad-Oumar* 1
2. Youth Mobilization Strategies for Political Participation  
- *Ekanem M. Ekanem & Dukana B. Ikpe* 13
3. Traditional socio-cultural systems as models for  
stability and security in African societies  
- *Adeyinka Aderinto and Akeem Ayofe Akinwale* 31
4. Maximizing the Economic Potential of the  
Calabar Cultural Carnival. - *Dr. Eze Bassey Eze* 55
5. Integrating African Arts and Culture into the school  
Curriculum: models, challenges and prospects.  
- *J. B. Bilesanmi - Awoderu* 71
6. Envisioning values based leadership:  
an exposition of the concept of Mutumin Kirki.  
- *Daiyabu Muhammad Hassan* 91
7. The State, Values and Development towards  
re-orientating Nigerian Youth for leadership.  
- *E. Remi Aiyede* 103

8. Strengthening Democracy in Nigeria: Lessons from Traditional Political Systems. - <i>Wale Are Olaitan</i>	119
9. Rejuvenating Community Spirit for accelerated socio-economic development. - <i>Ayo Olukotun</i>	137
10. Culture as an instrument for sustainable development and National Integration - - <i>Prof. Steve A. Nkom</i>	147
<i>Index</i>	165

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# Introduction

## Cultural imperative in our development process\*

- Onigu Otite<sup>#</sup>

### Introduction

I endorse the wisdom and the intellectual maturity of those who decided that a sociologist-social anthropologist should be part of the discussion today. This key note address concerning the theme, cultural rejuvenation for national integration and sustainable development is very much in order. I have titled it "*cultural imperative in our development Process.*"

The audience in this hall consists of people with different cultural backgrounds. But we all speak and understand English, a language which is a core trait of a foreign invading culture which we had to adopt officially through the uninvited forces of British colonialism. We have different cultures because we have different societies which inherited and developed such cultures. And because culture covers all areas of a people's life, different specialists emerge to build or speculate on different aspects of

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\*Text of a Keynote Address at the National Workshop on Cultural Rejuvenation for National Integration and Sustainable Development, organized by the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization. National Theatre Iganmu Lagos 17-18 April 2008.

<sup>#</sup> Professor of Sociology, University of Ibadan.

our cultural realm. Religious philosophers and researchers, specialists in performing or theatre arts, choreographers, teachers and researchers in songs and music, art historians, folklorists and palaeontologists, etc., lay claims to expertise in handling the concept of culture. Essentially, however, such claims are inappropriate. It may well be that it is because culture is sometimes equated with dance, song, choreography, crafts, and sculpture, that it has not been taken seriously as the *content* and *context of our social* relationships. We must, distinguish between substance and appearance.

The Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC) came into being through Decree 69 of 1979 with the main purpose of "spearheading the promotion of global understanding and appreciation of Black and African culture." As a professional teacher of social anthropology and culturology, I appreciate CBAAC's invitation under Professor Tunde Babawale to present this keynote address. First, what is culture?

### **Concept of culture**

As a social and political anthropologist, I define culture as a system of symbols which distinguishes one group of people, from another, and which, when fully decoded, consists of shared strategies for adapting to, and exploiting the social and physical environments for individual and group survival.

Let me give another definition, that which UNESCO adopted in Mexico in 1982, that is that culture is "the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group, (and) includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs."

My third and last definition of culture which social anthropologists adopted and modified for decades was introduced into English by Edward B. Tylor in 1871. He stated thus: "culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits

acquired by man as a member of society.”

This limited choice of definitions indicate the two main aspects of culture, that is material culture or things which are concrete and visible such as artefacts and gadgets or implements and appliances, etc., and non-material culture or invisible acquisitions such as educational and socialization processes, language and philosophy.

There are two other sides of culture. The first is that a substantial part of our culture is received or inherited from the past - for example, ritual songs and modes of sacrifices at altars and shrines of supernatural beings, deities and ancestors. Thus we are culture bearers. The second side of culture consists of the ongoing changes and creativity as we adopt and exploit our environments. New inventions and technology are designed to enable us utilize the resources of our environments, respond to political and economic changes, and enrich our cultural baggage; an issue which emphasizes the point that no culture can be static. We are thus also culture creators. Culture and society are two sides of the same coin.

Cultures cannot remain the same all the time when social structural changes occur as a result of political and economic development. Changes in the social structure lead to more complex social differentiation, which generates subcultures in societies. Examples are class cultures “durbar culture” or “canoe culture”, “club culture” and subcultures of rural farmers, cattle herders, criminal gangs, and of the professions.

Our holistic conception of culture indicates that it is not a commodity for sale. It is not a programme of dance entertainment for urban elites and dignitaries, or organized welcome for visiting tourists and heads of states. It is a more serious central concept in anthropology, relevant for perceiving and explaining the contents of the life of a people.

Although, some primatologists argue that the concept of culture be extended to other animals, such as gorillas, apes, and chimpanzees, we restrict the word here to human beings, living in societies. Primates may have vocal communication, use of signs and body language, but these do not constitute culture. Culture may not be regarded simplistically as a way of life.

Culture represents a complex integrated content of a defined structure of social relationships. And it may not be defined only in terms of its manifestations in the arts, crafts, or dances.

## **Multi-culturalism**

Many cultures and societies have now been inextricably encapsulated in new states, such as Nigeria and Kenya, by European colonial powers. They have had to remain with new identities within the new artificial boundaries. Nigeria, like many other African countries, is thus defined by multiculturalism. Current research revealed 389 ethnic-bound cultures and societies (Otiye 2000) co-existing in our Nigerian geopolitical space, held together by one constitution and our federal government political and administrative arrangements.

Socialization under multi-culturalism in Nigeria predisposes people to perceive things differently with particular reference to access to scarce political and economic resources at the national and state levels. Individual and group conflicts are natural and inevitable under such circumstances.

People react to the social phenomenon of multiculturalism in a positive or negative way. Under the minority rule in South Africa, for instance, the apartheid regime designed a policy ostensibly of separate development of Africans and non Africans, which was a policy of social-cultural segregation, as if to respect cultural differences. In that process, the more powerful white minority undertook land seizures and forced the relocation of Africans into Bantustan homelands. There was structured inequality of cultural groups with reference to access to land as well as the political and economic power and policy formulations.

Under democratic setups, such as Nigeria, we have free access to power and economic resources, although there are events of ethnic alliance-building and ethnic majoritarian power, which the elite-politicians use to subvert our democracy. Although there are cultural differences which the politicians exploit for their survival, yet there are cultural traits which Nigerians share.

## **Common cultural traits in Nigeria**

A cultural trait is the smallest identifiable unit of culture. An analysis of Nigerian cultures reveals that the following ten traits are found in our cultures, particularly among those of us who live in the rural areas.

### ***Respect***

Our cultures enjoin us to respect our parents, elders, and those in constituted authority. Respect contributes to orderliness and oils the chain of authority in society.

### ***Work***

Our cultures contain injunctions that everybody must engage in work, hard work, not only to maintain himself or herself and children, but also to promote the welfare of others in society. Only babies, children, and the sick.

### ***Morality***

Morality forms the content of, and the context for, most of our daily activities - reciprocity, trading activities, marriage and marital life, governance, etc. We do good to others, promote the wellbeing of society, and avoid doing evil as much as possible. We have moral responsibility in parenting and live in a spiritualized atmosphere which is believed to be supervised by, superhuman beings who reward good deeds and punish bad and evil acts. There is a high moral dose of self-discipline.

### ***Hospitality***

This is a well-recognized feature of our cultures. We welcome visitors and strangers and entertain them with kola, drinks, food, etc. Conviviality and commensality are part of this trait.

## ***Communication and harmony***

We talk with one another freely and engage in dialogue to settle quarrels. Talking, punctuated with laughter and humour, acts as social medicine, reduces tension and contributes to harmony and peace in society.

## ***Communalism***

The lifestyle involved in communalism is prior to anything else. The communitarian ethos supercedes other principles of life. It lays emphasis on the community, the commonwealth and the welfare of people committed as one group.

## ***Transparency and accountability***

We are enculturised to acknowledge and protect our commonwealth. It is morally reprehensible to mismanage or steal from the commonwealth and the local community associational purse. Incomes and expenditures must be properly accounted for, and people rule with clean hands. In our cultures we are required to avoid situations and circumstances which may lead to distrust or mistrust associated with public financial matters. Nowadays, people may not steal from the purse or wealth of their local community or town union, but may do so with impunity from the new state government treasury.

## ***Popular participation***

Government and economic affairs of the community involve every adult. Rulers and elders engage the people in policy making and implementation. There is generally a moral concern about good governance and adequate welfare and prosperity of the society.

## ***Mutual dependence as social insurance***

The fact that no person can live an isolated exclusive life is well

acknowledged in our cultures. There is no individual self sufficiency. Being our brothers keepers is acknowledged as a cherished trait in our Nigerian cultures. There is morality and social satisfaction in giving and receiving food items, provision of money, clothes, and essential living materials when in need. The rich and the not-too rich voluntarily assist those in need at all times, and particularly at moments of disasters, food shortages and loss of human capital, including breadwinners. This normal and spontaneous kind of social insurance is endemic in our social structure, and is hedged about and promoted by morality in mutual support and assistance.

### ***Mental creativity and reflection***

One of the greatest features of our cultures is the ability to be creative in responding to new challenges of the environment. Challenges posed by our different environments in the grassland, forest and riverine areas, motivate people to reflect on apparently insurmountable problems and improvise strategies or adopt new technology to overcome them. Our creative energies are sources of success in our survival in difficult and threatening situations.

Good parenting is expected to inculcate these values firmly in children and wards through words and actions. Otherwise, men, women, youth and children cannot become good leaders and servants.

### **Cultural basis for national integration**

Although in 1914 Nigeria became one state through the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Provinces within which diverse peoples lived, yet the often argued artificiality of its boundaries is questionable. Hambly (1935: 390-480) and Arikpo (1957:32) re-examined Awolowo's concept of the geographical expression and artificiality of Nigeria (1947) when they pointed to a substratum of shared Negro culture in the southern parts of Nigeria, with long socio-cultural contacts and homogeneity, with long complicated migratory and settlement histories and natural oneness. The northern inhabitants similarly share broad areas of

culture.

Kay Williamson strengthened this argument through personal communication to me in 1971. Her research showed that there are three main "language families" in Nigeria, that is the Niger-Congo sub grouped into several languages such as Busa, Buriba, Chamba, Edo, Igbo, Fulani, Nupe, and Yoruba; Afro-Asiatic, with sub groups such as Angas, Bachama, Bura, Hausa, and Mergi; Nilo-Saharan which includes the subgroups of Dendi and Kanuri. People who speak the same language share the same culture in a distinct territory and speakers of Nigeria's three main language groups thus lived together as 'neighbours for centuries with linguistic changes and cultural trait borrowing under socioeconomic and socio-political mutual influences.

The above light from history and linguistic formations indicate that Nigeria's multiculturalism and our 389 ethnic group identities must be recent and relatively contemporaneous. Any pluralisation of Nigeria's cultural past and social history must be time-bound.

If we accept this kind of argument we may therefore also admit that the ten cultural traits identified earlier in this address, and more, must be accepted as constituting sound bases for integrating and developing Nigeria as one entity.

These traits are not expected to change in the near future even under our changing political party-propelled democracy.

However, mere linguistic, cultural, and historical arguments are not sufficient factors for the integration and development of Nigerian socio-cultural groups. Strategies to strengthen these fundamental factors are necessary because of the scarcity of political and economic resources over which access individuals and socio-cultural groups struggle. These strategies should include the following amongst others:

- i. There is need to advance an adequate and equitable distribution of social amenities and services by the three tiers of government. The development of any territory is often regarded as the development of the social and cultural units therein. This will create a sense of belonging by citizens in different parts of the country;
- ii. Government should be more adequately constituted to

- reflect our multicultural structure, not state units, and governance must be transparent and accountable;
- iii. The phenomenon of internal colonialism must be totally discouraged. No government should function, and no ethnic-cultural group should act in ways which suggest inequality and exploitation of the less privileged or less politically powerful areas of the country. No traditional ruler may be allowed as overlord over those cultural groups who are not subject to him or do not accept his sovereignty and jurisdiction;
  - iv. Every culture should be recognized by government. Without any form of discrimination, every culture and its people's language should be researched and documented in detail, protected and preserved. The beauty and attraction of the Nigerian society is its cultural diversity. The inherited and created devices in our multiplicity of cultures empower us to successfully exploit and utilize the different and peculiar resources available in our territories. Besides, there are well-known culture-bound occupations such as fishery of the riverine people like the Ijo, animal husbandry of our grassland inhabitants, such as the Hausa and Fulani, palm oil and Kernel producers in our southern forest zone such as the Urhobo and Isoko, and iron and smithies and works of the Awka-Igbo, which our multiculturalism promotes. Cultures are designs for living in unique environments;
  - v. Our political, economic, and other leaders must be educated and cautioned to avoid manipulating our ethnic-cultural differences to promote their individual and class interests. Mobilizing our different cultural groups for personal support is a source of conflict and disintegration in Nigeria. It is not often the case, rather rarely the case, that whole cultural' group's or individuals in them gain from the political antics and spoils of the elite in competition. Some Marxist scholars perceive this as elite exploitation and manipulation of culture-ethnicity as an opium for the people, to achieve their own upper class goals. Here, culture becomes a device for depriving the masses of their rights and benefits in a

particular ethno-territory;

- vi. In order to promote national integration and development, the phenomenon of conflict should be minimized. Thus we need a strong national conflict management commission to handle promptly conflicts between and within cultural groups before they get out of hand. Conflicts are natural and inevitable in multiethnic-multicultural societies, like Nigeria, such as those between farmers and pastoralists, multiple users of limited land resources, and contested claims over territories in which valuable oil resources or minerals are found. The restoration of harmony and mutual understanding through dialogue and third party intervention in conflict resolution, helps to promote national integration and peace for development;
- vii. Respect for other cultures. Immigrants and strangers should always appreciate and respect the cultures of their hosts. This will avoid the conflicts such as that which occurred between the Yoruba and Hausa in Sagamu in 1999, Nupe-Yoruba conflict in Kwara State in 2000, and to some extent, Zangon-Kataf conflict in Kaduna State in inter-ethnic conflicts in Kano in 1966/1967, and Jukun-Tiv conflicts in Benue and Taraba States. Mutual understanding and acceptability are strong keys to national integration and development;
- viii. Inter-ethnic inter-cultural horizontal associations are needed as instruments for building bridges across socio cultural boundaries. It must be realized in this connection that cultural boundaries are not fixed or rigid, but characterized by the phenomenon of shading off of traits as we move from the core area or centre to the periphery. Cross-cultural associations have the potential of impelling members to relate to themselves and be integrated accordingly, instead of being divided through man-made political barriers. Horizontal associations of multi-cultures promote a meshing together of disparate groups that nevertheless share some traits together where they overlap in such areas as kinship marriage and language symbols at their marginal ends. Horizontal associations help not only to integrate cultures

and peoples but also serve as means of securing loyalty to the nation. They help in consensus building as well as developing a pool of political and cultural resources for complementary economic activities which promote national integration and development. They promote economic empowerment across cultures. They encourage local and national economic cooperation and complementarities for development. Building our development on our cultural traits as iron pillars will be relatively sustainable. It is development and growth from within.

### **The economy of our cultures**

Since we are part of the world as one complex society, the uniqueness of peripheral parts of our cultures have been monetized. We market our cultural resources through eco tourism. In the process, some of our cultural traits become bastardized as we make them attractive to entertain peoples of other cultures. If tourists have the time and are interested in the genuineness of our cultures, they could be conducted to rural and urban areas and sites where we live our cultures as we engage in palm oil production, fishery, sculpture, religious rites and rituals of kingship, biodiversities, and festivals which are involved in our socioeconomic life, instead of dragging peasants and local specialists inappropriately from their sustainable abode to entertain foreign visitors and urban elite exploiters. It is disrespectful and disorganizing to the local practitioners of their indigenous cultures to be pulled out to entertain dignitaries for ten to twenty minutes in urban audiences in stadia, conference centres, and five-star hotels, and asked or dismissed to return home in trucks or buses, if not abandoned to be on their own.

As part of the commoditizing aspects of our cultures, we may commercialize our museums, art galleries, monuments and other heritage resources etc.

In economic terms, our social systems carry resources for economic co-operation across cultures through associations to exploit our land resources, promote our occupational,

specializations, with their monetization and commercialization through well-organized tourist engagements.

## **The youths in all of this**

Although they are Nigerian citizens, the youths have become more and more non Nigerian culturally. They do not generally have cultural security. The category of youth is not necessarily defined by chronological age of 20 to 35 years or by mere physical growth or development, but by attitude to life in society. A young elder can be regarded as a youth if his or her attitudinal configuration defines him or her as such. A person can behave or act as a youth now and as an adult or elder at another occasion.

There has been a rising trend in urbanizing our rural youths in the search for urban - located jobs, and under the false impression that the more urbanized and westernized you are, the better the quality of life calculated in strange materialistic terms. Our rural youths should be made to appreciate our cultures and be empowered economically to mobilize them as sustainable devices for turning their rural environments to prosperous and attractive habitats.

Western education has become a warrant for bread and relative material well being. Culture is pushed aside, and those, the elders, who practise their cultures are generally regarded as retrogressive, old-fashioned and irrelevant. Culture thus vaporizes, creating a vacuum which unguides the lives of youths. Our traditional religion as promoter of our morality is condemned by certain western teachings and their religious organizations, thereby weakening our cultural roots. Certainly our traditional religion is not a religion of idol worshippers.

Most of our youths were born during the past military regime and are enmeshed in the culture of violence and the gun. Violent conflicts and reduced value for human life and its dignity generally dominate the minds of the youth. Cultural institutions and practices were subject to military operation. The Nigeria which the military controlled and left has been unhealthy in cultural matters principally for the youths.

A society defines certain goals for its members, and certain cultural means of achieving such goals. If and whenever such means are not available, some youths take antisocial means to attain the goals. Many of the youths of today are quite impatient for one main reason. The adults in their society demonstrate before them the attainment of new goals of rabid materialism, and revel in conspicuous consumption, outrageous vanity, and immorality. This new crazy material goal of society attracts the youth and it is a source of crime for those who are unemployed or seek more personalized wealth by any means, good or evil. In the new world of materialistic competition, the youth disregard and disrespect elders and even parents, and constituted authority, as well as the cultural-moral tone of society. They want to get rich very quickly with or without the cultural value of hard work, and rule the world around them. Their cultures are disregarded if they obstruct their new path and anxiety to mischievously and treacherously outdo others. They are strengthened in this desire as some members of society praise them for their ultimate success when achieved.

Education will help change the youths. But social change is not a mechanical phenomenon. The main problem is that the youths have not sufficiently undergone enculturation. They have inherited little from their parents and elders and they have little to pass on to the next generation in matters of culture.

### **Strategies for rejuvenating our cultures**

First of all, we must accept the argument that there is need to retain and preserve our cultures. No one wants to remain cultureless. We need to guide our cultural identity, while we develop. Our culture should not be construed as brakes to modern development. Instead they can facilitate development. The dualism in the simultaneous existence of our cultures and western cultures can enrich our lives.

Although we should think globally, we must act locally and preserve our local cultural identities. Democratization as a development process, science and technology are not alien to our cultures and societies. Development must be conceptualized not

only in economic, but also in political, social, religious, and other terms. We need cultural security to make us stable while we develop.

In his 1979 JB Danquah Lecture in Accra, Professor A.A. Kwapong referred to state recognized (declared holiday) portable shrine called *mikoshi* being carried along in one of the busiest streets (Aoyama-Dori) in central Tokyo with police direction and protection of enthusiastic worshippers and celebrants under heavy traffic, and surrounded by skyscrapers, complex super expressways and modern technology.

Similar to Japan's *mikoshi*, chiefs are carried along in palanquins in Ghana during annual *Odwira* festival to commemorate ancestors and appeal for land purification, reunity, and blessings for the present and future generations. *Keiro no hi*, a holiday dedicated to the aged, is a recognition of filial piety and respect for elders in Japan. The transformation of Japan is traced to the Meiji restoration in 1868 after the society was closed to the outside world for about two and a half centuries during a strictly purposeful military regime established by General Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1603. Japan finally opened up and between 1880s and 1890s officials and scholars were sent abroad to study the secrets of western science and technology such as medicine in Germany, law in France, and naval science and railway in England. The Japanese got what they needed and built it into their culture. Japanese familyhood philosophy, family-oriented social system which characterizes not only education but also big business corporations, universities and industries in which managers play the role of parents and workers' children, a practice that reduces the likelihood of confrontation. According to Kwapong, Japan reveres today great historical and religious centres like Kyoto and Nara, and the shrines of Ise, Nikko, and Kamakuru. Thus, although Japan is a modern giant in science and technology, yet there is a simultaneous and tenacious retention of cultural practices including language, food habits, dress, religion, music, dance, and several cultural traits.

The case of Japan, like that of the Chinese, and to a large extent, the Indian, shows that science and technology succeeded

most because the people preserved their own culture to express their national identity, self-respect, national pride, and dignity. We may accept Kwapong's assertion therefore that "a nation cannot achieve much in its national life if it completely gives up its precious national cultural heritage" (1979: 12). Japan achieved the status of an economic superpower within three to four decades and started to export science and technology back to the West in automobile engineering, electronics, micro-computers, etc.

To some extent, countries formerly under colonial rule, including Nigeria, have followed the example of Japan's push to excellence, and practise the western and indigenous cultural lifestyles. In this respect, we practise medical pluralism, political pluralism, and religious pluralism in our cultural contexts. In some cases, for instance in Zaire, there is a complex referral system involving patients from one traditional medical practitioner to another, on the one hand, and between western medical science and traditional medical practices on the other.

In her Reith Lecture in 2000, in New Delhi titled *Poverty and Globalization*, Vandana Shiva argued that farmers in the regions of Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, and others, were committing suicide as a result of crippling debts from forced change from their culture-bound agricultural practices and products such as pulses, millets, and paddy, to buy hybrid cotton seeds sold by "seed merchants" and referred to as "white gold". The new genetically engineered seeds were supposed to turn the local farmers into millionaires. Vandana Shiva found, however, that instead of this luring hope, the farmers became paupers engulfed in increased costs and ecological risks. Globalization, through global economy, has a detrimental way of ruining our rural culture-bound economies and sustainability.

It is essential that while we must change to respond to our changing technological-scientific world, we must devise means of rejuvenating our cultures and maintaining our identity:

- i. We must return to our cultural policy for inspiration. The 1988 edition of *Cultural Policy for Nigeria* states what most social anthropologists would accept, that "Culture comprises material, institutional, philosophical

and creative aspects...(and that)...culture is not merely a return to the customs of the past. It embodies the attitude of a people to the future of their traditional values faced with the demands of modern technology which is an essential factor of development and progress" (page 5). In 1985, I titled my inaugural lecture at Ibadan "The Presence of the Past" to underscore the point that many aspects of our past have not passed. We live our past, our culture, as a daily necessity. Our national identity and development must depend on the understanding and promotion of our cultures with their political and economic consequences;

- ii. We must continue to live our culture on a daily basis mostly in religious, political and economic affairs. We must visit and become energized by our museum, art galleries, archives, monuments, palaces, historical buildings. We must develop pride in our cultures, antiquities in wood, fabric, stones, etc.;
- iii. Ethno-cultural groups, through their associations, may be redefined and empowered to serve as unique civil societies, independent of government financial support. They can act as counterbalancing forces, whip up governments to their responsibilities, at the local levels, and check national abuses of inequitable distribution of development indicators from built-up capital resources. They should function to prevent government or state from being uncaring to the multiplicity of culture-bound interests and needs. They can facilitate transparency and accountability in the private and public domains. Their community-based organizations (CBOs) should assume the responsibilities of checking the performances and excesses or failures of government and NGOs at the local and national levels;
- iv. As we mentioned earlier, government should recognize and develop all our Nigerian' encapsulated cultures and languages. Our languages are central factors for promoting and transmitting our distinct characteristics

- of multiculturalism to our next generation. This is one strong means of integrating' and sustaining us in, performances in different spaces and spheres in our cultural, political and economic life;
- v. We must encourage and facilitate all our culture-bound occupations for the development of local and national resources, using our indigenous technologies;
  - vi. We should continue and strengthen our legal judicial pluralism and also participate in our political pluralism. The two faces of our social reality must recommend a stronger more visible constitutional position for our traditional rulers, many of whom are also highly educated in the western sense. They are key to our social stability as cultural trustees in Nigeria;
  - vii. I crave your indulgence to repeat my earlier suggestion in March 2002, that we should establish a Family Day, as a holiday in the year during which parents and children of whatever generation, meet to examine how far they have succeeded or failed in practising their cultural values, and the effectiveness of parenting. The cultural roles of all must be reassessed. In order to keep up our moral-cultural capital, a Family Day should not coexist with funny days like valentine day in which untraditional, immoral, and essentially obscene moral turpitude are rehearsed and practised by youths with uncommon enthusiasm in an advertised spirit of modernity. Any events that are unlikely to enable us live with moral integrity may not be permitted to occur in Nigeria;
  - viii. We must be bound by Mbonu Ojike's cultural thrust to "boycott the boycottables" such as the killing of twins in some of our cultures, any cultural practice or trait that acts as a brake to our local and national integrity and development should be discontinued;
  - ix. We should utilize western science and technology to advance our cultures, for example using western musical instruments, electronics, and auto mobile engineering and vehicular products to promote our cultural

practices. Western science and technology may be utilized but should be made consistent with our local and national cultural values. We should build on our own human and material resources in order to be sustainable;

- x. We should discourage rural youths from leaving their areas where surviving cultural practices are at their best and encourage urban and urbanizing ones to migrate there through systematic ruralization of industries for employment and as catalysis for general development;
- xi. One key strategy for rejuvenating and sustaining our cultures is education. This should be addressed as a key investment in both adults and elders and their children. Continuous adult education should be formalized to meet the cultural needs of adults who are the already westernized component of our population. Many of such adults look down on our cultures, and exhibit western cultural traits in language and dress. They are counterfeit Europeans and cultureless Nigerians. They need to be rescued and integrated into their cultures. Think of limelights like J.B. Danquah, a 1928 PhD of London University who is an embodiment of western education and indigenous cultural traits and moral excellence.

For the children - pupils and students - government should strengthen its laudable intervention through social studies as a compulsory subject in the first nine years of primary and junior secondary schools. Through social-cultural studies our different cultures and their common traits and values such as respect for parents, elders, humaneness and human dignity, dignity of labour, positive moral and religious values, and, civilization; and also how our cultures can serve our modern needs. Our positive communitarian principles should be inculcated in the children. Our cultures should be taught as promoters of science and technology and the contributions of our indigenous technology and skills to world cultures should be taught in social studies

to challenge contemporary corruption and moral indiscipline, and promote the effective management of our local and national resources for development. Education should take the form of training from within to distinguish what is bad, evil and anti social, from what is good and beneficial to the community, using the faculty of reason. Education becomes evil and condemnable if it is used to subvert rules and regulations and laws made to promote the prosperity of society and welfare of individuals. Apart from the adults and the so called educated and westernized elite, boys, girls, and women should be made special targets. Boys and girls will grow up socialized as good citizens;

- xii. Government should fund cultural activities by promoting research, publications, and documentations as well as self reliance and social development in line with Chapter 11 of our 1999 constitution on Fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy;
- xiii. Our cultural festivals should continue to be vigorously organized as periodic re-enactments of our cultural values in our different communities. In some cultures, formal and informal opportunities are provided for satirical songs with full immunity; and licensed dances and displays are directed to correct the immorality or misgovernance, of key actors. The Yoruba talking drum (not sycophants) or the Urhobo *Inorha* or *Ughovwa* at periodic institutional rituals and festivals, like a free press, or Fred Omu's freedom of the drum, single out the immorality of individuals and misdemeanour of rulers and leaders. These should be encouraged and celebrated as critical events of moral purification of society.

A content analysis of Fela Anikulakpo Kuti's songs shows the extension of this mode of criticism of the cultural-moral betrayal of failed State and unresponsive governments to modern times. Fela's "Afro beat songs" are of an engaging conscientizing brand of international popular music nurtured in a critical context of Nigerian

cultural expectations.

In addition to local festivals, government should organize national festivals of arts; performing and visual arts, with discussions of our cultural values implicit in the arts. Various shows in theatre arts, films, and exhibitions etc should be thoroughly screened and edited for their acceptability in morals and national values. Festivals and cultural performances have great potential in strengthening and sustaining our cultures. Various shows in theatre arts, films, and exhibitions should be thoroughly screened and edited for their acceptability in morals and national values. Our National Film and Video Censors Board should be strengthened and empowered to carry out this vital responsibility;

- xiv. The federal and state governments should enliven and internationalise interest in our cultures through tourism. This will commoditize some exhibiting aspects of our cultural traits, introduce enthusiasm and is financial resources to our cultural diversities, and create awareness of our local and national history, folktales, proverbs, philosophy and systems of thought and avoid dissociating our society from our cultures.

It is obvious from the preceding issues that the best results in our efforts to rejuvenate our cultures will be achieved through multi-institutional and multilateral synergy.

### **Cultures and our national orientation**

Our discussions indicate the need for, and the contents of a programme for national re-orientation. Our 1999 constitution and our 1988 cultural policy show the direction of where and what we ought to be from what we are at present. And performing artists can raise popular awareness by teasing out the core values in our cultures. Our shared cultural traits can be mobilized to turn as around from current problems of indiscipline, immorality, and self-centred material wealth and the privatization of our commonwealth and our enormous culture-based power resources. Communitarian ethos and familyhood

life style, and prioritization of society over individual, could reduce our societal material poverty and become an important issue in our national re-orientation. We should then be able to re-define our own vision of development. This need not be in a lineal form with cultural obstacles on our way, following the western model defined by its own cultures. We have our own clusters of cultural characteristics which, when properly articulated and re-aligned, will facilitate our movement towards self reliance and sustainable development towards the proposed achievement of a high global economic status of being one of the first twenty economies by 2020.

However, in formulating and promoting our cultural orientation, we must be critically aware of the need to engage in a purification exercise of discontinuing all -evil and outrageous cultural practices in any part of Nigeria. These practices often concern the most vulnerable members of our society, especially children and women. For example cultural practices of the killing of twins for whatever reasons must be abrogated. Also many of our cultural practices, including those involved in mourning rituals and human rights and dignity, traumatise, deprive, dispossess, and harass women, especially widows. Cultural practices permitting man's genderised culture-bound inhumanity to women must be stopped.

## **Conclusion**

We have great potential in our multi-culturalism for the evolution of one culture as a basis for adequately expressing a Nigerian identity and sustainable development. The various aspects of culture which define the totality of the content of life, provide adequate strategies for our survival and for facing changes encountered when meeting new demands, including those of western science and technology. In the process of developing and meeting universal demands, we should retain and develop the special characteristics of our culture for sustainable development and for Nigeria to work to excel as a team in spite of, or indeed because of, the forces of globalization. Many Nigerians, however, need to undergo mental decolonization and

replace the arrogant claims of western cultural superiority with our humane, communitarian order and goals towards which every unit of our structure must relate in a functionalist sense.

An outstanding factor for development in Nigeria is the human capital. But human capital does not consist only in the number of mere biological units and their endowments, including complex brain and mental faculty. It also, and more importantly, consists in the engagement of our cultural and moral capital for development.

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## Chapter 1

# Arts and culture as tools of national integration

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## Introduction

National integration remains a crucial issue in many countries of the world, particularly Africa and Asia because of the discordant factors intrinsic in their history, geography and culture. Of course, there are also other forces which accentuate these factors. Nevertheless, the most important factor against national integration and perhaps the most intractable is culture, for in both its concrete and abstract terms, culture is what defines a people; what makes them separate and distinct from other people, and the arts of a people is a function of, and an integral part of their material culture. It thus seems on the surface that arts and culture cannot serve as tools for national integration. This conclusion is reinforced by the abject failure of many attempts by many African and Asian countries at national integration.

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This chapter argues that the problem of national integration in Nigeria at least, arises basically but not exclusively, from four factors namely, the notion of culture as static and not dynamic, the misconception of national integration as suppression of social pluralism; the notion that the integral aspects of one culture and those of another are mutually exclusive and the undue emphasis on the material aspect of culture to the detriment of the analytic aspect of culture. It further argues that once these problems are resolved it is indeed not only possible, but highly probable that the various arts and cultures of Nigeria can indeed serve as tools for national integration.

For many African and Asia states the idea of nationhood in the contemporary sense of the word, seems elusive. In fact some people go to the extent of calling these states, "mere geographical expressions." For such states the idea of 'national integration' and 'nation-building' are virtually synonymous and the justification for this lies in the perceived need for such states, normally comprising of multi-cultural groups and people, to forge a common society with a common front for development. More insidiously, the political leadership in such states, usually lacking legitimacy usurp this notion in order to assume effective control with the hope of becoming the focus of popular solidarity.

There is strength in unity; this strength could manifest in political power, economic potency and social well-being of a community or nation. Conversely, a community or nation that is not united becomes weak and may even self-destruct as the world witnessed recently in the balkanisation of the former state of Yugoslavia, and as it will probably witness in Somalia and the Sudan. This fact alone would justify some form of unity or integration, between and among communities that constitute a modern nation or state. In addition, conventional wisdom prescribes increase in economic output as a pre-requisite of "development and modernisation", the target of every modern nation (Valdes 2002).

Yet, humans are differentiated into social groups each of which differs in beliefs, values and interests, and their expression thereof, or what is generally termed culture. Each group tends to

be most comfortable with, and hold fast to its own belief system or world view. It is also an established fact that most modern societies are culturally plural societies composed of several peoples, ethnic groups with subordinate loyalties, local allegiances, or certain similar 'primordial connections. Herein lies the modern nations' conundrum, for if culture's essence differentiates while modern societies or nations' essence integrates, then to paraphrase Kipling, "culture is culture, and modern nation is modern nation and the twain can never meet!"

Taking this argument to its logical conclusion, it follows that the theme of this conference is *faux pas*, and in essence inappropriate and a waste of time and effort. If we accept this reasoning then we might as well pack our things and quietly go back to where we came from so that we might engage in some more fruitful ventures. Yet, it will be foolhardy to do so without exploring in detail the central idea behind the theme, and the meanings of the key terms of the theme, namely culture, arts and integration toward a possible understanding of the essence of these terms and consequently a fruitful reconciliation.

The aim of this chapter is to explore the possibility and indeed, the probability of reconciling culture which, in its pure form is all exclusive and integrative, which in its pure form is all inclusive so that one can see if one can arrive at a way through which the various arts and cultures of Nigeria can indeed serve as tools for national integration.

## National integration and culture

The term 'integration' is used in the social sciences to cover an extraordinarily wide range of political phenomena, including national integration; territorial integration; value integration; elite-mass integration, and integrative behaviour. In general it refers to a relationship among communities or societies by which they combine to form a distinct entity imbibing the best from a toward the improvement of the lot. National integration which in essence is political and social integration is deemed necessary for 'nation-building'. Its purpose is to create among the nati

various peoples, a group consciousness that supersedes or removes, "subordinate parochial loyalties, local allegiances, or the similar 'primordial attachment', very likely to impede development (Ronen 1976:577). As it is to be expected, the way and means of making people transfer their commitments, loyalties and allegiances from the familiar socio-cultural environment to the larger national socio-political system is neither straightforward nor easy.

It is not straightforward because first of all, there is no consensus as what constitutes national integration (Lijphart 1971); scholars vacillate between the dominance of political identification on the one hand, the establishment of a sense of a strong communal belonging that would foster peaceful co-existence on another hand, and strong centre with institutions that have jurisdiction over and above the pre-existing on the other hand. Secondly, more often than not, national integration is conceived not as a means to an end but an end in itself. Thus under the guise of modernisation it becomes the *ñlan-vital* of a nation state that must be achieved at all cost.

It is also not easy because "Integration rests on common values...It presupposes cultural homogeneity...(thus)...it excludes the possibility of consensus...and necessitates non-democratic regulation of group relationship" (Kuper and Smith, eds. 1969:14). In many African and Asian countries this is rarely achieved. Above all, it is not easy because until recently, national integration in most African nations is viewed as a single model characterized by the values of Euro-American societies.

What is culture? What does culture do? These questions are elusive and difficult to define because as one sociologist put it, "at the descriptive level there is no ready fund of analytical terms for designating the components of the cultural realm corresponding to those which delineate parts of the structural domain (roles, organizations, institutions, systems, etc.), ...and... at the *explanatory* level the status of culture oscillates between that of a supremely independent variable... and...a dependence on other social institutions" (Archer 1985: 333-334). There are thus almost as many definitions of culture as there are scholars.

Despite this caveat, it is nonetheless possible to agree that the major characteristic of culture is a resilient and consistent ordering. "Culture" is basically the way of life of a particular people. More specifically culture can be described as beliefs and values and their expressions or products passed down from generation to generation. Thus, culture is both material and non-material; it encompasses traditions, customs, languages, belief systems, art, architecture, music, food and institutions. It includes the things created and used by the group, as well as the skills it has developed.

The central argument of this chapter is that it is the conception or misconception of culture, or cultures and the manifestations thereof that is responsible for the poor state of national integration in many African and Asian countries.

First misconception is the notion that the integral aspects of one culture and those of another are mutually exclusive. That is, there is nothing in common between say the Margi culture and that of the Igbo. And on the surface it may seem true, since they speak different and almost totally unrelated languages; they have different diet and rituals of marriage and death. Yet, a closer look will reveal that both cultures revere the old; they put premium on hard work and may even have similar belief systems. In fact, one will go as far as to say that the two groups may have more in common than otherwise, yet this is neither acknowledged let alone taken into account in formulating parameters for integration. Thus, if we were to go beyond the obvious we would find many things on which the two cultures concur. Unfortunately, lack of insight, respect for other cultures and exploitation in the hands of the few may, and usually do lead to heightened tension and mistrust.

This misconception is also closely related to the second which is the undue emphasis on the material aspect of culture to the detriment of the analytic aspect of culture.

There are basically four stages of integration; first there is community or social interdependent which refers to the everyday interaction between community or societal members, the most obvious being the economic interdependencies within that society. At this level, all that is required are simple rules and

regulations governing interactions. There is little or no need for interaction other than at the impersonal; second and more complex is power relationship or the domain of conflict resolution. This is the stage of posture, compromise and give and take; the third is "value integration" where the social structure is essentially defined with reference to certain acceptable culturally defined positions. Finally, there is "cultural integration" where loyalty to the community or society is expected such that the sense of personal identity completely meshes with the sense of membership in the society. Thus, while the first two stages derive from relations between people at the base level, the last two derive from relations between ideas. A more important consideration is the fact that many cultural characteristics may not be socially and politically relevant to integration.

Yet when discussing or considering integration, the tendency is to emphasise the "shared or common orientations" as the basis of social and cultural integration because as noted above this is vague enough not to warrant plan of action and is clear enough notion to be exploited politically. However, "*traditionalistic practices are not necessarily shared because the cultural system is binding, but can be binding because they are shared at the socio-cultural level*" (ibid: 345). To illustrate, the Christmas holiday is today celebrated in urban Nigeria by both Christians and non-Christians alike. Yet, while for the former it is more at the analytic level than the material, for the latter it is almost invariably at the material level. Thus its significance is neither contemplated nor imbibed other than superficially. The same goes for the Muslim Sallah.

The third misconception is the notion of culture as static and not dynamic. This is perhaps not unconnected with the long and chequered history of culture as progressive and evolutionary in anthropology. Culture was at one time viewed, "as the progress from savagery through barbarism to civilization" (Fracchia & Lewontin 199:53). However, the inevitable consequences of this notion are racism and imperialism. To avoid this, many scholars opt for the notion of culture as the consequence of a historical process. The argument is that since culture is basically a biological adaptation, it follows that there would be "cultural

change, cultural differentiation, and cultural history, but without cultural evolution" (ibid.). Due to this when it comes to formulating policies for national integration, the tendency is to assume the diverse cultures in a nation as static and ossified. So it is taken that culture A is distinct and separate from culture B even after decades of interaction between the two communities. Yet, anyone who has lived in a multi-cultural community for even a while will notice the rise of a local culture that is different from the dominant culture and often times even unique. Again this is no more than the manifestation of culture as a biological adaptation.

Finally and perhaps more importantly, is the notion that national integration entails the suppression of social or cultural pluralism. It used to be that people are told that to attain modern nationhood, they had to discard their cultural roots and orientation and imbibe a 'modern' culture. This 'modern' culture almost invariably meant western culture: one man, one wife; a nuclear family with only 2.5 children; the discarding of the use of mother-tongue at home in favour of some European language, be it French or English; the use of lounge suit in a tropical climate, etc., etc. In short, to be 'modern' one has to metamorphose into 'something' that is neither truly African nor wholly European.

This idea was much more strongly upheld by most African nations in the aftermath of their respective independence from imperial shackles. Although nowadays this idea has been discredited its remnants still persist. More importantly, the effect of this idea has left a serious damage in the nation's socio-cultural psyche. Thus we still find almost all the FM stations in the country broadcasting American rap in a country that gave the world Fela Kuti, Mamman Shata, Sunny Lionheart and Victor Uwaifo. Similarly, the urban diet has become one variation of rice or the other.

Having come this far it is logical to state that it is the considered opinion of this chapter that the first step towards integration is the recognition that humans are created differently, that is, with different perspectives, gifts and talents that they may learn from each other (Q49: 12). Every people, community or culture has its

God given talent that is unique to it and which another community or culture could learn from. This is the first step to integration.

Next is the need to respect other cultures that one comes across, and this is to be reciprocated; to be accepted as a human being is the highest compliment that could be rendered one. And how could one respect what one does not know? And for that one has to learn as much as possible about that culture, or at least the basic tenets of that culture. The fruitful result of learning about other cultures is not only grasping their analytic essence but also learning what is common to other cultures as well as what is compatible between cultures.

Finally, one has to learn to distinguish between the essential or the non-negotiable of a culture and the peripheral. In many cases we tend to mistake one for the other.

We now turn to look at how this understanding will be promoted through arts and culture.

### Arts, culture and national integration

As noted above, cultures influence each other and the arts are integral aspects of every culture. The logical question to ask is how would the arts be employed to promote national integration? First we must realise and accept that every form of art, ranging from literature through drama, dance, painting, sculpture, music and crafts to the mass media can and should be used to promote integration, for in general in Africa, the arts cannot be discussed fruitfully in isolation from the politics of the country.

The first form that we should pay attention to is oration. In particular the traditional praise poem, has been the medium for extolling good leaders and denigrating bad ones. As an example, the Hausa praise-poem "*Ku fad'a wa Obasanjo bamu yarda ta zarce ba*" did incalculable damage to the General's third term attempt in the North. Similarly, the Sardauna was more popular dead than alive, thanks to *Dank'wairo, Shata, D'anmaraya*, etc.

It was this format of art that the late Fela used with devastating effect in his life long social commentary. Who can forget ITT, Zombie, Yellow Fever or Army Arrangement? The traditional songs and the drumming of Nigeria are many and varied and bursting with talent. All we need to do is find such artistes and with almost next to nothing in terms of patronage tap their talents for mass awareness and mobilisation. Let us not forget that the oral praise-poem or story telling goes beyond the intelligent and clever arrangements of words. It often times is a performance that involves music, dancing, spectacle and all the ingredients of good drama (Niven 1985).

Among media practitioners, it is generally accepted that the success of the Buhari-Idiagbon War-Against-Indiscipline (WAI) was largely because of the use of local talent such as Kolington Ayinlla, and late Maman Shata. And above all the use of powerful local imagery in communicating nationalist ideas. I doubt very much if we can ever measure the impact of "Andrew" checking out to our national cohesion.

Then again when it comes to literature who can match Achebe's *No Longer At Ease* or Soyinka's *Kongi's Harvest* for political commentary?

What about football? One needs say no more.

Before we conclude, lets us say a little about our profession; architecture. Of all the arts, architecture is the most public and enduring. It is unavoidable, pervasive and the art which enables all others to take place. A concern for architecture and for its promotion, then, should be part of our extensive duty in formulating a national policy on integration. From the simple residential house to the lofty and imposing Federal Institution, architecture has the potential of providing the impetus to individuals and communities to reconcile their various identities and still feel part of a collective entity.

## Conclusion

To sum up the attainment of national integration in multi-cultural societies has been arduous and uncertain in most African

and Asian countries due to certain misconceptions of culture and the resultant applications. There is no doubt that the disintegration of a community or nation is to be avoided, but to demand for integration at all cost and to hinge that upon the imposition of a new culture that is not only alien but demands the rejection of tradition and convention is unnecessary and impractical. There is also no doubt that the interaction among and between communities changes these communities in subtle ways driven by social gains and self conviction. However, the tendency to politicise culture, that is emphasise its material aspect as well as insist on its immutability has proven to be detrimental to integration. The argument here is that sharing of culture is not absolutely necessary for national integration, nor is the converse true, that is, lack of shared culture prevents integration. If we accept integration as the relationship among parts through which they form a whole, so that the whole has its own distinct feature, its limits, such that it is distinguishable as a separate structured entity, then we must concede that the best way to it is through understanding, tolerance, mutual respect and conviction through persuasion.

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## Chapter 2

# Youth mobilization strategies for political participation

- Ekanem M. Ekanem<sup>1</sup> & Dukana B. Ikpe<sup>2</sup>

### Introduction

Nigeria is a youth-dominated nation with about 83.5% of her population falling within the zero and 39-years age bracket. However, very little is coming from the society to motivate and enhance the ideals of youth in Nigeria. In most contemporary developing societies the role of the youth in societal development has been largely ignored and maligned. It is indisputable that youths have a significant role to play in the political system, and Nigerian youths have been vigorously involved in several political activities over the past years. Development of the society and people, and the sustainability of life and the environment as the goal of any nation can only be effectively attained if the solution set is people centred. Nigerian society should direct her developmental thoughts, goals and policies towards enhancement of the well being of youths. Their patterns of involvement in political activities are disjointed, disoriented,

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disorganized and incoherent. This leads to misdirection of youthful energies into unconventional and village political activities such as thuggery, arson, murder and various types of election rigging. The danger is that if this pattern of behaviour stabilizes in these youths as appropriate modes of politicking, then the future of Nigerian democracy is insecure. The fact is that youth are identified more with antisocial behaviour than with behaviours that are in tandem with development. Where youths are not used as cannon fodders for civil disturbances, they are involved in different forms of brigandage. Today in Nigeria armed robbery, political thuggery, rape and arson are some of the vices that are used to describe the youths of the day. There is need for a new orientation of the youths toward political participation that is supportive of liberal democracy. This calls for long and short term measures. Long term measures begin with the socialization process which as at now is completely disoriented. This will be followed by education, training and retraining of youth, to acquire skills for proper participation and to decongest the political arena. Short term measures include creating appropriate political roles for the youth to enable them formally participate instead of being thugs to political bigwigs. The existing laws against thuggery and other electoral crimes which involve a large member of youth should be enforced diligently. This development calls for concern hence the need to identify the social causes of these vices and ways to ameliorate the ugly situation. Are the youth mobilization strategies wrong or simply inadequate? How was the *traditional African system* able to handle this youth challenge? The aim of this chapter is to capture the process of youth mobilization for optimal development process in the polity.

Globally human development processes have suffered tremendous challenges including that of providing a sustaining economic ability to an astronomically growing family. This situation has put so much challenge to the productive ages, including the youth. There are socio-economic pressures among working adults and more in the unemployed, resulting from unabated poverty and diseases. The experience of this economic scenario is distributed unevenly through the various social classes

of the society. But generally, the inflationary trends and global market indices have all suggested that the solution is in right leadership, good governance and appropriate decision making by the ruling political class. This makes human energy to be largely directed forwards polity both in the developed and the developing countries of the world. Political participation by men and women since twentieth century seems to have taken entirely an unprecedented trend, with an amazing range of youth involvement. The drive is based on the belief that better governance would sure provide answers to the glaring social, economic, political, educational problems and even hunger that is prevalent in the world systems.

This chapter therefore focuses on the various strategies of mobilizing the youths for the political participation, with particular reference to Nigeria circumstance.

### **Conceptual framework**

For purpose of unambiguity, the main concepts of the topics of this chapter are identified and explained. These concepts are the concept of youths, mobilization strategies and political participation.

#### ***Youth***

A youth has been defined by different groups and individuals differently. For instance, Chukwuma (2000) has defined youth as any person between the ages of 12 and 35 years who is passing through mental and physical development process to face the challenges of adulthood. A *youth* is referred to as the state of or time of being young. It is also referred to as a period of time when someone is young, especially the period between being a child and being fully grown (Akpan, & Ekong 2006). Furthermore, youth is the period of life from puberty to the attainment of full grown adult.

#### ***Mobilization***

Mobilization according to Tilly (cited in Giddens 1989: 744), involves the way in which a group acquires control over

sufficient resources to enable collective action possible. Such resources may include supply of material goods, political support or weapons and so on. Mobilization requires a change of orientation by the citizenry and expressed commitment by the leadership. The change of orientation by the citizenry depends primarily on the perceived sincerity of the leaders by the citizens. It also depends on the capacity of the leaders to captivate the imagination of the people with the efficiency and utility of the expected new benefits.

Mobilization therefore means creating a state of readiness for involvement in an activity; that is, organizing human and material resources of the society to achieve identified goals. For instance, although, the constitutional provision empowers every citizen who has attained the age of 18 years to contest election, such an individual must be mobilized to actualize the provision. Mobilization here implies that the individual must be made to be mentally ready to accept the challenges of contesting, or voting and possessing the necessary resources required to perform those functions properly.

### **Mobilization strategies**

Mobilization strategies involve those processes needed to equip or expose individuals to set goals or challenges. For instance, when citizens are politically mobilized they become activated to participate in politics. It is dangerous for any system or organization to direct the energy of the citizens without channelling them into something that promotes the cause of the society as perceived by the ruling political regime. It is the mobilization strategies employed in the systems that harnesses the promotion of such cause and achievement of set goals. The strategies include awareness creation, innovation and information generation, public enlightenment at the grassroots, media publicity, formal and informal education etc.

### **Political participation**

According to Ikpe (2000; 18) political participation refers to the disposition, ability and willingness of citizens to take active part

in political activities with the implicit or explicit aim of influencing the decisions of government. Influence on the government in various countries is legal, illegal and sometimes extra legal acts but are greatly subject to political actions. But there are differing thoughts from scholars as to whether illegal activities, unsuccessful attempts to influence the government and involuntary action should be included in the definition of political participation. For instance, Akpan & Ekong (2006; 168) have quoted Jerrold Rusk (1976) of criticizing Verba and Nie in 1972 for excluding interest group on activity and protest behaviour which have had tremendous influences on government.

However, political participation is being classified as conventional and unconventional. The conventional participation refers to those activities that are accepted as appropriate by the dominant political culture such as voting, seeking elective position, and working for a candidate or a political party, writing letters to public officials and so on. While unconventional forms of political participation are not accepted by the dominant political culture as being appropriate. These include all kinds of political protest which may or may not violate the law.

### **Historical background of youth mobilization in politics**

Youths are undoubtedly strong agents of change and where they are properly mobilized, great deal of results could be achieved politically. This fact was realized even in the past political scenes in Nigeria. It could be said that youths were mobilized in the past by the indigenous political organization and leaders; and then by the nationalist who both had their motives paramount over national interest. Therefore youth mobilization was haphazardly conducted through the mass media particularly radio, public enlightenment campaigns of parties which emphasized slogans aimed at consolidating ethnic solidarity. There was no programme that was directly aimed at mobilizing the youths for any purposeful role in the political systems. Rather, youths were

unintentionally involved, and by default, owing to their utility in initiating electoral malpractices and political violence. Hence youths were used as thugs and combatants for the parties and bodyguards for the political leaders.

The first and second republics saw the same political scenario in youth mobilization. It was in the third republic, about 1987 when directorate for mass mobilization, social justice and Economic Self Reliance (MAMSER) and Centre for Democratic studies (CDS) were established. While MAMSER was for political mobilization of the masses and political education, CDS was for induction of political elites into respective roles and democratic norms respectively.

However studies show that through the mobilization effort of MAMSER, most of the youths who had never participated in an election before became excited and enthusiastic, while the older people sank deeper into pessimism and disenchantment (Ikpe; 2000: 138-139). But the reality was that when actual electioneering ensued, the old political techniques returned with stronger vehemence, and the youths once again took their position as the executors of electoral malpractice formulated by the political leaders.

Youths have generally been mobilized by political class because they tend to thrive in thuggery, violence and the like, apparently because of poverty, unemployment and the selfish motive of people who exploit them. A situation where politicians, chiefs and businessmen recruit youths as thugs and reward them for terrorizing people is greatly counter-productive. The youths need to be encouraged to participate actively in political processes. Such encouragement could mean building necessary social structures and providing the enabling atmosphere for the realization of individual talents, personality development and group survival.

### **Youths in political history of Nigeria**

Historically, the political story of Nigeria would be incomplete without the indelible records of past youth participation and involvements. The Pre-independence efforts of Nigerian youths

contributed much to the achievement of independence in Nigeria as a nation. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Chief Anthony Enahoro and others who championed the cause of Nigerian Independence were young students. They started their agitation for independence as student union activists, and carried on formidable groups that challenged colonial rule. Anthony Enahoro was about twenty one years old when he moved the motion for the independence of Nigeria. Yakubu Gwon was only twenty-nine years old when he became the Head of State of Nigeria. Late Isaac Boro, fresh from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka was in his thirties when he formed the Niger Delta Volunteer Force and later fought for the emancipation of his people.

### ***Factors affecting youth mobilization and participation***

#### ***The pattern of political socialization and culture***

Youth participation in politics is tremendously affected by the pattern of culture and political socialization. Political culture refers to the pattern of individual attitudes and orientations towards political activities among members of a political system. In other words, political culture consists of all attitudes and beliefs held commonly by the people which form the basis of their political behaviour. It is the subjective realm that gives meaning to political actions. The individual orientations involve several components including knowledge of political beliefs, feelings of attachment, involvement, rejection, and the like about such objects; and judgments and opinions about political objects, which usually involve applying value standards to political objects and events.

But political socialization is the process through which the political culture of a society is transmitted from one generation to another. It is the process by which change in political culture can take place.

It is political socialization that helps the individual in the development of awareness of the political world and

appreciation, judgment and understanding of political events. Therefore when an individual becomes socialized politically, he acquires political orientations and pattern of behaviour which provides him with an opportunity to learn the basic orientation necessary for maintenance of democratic system.

### *The military problems*

Military destroys democratic cultures and also those institutions through which gradual socialization could excel. There is always a cut-throat struggle for power which eliminate orderly and systematic approach to institutionalization of political authority; governance and other political processes. When military remain for long in power the youths in particular have no knowledge of what the proper civil political processes ought to be. Usually the military come to power through coup which usually eliminates the senior officers from their political positions. This results often in the false impression that the youth are in power.

In Nigeria, for instance, the youths were uncritically credited with excessive energy, efficiency and intelligence thus the political slogan "new breed politician" The fourth republic has actually shown a youth dominated political scene in the local government councils, State and National Assemblies, House of Representatives, etc. There is an attendant problem in the development, with regards to training, experience, orientation and imbibed values which the youths are in most cases not adequately equipped for such responsibilities.

### *Commercialization of politics*

Politics has generally become one sure way to wealth and riches. Many politicians have traded in politics, fully intending to amass financial wealth. Politics is not seen as gateway to leadership except for fame and material well-being. According to Ake (1985) politics in Nigeria has from the first republic been seen as the quickest and surest avenue to wealth accumulation. Truly but sadly, wealth accumulation by whatever means has become the

dominant value for most Nigerians. The youth are unredeemably intoxicated with the situation and so have abandoned other values such as education, trading, and vocational training. The strong urge to make it materially and that soonest has constituted the strongest mobilizing influence for youth participation in politics.

### *Influence of role models*

The performance of the political leaders has influenced the youths more than any thing else in their political involvement. Unfortunately, the political elders use the youths as tools to effect their electoral manipulations, malpractices and violence. The youths emulate them in actions that have impacted them negatively in character and behaviour. Most office holders indulge in corrupt practices; they neglect the legitimate channels of seeking power and would rather prefer the illegal and fraudulent channels. It must be said that, when what is in existence is corrupt, it is into the corrupt system that the youths are socialized, and they participate in it, then, mobilization activities will be cosmetic, deceptive, and only designed for window dressing, with no much positive impact.

### *Political leadership structure*

The western world seems to have more flexible political system that allows change of leadership with ease. But in the African political system, as in Nigeria, political leadership structures tend to tilt towards permanent arrangement. They find it difficult to relinquish position but would rather attempt to amend constitutional provisions to elongate their tenures. The old politicians keep circulating from one position to another. This makes upward mobility of the youth very slow and frustration, violence and indiscriminate killings become the means to move up quickly.

When tension mounts excessively on the leadership and they are reasonably threatened, various strategies ranging from divide

and rule, coercion and bribing the various youths leaders to exert control over their members are utilized to keep the leaders in power (Akpan and Ekong: 2006).

## **Global perspective of youth mobilization**

### ***United States of America***

In America, a renowned sociologist, Charles Derber with Lt. Gov. Tin Murray observed that emerging democratic crisis in the last 30-40 years was no accident, but has been designed and planned by the political elites who were terrified by the spectre of mass grassroots political activities they saw in the 1960s. He said widespread youth political mobilization caused politicians to intentionally suppress public involvement and alienate them from political process. "There is nothing more dangerous than a mobilized generation" he said.

However, by American political history, Jesse Jackson in 1984, ran for president in the Democratic Primary and 2000 Ralph Nader, another American youth, ran as the presidential candidate in Green Party. But in each instance, it seemed like youth participation was reaching new heights. Whereas in the actual voting youth turn-out (18-20 year-olds) actually declined.

In the Al Gore versus George W. Bush race, an election which turned out to be a defining moment in political history approximately thirty millions young eligible voters had no say. Although voter turnout actually dropped in recent times, the plunge has been particularly dramatic among the youths. For example, in 2000 only 45.5% of the youth registered to vote.

Between 1972 and 2000, the youth voter turn-out rate declined by 13 per cent points among the youths in presidential election years. In 2000, only 42 per cent of youths voted, compared to 70 per cent of the older citizens.

Still, the major political parties in America are making effort to get youths to participate. Both the young Democrats of America and the College Republic National Committee have stepped up their recruitment efforts and are now holding more

events than in the past years. They also both encourage youths to attend political events and register to vote on their web sites.

### ***South Asian American Voting Youth (SAAVY)***

In the past ten years, Asian American youths between (18 and 24 years) registered to vote dropped drastically. From 50 per cent in 1990 to only 35 per cent in 2000; which was far lower than any other minority, according to study by CIRCLE (The Centre for Research, Civic Learning and Engagement). Thus we can conclude that South Asian American Youth fell into a bracket of those highly discouraged from political participation.

Thus SAAVY is at present trying to empower South Asian grass roots. Mobilizing efforts to present a unified voice and create a voting bloc that will allow South Asian American issues to be pushed to the forefront of American politics. Though the important tactic here is getting the youth to vote, the overall vision is to educate, organize and mobilize South Asian Youth to create a national united Progressive Voice and thereby increase political participation as well as civic engagement. Youth voting is not just getting more votes to the poll, it is about organizing, and mobilizing the youth to create a united voice and increase political participation.

### ***Kuwait***

To encourage youths to participate in the elections, UNDP collaborated with the Kuwait Transparency Society and the Kuwait Forum to publish and distribute a youth Guide to the elections. Its objective was to raise awareness of the elections procedures and enhance the abilities of eligible youths to vote for the candidate that best represents them.

Message used in the media are varied e.g., "Exercise your right let your voice be heard", "Your vote is your decision, participate", "one vote makes a difference," "your vote is a trust according to law and to sharia," etc. These messages adorned the streets and media through bill boards, posters on buses, flyers

, distributed at campaign headquarters, TV and newspapers advertisements, etc.

## **Strategies in youth mobilization for political participation**

### ***Strategic groupings***

Mobilization organization formation is a *sine qua non* if meaningful mobilization and participation of youth in politics is envisaged. The organizations so formed would aim at making sizeable mobilization effort that could yield the expected results. For instance, in the United States of America, mobilized groups are created to mobilize youths and integrate them into meaningful political participation. These groups include:

America coming together: These groups constitute a large number of members before 2004 but had now shrunk. But they are still around and kicking. They claim to have reached over 42 million voters on 2004 Election Day.

Declare yourself (DY) Non-profit campaign that started in 2004 focused around youth mobilization and has claimed to have registered one million young and first time voters prior 2004 election via DY spoken word and music tour, high school program, and related campaigns.

NAACP National Voters Fund: This is an organization with the Mission to engage in issue advocacy, educate voters on candidates' stands, civil rights and also increase voter turnouts among African Americans Non partisan.

MTV's Choose or Lose – This is youth focused organization that did lots of work prior to 2004 election.

(a) New Voters Project .A non-partisan effort to register young people launched in 2003. The group did some amazing work before the 2004 election and became one of the largest

grassroots mobilization efforts – increasing turnout by 11% and registered about three hundred and fifty thousand youths.

Voto Latino - This organization is non-partisan, and youth driven organization to create a rectified voice for Latino youth.

- (b) Youth Democrats of America – youth arm of the Democratic Party. Nationwide organization with 43,000 members. It runs lots of programmes to elect democratic candidates, train youths, and aims to stimulate youth participation in the democrat party.

Rock the vote – One of the big youth focused mobilization organizations. It did a lot of work prior 2004 and did it very well. They integrated text messages into their voters' registration/mobilization campaign, incorporated entertainment and youth culture into its activities.

### ***Political education***

For effective mobilization, education is a necessary strategy. In most cases the youth and even the political class does not receive the needed political education for meaningful participation. But rather the degree of political participation and involvement is determined by experience in the political scene. In some cases, experience gained without due political education has proved counter-productive. Corrupt political models and god-fatherism have negatively impacted their subjects and the result has always been distasteful.

Ours seems to be an age of lost values and spiritual decadence characterized by among other things, the superficiality of youths. The basic cause of the problem is that the present generation of Nigerian youths has inappropriate role models. Their situation has not been helped by the deepening poverty, inequality and lots of hope engendered by corrupt, violent and irresponsible governments. (Archibong 2006). It is therefore clear that youth

cannot participate adequately without the needed education to correct the ills already enshrined in the Nigerian political system.

Except for the increasing jobless and misguided youths at the political scene, the youths seem to be significantly neglected in politics. The requisite awareness on political process is grossly lacking. The result is that the educated and the skilfully engaged youths have stayed away from participating in politics not for lack of interest, but largely due to the inherent corruption, and dishonest manner with which issues are being treated. This is one reason why the youths are not in politics because they have not been mobilized to vote during election, prepared to stand for election, or contribute towards running effective government but rather to assist older politicians in achieving their political and material interest.

However the mobilization of youths in political system as thugs for violence, carrying and destroying of elections boxes and materials, killing and other such vices have only narrowed participation in politics in it's real sense. This form of mobilization rather entrenches distrust, suspicion, intolerance, rivalry and incapability among youths even in their environments. Politics need not be pursued like the military where governance is characterized and also made through coup d'etat.

A situation where politicians, chiefs and businessman recruit youths as thugs and reward them for terrorizing people negates the purpose of mobilizing them for political participation. The youth are to be encouraged to participate meaningfully in all political processes through creation of appropriate social structures and provision of enabling environment for realization of their individual talents.

## **Recommendations**

Mobilization strategies for political participation, whether in the developed world or developing countries, ought to be seen as a democratic process of involving the citizenry in decision making and exerting positive influence on power through voting and

other constitutional measures to enhance national development. The mobilization strategies should involve the youths and the following recommendations are made:

1. Youth mobilization strategies should have a defined purpose to achieve what should be of national interest.
2. The youth's mobilization should have an integrated pattern to educate, organize and monitor them so as to engender united, progressive and increased/political participation and civil engagement.
3. The issue of adequate creation of political awareness is a critical one in youth mobilization process for their political participation. The awareness process should involve use of television, magazines, and internet. At the global political scene internet contributes to a wider awareness of political arguments. Any fear that use of the internet might hurt healthy democratic deliberation are borne out of bias. Internet users, which constitute a large proportion of youths, will have greater exposure to the arguments that challenge their views.

For example, internet has become an essential medium of American politics. President George Bush used internet primarily to grassroots organization and mobilization of youth.

4. The youth should be empowered through government initiative of building youth patriotism, national consciousness and pride; and massive expansion in youth-related programmes. This kind of empowerment will reflect the 1972 declaration of General Gowon administrations "readiness to bring together qualified young men and women and to inculcate in them a sense of discipline, dedication, national pride and consciousness through nationally directed and disciplined training (Umobong: 2006).
5. Yearly budgetary allocation for youth development through training will translate successive government lofty ideas, such as the General Gowon's into realities. This is important

because the youths have the ability and the intellect that can be tapped to make a positive development and a remarkable change in the different sectors of national life. They are said to be "leaders of tomorrow" and therefore, must seriously be invested on and budgeted for.

## **Conclusion**

The stage of our national development like any other developing country of the world in this twenty-first century demands more serious attention in youth participation in politics. There is a growing challenging craze for power, participation in decision making on issues that affect them, and the struggle to be heard by the youths.

The alarming increase in knowledge and technological advancement has created access to the youth for information and means to explore and exploit situation of their interest beyond imagination. Already depriving the youths of their participation in political decision making and their exclusion from youth issues and programs in practical terms, in national development projects, have attracted agitations and alarming youth protest. In Nigeria, the militant groups in the Niger Delta and abduction of expatriates in oil fields are enough threats to national security and development. The youths must be properly mobilized to truly participate in politics.

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## Chapter 3

# Traditional socio-cultural systems as models for stability and security in African societies

- *Adeyinka Aderinto & Akeem Ayofe Akinwale* \*

## Introduction

Traditions refuse to die despite the sweeping effects of modernisation. The modernisation school of thought has been much criticised for its partial understanding of history and civilisation and its consequent ethnocentrism (Roberts and Hite, 2000). Increased interest in human values, cultures, and culturalist approaches has opened a way to multidisciplinary and diverse interpretations of both culture and development, and intensified active involvement of anthropology, sociology, economics, development studies, and many other disciplines in search of new development paradigms, concepts, and theories (Radcliffe, 2006).

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Anthropologists have discovered different traditions alongside three realities controlling the world (religion, magic and science). These realities commingle and their complete separation seems impossible. Thus, the relevance of traditional values is not in doubt especially when viewed from their intermingling with modernity. For instance, the social structures of traditional societies in Africa clearly show the interplay of different traditional and modern forces. An example of these forces is the explosive growth of churches and mosques in Africa. Their growth cannot be divorced from traditional beliefs in witchcraft and spiritual power for protection and security. Obviously, Christianity and Islam have been adapted to the socio-cultural environments of peoples in Africa thereby giving birth to new constructs such as African Christianity and African Islam.

African traditional religion has also been repositioned while indigenous beliefs continue to thrive as witnessed in the publicity of shrines in Nigeria. Therefore, the co-existence of traditional and modern beliefs is one of the most dramatic developments worldwide. Apart from religion, other socio-cultural systems such as education, family norms, law and politics are vital. The major thrust of this chapter is to examine the relevance of traditional socio-cultural systems in the modelling of stability and security in Africa. The next sections deal with issues associated with the interaction of traditional socio-cultural systems and models for stability and security in selected societies across the world.

### **Traditional socio-cultural systems**

Different traditional socio-cultural systems have received significant attention within the contexts of rural and urban dichotomies across the world. Anthropologists such as Malinowski (1884-1942) and Frazer (1851-1941) built on Darwin's theory of evolution in their studies of traditional social institutions (Mitchell, 1979). They conducted extensive studies on different aspects of traditional socio-cultural systems and brought to fore the theory of functionalism in delineating the

operation of different units such as the family, kinship, marriage, economy, religion and politics. Different information that Anthropologists provided about indigenous cultures, which they studied with application of ethnographic techniques including participant observation, made them popular during the colonial era. Their popularity has however waned since the onset of the postcolonial period due to recognised limitations in anthropological studies of Africa. A major limitation in anthropological investigation is ethnocentrism.

One of the prominent anthropologists is Leslie White (1949), who divided the cultural system into three broad categories: technology, social structure and ideology. The categories were aptly ranked into different levels as shown below:

At the base of any culture is its technological capacity; at the next level is the sociological realm, including notably the system of class relations; and at the third or top level is the ideological or the belief system (Singham and Singham, 1973: 262).

Through the technological cultural system, societies can exploit their environments and export techniques to other societies. The sociological level plays out through the manifestation of the class structures integrally linked to the technological system. The ideological level throws up cultural devices such as law, religion and education. These cultural devices are crucial in ensuring social stability. In many societies, the law has different layers including customary practices. Traditional norms and conventions largely dominate in the British jurisprudence with positive implications for stability and security. Britain is a model of stable and secured societies. In Nigeria, certain cases are managed under the jurisdiction of customary court. The recognition of customary court is evidence of the continued relevance of traditional values to the judiciary.

Similarly, religion remains significant in ideological cultural system in most societies where people patronize different religions including traditional religion, Christianity and Islam. The reality of religion is premised on two basic assumptions. The

first assumption is that there are powers in nature while the second is that man is not an independent being (Noss, 1966). Religion is the force that relates man with powers in nature. In every society, there is a popular belief that human environment is full of mysteries. To buttress the pervasive belief in mysteries, Edward Tylor (1832-1917), a British Professor of cultural anthropology, remarked that: "All nature is possessed, pervaded and crowded with spiritual beings...the power-centers constantly affecting every man's destiny and interest."

In the light of Tylor's remark (Mitchell, 1979), spirits can control stability and securities in societies. Peoples in traditional societies recognise the power of spirits and usually venerate spiritual forces through different mechanisms such as prayer, divination, ritual and sacrifice but these mechanisms seem to be fading out in Africa. In Asia, traditional religions such as the Chinese Confucianism, the Japanese Zoroastrianism and the Indian Hinduism influence virtually all aspects of the society ranging from politics to economy and family (Noss, 1966). Therefore, the stability and security experienced by many peoples in Asia can be attributed to the recognition and promotion of their traditional value systems. Unlike the situations in Asia, Islam and Christianity have become popular in sub-Saharan Africa. The idea that the gratification of human needs should flow from devotion to spirituality has become a prominent feature of Pentecostalism. It is in this context that an emerging doctrine known as the 'prosperity gospel' receives attention. The manifestation of prosperity gospel has influenced stability and security in sub-Saharan Africa through its engagement with the ideological insurgence of neo-liberal capitalism and corruption of political leaders. Unlike the modern political systems characterised by corruption and instability, traditional political structures in Africa are noted for their unique attributes including stability of tenure occasioned by gerontocracy and communal welfare.

The lingering instability in the modern political system has attracted attention of all and sundry. Religious organisations have become famous in their preaching against political instability, which remains the hallmark of modern political

systems in Africa. The temptation to revert to the stable traditional political structures or draw some insights from the features of their stability echoes here. Political structures were relatively stable in African societies, considering many centuries of political stability in Benin Kingdom, Dahomey Empire, Kanem-Borno Empire, Mali Empire, Oyo Empire, Shongai Empire, and Zulu Kingdom. These African political organisations flourished as people adhered to traditional belief systems including indigenous religion, which largely guided human relationships in African societies. Political leaders in many African societies were generally perceived as representatives of God and this perception coupled with traditional systems of checks and balances aided political stability in Africa, especially prior to the advent of European colonisation of the continent.

Unfortunately, as Islam and Christianity gained popularity in the context of colonisation, African traditional religion (ATR) has remained relatively marginal (Anderson, 2001). Unlike the situation when ATR was the only major religion in Africa, the growth of Islam and Christianity has been accompanied by lingering political instability in the continent. Islam and Christianity have been parts of dynamic social structures in sub-Saharan Africa since the colonial era. Like the religious situations in Latin America and some societies in East Asia, African Pentecostalism has witnessed spectacular growth. Religious movements have affected education and both have influenced stability and security in societies.

In Nigeria, many religious based educational institutions have been established at all levels. While endeavours to support African Traditional Religion (ATR) have resulted in the establishment of schools for traditional medicine as can be found in southwest Nigeria, Islam and Christianity have favoured establishment of schools from primary to tertiary levels of education. However, the crises between Christians and Muslims remain tense in Africa, although the ATR remains relatively peaceful and non-proselytising. The battle between Christians and Muslims is traceable to hegemonic struggle for political power which is deployed for socio-economic advantages in some

African countries including Nigeria and Sudan. Similarly, the hegemonic struggle for the control of state power has promoted suppression of the ATR within the context of massive campaigns for Christianity and Islam. This situation has resulted in ideological divides which provides motivation for undermining the constitutional secularity and fuelling battles among Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.

Rather than blaming missionaries for the turbulence generated through the adoption of the foreign religions, peoples of Africa have been implicated in the proliferation of religious crises in the continent. As reported by Elphick (2002), Africans, and not missionaries, have been the most effective propagators and interpreters of Christianity in Africa and as Sundkler & Steed (2000) showed, refugees and migrants such as the Sierra Leonean returnees to the Niger or Africans returning home from the Witwatersrand gold mines largely spread Christianity. It is noteworthy that African elites have contributed to religious crisis and socio-political instability in Africa. As demonstrated in the discourse of cultural ideology, law, religion and education give insights to the direction of powerful instruments of social order in human societies.

In contrast, White (1949) postulated a deterministic theory of social causation by identifying the technological base as the determinant factor in any society. Though he demonstrated awareness that social and ideological subsystems condition the technological system, he noted the distinction between the conditioning factors and the determining factor. For White (1949), technology simply means the capacity to develop tools to transform nature. Adapting the technology to the changing environment is crucial in the sustenance of human capacities. Some societies have utilised their technologies to dominate other societies. This dominance can be traced to a culture's superior adaptive capacity, which depends on appreciation of tradition. While the dominant culture in a particular system tends to destroy its subordinate culture, in some instances it allows the subordinate culture to co-exist in a dormant way. Kaplan summarized the results of cultural evolution as follows:

...cultural evolution has moved simultaneously in two directions: on the one hand there is an increasing heterogeneity of the higher cultural type; and on the other hand there is an increasing homogeneity of culture as the diversity of culture types is reduced. Undoubtedly this latter trend toward the homogenization of the world of cultures will continue in the future at a more accelerated rate than in the past (Singham & Singham, 1973: 263).

Building on the theory of cultural evolution, the relevance of the traditional socio-cultural systems can be examined. There have been major shifts from the dominant western cultural systems to appreciation of indigenous value orientations in many societies. This development has created convergence between the traditional and the modern socio-cultural systems.

### **Conflicts of traditional and modern cultures**

In the early stage of industrial revolution, the socio-cultural systems in Europe became modernised and extended to other cultures through colonialism. European expansion in this period resulted in the conquering of Asia, Africa and parts of Latin America, where military power was used to achieve political control (Singham & Singham, 1973). However, internal crises in Europe, especially the conflict of the Allies with Germany and Japan, resulted in a shift in the balance of power from Western Europe to North America and the Soviet Union. Through colonialism, the above mentioned countries attempted to dominate the cultural system in the world. Africans, however, condemned colonialism as witnessed in several social movements for decolonisation in Africa.

For instance, Amin (2009) recalled a series of struggle for decolonisation among African students in Europe prior to the attainment of political independence in Africa. The Anti-Colonial Students' Union (ASU) and the West African Students Union (WASU) as well as other pressure groups were established during the struggle for political independence in Africa. Consequently, a vibrant group of indigenous political elite

emerged in the struggle to wrestle power from the colonial administrators in Africa. The African liberation project produced three divergent groups (the Brazzaville, the Monrovia and the Casablanca groups), which metamorphosed into the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) on 24th May 1963 through a treaty signed by 32 African political leaders (Sahnoun, 2009). While the Casablanca group comprising Algeria, Ghana, Morocco, Mali, Egypt and Libya adopted a violent approach to decolonisation both the Brazzaville and Monrovia groups advocated for caution and gradual approach to it. Following the attainment of political independence, many African countries were forced into prolonged military rule and various forms of instability became prominent in Africa (Boafor-Arthur, 2008). With this situation, African societies have been considered as parts of the Third World.

Expectedly, the concept of the Third World has been rejected by the antagonists of the dominant western cultures due to their belief that it promotes dependency with detriments to Africa, Asia and Latin America (Frank, 1969). Dependency is defined as:

an historical condition which shapes a certain structure of the world economy such that it favours some countries to the detriment of others and limits the development possibilities of the (subordinate) economies...; a situation in which the economy of a certain group of countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy to which their own (economy) is subjected...(Bodenheimer 1971:124).

Frank (1969) showed how many Latin American countries remained underdeveloped despite their closest ties to the metropolis. Frank's revelation indicates that denigration of traditional socio-cultural systems could counter development efforts and threaten order and stability in societies. Like the experience of societies in Latin America, societies in Africa have played host to bizarre consequences of modernisation without close affinity with African renaissance. Rather than drive forward the progressive legacies in traditional cultures, African leaders promoted western socio-economic networks until multi-national

and trans-national corporations emerged as dominant economic superstructures in Africa where survival of many people still lie in indigenous traditional practices.

Following the abrogation of colonialism, new matrixes of social and cultural mechanisms were created to replace the traditional legacies and old colonial model of direct control. Clientele social classes including the local bourgeoisies, certain elements of the government bureaucracy, professionals (Singham & Singham, 1973) as well as technical and intellectual elites served as essential links in the substitution of the traditional and modern models. In Africa, intellectuals played vital roles in all facets of social structure. The intellectuals of the pre-colonial eras were priests, artisans, Islamic scholars, philosophers and historians who gave meaning to identity and social progress.

In contrast, colonialism interrupted the process of evolution of Africa by its interventionist and exploitative logic. The colonial state in the process of destroying pre-colonial structures and integrating Africa into the international capitalist system undermined the substructure of African traditional intellectualism and its links with the larger society in the promotion of missionary and western education as the new fountains of wisdom (Obi, 2004). Resultantly, the western educated elites became articulate spokes persons of the masses and flag bearers of pan-African movement. However, they inherited the colonial political apparatus as the political independence opened space for indigenization of the colonial state. Unfortunately, the state remained oppressive and the imposition of the western model of stability was legitimized in Africa. In Nigeria, most of the intellectuals that articulated the project of nation-building became politicians and civil servants without much zeal to promote indigenous cultures. As such, instability has been the bane of the Nigerian social structure.

In his thesis on the clash of civilization, Huntington (1996) stressed that modernization process is the cause of instability. Modernization thus tends to produce alienation and anomie. This production is generated through the conflict of old and new values. The new values undermine the old bases of association and of authority before new skills, motivations, and resources

can be brought into existence to create new groupings. In the context of conflicts of old and new values, Ekeh (1983) divided social structures into three categories. The first category is the transformed social structure; the second is the migrated social structure while the third is the emergent social structure.

This categorization connotes that culture contacts result in the transformation of traditional values, adoption of foreign values and the emergence of new values that are neither completely traditional nor modern. The fusion of these values can promote greater stability and security. However, as modern values are over privileged over the traditional values, instability looms large. A synergy of divergent positions and ideological contradictions in the explanation of cultural conflicts as shown in the above mentioned dependency and modernisation theories provides a clue to an understanding of security dilemma in Africa. This situation can be corrected through co-existence of traditional and modern values.

### **Traditional cultural models for stability and security**

Culture is brought into development primarily as a product and as an institution. This indicates potentials and implications of viewing culture as creativity (Radcliffe, 2006). Models of creative use of culture can be found in many societies across Africa. Traditional African societies were primarily privileged by social capital, which appears to have been sidestepped in the wake of the new state with its reified coercive force and weak social power. Ekeh's concept of Two Publics is relevant here for an understanding of the cultural foundation of social stability. Ekeh (1975) traced Africa's political problems to the dialectical relationships between the two publics such as the private and the public realms. These realms are otherwise known as the primordial and the civil publics. The private realm and the public realm have a common moral foundation because what is considered morally wrong in the private realm is also considered morally wrong in the public realm and vice versa. Christian beliefs have provided a common moral fountain for the private

and the public realms in Western society. Unlike the situation in the Western world, the private realm in Africa is differentially associated with the public realm in terms of morality. According to Ekeh (1975: 93): "Pre-colonial political structures were important in determining the response of various traditional political structures to colonial interference. But the colonial experience itself has had a massive impact on modern Africa." Colonialism resulted in a clash between traditional and modern values in Africa. Ekeh (1975: 107) noted that:

Although the African gives materially as part of his duties to the primordial public, what he gains back is not material. He gains back intangible, immaterial benefits in the form of identity or psychological security. The pressure of modern life takes its toll in intangible ways. The cost of the rapid advance in urbanization and the sudden emergence of several individuals from a rural, non-literate background to as high as the leadership of prestigious departments in the universities and the civil service may not be measured in tangible economic terms. In all of postcolonial Africa, new men with non-literate parents and brothers and sisters-from non-chiefly families ungrounded in the ethics and weight of authority-are emerging to occupy high places. Behind the serenity and elegance of deportment that come with education and high office lie waves of psychic turbulence-not least of which are widespread and growing beliefs in supernatural magical powers. The primordial public is fed from this turbulence. For it is in the primordial public, whether it be narrowly defined as limited to an extended family of some two hundred individuals or, far more likely, to a whole emergent ethnic group ranging from half a million to some ten million people, that gives security to many first-generation educated Africans. The material manifestation of the duties of the educated African to his primordial public may or may not be balanced by the psychic benefits of security, benefits that flow from close association with the primordial public. But the point is, like most moral spheres, the relationship between the individual and his primordial public cannot be exhausted by economic equations.

From Ekeh's (1975) assertion, it is clear that Africans operate within two publics in the same society. On the one hand, they belong to a civic public from which they gain materially but to which they give only grudgingly. On the other hand they belong to a primordial public from which they derive little or no material benefits but to which they are expected to give generously. A good citizen of the primordial public gives out and asks for nothing in return, while a citizen of the civic public can gain from the civic public and enjoy escaping giving anything in return. Manifestations of the primordial and the civil publics can be found in an understanding of kinship system in Africa.

### **The African kinship system**

The kinship role in the African setting is particularly noteworthy as an example of traditional system that promoted social stability and security among Africans. The working of the system was such that each group was organised into compounds for political, economic, social and administrative purposes, focusing on a few problems for the maintenance of the total society. This arrangement ensured cultural continuity and prosperity. Fadipe (1970) asserts

...either for reason of self-defence or sheer gregariousness, or both, the Yoruba population is predominantly urban. Even the farming folk have their houses in town and look upon their farms which are in many cases situated at great distances from the town merely as places of work and temporary residence...

Okediji (1972) also contends that in practice, the kinship group provided insurance and security against social and economic risks according to usage and customs. The economically handicapped individuals were aided by the kin group. The system of organising the family in the pattern of kinship and extended family is significant towards understanding the prevention of social problems in the traditional Nigerian setting. This explains the relative ability of the traditional society to succour the less-privileged families and to halt their children

from drifting into the streets or from engaging in extreme behavioural attitudes

African societies of the pre-colonial era broadly compared to the social typology which Durkheim referred to as mechanical solidarity in which ideas and tendencies common to all members of the society are greater in number and intensity than those which pertain personally to each member. This solidarity only grows in inverse ratio to personality.

However, with the advent of urbanization and consequent growth of cities, all structures that kept people together in the pre-colonial days were weakened. Firstly, many people began to move to the cities in search of jobs and better conditions. Secondly, the emphasis of kin-protection became lowered with the influx of people into cities where money economy prevails. In short, different political, social and economic organization operated in the urban centres. Relationships are strictly superficial and individualized. The maxim "Be your brother's keeper" which existed in the traditional societies became changed to "everyone for himself, God for us all." An example of communal perspective to social stability that became modified is the Harambee system in Kenya.

### **The Harambee model of solidarity**

Harambee is a traditional concept for communal solidarity, collective social responsibility and self help in Kenya. Harambee is a voluntary engagement which empowers the society to collectively settle common problems and challenges. The Harambee was a relevant model of stability in Kenya in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. The Harambee makes members of the community devise mechanisms of settling problems by mobilising community resources such as finance and other resources. The Harambee self-help approach draws its spirit of commitment, inspiration and informality from the African indigenous setting (Wanyonyi, 2004). It has been used successfully during marriage negotiations, funeral, work and sport. An equivalence of Harambee has been found in many traditional African societies. For instance, Ujamaa in Tanzania is

an equivalence of Harambee. However, the 1895 colonial incursion (British East Africa protectorate) and earlier contact with European explorers, missionaries and Arab traders led to modification of the Harambee.

The pre-colonial largely voluntary and informal engagements were often truncated with colonial officialdom under the ethnically based local native authorities introduced in Kenya in 1924. Instead of retaining the traditional Harambee, colonial government introduced community development policy. Similarly, the colonial projects were largely communal as people rendered free labour and chiefs and local councils organized the projects. Unlike the Harambee tradition, the colonial policy of development was largely coercive and as the impact of colonialism became entrenched, Harambee took new turns, often becoming formalised and in line with the capitalist western orientation. The colonial administrators used the Harambee to improve farm yields but the initiative was not locally known as Harambee. Working was accompanied by traditional rhythmical work songs that boosted workers morale and warned people against laziness.

Kenya attained independence in 1963 and its *Harambee* took another dimension as Jomo Kenyatta announced a strategy of *Harambee* self-help as his core policy with the slogan:

you and I must work together to develop our country, to get education for our children, to have doctors, to build road, to improve or provide all the day to day essentials in the spirit of *Harambee* (Kenyatta, 1968:217).

*Harambee* with its local parallels such as *Obulala* was applied to the state policy and movement whose history dates from pre-colonial time. The cooperation of members of various communities was massive and unprecedented. Consequently, what was perceived as a right step in facilitating development became contaminated due to mass unemployment, inequalities and ethnic conflict as each ethnic group wants its member to be in the parliament to skew the Harambee for members' benefits (Wanyonyi, 2004).

The 1980 and beyond are years of President Moi's leadership and political manipulation in employing Harambee rallies to ensure his impact. In his one party rule, Harambee initiatives were associated with political dictation. Unlike the traditional setting, the plight of those who require help and even the method of collecting donations are communicated through the print and electronic media. Similarly, the donations were sent both physically by contributors visiting the Nation centre building in Nairobi as well as by postage. Besides, donors were local and international, young and old. Hence, the nobleness in giving and sharing transcend ethnic and racial boundaries. However, the Harambee was corrupted to serve parochial political interest (Wanyonyi, 2004).

Kenyatta (1968) stressed the need to employ Harambee spirit in sustaining and improving post independent rate of development. But since the two leaders' orientation was towards the western liberal material persuasion, elitism was encapsulated in their articulation of Harambee. Consequently, tension between politicians and provincial administration emerged especially when specific politicians were perceived as being diametrically opposed to the views of those in power or their local agents. Using huge resources generated through Harambee, politicians from underdeveloped areas neglected the needs for projects in their districts and concentrated on developing the President's districts. Thus, Harambee contributed to positive performance in some areas while it has also resulted in disparities in the national distribution of resources. Both presidents used Harambee to establish clienteles in other parts of the country (Morton, 1998).

The misuse of political and administrative offices to frustrate Harambee projects was popular. The reintroduction of multiparty system in 1991 led to the fall of previously powerful politicians. However, the money raised by new breed of politicians could not initiate long-lasing projects unlike the previous politicians with huge sums of money. Okondo (1995) identified other ways in which the Harambee initiative was abused. First, civil servants used their positions to extort money from their juniors to contribute at fund raising which were

presided over by senior politicians but also these senior officers even diverted money from budget project allocations fund which the officers donated at Harambee functions while secretly expecting to be rewarded with promotions. Besides, provincial administration officials often demanded bribes in return for license in the name of Harambee.

With unnecessary lack of transparency, corruption, administrative high-handedness, over taxation and the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP), Harambee initiatives declined. The contributors (politicians, business class, professionals and farmers) felt the expectations from their people were too much to manage. Beside, the element of corruption that had infected the Harambee initiative rendered the primary driving force of fostering self-reliance hollow. While individuals and organizations raise money and other form of materials to help improve the living standards of specific communities, some of these funds were misappropriated by a few corrupt individuals. In this regard, the lives of those in whose name the Harambee initiatives were conducted either remained poor or have even been worsened (Wanyonyi, 2004).

### **The dilemma of cultural globalisation**

The false universality of western culture has affected indigenous initiatives and efforts towards reconstruction of the hitherto colonized identities. It is false because it derives from particular European experiences and is arbitrarily imposed on all cultures (Gimode, 2004). In responding to the multi-layered cultural domination which claims universal validity the local and dominated values have refused to die. The outcome has been a renewal of historical forces, a mass of religious loyalties, ethnic identity, linguistic differences and other forms of cultural expressions (Mittleman, 1994). This is what Huntington (1996) described as a "clash of civilization". The clash embodies the acceptance of modernity but the rejection of western culture. The failure of a World Bank Project in Brazil can be a relevant case study.

## **The failure of the goat-breeding project in Brazil**

After studying the outcomes of a World Bank project in Brazil, Cavalcanti (2007) reported the conflict of the traditional and modern approaches to development. The project took place in Gravata (a rural community in north-east Brazil). The project involved 30 families of small farmers. The history of the project is important for an understanding of the operational context. Community members were already familiar with the presence and discourse of the local development technicians, as they had been involved in various initiatives in the area. As a result of this contact, some members of the community heard about a fund from the World Bank mediated by the state government through its Secretary of Planning and Social Development. This fund was to be used in development projects to improve the living conditions of rural producers. The community, which was based on subsistence agriculture, with each family working on its own piece of land, was stimulated by the idea of this fund to start thinking about breeding goats to complement what they were already doing.

Consequently, through an association of small farmers assisted by the state development technicians, and after various discussions and meetings, the community drew up a project for which it received a grant from the World Bank. The World Bank stipulated that the project should be owned and managed collectively. A piece of common land was therefore used for the building that would shelter the goats. The unskilled work was to be contributed by the beneficiaries – the community – who in turn would receive training from the technicians. The project documentation described the plan as follows. A group of 30 beneficiaries will take turns in the daily upkeep of the goats' shelter. Every beneficiary will receive three goats and two kids. The beneficiaries can sell the kids and the milk, provided each beneficiary retains five goats.

The project details show how the development bank attached conditions to the grant, specifying how the money would be spent, and giving instructions about the practices to be employed

by the community. The project began in 1999, with the development technicians responsible for monitoring the results and also for ensuring that the project continued to be carried out in the way that the development banks had stipulated. The whole project fell apart in 2002, when the community decided that it was better off before the initiative had started.

The collapse occurred after a series of discussions within the community which made clear that members had been pushed to act in a way that was not in accordance with their tradition. Four main assumptions were developed from the failure of the project. First, the World Bank technicians complained that the community members were lazy and stupid for not wanting to improve their lives. This was clearly a view influenced by a modernisation approach to development. It means that for the development to take place, according to the technicians' view, it would be necessary to change from a traditional way of life to one that embraced modern values. However, the development agents' view about what constituted the people's needs was not shared by the community.

Second, the community's disengagement from the project can be seen as a form of resistance to the imposition of external values. The farmers were able to resist the developmental disruption, even though they regarded the technicians as some sort of superior or more enlightened human being. They saw themselves as being less knowledgeable than the development technicians, but they did not accept the idea that the 'foreigner' would know better than they did what was really important for their lives.

Third, the needs of the community were defined externally and can be seen as artificially created by the technicians within their top-down relationship with the locals. The development experts saw themselves as the mediators between what they saw as a condition of underdevelopment and the possibility of improving the farmers' lives.

Fourth, the imposition of values and artificial needs can be interpreted as cultural violence that benefits the elite but is met with resistance from the potential losers. The community's response was mixed, because the farmers wanted the project

while at the same time almost surreptitiously reacting against it. It was clear that the collective organisation, insisted on by the World Bank, had been so artificially created that there was no real feeling of belonging. Because the collective organisation was created from the top down, within the context of the power relations inherent in the way this project was handled, and because something intended for the common good was actually an external imposition, the project came to be seen as not belonging to anyone.

Nominally, it belonged to the community, but there was no sense that this community, created for meeting the demands of the project, was made up of individuals or individual families. Another expression of cultural violence came from the World Bank's stipulation that the project should be collective, insisting that the goats be kept in the communal area and that community members should share the task of maintaining the animals. This was very difficult for a community which customarily came together only for certain occasions, such as festivals, funerals, or the resolution of problems of a more general character. People were not used to dealing with subsistence issues on a collective basis. Rather, they worked within the context of their own family businesses. Each family had its own piece of land, and every family unit managed the activities from which it made a living.

## **Conclusion and recommendations**

Tradition remains strong in the global arena and its strength has been felt in the interaction of traditional and modern values. In many societies people remain rooted in local and traditional social milieus despite exposure to competing centres of cultures. Promotion of traditional socio-cultural systems is a major way of ensuring stability in Africa where western culture has taken a centre stage in virtually all facets of the social structure resulting in the neglect of communal lifestyles and social welfare through which the basic needs of the people were hitherto guaranteed.

Western values have gained control over the traditional norms and uncertainty has enveloped the emerging society.

Unexpectedly, different social problems including poverty, unemployment and crimes have escalated. Other social vices such as corruption and immorality have replaced the traditional culture of honesty and chastity. Therefore, interventions are urgently needed to fill the gaps generated through excess reliance on western culture. Indigenous people should be seen as actors that are capable of ensuring security and redeeming the instability in their societies.

The African kinship system remains useful and should be promoted. The state must protect interests of the public in the context of modernisation. As discovered by Cavalcanti (2007), traditional communities that are on the receiving end of development projects have three main ways of reacting to the imposition of external values. They may resist to the point of totally rejecting any external intervention. They may accept the development package in part, while at the same time resisting some of its contents, especially those that would greatly disrupt their way of life. Also, they may decide to embrace the development idea wholeheartedly and be willing to pay the price of significant changes in order to see the promises of development being fulfilled.

In the case of the goat-breeding project in Brazil, it became clear that the community accepted part of the development package, which was the prospect of the money that they could earn. However, once they realised that this implied changes and disruption to their own way of life, they gave up on the project. Development was resisted because the trade-off between the necessary changes and the promised benefits was not seen as worthwhile. This can be understood in terms of development versus enjoyment of life. The persistence of the idea that development is detrimental to traditional cultures is due to the lasting influence of development as modernisation.

Generally, across Africa, poverty can be effectively managed through the recognition and utilisation of the traditional culture of contentment and communalism. Cooperative societies and various community associations should be assisted to make them more viable in responding to the financial and material needs of their members. Traditional arenas serving as the sources of social

networks for employment and contracts should not be contaminated so as to ensure their sustainability. Fundamentally, the renewal of indigenous identities of people who have been westernized is inevitable in the move towards ensuring stability and security in societies.

An enforceable language policy is needed in this direction. Local dialects and community languages must be resuscitated to accommodate the needed collective consciousness and renewed interests in social solidarity. In addition, re-conceptualisation of reforms beyond the Bretton Woods agenda and integration of traditional cultures into the school curricula may galvanize essential instruments of order and arrest the prevailing instability.

Finally, drawing from the rich heritage of traditional cultures and pan-African philosophy, it is the propagation of traditional socio-cultural systems that can provide fruitful models for understanding socio-economic development. In the age of globalization, the pan-African mission remains critical and relevant to the survival of African societies. The traditional cultural propagation can alleviate the lingering instability and insecurity of lives and properties occasioned by the restructuring of society from one regime of accumulation to another.

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# Maximizing the economic potentials of the Calabar Cultural Carvival

- Dr. Eze Bassey Eze\*

## Introduction

This chapter is aimed at unfolding the potential benefits of the Cross River State Christmas Festival and the Calabar Carnival. The carnival which was instituted in 2004 is certainly one of the biggest cultural festivals in Nigeria today. This event which has now assumed international dimensions usually begins with the declaration of a one-month holiday for the civil servants in the state during the month of December. Thereafter, Local Government Areas are given days to show-case their unique cultures through foods, drinks, folklores, and dances. The climax of the month-long festival is the carnival procession which involves a colourful display and systematic parade through the major streets of Calabar with costumes, masks and masquerades. Notable African musicians are always invited to add colour to the occasion. The music is exceptionally loud, accompanied with great vibrations and so it enjoys high patronage by mostly

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youths. The smiles on the faces of participants show nothing but happiness, dogged determination, inspiration and enjoyment as most participants see the carnival as a tourism project.

However, the festival has entered its third year and there is need to review its economic potentials as expenditure runs high and is bank rolled majorly by the Cross River State Government. Private or corporate sponsors currently include Oceanic Bank, the MTN, Guaranty Trust Assurance PLC, International Energy Insurance, Alibert Products Ltd, Hi TV, Shinco air-conditioners, iway Africa etc. Their financial contributions remain very little as almost everything about the carnival is imported from the Caribbean's. The exact quantum of funds so far invested on the carnival is not public knowledge and so is the issue of direct returns on the investment. Though some people have pointed at the indirect gains such as "fully booked hotel rooms," brisk business by airlines, taxi drivers, commercial motor-cycle (Okada) operators, GSM service providers etc. the real economic benefit to the state (the major investor) remains unsubstantiated.

This chapter intends to investigate this great project using the principle of economic Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA). Indeed, the Calabar Carnival has the potential of working for the social and economic good of all Nigerians if we can source for costumes and materials locally, encourage 100% private sector or corporate sponsorship, correct taxation of participants and related business, and a workable programme to curb immorality, drunkenness, hooliganism and waywardness during the festival. All these can turn the carnival into a gold mine.

## **1.0 Introduction**

The people of Cross River State are noted for their hospitality and love for peace, cleanliness and 'good cuisines'. Calabar town itself, apart from being the cleanest city in Nigeria has an antihypertensive effect on the inhabitants and visitors alike. In the south-south geo-political zone, Calabar is the city with the lowest crime rate and total absence of militants. Undoubtedly, the town has lived up to its acronym "Come and Live and Be at Rest" (CALABAR) or 'Canaan city' or 'paradise city' as she is

popularly known. Located on latitude 4°58rN and longitude 8°21rE exactly at the point of inflexion of the Gulf of Guinea, the border towns of Calabar has been attractive to foreigners from especially Europe since the seventeenth century both as a slave port and a trading post. Calabar is described as the jewel in the crown of Nigeria, being the seat of colonial administration of the southern protectorate of Nigeria between 1882 and 1906. Its unique location as an estuarine town and the copious rainfall all help to moderate the temperature of this coastal city. Relative humidity is always high all the year round (over 80%) and the ground is easily saturated as the soils are mostly composed of Alfisols. The town is well drained such that run off waters disappear 30 minutes after a typical rain storm.

This is because the city is perched on a beautiful escarpment which runs from "Welcome to Calabar" through Essien town, Hope Waddel, Naval Headquarters to Hawkins Street. The hydrologic beauty of the town is further enhanced by the meander loops of the Great Kwa River and the Calabar River, two rivers that try to squeeze the town and make it appear like a Sandwich. The vegetation is a mixture of mangrove to the south and the tropical high forest to the north of the town.

All these biophysical elements coupled with easy accessibility make Calabar a natural tourist destination for all Nigerians from all sections of the country and the first choice today in terms of venues for many conference organizers.

The introduction of tourism into the development plan of Cross River State is therefore a far-sighted venture which has recognized the intrinsic qualities of Cross Riverians and the untapped tourism potentials of the physical environment called Cross River State.

It is the intention of this chapter to arouse interest in the tourism potentials of the State. Attention will be focused on the development of tourism in the State, the Calabar Christmas festival, the cultural carnival, the Economic cost of the carnivals, pattern of benefits and how to maximize the benefits.

## **2.0 The development of tourism in the Cross River State**

Tourism has become an important economic venture that is associated with Cross River State. Indeed, the highest point of achievement of the administration of the former Governor of the State, Mr. Donald Duke, was without question in the area of tourism or tourism related developments. Tourism became the focal point of the Cross River State government from the year 2003 and gained grounds in 2004. Today all the local Government authorities have been fully mobilized to compete for the best in the tourism industry. Different aspects of environmentally friendly tourism packages have been unfolded for the diverse ecological zones of the state, ranging from the coastal to the montane ecosystems. For example, the Marina and Tinapa resorts represent examples of coastal tourism while the Obudu Ranch Resort and mountain race showcase tourism of the montane type. The Afi mountain forest reserve and the Cross River National Park (CRNP) at the Central axis of the state paint pictures of ecotourism. On the other hand, cultural tourisms are manifests in the Alok and Nkarassì monoliths, the National Museum old Residency, the Calabar Carnival and others. This is not to mention numerous other cultural festivals and unique traditional displays which are naturally associated with the people of the state. The rich cultural heritage of the people which often hold visitors spell-bound are displayed during marriage ceremonies, at burials, harvest times, coronation ceremonies and during festivities. The former Minister for culture and tourism, Chief Ojo Maduekwe, stated that Cross River state will become Nigeria's Mecca in tourism within the nearest future. The Governor of the state, Senator Liyel Imoke, also very recently said that the future of tourism in Nigeria and the sub-region totally belong to the Cross River State. At present, the State is actually synonymous with tourism. However, it will be apt to point out that the future of tourism in the state lies with the success or failure of the Calabar Carnival which is clearly the engine room of the state's tourism package. It is the crowd-puller especially for

the youths and also the pivot of the entire tourism initiative. Indeed, the plan of those who conceptualized the Calabar carnival is to make it to compete favourably at the international level with similar festivals, both economically and socially. Economically, it is planned that the tourism sector, (the carnival) should have the potentials of becoming the major driver of the Cross River State economy (Achonwa, 2007).

Achonwa, a key player in the state's tourism initiative, opined that the tourism sector is capable of weaning the state of dependence on the monthly Federation Account allocations and also providing a viable means of income for individuals engaged in tourism related business activities. The Calabar carnival has the above capabilities and even more. It is a potential gold mine but is yet a rough diamond that needs to be polished. The Carnival began in 2004 and has been held every December in the past six years. It has therefore become necessary to review its economic cost and benefits from the point of view of education, enlightenment and maximization of benefits.

### **3.0 The Calabar Christmas Festival**

The festival which is the harbinger of the Calabar Carnival begins every 1<sup>st</sup> December and terminates on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January of the next year. It takes a total of 32 days of fun to prosecute the Christmas festival and it is organized in such a way that there is a programme of events for each day in the month. All civil servants must be on leave within the festival period to avoid any one missing the festive mood. The gigantic edifice of the Calabar Cultural Centre and its environs houses the Calabar Christmas Village and this is often the rendezvous of all activities during the festival. The show usually spills over to the Millennium Park around Eleven-Eleven round-about. The Christmas Village offers a lot of varieties such as eateries, folklore, drama, window shopping, drinking bars, barbecue, casino and different kinds of musical entertainment. The security is tight and this must be commended as there have been very few reported cases of stealing or robbery. Programmes run from dusk to dawn with educative day time programmes such as HIV/AIDS match. The

highest attendance at the festival are youths from all the local councils in the state and others from the neighbouring states such as Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Bayelsa, Delta, Imo and Ebonyi states.

Each local government council in the state is given opportunity to show case their rich cultures through:

**Foods:** The delicacy that the council is famous for is prepared and served visitors on the "council day." There is a stand for the council as obtains in trade fairs.

**Drinks:** They are mostly in the form of different varieties of palm wine and fruit drinks made from indigenous forest fruits.

**Local Crafts and Art Works:** Local crafts such as beaded footwear, caps, outfits, mats, dolls, carvings, paintings, bangles and necklaces are put on display for visitors at attractive prices.

**Cultural Displays:** The council on duty is also expected to entertain visitors with cultural displays from their area. This is the most interesting aspect of the local council day at the festival as the state has 18 local councils with over 25 language/ethnic groups.

The other types of entertainment that feature during the Christmas festival include the high vibrating steel orchestra, comedy galore, family funfair, Santa Claus grotto, raffle draws, lottery, fireworks, classical orchestra, Jazz night, choral night and the Governors tree lighting ceremony (Mofinews, Dec. 2007). In general, what is happening in Cross River State is a fusion of traditional and modern cultures in line with the observed serious incursions into our African culture. Yet, the least known of masquerades and dances are rejuvenated and revived with prizes given to high performers. This therefore is a cultural enrichment programme or rebirth which needs encouragement. In fact, a visitor to the carnival once remarked that "there exists colour in the people's culture and cuisines" (Mofinews, Dec. 2007). One may ask 'what colour'? Experience they say is the best teacher. A visit to Calabar within the month of December will reveal more than words can capture!

#### **4.0 The Calabar Carnival**

The Calabar carnival is held usually after the Christmas celebration every December. The 26<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> of December are possible dates. Currently, the programmes cover at least two days with the children's carnival taking the first day and the main carnival train arriving the second day. The key features of the carnival include:

- Carnival queen
- Colourful masquerade parades
- Indigenous music and dance
- Exhilarating band processions
- Dinning and winning

As a warm up to the carnival event and to catch the attention of the youths, a beauty contest is usually held to pick the carnival queen. The contest is open to all Nigerian girls. Last year a 17-year old girl from Imo State emerged the winner. The sum of two million naira and a brand new Honda Car were the star prizes. This goes to show the seriousness of the organizers.

The colourful masquerade parades are another unique feature of the Calabar carnival. It is often majestic, exciting and attractive to children, youths and adults alike. In fact, other states in Nigeria have been known to send their cultural troupes to participate in the masquerade parade. Last December, the masquerade parade was the best in line with the theme "celebrating our culture and heritage." The focus was to rediscover and repackage the culture of the state for others to see.

Another very creative aspect of the carnival is the focus on indigenous music as only musicians of African descent are invited to grace the occasion. Musicians such as the Senegalese born, Akon, Awilo Locomba, Angelique Kidjo, Masekela, P-Square, 2Face Idibia, Sunny Neji etc have performed at the carnival.

The climax of the carnival is the procession. This is what all the youths in the city and the surrounding region look forward to. It involves large groups donned in colourful Caribbean

costumes dancing with very loud bands. Last December, the participating bands included the Bay Side Band, led by the former Governor Mr. Donald Duke, the Seagull Band, led by Senator Florence Ita-Giwa, Passion Four led by Mr. Chris Agibe (a former commissioner), Master Blaster Band, led by the current Governor, ( then senator) Liyel Imoke and the Freedom Band, led by Captain Henry Brisbe. Each band had over a thousand participants and the parade proper took almost a whole day (10 am to 9 pm). The carnival procession is very tasking and only the young and the energetic can go through the streets dancing for an entire day. The procession begins from the J. U. Esuene Sports Stadium and moves through the Millennium Park to Mary-Slessor road, through Ndidem Usang Iso road to MCC road and then to the highway and from there back to the stadium. This is done with residents of the city lining up along these routes to cheer. Judges are positioned strategically to score the bands and the costumes. Music and dancing are all determined by the level of sponsorship enjoyed by the bands. For example, the leading band, Bay Side Band led by the former Governor, Mr. Donald Duke, was last December more flamboyantly dressed, colourful, well organized and with the most impressive steel-band in terms of sound and the response of band members to the music. No wonder the band emerged winner. A typical band group is separated into sections. For instance the Bayside Band had five sections named 'Nature, Manna, Canaan, Safari, Stress Free and Adventures. Each section is further subdivided into three sub-sections. In 2006, Bayside alone had 5,643 participants. However, the carnival day is a day of little movement for the residents of Calabar as the carnival trains usually cause serious traffic hold-ups.

As for wining and dinning, this is usually continuous throughout the carnival procession and is done using supporting cold vans, ambulances and other vehicles. In fact, the ubiquitous food vendors and hawkers usually experience boom as they make brisk business during the period to service the needs of participants.

## **5.0 Theoretical issues**

The Calabar Carnival is a tourism and a recreation project. Demand as well as supply of recreational and tourism facilities is directly related to higher living standards, higher income, greater education, improvement in transportation facilities, political stability longer vacations, etc. These issues have been dealt with by many urban and regional planners. In general, recreation and tourism are viewed as service industries (Whynne- Hammond, 1979). What this means is that not so much of economic benefits should be expected from it as it is a bag of mixed blessings. This may be contestable yet true.

Two theories which have captured the place of tourism in the development of third world economies are the functional approach and the political economy approach (Lea, 1995). The functional theory according to Britton (1981) and as amplified by Mathieson and Wall (1982) is an analytical approach to the complex issues of tourism. This theory sees tourism as an activity or a process which can be broken down into three main subdivisions. The first he called the dynamic phase. This covers the movement of the tourist to and from the destination. The second phase is the static element which focuses on the 'stay' of the tourist and the third is the consequential element which involves the description of the impact of the tourist on the economic, physical and social environment of his destination. The functional approach is a model for looking at tourism as an interconnected process or a system with inputs, and outputs, links and feedback mechanisms. The functional view pays little or no attention to issues of profitability, economic exploitation and inequalities preferring rather to focus attention on how to provide a description of the attributes of the industry in terms of the tourists, their destination and various impacts.

On the other hand, the political economy approach clearly states that tourism perpetuates many existing inequalities despite its considerable benefits to poor countries (Lea, 1995). Unlike the functional approach, the political economy approach probes beneath the mere surface characterization of the industry. This

theory views tourism as emanating from the desire of the affluent middle classes in metropolitan countries to travel abroad. It contends that the companies which have emerged to service the tourism industry have organized themselves in a manner to best exploit the tourism demand. And such companies include hotels, airlines and tour guides. For the Calabar carnival, we may add the costume designers and a litany of middlemen and women. The consequence is that a bulk of the tourist expenditure is retained by the above cabal. In addition, these agencies ensure that the tourist is confined to isolated enclaves separated from most of the local population. And finally, the tourist package makes it impossible for host countries to gain adequate control over their own visitors. In fact this approach sees nothing economically or socially beneficial in engaging in tourism. Rather it views tourism as an extension of imperialism and a reflection of patterns of trading links and spheres of influence which must have been established over time.

This view therefore dwells heavily on the structural inequalities in World Trade and suggests that international tourism is most unlikely to favour poor countries. This is in addition to the fear that tourism exposes the third world to the worst examples of exploitation especially when essential segments of the industry are taken over by foreigners. The political economy approach gives room for the assessment of the relationship between tourism and economic development which is the broader objective of this chapter.

## **6.0 The economic cost**

It was Shivji (1973) who noted that the argument that tourism brings economic good completely fails to appreciate the integrated nature of underdevelopment. Indeed, the debate about the economics of tourism is a continuous one which we cannot settle in this chapter as it ranges from issues of opportunity cost, multiplier effects, improvement of social services employment generation to heavy infrastructural cost. The issue of opportunity cost may be of interest to a lot of Cross Riverians as it was some years back in the Caribbean Island of St.

Lucia where the coming of tourism resulted in the flight of labour from the local banana industry (Young, 1973).

The question therefore is "has Cross River State missed something by pursuing the tourism agenda?" Or put in another way 'what is the foregone alternative?' This is not the focus of this chapter so we go straight to issue of the financial cost of the carnival. Data about the financial cost of the three carnivals so far organized are difficult to come by. Staff of the Cross River State tourism Bureau located at the Okoi Arikpo House, Calabar road, Calabar were most unwilling to part with information on the project financing. However, the *Tide* newspaper (Nov. 6, 2007) stated that the 2007 carnival was going to cost the government one billion naira. If we take this as the average expenditure then for 2005 and 2006, one billion naira each was spent on the carnival. That brings the total to about 3 billion so far expended on the hosting of these carnivals. However, reliable sources who would not want to be mentioned have alleged that these figures are far away from the real expenditures which they put at 3.8 billion naira for 2005, 6.2 billion for 2006 and 8.95 billion for 2007 respectively. The Tinapa Business and Leisure Resort, the largest tourism investment in the State, was commissioned last year at the cost of 45 billion naira. The cost of rebuilding Obudu Ranch Resort and the cable car plus the annual mountain race could not be ascertained at the point of concluding this chapter. Definitely the figures are also in billions of naira. The import of presenting these figures in this write up is to show the seriousness and the determination of the government of Cross River State to make an economic success out of tourism far beyond the carnival parade. But, what of the cost in terms of the one month wasted man-hours of civil servants service, as well as for those who lost the opportunities of doing their business because of the shutdown of the state bureaucracy? Surely, it can be done otherwise!

## 7.0 The Benefits

The economic benefits of tourism in third world countries have been found to include a contribution to foreign exchange

earnings, generation of employment, the improvement of economic structures and the encouragement of entrepreneurial activities. The people of Cross River State have started experiencing these benefits although at a very low level.

### ***i) Contribution to Foreign Exchange Earnings***

The last Calabar Carnival was attended by Israelis, Ghanaians, some Cameroonians and persons from South America and the Caribbeans (*Nigerian Newsworld*, 2008). These foreigners by spending their foreign currencies in Cross River State and the Nation must have contributed directly to the foreign exchange earnings of our country. It will be necessary in future to measure the percentage increase in foreign exchange earnings accruing to the country immediately after the festival/carnival.

### ***ii) Generation of Employment***

The Cross River State Tourism Bureau has recently been expanded with some new staff. Tinapa alone is expected to offer employment to 5000 youths and 500 foreigners. Certainly, new employments have been provided for indigenes in the Obudu Ranch Resort, the cable car, mountain race and the Bebi airstrip. This is not to mention workers at the Marina resort and the over 20 new hotels that were built between 2004 and 2007.

### ***iii) Improvement of Economic Structures***

The rapid infrastructural development of different parts of the state was aimed at improving tourism in the state. There have been Urban renewal programmes, dualization of roads within Calabar town, construction of pedestrian over-head bridges, side-walks, street-lighting, beautification of roundabouts with ornamental trees, street sweeping etc. All these have been done to enhance the aesthetics of the city. Space will not allow one to analyse the multiplier effect of investment in tourism in Cross River State as it is evident even in the improved water supply, urban mass transportation system, increase in the number of

banks in the state and other social services which have improved tremendously over the years.

#### ***iv) Encouragement of entrepreneurial activities***

Investment in tourism has brought business motivation to most residents of Calabar in the area of skill acquisition, technological development, business and social interaction. In particular, the hotel and hospitality industry has grown dramatically such that in the state, there are now 244 registered hotels with a total of over 3,000 rooms as at October 2007 (Achonwa, 2007). Also on the increase are road side cell-phone operators, computer centres, internet cybercafés, retail outlets, fast food spots, sit-out bars, night clubs etc. At Present, Calabar is the cleanest city in Nigeria with total absence of refuse heaps. From the above analysis, it thus appears difficult to quantify the benefits in monetary terms. This is because of the many factors governing tourism's economic impact (see fig. 1). The benefits are dependent on so many factors of which we seem to be concentrating on only one – nature of tourist facilities and their attractiveness.

### **8.0 Towards maximizing the benefits**

In the absence of economic figures, it is difficult to carry out economic cost-benefit analysis (COB) in the Leontif way. However, we have attempted a descriptive analysis of the cost and benefits of investment in tourism by the Cross River State government. Now, the question is where do we go from here? The following suggestions may be of assistance to the implementers of the Calabar Carnival as a tourism project:

- Democratization of the industry will help. Policies ought to be debated, accepted and adopted. Is tourism really the priority of the state? Can the state place all her future on recreation? Can show business bring genuine development? Etc.
- Power supply must be beefed up above the Nigerian standard. Calabar town should go for an independent power

supply system that will make sure there is at least one-month of power supply without black-out. This will boost both business and tourism.

**Fig.1: Factors governing tourism's economic impact (After, Lea 1995)**



Source: Lea, J. (1995) *Tourism and Development in the Third World*, pp.15

- More programmes such as slide diving, traditional wrestling, the Obudu mountain race, etc., should be incorporated into the festival to enrich it.

- Materials for the carnival especially costumes must be sourced locally most especially machines and fabrics for sewing T-shirts and gowns.
- Payment of a token for the carnival or festival. Our people are used to paying gate fees when they go for shows. We need to charge people for coming to watch big-time musicians such as Senegalese the Akon, P-Square, 2Face, etc. In fact, visitors entering the city during the December month should pay a little token.
- Patronage of hotels should be closely monitored throughout the yuletide period to ensure compliance with the tourism tax, VAT and other financial regulations.
- 100% private sector sponsorship. The banks, airlines, GSM service providers and other interested companies should be made to take over the financial cost of the festival completely and make their profits then pay tax to the state government.
- There should be a periodic review of the tourism industry to curb nudity, noise pollution, immaturity, and immorality. Condoms should be placed strategically all over the town (not just in hotel rooms) to assist those who attend the carnival only to feed their lower nature.
- The entire organization of the carnival needs an overhaul to make Calabar the tourism capital of Nigeria. Some bands are too poor to stand alone with no music, poor coordination, late arrival at designated points and general indiscipline.
- There is also the need for a realistic post impact assessment through commissioned studies. If it must be done it must be done well.
- Finally, we have done well in product promotion or advertisement but we need to invest in tourism human resource capacity building, at present no higher institution offers tourism even at the diploma level.

## **Conclusion**

Tourism can change the fortunes of Cross River State and the Calabar Carnival is a definite key player, if not a catalyst to fast-forward this objective. Expenditure is high and is currently being

shouldered mainly by the state government. The benefits are yet to really come though they are expected at the long-run. This may be a mirage if the entire organization of the carnival is not reviewed especially to cut down cost through local sourcing of major inputs, monitoring of visitors, payment for participation and other things which have been pointed out in this chapter. Finally, we must recognize that Cross River State is a unit under the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Unless basic facilities such as light, water, security and easy transportation are made available continually plus a change in the international image of the country, the type of tourism that will attract foreigners and make it the leading sector of the economy of the state will remain illusory.

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# Integrating African arts and culture into the school curriculum: models, challenges and prospects

*- J. B. Bilesanmi - Awoderu\**

## Introduction

This chapter focuses on the need and how to integrate Nigerian arts and culture into the school curriculum. In doing this, related models for integration are discussed and the proposed stepwise process model is presented. Also, the possibilities of integration are established. However, the challenges that can possibly confront the proposed practice are highlighted with a view to providing prospects of cultural rejuvenation for national integration and sustainable development.

The United Nations Educational Scientific & Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2002) gave a vivid description of culture as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of

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living together, value systems, tradition and beliefs. Also culture, in the words of O'Neil (2006), is a powerful human tool for survival, but it is a fragile phenomenon. He commented further that culture is constantly changing and easily lost because it exists only in peoples' minds. To him, peoples' written languages, governments, buildings and other man made things are merely the products of culture, they are not culture in themselves. For this reason, he opined that archaeologists cannot dig up culture directly in their excavations. Thus the broken bottles and other artefacts of ancient people that they uncover are only material remains that reflect cultural patterns- they are things that were made and used through cultural knowledge and skills.

People's culture can be divided into three layers (O'neil 2006). The first is the body of cultural traditions that distinguishes specific societies, such as the Italian, Japanese and African culture. This essentially refers to the shared language, traditions, and beliefs that set each of these peoples apart from others. The second layer is a sub-culture. This implies that in complex, diverse societies in which people have come from many different parts of the world, they often retain much of their original cultural traditions. As a result, they are likely to be part of an identifiable sub-culture in their new society. These cultural traits of sub cultures set them apart from the rest of their society. In the US, examples of such ethnic groups are Vietnamese Americans, African-Americans, Mexican-Americans. In Nigeria, we can give examples of the Yoruba culture, the Igbo and the Hausa. The third layer is the cultural universals. These are learned behavioural patterns that are shared by all of humanity collectively. No matter where people live in the world, they share these universal traits. Examples are: (a) communicating in a verbal language consisting of a limited set of sounds and grammatical rules for constructing sentences, (b) using age and gender to classify people (e.g., teenager, senior citizen, woman and man), (c) raising children in some sort of family setting, (d) having a sexual division of labour (e.g. men's work versus women's work), etc.

From the fore-going, it follows that culture is people-related and that there must be a group of people or societies in place

before culture can be learned and transmitted from one generation to the other. In essence, culture is not a product of lone individuals.

However, a curriculum is an educational programme of learning experiences offered to the learner under the guidance of a school for the purpose of effecting change in the behaviour of a learner (Oriaifo, 2005). According to Wheeler (1967) a curriculum is the planned experiences offered to the learner under the guidance of the school.

Curriculum must therefore be seen as the reconstruction of knowledge and experience, systematically developed with the guidance of the school or relevant agencies which will enable the learner to have better mastery of learning experiences for the learner's and the society's wellbeing. Lawton (1975) in Esu, Erukoha, and Umoren (2006) viewed the curriculum as the selection from culture which embraces way of life, certain kinds of knowledge, certain attitudes and values regarded as so important that their transmission to the next generation is not left to chance.

From these few definitions, distinct features of the curriculum can be presented in line with the views of Ogunyemi (2007). These are:

A good curriculum is planned. This means that developing a curriculum requires elaborate efforts. It is not accidentally done or hurriedly put together as many activities are involved at the levels of school and other curriculum agencies.

The curriculum is systematic: this suggests that it involves stage-by-stage outlay of activities and not muddled up or done in a way that is likely to create confusion e.g. weekly, termly, yearly arrangements of learning experiences using units, modules, etc.

- The school anchors a curriculum: Unlike the informal process of education the school relates to curriculum to guide its activities and programmes.
- A curriculum focuses on the child: The most important consideration in curriculum activities is the child's needs for coping with the challenges. This is why curriculum is usually designed to equip the learner with the knowledge, skills,

values and other forms of competencies that will make him or her useful to himself or herself.

- The curriculum derives its basis from the expectations of the society: It is through the curriculum that the society perpetuates itself. So, the curriculum is only relevant when and if it serves the needs of the society for which it is meant.
- Curriculum development is a dynamic activity: constructing curriculum is an on-going and never-ending process. This is because there is always a new need to be addressed through the school system at every stage of the societal life.

The term curriculum therefore, has come to include the total environment in which education takes place. Thus, it embraces the child, the teacher, the subject, the content, the methodology of teaching and evaluating as well as the physical and psychological environment of teaching and learning experiences outside the classroom which were formally regarded as extra-curricular activities (Onyike, 1981) and (Bilesanmi-Awoderu 1999).

### **Models for curriculum development**

Curriculum models are graphical representations of curriculum development. There are three broad types of curriculum model. These are:

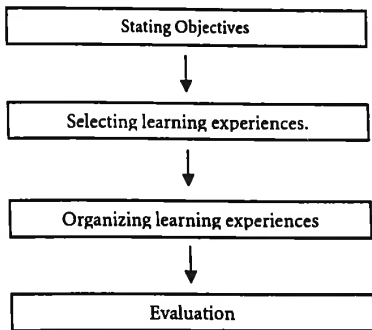
#### **1) *The objectives model***

The two major proponents of the objectives model otherwise known as the goal-oriented model are R.W Tyler and D. K. Wheeler. To Tyler (1949: 1), a model for providing curriculum design should be based on these 4 questions:

- What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
- What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?

- How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
- How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

Hence, he provided his linear model presented here as figure I.



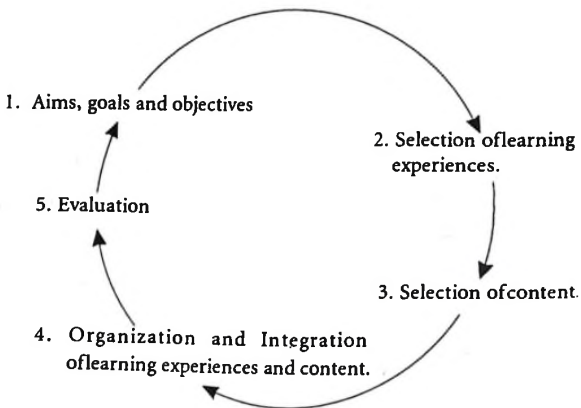
*Figure 1: Tyler's Linear model for Curriculum Development, in his Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction (1949)*

The four logical steps in his model involve:

- Stating objectives.
- Learning experiences.
- Organization of learning experiences.
- Evaluation.

On the other hand, Wheeler's model emphasizes the following:

- The selection of aims, goals and objectives.
- The selection of learning experiences;
- The selection of content (subject matter).
- The organization and integration of learning experiences and content.
- Evaluation.



*Fig. 2: Wheeler's Cyclic Model for Curriculum Development in his Curriculum Process (1967)*

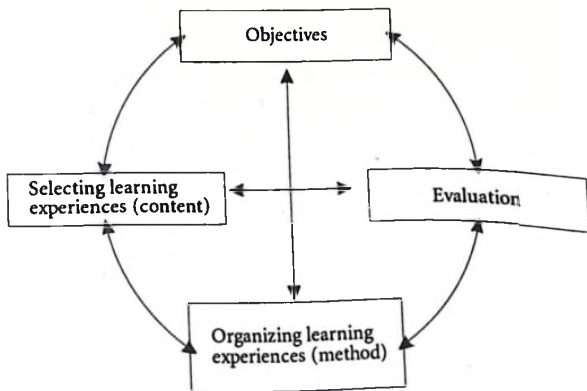
According to Ogunyemi and Ifegbesan (2007), there are two major differences between the two objectives models. First, Wheeler adopted a cyclical approach; suggesting that curriculum development is a continuous process as it does not end with evaluation. Second, Wheeler distinguishes between learning experiences and content both of which Tyler regards as same.

## **2. The Interaction Models**

These are models that show different relationships among the curriculum elements more than the objectives models. Quoting

Ivowi (1993), Ogunyemi and Ifegbesan (2007) list the following as the characteristics of the interaction models:

- (i) They begin with curriculum elements.
- (ii) Any sequence amongst the curriculum elements may be followed.
- (iii) The curriculum elements are interpreted as interactive and progressively modifiable.
- (iv) The order of curriculum planning may be changed to suit a given intention.
- (v) Reaction to the learning situation determines the sequence to be followed.



*Figure 3: The Interaction Model for Curriculum Development*

### **3. The Process Model**

These are models that can be referred to as the mid-point between the rigid objectives model and the flexible interaction models. Ogunyemi and Ifegbesan (2007) listed the following as the characteristics of the process model after Ivowi (1993):

- (i) It has no initial statement of objectives.
- (ii) It has a smaller emphasis on content than on method.
- (iii) It supports the view that some content and method are of intrinsic value.
- (iv) It does not endorse the notion that evaluating is of pre-specified objectives.

They went further to opine that the interactions among the various elements usually involve complex process as many of the activities take place concurrently. An example of this model is the Comparative Education Study and Adaptation Centre (CESAC) model of redesigning an existing curriculum.

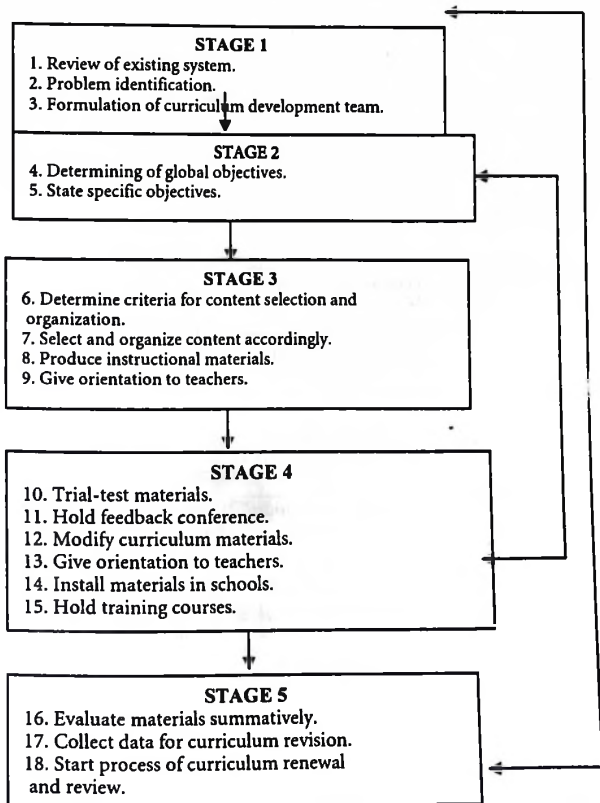
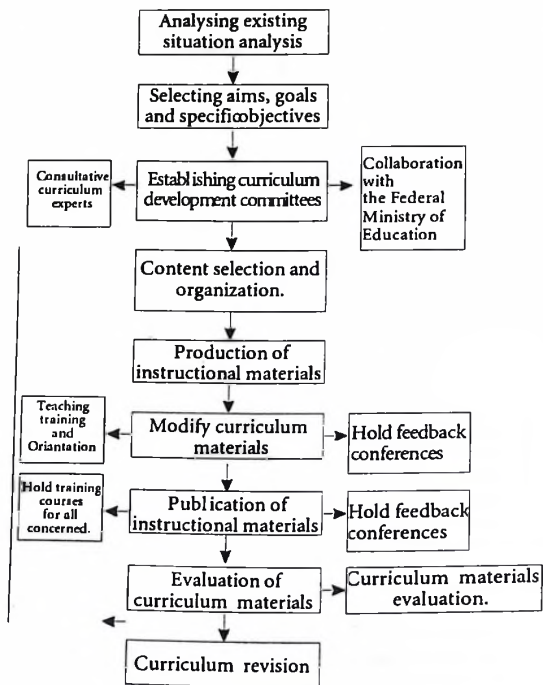


Figure 4: CESAC process model (Adopted from Mkpa, 1993).

## The proposed model

The proposed model Stepwise Process Model presented in this chapter as Figure 5 was adapted from Ivowi (1993).



**FIGURE 5:** Proposed model for integrating culture in the school curriculum. (Adapted From Ivowi 1999)

## **The need for integrating culture into the school curriculum**

The National objectives of Nigerian Education as stated in the Second National Development Plan are as follows:

- (i) A free and democratic society;
- (ii) A just and egalitarian society;
- (iii) A united, strong and self-reliant nation;
- (iv) A great and dynamic economy.
- (v) A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens (FGN 2004: 6).

In consequence, the quality of instruction at all levels has to be oriented towards inculcating the following values:

- (i) Respect for the worth and dignity of the individuals.
- (ii) Faith in man's ability to make rational decisions.
- (iii) Moral and spiritual values in interpersonal and human relations;
- (iv) Shared responsibility for the common good of the society.
- (v) Respect for the dignity of labour; and
- (vi) Promotion of the emotional, physical and psychological health of all children. (FGN 2004:8).

The National educational aims and objectives to which the philosophy is linked are therefore:

- (i) The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;
- (ii) The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society;
- (iii) The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; and.
- (iv) The acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competences both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society. (FGN 2004:8).

Culture therefore being a distinctive characteristic of the society is an instrument central to the educational process. The school curriculum is in essence used as a means to achieve the educational objectives or the objectives of the policy-makers in education. It is through this means that professionals as doctors, accountants, lawyers and others are produced for the country. According to Esu (1995), the country uses its school curriculum content to produce various kinds of manpower needed in all fields of education in the country. The school curriculum reflects the culture, (essential values and ethics) real life experience, needs, interests, and aspirations of that society.

Since the curriculum is derived from the society, it is imperative that it contains such components that could increase the cultural awareness of the students. As a follow up, school curriculum should include the learning of the norms of the society such as law and morality, its value systems, codes of manners, dress, religion, rituals, beliefs, tradition, language, music, creative arts, folk, classical and contemporary arts and literature. As a matter of fact, when students do not possess sufficient understanding of their culture, they do not seem to be emotionally attached to their background and as such may not be very loyal to their fatherland. In other words, they are emotionally detached from their roots.

The virtue of cooperation in the society is a welcome one for the progress of the society. It follows therefore that when Culture is fully integrated into the school curriculum, this would afford the students the opportunity to imbibe the ability to process and accept the view points of others. If one is to understand culture as being the most civilized relationship between humans, a sensitivity to and understanding of those considered as "others" is important. This is the only way of destroying prejudices, which is the beginning of the most uncultured behaviour. Gender sensitivity is something that has to be part of any value system that children should absorb.

The virtue of respect is a cardinal aspect of the culture which emphasizes courteous and smooth relationship between youth and their elders and even within the youths themselves. It follows therefore, that the integration of culture into the schools'

curriculum would promote the virtue of respect which will in turn enhance good interaction and co-operation within the people of the society. Language is a useful tool for transmitting cultural values system, beliefs etc. So, it can be inferred that if the language proficiency and effective use is lost, some part of cultural heritage is lost with it. In many educated homes nowadays, it is a common phenomenon to find everybody (even babies) speaking in English to the detriment of the mother tongue. This, experts have said is not good enough for the children who would feel "threatened" by an alien language thrust upon them. This act should be discouraged, so that the thinking processes of the child, which happens in the mother/home-tongues do not get hindered (MHRDG 2005).

The contemporary dressing option/style of most youth is an eye-sore. It could be said to be unbecoming and anti-cultural. The conscious teaching of cultural beliefs, aspiration and values would go a long way to impact on the youths the dress code, appropriate dressing for occasions and even carriage and dressing expected of a decent and respectable individual in the society.

Against the background of national development, culture has significantly been the spring source of knowledge and those virtues that facilitate or hinder civilization. It cannot be over-emphasized that culture does not only influence national development, it is indeed a prime vehicle for progress or retrogression as the case may be. The rate or level of progress of a people is attributable to the vibrancy of their culture while under-development is largely ascribable to ignorance and a degenerate culture (Oriaifo, 2005).

Cultural practices are not devoid of science and technology. For instance, basics of scientific principles are expressed in relation to traditional storage, cooling system, blacksmithing, smelting, preservation, manufacturing of implements, farming and medical care. So, if culture is fully integrated into the school curriculum, there is every possibility that this could spur scientific processes in the students which invariably could lead to an advantage in technology transfer on the long run. Epitomizing this view, Oguniyi (1986) opined that a great number of African

myths and beliefs have scientific explanations if they are carefully studied.

Culturally, responsive teaching can therefore be seen as using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them (Gay, 2000). He further opined that culturally responsive teaching can be described as having these characteristics:

- (i) It acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups, both as legacies that affect students' dispositions, attitudes, and approaches to learning and as worthy content to be taught in the formal curriculum.
- (ii) It builds bridges of meaningfulness between home and school experiences as well as between academic abstractions and lived socio-cultural realities.
- (iii) It uses a wide variety of instructional strategies that are connected to different learning styles.
- (iv) It teaches students to know and praise their own and each others' cultural heritages.
- (v) It incorporates multi-cultural information, resources, and materials in all the subjects and skills routinely taught in schools.

### **Challenges of integrating arts and culture in the school curriculum**

This chapter has identified the need for integrating culture into the school curriculum. However, this need is not without its challenges:

#### **(i) Diversity of cultural values**

Nigeria is no doubt a multi-cultural society. People from different communities exhibit unique thought patterns, distinctive intrinsic behaviours, interest, values and characteristic worldviews. This made Oriaifo (2005) to opine that socio-cultural practices change ever so frequently from one community

to another that the totality of the environment coming under the umbrella of a given cultural description is usually small. It is therefore a great task for curriculum planners to “catch” effectively the significant aspects of these cultures for inclusion into the curriculum. Hence, it may be a herculean task coming up with what content to be included in the curriculum to achieve the selected aims and objectives.

**(ii) Fund**

Availability of fund is an important factor in the integration of arts and culture in the school curriculum. Inculcating culture in the existing school curriculum is tantamount to curriculum revision. Curriculum revision requires a lot of money at different stages of planning, organizing, trying out the proposed curriculum, monitoring processes and progress made (Bilesanmi–Awoderu, 1999). If the government of the day is not committed to curriculum revision, then adequate fund would not be made available to the curriculum planners.

**(iii) Teacher factor**

Teachers are the most important agent of curriculum implementation. The National Policy on Education (FGN 2004) states that “no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers”. However well designed a curriculum is, the teachers would have to possess the adequate capability to implement it. If not, a well designed curriculum may turn out to be a failure.

**(iv) Duration**

The process of integrating arts and culture into the school curriculum would no doubt involve a programme of events which includes trial-testing or pilot-testing. In this bid, when the decision of integrating is finally taken, appropriate relevant aims and objectives are selected, also relevant content and learning experience to achieve these aims and objectives are selected, appropriate organizing of the learning experience are done and

evaluation techniques are put in place. All these take a lot of time to achieve and even after they might have been put in place, a lot of time is still needed to monitor the new programme, detect its shortcomings, and make remedies and trial test again until a satisfactory programme is got.

### ***(v) Resistance to change***

The ruling class in Nigeria which invariably controls what goes on in the schools does not encourage deviations from the status quo (Esu, Enuokoha and Umoren, 2006). This pre-supposes that special cultural elements are not seen as so important to be included in the curriculum. This is especially prominent at the secondary schools where they do not make any serious attempt at integrating special cultural elements into the school curriculum aside from studying of their local languages. The Secondary Schools have been criticized for educating the child to be partially an alien in his/her cultural environment. (Esu, Enuokoha and Umoren 2006).

### **Improving the quality of cultural awareness**

The suggestions for improving the quality of cultural awareness in line with MGRDG (2005):

- (i) The entire schooling should be based on the culture of the locality/community, learning should be made "culture-sensitive".
- (ii) The school should be process-based, and experiential, with sufficient flexibility to integrate local culture. Hence, it should accommodate the hopes, aspirations, needs and culture of the society.
- (iii) There must be sufficient space for accommodating local art forms, practices, places, institutions, festivals, rituals, artefacts, literature, even local riddles and humour.
- (iv) The teacher should become a friend and facilitator encouraging different cultural patterns and processes.

- (v) Different folk art forms, folksongs, stories, riddles and games should be included as "text" material. Decorations, embellishments in textbooks could use local forms of paintings, etc.
- (vi) Visit to museums to sight and familiarize the students to local arts and artefacts should be built into the school curriculum.
- (vii) School timetable should feature cultural activities. At these times, local artists, musicians, painters, writers and storytellers could be guests and performers at some of these sessions. Students should be encouraged to directly interact with them.

## **Prospects**

Since it has been established that there is an urgent need for the integration of arts and culture in the school curriculum for National Integration and Sustainable development, this author, opined that the multicultural nature of Nigeria notwithstanding, the curriculum experts can still integrate arts and culture in the school curriculum. This could be done by carefully selecting significant cultural values as content to be taught. It is also expected that the learning experiences selected for the curriculum materials be "student-centred" and instructional materials highly relevant and appropriate. It is also pertinent that everybody should be involved; the curriculum planners, writers, musicians, painters, teachers, parents, and students.

Adequate funds should be made available so that each step of the proposed model is carried out to specification. Enough instructional materials should be produced and the series of trial-testing expected carried out without recourse to shortage of funds.

Training, re-training, in-service training, workshops and conferences should be made available to teacher trainees and practicing teachers to orientate, re-orientate educate and encourage them.

## Conclusion

This chapter has no doubt established the need to integrate Nigerian arts and culture into the school curriculum. It has posited that culture is positively related to the level and rate of people's progress. Against this backdrop, a model for the integration was proposed. The challenges and prospects for the integration were discussed. It is important therefore to document that for national development and sustainable development to be fast-tracked, people within the society should be culturally sensitive.

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## Envisioning values-based leadership: an exposition of the concept of *Mutumun Kirki*

- *Daiyabu Muhammad Hassan*<sup>1</sup>

The chronic ills that beset Nigeria are directly attributed to crisis of leadership. One explanation given, for the poverty of leadership in Nigeria borders on our tendency to neglect or give inadequate recognition to indigenous ideals and value-systems in the shaping of state institutions and in evolving guidelines for the conduct of the affairs of government. *Mutumun Kirki* ('the good man') represents the ideal of personal goodness – a fundamental requirement of leadership personality traits imbued in the worldview and values of the Hausa people.

Although Islam has influenced the thinking and worldview of the Hausa people, this chapter will explore the concept of *Mutumun Kirki*, essentially from politico-cultural perspective, gleaned substantially through paroemiological lens. To this end, a number of questions are raised and addressed. How does the epithet of *Mutumun Kirki* influence leadership selection in Hausaland? To what extent does the appellation of *Mutumun Kirki* influence successful leadership? What are those specific

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personality traits for leadership that can be derived from an example of a *Mutumin Kirki* and mainstreamed into a national leadership model?

Our choice of conformance frame on which to discuss the concept of *Mutumin Kirki* (the 'good man' in Hausa) is the paroemiological one, (the subject of proverbs). Although contemporary Hausa culture constitutes mainly of a synthesis of the indigenous Hausa and Islamic belief and value systems, it has been argued that proverbial sayings (*Karin Magana*) are central to the understanding of all aspects of Hausa culture. Proverbs are regarded as one of the most reliable media through which pristine Hausa oral cultural tradition are retained and transmitted. At another level, the same argument has also been extended, to hold for the pre-Islamic and the period after the spread of Islam in Hausaland, on the thinking and worldview of the Hausa people.<sup>2</sup> In other words, oral traditions have continued to serve as important means of preserving the collective wisdom (especially) of non-literate people.

In the words of Loeb, "proverbs were, as a matter of fact man's first serious attempt at abstract thinking"<sup>3</sup> According to Anthony Kirk-Greene, quoting Professor Ida Ward's definition of the place of proverb in West Africa:

In law, it seems to classify a court- case, to provide a precedent, to generalize a particular action; in family life, it regulates the attitude of one member of the family to another; it helps in the education of the children; and in social intercourse, it smoothen out difficulties and adds pith to the well-known accomplishments of African conversation.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, Bada, also contends that," the data at our disposal lead us to the conclusion that quite a lot of African

<sup>2</sup> Details on this can be obtained in *The Hausa Metaphysical Worldview: A Paroemiological Exposition* (Unpublished Ph.D Thesis) by Muhammad Lawal Amin, 2002, ABU Zaria.

<sup>3</sup> As quoted by M. L. Amin *The Hausa Metaphysical Worldview: A Paroemiological Exposition* (Unpublished PhD Thesis)(P.16)

<sup>4</sup> Anthony H.M Kirk-Green *Mutunin Kirki: The Concept of The Goodman in Hausa*, (3<sup>RD</sup> Hans Wolf Memorial Lecture), Indiana University Bloomington, Indiana (p.3)

proverbs serve as bearers of philosophical insight. The corpus of non-literate people worldwide constitutes the foundation of their morality and philosophy.<sup>5</sup> This statement could be truer for the Hausa people. A view supported by Neil Skinner when he asserts that, "proverbs in a sense sum up Hausa culture."<sup>6</sup> In other words, the frequency with which proverbs are used in Hausa, in virtually all aspects of everyday interactions, shows their centrality in understanding the thinking and culture of the Hausa people. Hence, they are considered reliable source of data, from which insights into all aspects of life of the Hausa people can be obtained.

As in many other African language groups, the usage of proverbs has persisted, and thus survived all through the centuries, therefore become the wellspring from which oral cultural heritage are transmitted from one generation to the next. To buttress this point in the case of Hausa proverbs on their persistence, M. L. Amin cited the examples of pre-Islamic proverbs and the period after the spread of Islam: *Duk Dodo guda muke wa tsafi*, literally translated as *-we are all worshipping the same spirit* for pre-Islamic, and *Tsammanin wa rabbuka Mallam yaki noma don hatsin zakka*. Which means, *in anticipation of zakat 'Mallam'- the Islamic teacher, has refused to cultivate his land*, for the Islamic period.<sup>7</sup>

The task of discussing the concept of *Mutumin Kirki* has been made easier by the work of Professor Anthony H.M. Kirk-Greene, a leading social anthropologist of Hausa culture. In his work: *Mutumin Kirki - the concept of the 'good man' in Hausa*, Kirk-Greene identified and described the key character traits that earn a person the epithet of '*Mutumin Kirki*' in Hausa culture.

Our objective here is not to review Kirk-Greene's work; in fact, his work is a reference material to many fields of study that are concerned with Hausa culture. What we seek to do is to attempt to explore the political cum leadership significance of the

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<sup>5</sup> As quoted by M. L. Amin *The Hausa Metaphysical Worldview: A Paroemological Exposition* (Unpublished PhD Thesis)(P.115)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., (p.102)

concept, particularly, its importance to the understanding of indigenous leadership values. To do this, the chapter is divided into two sections: Section one, provides a brief summary of Kirk-Greene's conceptualization of the concept of *Mutumin Kirki* in Hausa. This is with the view to underscoring the significance of earning the accolade of a *Mutmin Kirki*. In section two, the attempt is made to derive from Kirk-Greene's concept of *The Goodman* in Hausa milieu of cultural values the political significance of the concept. For example in influencing leadership selection and examine how this insignia contributes to successful leadership, through the interpretation of what is considered the linking proverb: *Nagari na Kowa*, (which means, the good one belongs to everyone) *Mugu sai mai shi* (The bad or evil one belongs to his kith and kin). And its corroborating affiliates; *Nagari shi ke sai da kansa*; (the good one needs no advertisement), *Kowa yayi nagari dan kansa* (whoever does good to others, is for oneself).

### **The concept of *mutumin kirki***

According to Kirk-Greene, in Hausa society the highest social ideal the society expects its members to attain is the ideal of being a *Mutumin Kirki* (The Good Man). This underscores the cultural significance of earning the accolade of a *Mutumin Kirki* in Hausa society. Thus, as in many other African societies, high premium is place on character formation through moral exhortations and other means of regulating conducts and instilling the values underlining the expected standard of behaviour such as the use of satire and invocation of proverbs in the upbringing and socialization of younger members of the society.

In Hausa society, the good man is not necessarily the same as the successful man. The formation of character and the consequent reward of recognition as *Mutumin Kirki* have

been more important to the Hausa than the securing of *arziki*, the wealth that comes from success.<sup>8</sup>

As in other cultures, what underline this strong emphasis on the qualities of a man's character is shaped by the thinking and worldview of the Hausa people about the world, humanity and life. This therefore, forms the basis on which Kirk-Greene carved out his criteria for identifying a *Mutumin Kirki* in Hausa culture.

The main criteria adopted by Kirk-Greene for identifying those character traits which constitutes *halayen Kirki* in a man and which earns him the epithet of Mutumin Kirki are; firstly, the frequency with which these *dabi'u* behaviours, are referred to in ordinary conversations, approved and upheld in social intercourse at all levels of society including the royal official court level. The depth of reprimand and abhorrence shown to anyone who exhibits the opposite of these accepted standard behaviour codes was his second criteria for assessing those *halaye*.

Beside his personal observations, Kirk-Greene used other sources to establish the validity of his claims. For example, proverbial lore, *tatsuniyoyi*- fables maxims, historical anecdotes or stories. However, he relied mainly on the application of proverbs in social intercourse. The first item on Kirk-Greene list is *gaskiya* 'truth', which he acknowledges to be a universal item, but that, "the frequency of its occurrence in Hausa conversation is noticeably higher than in any equivalent of Western situation." Other examples he cited to support the choice of his first component element of what composed of the items required of a Mutumin Kirki such as, *tastuniyoyi* traditional fables, which he contend, emphasize the supremacy of truth.

The second *hali* on Kirk-Greene's list of *halaye* is the *hali* of *amana*, translated as 'trust'. According to him, the virtue of *amana* "does have a peculiar force in Hausa society". *Rikon amana*, the capacity for one to be trusted and to keep faith is at the foundation of all social behaviour. On the other hand, the

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<sup>8</sup> Anthony H.M Kirk-Green *Mutunin Kirki: The Concept of The Goodman in Hausa*, (3<sup>RD</sup> Hans Wolf Memorial Lecture), Indiana University Bloomington, Indiana(p.22)

transgression of *cin amana*, i.e to "embezzle or convert something entrusted to one's care (not necessarily cash), rank as an exceedingly grave blemish of character among the Hausa." Anyone who is regarded, as *yanada amana* is highly respected in Hausaland.

His third feature, *Karamci* or *kyauta*, 'open generosity', which can also be argued to be a universal attribute, its expectation, he asserts, among the Hausa "often seems larger than life". *Marowaci* or the stingy is an object of contempt or ridicule. The Hausa, he contends are status conscious people, so maxims like *laifin babba rowa*, which he translated as "an important man's sin is avarice" or *manya manya* 'the big shots' are very common in every day conversations in Hausa society.

The fourth virtue is the virtue of *hakuri*, patience which is "much prized and much preached". Although this also is strongly admonished, in the Islamic faith, it has its own peculiarity among the Hausa people. In fact, "a ritual greeting involving no response other than one from a set of conventional replies remains *ina hakuri*?" "This he maintains Islam only enhances having this virtue among the Hausa rather than instituting it.

The fifth quality identified by Kirk-Greene is *Hankali*. *Mai hankali* is translated, as someone who is prudent and well behaved as well as having a reasonable amount of common sense. A person without *hankali* is regarded, as silly, reckless or irrational.

The number six character requirement of a *Mutumun Kirki* is the attribute of *kunya*, which is taken, to be a proper sense of shame displayed by a person in his interactions. This leads such a person to the complimentary display of *ladabi* good manners the seventh item on Kirk-Greene's list. A person without shame in Hausa society is stigmatized, and is held in great contempt. Kirk-Greene tells us that, "to a certain extent, too, *ladabi* can be interpreted, as the outward manifestation of that ready obedience which permeated the Hausa attitude to legitimate authority. To buttress the importance of this particular attribute, he cited the corroboratory statement by Heinrich Barth "...The manners of Katsina were distinguished by superior politeness."

"It is by the way a man treats his fellow men, regardless of their station in society that the Hausa will finally evaluate him as meeting the criteria...of *Mutumin Kirki*". This statement presents us with the number eight item on Kirk-Greene's list. *Mutunci* described as the way a person, (especially a superior) treats others with due respect for their feelings. The significance of this attribute is revealed, in its negative sense, thus, "to the Hausa *cin mutunci* is a gross social offence that it outweighs, in gravity, physical assault."

The ninth and tenth behavioral character traits that conclude Kirk-Greene's list have their root in the Islamic religion; hence, *hikima* and *adalci* which are wisdom and the dispensing of justice and honesty in one's dealings, respectively, are central to leadership. In another sense *Adalci* is a synonym for *kirki*, which represents the fear of God.<sup>9</sup>

These character traits identified by Kirk-Geene are the ten "obligatory features" that define the *halaye* of the good man in Hausa. In his view, with the exception of 'truth' none of them is a universal attribute. This therefore, provides us with insights on what defined the highest ideals, which Hausa people aspire to, as well as the moral make-up or the supreme qualities of the cultural hero of Hausa society. However, Kirk-Greene has warned us that, "...the hero need not simultaneously be the good man, but the good man will always be the hero of his community."<sup>10</sup>

Based on Kirk-Greene's criteria for identifying the good man in Hausa cultural setting, and the sources of his data, and in spite of the difficulty of delineating what is indigenous and what Islam has instituted, it can be accepted that, largely, these values as enunciated, are indigenous to the Hausa environment and thinking. Again, as mentioned above, this does not imply that these values are not universal; the point here, as argued by Kirk-Greene has to do with the importance that is attached to some of the sources of his data, particularly oral tradition in Hausa

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<sup>9</sup> Pp3-12

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

culture and the frequency of occurrence of most of the items on his list in everyday interactions.

This can be substantiated further by assessing the impact of the cynosure of *Mutumun Kirki* on leadership selection in Hausaland. However, from the standpoint of our observation, the influence of the epithet of *Mutumun Kirki* on leadership selection is much more visible at general societal level than at the official level of political leadership. Evidence abounds on leadership selection in occupational or other forms of associations where the admiration and respect accorded to a *Mutumun kirki* automatically transform into votes. On the other hand, loyalty (an important ingredient for successful leadership), is maintained largely not by charisma or leadership style, but by the character disposition of the leader.

The thesis of this chapter is focused on the task to explore all aspects of our cultural heritage in our search for solutions to the numerous developmental challenges that confront us. Our position is that the subject of proverbs has remained one area that has been largely untapped. In our view, the assertion that "proverbs sum up Hausa culture" can be extended to hold for many other African cultural groups. The fact that Kirk-Greene relied on the extensive usage of proverbs among Hausa people to extract much of his data, suggests that further researches in this area can be stretched further and expanded. For, as S.A Nkom argued, "...it is the culture and philosophical outlook of a people which gives content, meaning and direction to their vision of the desirable society."<sup>1</sup>

Beside their other social functions in inter personal relationships; proverbs also serve as means of social control; as instruments of sanctioning behavior in Hausa society, in this regard, their political significance can be explored.

### **Nagari na kowa...**

If we adopt Stuart Gallacher's definition of proverb as our working definition- "a concise statement of an apparent truth

which has (had or will have) currency among the people”<sup>11</sup> then, the political significance of the proverb *Nagari Na Kowa* (which means, the good one belongs to everyone) amongst the Hausa becomes apparent. Taken together with its accompanying aphorisms; *Mugu sai mai shi* (The bad or evil one belongs to his kith and kin); *Kowa yayi na gari dan kansa* (whoever does good to others, is for oneself) and *Na gari shi ke saida kansa* (the good one needs no advertisement), its impact on who emerges in a competitive election becomes apparent.

The link between the concept of *Mutumin Kirki* in Hausa, as defined by Kirk-Greene and the proverb of *Nagari Na Kowa*, is shown by its depiction in a short and concise statement, all the character traits embedded in a *Mutumin Kirki*. It encapsulates within it, of *Gaskiya* - truthfulness and trustworthiness, generosity to the less fortunate members of the community, piety, integrity, honesty, and commitment, hence it re-enforces the recognition of those attributes of a *Mutumin kirki*.

In competitive leadership process of selection or election in traditional Hausa society, albeit at any level or sphere of society, where the competition becomes intense, many factors come into play in deciding who emerges as the preferred candidate and winner of the election. The accolade of *Mutumin Kirki* is important; however, what finalizes the decision is the subtle invocation of the proverb *Nagari Na kowa...*, its impact whether subconsciously or consciously quickly resonates in the electors. It separates between *Mutanen Kirki* (plural of *Mutumin Kirki*); it instantaneously brings out those added qualities in one of the competing *Mutanen Kirki* which could include; resoluteness and decisiveness, greater concern and commitment to the wellbeing of the people, foresight, or vision, etc.

This proverb is one example of many proverbs that have ‘political’ significance especially in leadership selection among Hausa people. The challenge before us therefore, is to explore and examine such proverbs that will aid in developing precepts, which can be mainstreamed and put to use in the search for

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<sup>11</sup> As quoted by M. L Amin *The Hausa Metaphysical Worldview: A Paroemological Exposition* (Unpublished Ph.D Thesis)(P.15)

values rooted in our cultures. In other words, if the different aspects and functions of our proverbs are studied, they can be added to existing knowledge on other aspects of our oral tradition. This is based on the supposition that African indigenous value systems are untapped treasure-troves: values that can be tapped to address some of our contemporary problems, particularly our leadership problem.

### **The future of values in leadership**

In a piece, titled "It's Leadership, Stupid"<sup>12</sup> Rev Fr. George Ehusani joined in the long list of those Nigerians who, having diagnosed the ills that beset Nigeria, came to the conclusion that unless our leadership problem is addressed, our other fundamental ills would remain uncured and Nigeria will remain stagnant in the path of development. The qualities required in a good leader, in any human group are virtually the same. What made some to get it right and others wrong, is in our view the inability of those who got it wrong to identify those 'added' values that are indigenous or most appropriate to their peculiar situation, whether it is in finding the right leadership or in getting the leadership to do the right thing. The example Rev Fr. Ehusani cited of Singapore and their leader Lee Kwan Yew, cannot be more apt, in contrast to Nigeria. Nigeria like any other country has its own share of people with leadership traits that are at the same time imbued with those character traits that are forged and shaped by the environment. As mentioned above, our fundamental problems arose primarily due to the crisis of values in the choice of national leaders. This problem is further compounded by the corrosive powers of certain 'negatives' that are alien and detrimental to our way of life, which are fast encroaching, and propelled by the forces of globalization.

It has been argued, that Nigerians excel in extracting out our 'negative' traditional practices and marrying them with similar

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<sup>12</sup> *Guardian* newspaper Nov 15, 2004 (p.65)

externally induced or imported negatives. Such hybridization is responsible for our current situation. The question before us therefore remains; how can these rich sources of our cultural heritage be explored and harnessed in the search for our indigenous value systems? This is because our current confused state of identity and the parody that we are is responsible for most of our leadership crises.

## **Conclusion**

Our traditional methods of sanctions, reward and punishment hold the key. Nigeria's crises of values in leadership can only be addressed if we get our priorities right. For us to get the right leadership that would get the country out of her myriad of problems, who are ready to make the necessary sacrifice, which is a common feature among all great leaders of the world, we must set our values right. Such high hopes can only be realized if we look inward in our search for the appropriate values. One area that has not been explored in this regard is the study of African proverbs.

The attainment of successful leadership in any human organization is fundamentally dependant on the loyalty of followership, followed closely by the overall disposition of the leader. The leader's innate qualities, which are in-born, the environment he is moulded, his personal experience are all very important to successful leadership. However, the loyalty of the followers is in our view the most important factor. The choice of a personality model made by Kirk-Greene to represent his African personality model, based on his criteria, was Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, because "...the hero needs not simultaneously be the good man, but the good man will always be the hero of his community."



# The State, values and development: *towards re-orientating Nigerian youth for leadership*

- E. Remi Aiyede <sup>1</sup>

## I. Introduction

One of the most fundamental questions vexing the Nigerian youth has to do with the possibility of success of the Nigerian project. This question arises mainly from the fears and despairs the youths face daily as they try to make sense of their existence as Nigerian citizens in a world that has become a global village. This question has to do with the level of confidence that they have in terms of the relative opportunity to realize their potentials within the Nigerian political and economic milieu. This question takes on particular importance when the youths try to make sense of the paradox of penury and hunger in a nation so richly endowed with natural and human resources. It is also brought to the fore when Nigeria is compared with countries like Malaysia, South Korea, Singapore and Indonesia that are not as rich in natural resources and were in the same situation as Nigeria in the 1960s but have experienced marked

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industrialization, with improved quality of life for the vast majority of their population since the 1990s when Nigeria cannot confidently say it is on the path to industrial growth. There is a moral dilemma that arises from the failure of the promises of independence. One of which is the responsibility of the youth to a country that holds so much promise but carries very limited hope of their fulfilment for a vast majority of its population. What accounts for the failure of development in Nigeria? Has it got anything to do with the values that are given prominence in the way things are done in the country? If it has to do with negative values, how can we ensure that these values are transformed for the future reversal of developmental failures? What are these values? How did they come to dominate the values of our society? What measures can be taken to re-orientate our youths who are victims of the failures of today but are destined to be leaders of tomorrow. These constitute the questions that this chapter seeks to answer.

The chapter begins by examining the place of values in the development process, especially as they relate to youth in the development arena. It then explores the challenges facing Nigeria. It argues that there is indeed a crisis arising from the general breakdown of values in the Nigerian society. It then goes on to map a strategy for dealing with this situation in order that Nigeria achieves positive leadership in the nearest future. At the core of the reorientation of values among the youth is the socialisation processes, especially the educational system both formal and non-formal.

## **II. Values, youth and development**

Development is a contested concept. From its earliest conceptualisation in the 1960s as modernization, there have been competing meanings of development. When the modernization paradigm held sway, development was viewed as total transformation of a traditional or pre-modern society into the types of technology and associated social organisation that characterize the 'advanced' economically prosperous and

politically stable nations of the western world (Moore 1963:89). In this wise the future of the developing world was already in existence and was seen in the form of the advanced western societies of the United States and Europe. This view was later challenged by several schools of thought not in terms of the goal of development but in terms of whether it was achievable as envisaged by the modernization school. For the modernization school, development was achievable by the application of rational management techniques and planning. The dependency school forcefully maintained that the global economic structures make development unachievable in the periphery. The last two decades also saw the shift from the view of the state as the central agency of development to a view that perceived the market and the private sector as the engine of development. At the centre of these debates are the generation of prosperity and the spread of these prosperity to a majority of the population of a country, the role of the state in the process, the cost of the social and environmental transformation that it entails, as well as the distribution of the burden among the various strata of society. Generally, development related to the human capacity to improve the quality of life by transforming the way production and other human activities are carried out in order to eradicate poverty, unemployment and social inequalities. Dudley Seers (1972) defines economic development as the progressive elimination of poverty, unemployment and inequality, while Amartya Sen (1999) places emphasis on the concepts of capacities and entitlements (or social rights). In general development has six components according to Goulet 1992. These are:

- An economic component dealing with the creation of wealth and improved conditions of material life, equitably distributed;
- A social ingredient measured as well-being in health, education, housing and employment;
- A political dimension including such values as human rights, political freedom, enfranchisement, and some form of democracy;

- A cultural dimension in recognition of the fact that cultures confer identity and self-worth to people;
- A full-life paradigm, which refers to meaning systems, symbols and beliefs concerning the ultimate meaning of life and history; and
- A commitment to ecologically sound and sustainable development so that the present generation does not undermine the position of future generations.

Conceived in this manner development is a comprehensive process that is underlined by values both in terms of its goals, process and sustenance. Indeed, at the centre of development is human agency with both individual and social dimensions. Also very critical is the implicit assumption that the state system provides the essential framework for the development of peoples in our contemporary world. Accordingly, efforts have been made to identify the key elements of the state system that engender development. A cursory review of the literature reveals that states that have succeeded in engendering the development of their societies from the advanced countries of the West to the new industrialized state of Asia, are states that are able to clearly set development objectives and establish the institutional structures to achieve those objectives. Such states are able to form alliances with key social groups in society that helps it to achieve its developmental goals. This usually involves establishing a programmatic relationship between citizens and political parties. Programmatic politics are based on collective deliberation on public issues and are characterised by networks of civic associations. This helps to generate consensus and create stability in the political system. On the other hand, clientelistic politics is based on the award of personal favours; and at times coercion. Under such a dispensation, voters make their choices on the basis of primordial factors such as religion, ethnicity, race and personality, rather than alternative developmental programmes.

At the heart of the developmental state is the normative environment that links institutional design with state-society relations and economic prosperity. Values underlie institutional

transformation that close the gap between formal and informal processes and networks that help strengthen the state and enable social organizations to achieve development. The discourse on the developmental state also emphasizes the mobilization of peoples, the social construction of patriotism, social capital, and the extension of access to education to unleash the innovative potentials and abilities of individuals. These sharply contrast with the disincentive effects of wealth accumulation through political corruption, including conspicuously large salaries for politicians, in a society in which a sense of duty or responsibility to the state needs to be augmented. Predatory rule has devastating effects on development because, as a non-violent form of domination, it has to depend on non-violent strategies that disorganize civil society (see Bagchi, 2000; Evans, 1989, 1995; Fatton, 1992, 1999; Mkandawire, 2001).

The youths have a role to play in this process as a social stratum with organisations and other resources that can promote capabilities and mutual support. The place and importance of the youth in the development process is aptly described by the Nigerian National Youth Policy in this way:

Youth are one of the greatest assets that any nation can have. Not only are they legitimately regarded as the future leaders, they are potentially and actually the greatest investment for a country's development. They serve as a good measure of the extent to which a country can reproduce as well as sustain itself. The extent of their vitality, responsible conduct, and roles in society is positively correlated with the development of their country.

The youth policy defines the youth as all young persons of the ages 18-35 years. The youth population, according to the 2006 national population census figures, is almost a hundred million. This means that they constitute more than two-thirds of the country's population of 140 million. They are the backbone of the development of the country. Indeed, if Nigeria is to be sustained as a viable entity there must be a very good plan to tap

the energy and resourcefulness of the youth population to fast track economic development.

The discussion so far has outlined the idea of development, the developmental state and the requirement of concerted programmatic involvement of various strata and organisation in the development process. One point that needs further emphasis is the idea that the developmental state is 'one whose ideological underpinnings are developmental and one that seriously attempts to construct and deploy its administrative and political resources to the task of economic development' (Mkandiwire 2001: 3). It involves a commitment on the part of political leadership to specific values that guide their action in government. Values are things or ideas we hold in high esteem or regard highly. As a concept, values are beliefs or ideals which individuals, groups or societies hold dear and acceptable. It is these ideas, beliefs or understandings of members of the society that guide and are reflected in members' behaviour. These ideals or beliefs are the basis of standards in public life. They may be derived from tradition, experience, and religion. They inform the morality of society and drive the design of institutions and their enforceability. In the Nigeria of today personal riches are valued above character and national success. Money is worshipped as the greatest thing in life regardless of how it is acquired. Embezzlement of public funds and other forms of corruption reign supreme. There is palpable need to take the advice of Mahatma Gandhi which he put before his Indian people very seriously, namely, the need to re-orientate the society against 'wealth without work, pleasure without conscience, science without humanity, politics without principle, commerce without morality, and worship without sacrifice'. Attempt must be made to institute Nigeria's national values which are clearly articulated in the constitution but neglected in everyday life to become real guiding principles in public life. These values include, discipline, integrity, dignity of labour, social justice, religious tolerance, self reliance and patriotism.

### **III. The Nigerian youth, underdevelopment and the crisis of values in Nigeria**

The socio-economic and political environment in Nigeria poses a great challenge to the youth. Economic and social statistics present a somber picture that leaves much to be desired. Almost half a century after flag independence, the economy continues to be dominated by the primary sector – agriculture, oil and minerals. This is partly because the country has not been able to create an environment for high value added economic activities. There is low domestic capital formation and declining direct foreign investment, with the exemption of the oil and gas sectors, until recently very heavy indebtedness, high unemployment and the informalisation of the economy where the majority of its people live in poverty. Nigeria performs very poorly in terms of global economic competitiveness. The country lacks basic social and physical infrastructure. As a result, most people in the country have no access to basic services such as potable water, electricity, good sanitation, roads and healthcare. There is also a high illiteracy rate, especially among women. The lack of access to basic medical care occurs against a backdrop of ravaging diseases; a situation which has become exacerbated with the advent of the pandemic HIV/AIDS.

The country's underdevelopment has been reinforced by authoritarianism, political instability, ethnic and religious conflicts in the last decade. Even almost a decade after the return to democratic rule palpable misgovernance is marked by exclusion of the people from governance, non-accountability of public officials, lack of transparency in decision-making, electoral fraud and the colonisation and personalisation of the state and national resources by the political elite. This situation presents particular challenges for the Nigerian youth.

The basic assumption of the chapter is that the crisis of values and attitudes affecting the youth is to be traced to the general breakdown of values within the larger society. To expatiate on these we draw from the sociological studies on social norms, the fundamental theory being the theory of anomie propounded by Robert Merton. Merton tried to explain why widespread

breakdown in norms of society do occur. According to him the widespread breakdown of society's norms occur when the values of society extols the pursuit of a goal but provides access to legitimate means of attaining that goal to a limited number of persons within that society. Those who are foreclosed from achieving that goal through legitimate means (by their social strata or class for example) try to relieve their sense of deprivation by adopting ways that conflict with societal norms. Some simply lose interest in societal goals and drift along while others resort to some form of escape in drugs or religious fundamentalism (Merton 1968).

For the Nigerian youth, this situation is made more complex by the contradiction between the values and goals that the youth are expected to uphold and their interests as individuals who want to move ahead in both economic and social terms within such a society. The anomie theory enables us to trace the origin of the crisis of values among the youth to the 1970s and 1980s when the country underwent critical changes in social relations and societal norms. The contradiction enables us to see why the crisis has become protracted and widespread.

As it is well known Nigerian society is a post-colonial society. The colonial educational system was the basis of social and economic advancement until independence. The major source of absorbing the product from the educational system was the public bureaucracy and the multinational corporations. The educational system was dominated by religious norms with a claim to universal validity.

The struggle for independence challenged the social and political foundations of these values and the very goals of the educational system were redefined in the post independence era. Worse still, there was a political challenge to received process of political succession by the prevalence of military rule and the associated morality of power. At this time there was a marked change in the status of education as the important determinant of social advance. Education was important but it was no longer enough. Secondly, in place of the rigorous and institutionalised processes of educational attainment, it was clear that such rules and processes can be circumvented and that if successfully done

the end justifies the means. Efforts by the various unions, associations and respected educationists like Tai Solarin to draw attention to this dangerous trend were met with coercion. All of these became aggravated by the economic recession that gripped the country from the early 1980s and the ways individuals have tried to cope with the resultant economic and social hardships, especially at the individual level.

Coups, military rule and authoritarianism have led to the devaluation of values and disregard for institutionalised processes of advancement in the country. The 1980s and 1990s that marked the deterioration of the value system also witnessed the entrenchment of predatory rule. The manner of military take over and the use to which political power was put made mockery of many values that the society held in high esteem, values that the educational system was designed to promote. Military authoritarian rule enthroned a culture of might, arrogance of power, human right abuses, and disrespect for the courts of law, indiscipline, aggrandisement and arrogance within society. The lifestyles of the military officers in government and their civilian allies showed to the young that hard work was a waste of time. It showed to them how faster and easier it is to become wealthy through extra-legal means.

As the public service, especially the educational system, and its values come to clash with the authoritarian regimes, the former rode rough shod over the latter. The government interference in the routine procedures of the public sector, especially through sacks and unilateral appointments, sporadic setting of targets and rules, arrest and detention of union officials, forceful eviction of academics from their living quarters, etc. the system began to experience institutional atrophy. Currently one of the baleful symptoms of this crisis is the growing intolerance of others' views and actions by political, religious and social groups within the system (Omoluabi 1999, Ademiluka 1999). Another is the increase in violent behaviour among students which Asobie (1999) ascribes to militarism in the campuses.

Economic recession in the 1980s and 1990s did not help matters. Salaries of civil servants, teachers and academics were

the most hit during the early days of recession. Salaries of teachers, especially primary and secondary school teachers were left unpaid for several months in many states in the early 1980s. When Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was implemented in the late 1980s, the wages of public sector employees were frozen (Olukoshi 1991, 1993, 1993a). Some civil servants and other workers in the public sector sought employment in the private sector; some left the country, those who have nowhere to go stayed within the system employing a variety of means to augment their income. As the employment market contracted, new in-takes merely took up public sector paid jobs as stepping stones to better opportunities. Commitment to professional and moral values eroded. Loyalty to the governance structure and norms of the work organisation became weak and so was socialisation processes. As a result, the capacity of institutions to shape behaviour in the workplace weakened. The incapacity of the professional associations to protect the welfare of their members in spite of strikes undermined their power over their members (see Klitzgaard 1989, Bangura 1994). Society eventually descended into a state of anomie characterised by a crude struggle for economic survival and accumulation. Thus, the contemporary youth is a product of this anomic situation. The implication of the foregoing is that the value crisis amongst the Nigerian youth population is a fundamental one. It touches the very foundation of social values and social relations within the Nigerian society and economy. As such, it can only be resolved by taking it along with other political, economic and social reforms.

### **Public policy and the Nigerian youth**

For a very long time, there was no comprehensive youth policy in Nigeria. The existing policy before 1999 which was formulated several decades ago, fail to reckon with current challenges facing the youth today. In many respect, it fails to meet the hopes and aspirations of Nigeria. In spite of this, many of the youths have made a successful transition from childhood to adulthood.

However, they did not achieve this transition without assistance from families, societal institutions, communities and friends. They benefited from the opportunities and events that guided and structured their behaviours and encouraged them towards positive growth and development. The period 1960 to 1980 witnessed a very robust enlargement of opportunities for the Nigerian youth. In those periods when the economy flourished, education was expanded, universities multiplied and blossomed, school enrolment exploded at all levels. However, with the world-wide economic recession in the early 1980s, Nigeria fell into economic difficulties, leading to a cut in social spending in the effort to arrest economic recession and return the country to the path of growth and development by successive governments.

Over the years, significant proportions of Nigerian youth have become demoralised and confused. Thus, we have experienced high levels of youth deviance, manifesting in different forms of violence and thuggery, rising levels of financial and economic crimes. Violence, cultism, fraud and other corrupt practices mark school culture in public and private schools. Many of the youths of today are not equipped to sustain themselves economically and to contribute to the maintenance of family cohesiveness. Neither are they empowered to participate meaningfully in community and social life.

The Nigerian federal government expressed recognition for the need to deal directly and systematically with these challenges when it prepared a National Youth Policy in 2001. This was followed by a National Youth Agenda. The National Youth Policy identified the problems confronting the youth in Nigeria to include:

- Inadequate parental care;
- Non-availability of suitable sports and recreational facilities;
- Moral decadence in the society;
- Lack of appropriate role models;
- Religious fanaticism;
- Cult activities;
- Political manipulation of youth organizations;

- Unemployment and underemployment;
- Poor education;
- Breakdown of family values; and
- Indiscipline.

Apart from these identified problems, the youth in Nigeria grapple with moral and health problems such as examination malpractices, and sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS.

According to the youth agenda, the government recognises that youth development requires the concerted effort of government, non-governmental agencies, communities and the family. There are three components of the national Youth Agenda. The first is sustainable livelihood. This involves enterprise development and business support, educational counselling and support, and access to credit and loans.

The second component is the building of bridges for responsible adulthood. It involves mentoring, leadership development and coaching. The third component is the provision of an enabling environment for self-expression. This aims to unleash the spirit of enterprise and innovativeness of the youth. The role of government in this regard is to provide the appropriate policy framework, and support, harnessing the private sector experience and resources and engagement with civil society by government in youth development and promotion activities.

A National Youth Development Fund was also established as a micro-credit scheme to support productive aspirations and entrepreneurship among the youth. The fund provides credit and loans to enable disadvantaged young people to start a new enterprise or expand old ones. It was also to enable others to pursue their education with this credit facility. But these are tokens put forward to show government concern. The real issues of misgovernance, underlined by an ethics of predation needs to be addressed. Until governance is reformed such that it becomes driven by discipline, hard work, patriotism, national pride and economic competitiveness the journey to development is yet to commence.

## **Conclusion**

All over the world, it is recognized that people are the real wealth of a nation. However, in our knowledge driven world, the quality of a people is marked by the skills and knowledge that they bear. A well educated citizenry is a mark of a huge human capital. Such a citizenry are not likely to be merely beneficiaries of economic and social progress. They are more likely to be the agents and driving force of economic and social progress. It is the period of youth that coincide more strongly with the period of skill acquisition in a country's life. Thus, if the people are the real wealth of a nation, the size and quality of its youth population determines whether the wealth potential in the country will be realised and sustained. Hence if we want to invest in our future, the best thing to do is to invest in the youth. The essence of these is to create an environment that is free of fear and poverty, and ensures that the future generation is able to fulfil their lives through productive, creative work and through love, affection, solidarity and co-operation.

The Nigerian youth is both the greatest assets of the country as well as its daunting challenge. The youth represent the great potential that Nigeria is while equally presenting the depth of the challenge of breaking through the confines of underdevelopment. Accounting for almost 50 per cent of the population, it brims over with energy and creativity. But a significant proportion of the Nigerian youth is misguided, demoralised and confused. Some of them have become involved in criminal activities. Yet the youth is what enables us to dream of a better tomorrow, to work very hard to build a virile and dynamic system that our generation and the future generation would be proud of. It is important to note that however hard we work, if the youth of today, who are the leaders of tomorrow, are not properly equipped and empowered to sustain and improve upon the legacy we are bequeathing to them, our efforts will be in vain. It for this reason the youth must be central to any programme of national development.

Given the above condition of the Nigerian youth, value reorientation has to be done to inculcate national values of hard

work, patriotism among the youth. Efforts must be made to ensure that no Nigerian child of school going age is out of the school system. Then national values must be entrenched at every level of the educational system.

Two concepts are important to redressing the problem of values. These are values education and character education. These two concepts are particularly important because they take us to the values of society as prescriptions and as practices. They also point to the fact that reordering values and character in education can only occur over several years and within a number of environments. Value education is the process of providing opportunities for the continuous development in all students of the knowledge, skills and attitudes related to certain values which lead to behaviour exhibiting those values. Character Education is the process by which positive personality traits are developed, encouraged and reinforced through example, study (history and biography of the great and good) and practice (emulation of what has been observed and learned). Nigeria must take values education very seriously. The government must support organisations that try to promote values education within the system (see Schaps, Watson and Lewis 1996).

There is a need for the reordering of the values of the Nigerian society by its leadership. This will involve making efforts to infuse upbringing of children from the cradle with these positive values at every level of socialization. For this purpose, every stakeholder in the educational system has a role to play. The school, the home and the community, including religious institutions, should be used as venues to practice value/character traits. The family is extremely important to a child's character and values development. The individual comes in contact first with family members and their influence continues to be important in the preschools and early school years.

As students progress through the formal school system, their education should provide instructional opportunities, explicit and implicit that help them develop their beliefs about what is right and good. Students in all grade levels should have opportunities to practice values and character traits that range

from role playing and decision-making exercises to actual community service.

Also, the various voluntary associations in the educational sector: parents/teachers association, professional associations, old students and alumni, unions and other social movement organisations have an important role to play.

We cannot achieve development without investing in the moral development of our youth. This must be part of the effort to make them self-sufficient, and able to cultivate positive and responsible family and social relationship, thereby minimising their vulnerability to abusive, violent and criminal or other anti-social behaviours.

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# Strengthening democracy in Nigeria: lessons from traditional political systems

- *Wale Are Olaitan*<sup>1</sup>

## **Introduction**

In spite of the popular argument and disposition about the largely undemocratic past of Africa (including Nigeria) characterised, as the argument goes, by authoritarian chiefdoms, totalitarian empires and personalised rulerships, the chapter advances the argument that there is still much to be learnt from the past in seeking to strengthen democracy in Nigeria. This is not just because the past is essential to any worthwhile present and culture is crucial to the sustainable and efficient governance of any society. Culture is inexorably grafted on the past, but also due to the fact that traditional African (and Nigerian) political systems espoused ideals which promote responsible and responsive governance, the end that democracy also seeks to attain. It is, therefore, canvassed that modern democratic arrangement in Nigeria could learn from these ideals.

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It is almost well known that Africa has been grappling with how to make democracy work well and serve the interest of development and the people. This is because in spite of the formal introduction of democracy in most countries in the continent and even the formal adoption of a democratic code by African leaders under the platform of the African Union (AU), Africa continues to have an image of an undemocratic setting where elections are routinely rigged and leaders use any means to cling to power without being concerned about how to make government serve the people or get real democratic dividends to them. This trend also manifests itself in Nigeria where more than eight years of democratic experience since the return to democratic rule in 1999 has not cemented democracy especially considering the problems the country continues to have with holding credible elections. (LeVan, *et al.*, 2004) While it would have been expected that the country would grow in terms of its mastery of the ability and capability to cope with the demands of conducting democratic elections as it clocks more years of democratic practice, the reality would suggest a loss of capability as the years of democratic experience accumulate. It has, for instance, been reported that successive elections in Nigeria since the return of democracy in 1999 have witnessed increased manipulation and malpractices perhaps to show that the more democracy stays in terms of years, the more the country moves away from its true ideals. It is, therefore, not a contested statement when it is averred that there is still much to do to deepen democratic rule in Nigeria as the current democratic practice suffers from a lot of setbacks and shortcomings.

One of the ways of grappling with or understanding the problems of democracy in Nigeria, according to Claude Ake, is to link this with its disdain for the history and culture of the people. States Ake (1996: 21):

We regress (democratically) today because we studiously abandoned those democratic elements in our culture which gave our traditional societies solidarity, accountability and the rule of law, leaving our societies without balance, rhythm or coherence, incapable of peace or stability.

The implication of this position is the need to look toward the culture of the people and the traditional political systems to identify ideals and elements that could be integrated to strengthen the modern democratic practice in order to assure it of sustenance, effectiveness and efficiency. This chapter, therefore, explores the terrain of traditional political systems in Nigeria to see elements contained therein that could serve as lessons for the modern democratic system of governance. The idea here is to identify areas where the traditional system of governance could provide the way forward for the true practice of democracy in Nigeria in such a way that the current defects of democracy could be transcended. This is to derive creative institutional and behavioural traits from the past that would help make democracy sustainable by enhancing its capacity to, in practice, provide for the needs of the people. As Claude Ake (1992: 6) again puts it:

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to the entrenchment of democracy in Africa is our disregard of the cultural context of democratic processes and practices. All too easily, we confuse the values and principles of democracy with specific historical institutional forms of democratic practice. We invariably try to reproduce the familiar institutions already in existence rather than devising creatively, new institutional forms and practices appropriate to our circumstances yet incorporating the values and principles of democracy.

The argument here is not just that traditional political system and their cultural imperative could provide the needed lessons for the strengthening of democracy in Nigeria, but that the persisting failure of democracy is not unrelated to its disregard of this cultural past. Given that the past is always implicated in the present and that no worthwhile edifice could be built on nothing, it becomes important that modern democratic practice be built on the reality of the past in Africa and Nigeria and this would entail grafting modern democracy on the cultural and institutional pattern which defined the people in order to ensure a link between the modern form of governance and the people.

The desire to identify lessons that could serve modern democracy in Nigeria in good stead from the traditional political systems is, therefore, a return to the true path of sustaining democracy in Nigeria as it is simply impossible to go forward without relying on the past. This is the essence of this chapter.

### **Democracy and its ends**

Democracy is widely accepted as the best process of governance in modern times because of the opportunity it gives to involve the people as much as possible in the process of governing them. Indeed, democracy started as the rule of everybody – the rule of all the people – where every eligible citizen was expected to participate in the making of every public decision. Classical democracy was, therefore, about the rule of every citizen, such that the opinion of every citizen counted in the process of governance. This opportunity offered by democracy was not considered as an end in itself, even if this idea could be regarded as self-justifying. By this, it is meant that whereas bringing everybody into reckoning in taking decisions that affect them is in itself an inherently justifiable position arising from the equality of all citizens and the associated fact that such decisions would then spring from the contributions of all the equals, it is also the case that decisions arrived at through this process have a higher capacity of satisfying the true needs of the people (Macridis, 1980). If it is accepted that nobody could know the interest of another more than the person himself/herself, it would follow that whatever he/she agrees to would be in his/her best interest. Thus, democracy, even from the classical standpoint, is not only meant to provide an opportunity for the citizens to participate in governance, but is essentially directed at getting the best policies and decisions through this participation. It then means that democracy as a process has important ends – such as getting the best possible decisions – that it is designed to achieve and it should be to the extent that such ends are met that democracy would be on a higher pedestal of justification (Rokkan, 1970).

However, the need to make all the people participate in the governance process or the urge for the best possible decision to serve the interest of the people would not have been necessary if not for the understanding that the people make the society and that the health of the society is coterminous with the health of the people. This is not as obvious as it would seem. This is because it is possible to see the society in the image of the gods and those who are representing them on earth. In which case, the society would be conceived essentially in terms of what happens to the gods and their representatives, and to the extent that the gods and their representatives are happy, it would be assumed that the society is functioning well. Here the interests and concerns of the people do not count or matter as the society exists essentially in the interest of the gods and their representatives. It is also possible to conceive of the society in terms of leadership, with the designs and interests of the leaders constituting the kernel of the existence of the society. The leaders here would not just take decisions for the society, but such decisions would be for the furtherance of the interests of the leaders as the leaders, to all intents and purposes, constitute the society. Within these conceptions, the people constitute no more than tools for the satisfaction of the interests of the gods or the leadership. The desire to involve every citizen in the process of governance is, therefore, a shift in paradigm, suggesting recognition of the society as being composed essentially by the people rather than the gods and the leadership. Democracy, as such, signifies a conception of the society in terms of the people and this represents its first important purpose or end: linking the society to the people in a concrete sense such that the people (come to) see themselves as the society. It is this kind of conception and realisation that would make the people see the society as their own with the readiness to work to see it function well. It follows, therefore, that even with the presence of the formal trappings of democracy without this significant realisation on the part of the people, such a democracy would be hollow indeed (Macridis, 1980).

When the people see themselves as constituting the society, it follows that they would also see themselves as being responsible

for the running and governance of the society. Here, it is not just that a government exists for the society, but that the people are the government. There could be variations in the way that different societies constitute their governments, what should be constant, however, is that a society that follows the precept of democracy ensures that the government is constituted by the people themselves rather than having a government imposed on them. The end of democracy here is to see a government deriving its existence and power directly from the people, such that to the extent that this obtains, it could be said that democracy is on hand while it would be no more than a pretence, no matter the formal claim of democratic practice, when the government does not owe its existence to the people and the people do not see themselves as constituting the government (Rokkan, 1970; Macridis, 1980).

A government that derives its existence and power from the people necessarily has to work for the interests of the people in order for it to be consistent with its essence. This is why a democracy functions essentially in the interest of the people and would be missing its essence when the interests of the people do not count in its calculation and functioning. The end of democracy within this context is to see a government not just constituted by the people, but for the government to serve the interests of the people, such that to the extent it is not serving the interests of the people, it would lose its essence as a democratic government. The parameter of this end enables even a government that parades itself as democratic not to be assessed as such when it is not serving the interests of the people (Macridis, 1980).

Though Schumpeter has described modern democracy as no more than 'that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote', (cited in Ricci, 1970:239) such that modern democratic government is what Plamenatz calls 'government by persons freely chosen by and responsible to the governed' (cited in Joseph, 1987:18), it is also the case that every democracy must keep up with the ends outlined above. Indeed, the well known Abraham Lincoln's

definition of democracy as 'government of the people, by the people, and for the people' encapsulates the three ends of democracy highlighted here (cited in Remy, 1994). 'Government of the people' conveys the proper image about the link between the society and the people as the society would only be run by a government composed of the people themselves when they see themselves as constituting the society. In which case, government of the people signifies a conception that the people constitute the society and that the society does not have any other existence outside of the people; to administer the society is to administer the people and such administration must see itself as springing from that conception.

'Government by the people' points at the need for the administration of the society not to just spring from the conception that the people are the society, but to also include the need for the administration to be done by the people themselves. A democratic government must spring from the people and be constituted by the people; the government would be constituted directly by the people and this must include the understanding that the people have a right to constitute it the way they like. In the same fashion, 'government for the people' refers to the need for a democratic government to work for and serve the interests of the people. The performance of the government under a democracy, and whether it would survive and continue as government, would be dependent on how far the people consider it as serving their interest. This recognition must also be clear to the government itself, such that it conducts its business in relation to its demands and ensures that all it does is for the purpose of satisfying the interests of the people. Both the government and the people are, therefore, in clear recognition of the ends of democracy and all must also know that it is to the extent that these ends are projected and affirmed that democracy could be said to be flourishing. By the same token, where it is said that democracy is tottering, this must be because some of these ends are not being respected. For instance, it is only where those in government and perhaps some of the people do not respect the need for a democratic government to be constituted by the people themselves that there would be the problem of

rigging of elections as those who rig elections must obviously want to prevent the people from constituting the government themselves. The affirmation of the ends of democracy is, therefore, very important in assessing the extent of democratic practice in any society and it is against these ends that this chapter explores the possibility of lessons to be learnt from traditional political systems in strengthening democracy in Nigeria.

### **Democratic elements in traditional political systems**

It has already been conceded that not much democratic reality is read into the workings of the traditional political systems in Africa considering the image of totalitarianism that is usually presented of the African past. This is not, however, to state that traditional African political systems were bereft of any democratic element. Given that these were systems that offered their societies and peoples some form of logical existence prior to colonialism must mean that they possessed fundamental elements responsible for their functioning and some of these must reflect democratic ethics to the extent that the people had relationships to the political systems and they also performed somewhat in the interests of the people. Without attempting to hold out the traditional African political systems as exemplars of democracy, I call attention to some of their workings that speak to democratic ethics and which elements could well serve as source of strength for modern democratic practice in the continent because they would not be strange to the people as these are elements from their past.

While it is possible to see the elements that I intend to refer to here in almost all traditional political systems in Africa – there is indeed similarity among them, such that they evince almost the same characteristics – I would be using examples from the past Yoruba kingdoms to buttress my argument. I do not assume that the limited scope of the examples I am going to draw would vitiate the argument as the examples could be replicated in almost all parts of Nigeria and in all the regions of the continent. This is especially in the area of the direct link between the

political systems and their peoples. In traditional Yoruba kingdoms, the society did not exist apart from the people. Rather, the society was constructed around the people, such that the society existed for the people and the people for the society. The implication of this position is that every member of the society saw himself/herself as being committed to the society since the society was his/her own. This is the sense in which Yoruba *obas* – the head of the traditional political systems – were never chosen from outside of the communities. The societies were regarded as organic wholes made up of their different members and this meant that the people knew where they stood with regard to their societies and could relate to the societies as their own. The Yoruba societies, therefore, in terms of their conception, had the democratic element of regarding the people as very important to the existence of the society. This meant that the reality of the societies was determined in terms of the people and the people were happy to associate with their societies, spawning a close link and association between the people and the societies.

This close link between the people and the society was further demonstrated through the workings of the institution of obaship where the *oba*, though regarded as the representatives of the gods and therefore having a superhuman essence and power, was expected to manifest the power only in relation to the people. The *obas* were chosen by the people through king-makers who owed their positions not to the *oba* but to their families and achievements within the society. The king-makers were also in position to dethrone the *obas*, suggesting that real power in terms of the running of the traditional systems resided with the people through their representative chiefs who were the king-makers. A typical example of the working of the king-makers was in the role of the *Oyomesi* vis-à-vis the *Alaafin*, the *oba* and ruler of the Old Oyo Empire. In relation to the *Oyomesi*, it is stated thus:

The *Oyo Mesi* comprises of the seven Principal councilors of state: they constitute the Electoral Council and possess legislative powers akin to that of...(the) present day (legislature)...They are responsible for the selection of a new

*Alafin* with the *Basorun* as the leader who ratifies the nomination. They are seven in number and of the following order:

The *Osorun* (*Bashorun* who is the leader and also the *Prime Minister*); *Agbakin*, *Samu*, *Alapini*, *Laguna*, *Akiniku*, *Asipa*.

The title of each is hereditary in the same family but not necessarily from father to son; ...They represent the voice of the nation and on them rests the chief responsibility of protecting the interest of the empire. The *Alafin* must take counsel with them whenever any important matter affecting the state occurs.

Each of them has a state duty to perform at court every morning and afternoon and a special deputy attached to them whom they send to the *Alafin* at other times when their absence is unavoidable; they are, however, required to attend court in person the first day of the (Yoruba) week, for the *Jakuta* (*Sango*) worship and to partake of the sacrificial feast.

The *Oyo Mesi* could condemn a deficient king to death by suicide, thus placing a powerful check on any tendency toward royal tyranny. (*Oyomesi* website, accessed 12/04/08)

The illustration about the *Oyomesi* suggests that the king-makers were directly from the people, thus showing that they acted on behalf of the people and given that they were the ones to choose a new *oba* would mean that the people were the ones choosing the *oba*. It is significant in this respect that the king-makers had their own source of power – their standing within their families that could not be touched by the *oba*. The *oba* was not in a position to suppress them as only their families could remove them from their chieftaincies. Here we see a clear demonstration of democratic ethics in the sense of denying the *oba* of absolute power – even though popularly regarded as the representative of the gods – and ensuring that real power resided with the people. Care was also exercised that the check placed on the *oba* was not an abstract one as the people had the chance of using their family structure to protect themselves and wield political power. The Yoruba societies were largely organized round the families, such that it would be the responsibility of the families to wield power

and exercise it on behalf of the people. This was not just a case of involving the people in governance, but was predicated on the real existence of the people such that they would be able to exercise the power reposed in them as the bastion of governance.

One other manifestation of the democratic element in the running of the Yoruba society in the past was through the actual behaviour and working paraphernalia of the *oba*. Though the *oba* was regarded as the representative of the gods, his activities were to centre on the interests and welfare of the people. And nothing manifested this – outside of the fact that the *oba* was chosen and would be in power at the instance and pleasure of the people as represented by their representative Kingmakers – than the fact that the *oba* regarded the health of the existence of the people as the indication of his own health. It is significant in this respect that the *oba's* palace in traditional Yoruba political system was regarded as the centre of the community with the market standing beside it and being called the *oba's* market. This market symbolized the concrete relationship between the people and the *oba* as the *oba* had first hand knowledge of the health of the existence of the people through assessing the market while the people themselves, in using the market, had a platform through which to directly relate their existence to that of the *oba*. Through this important interchange, a direct relationship was kept going between the *oba* and the people and this ensured that the *oba* continued to operate within the democratic ethic of working for the interest and welfare of the people as decrease in activities at the *oba's* market would be regarded as the *oba* not doing enough for the people which could result in his being dethroned by the kingmakers. The *oba* here accepted the reality of the importance of the people's welfare to the running of the society and pitched his tent with the people in being in their midst to monitor their welfare in order to respond appropriately.

What is discernible from the way the Yoruba traditional political systems were organized is the importance of the people in the structure of governance, which is a testament to the presence of the democratic element. The people were the cornerstone of the existence of the society, so they presented societies that had the people closely identifying with them; and

this identification was not just at the abstract level as the people were directly involved in choosing their *obas* – the rulers – through the Kingmakers who took their powers and relevance from the family structure of the people in the society; while the *obas* themselves continued the democratic trend by having their palaces in the centre of their communities where they could monitor the welfare of the people through the *oba* markets as the interests and welfare of the people were the main fulcrum of governance.

### **Lessons from the past**

What are the lessons to be drawn from the democratic reality of the traditional political systems highlighted above? It ought to be clear that the starting point for democratic appreciation in the traditional political systems was their taking into cognizance the reality of the existence of their societies. The real reality of the societies were taken into account in devising the structures of governance and what better way to step into democracy than to be based on reality, the concrete existence of the people? This would ensure that the democracy is concrete and not a simple abstraction that does not have any link with reality. But what do we have with the modern form of democracy particularly in Nigeria? States Claude Ake (1996:9):

...the process of democratization...is also blind to its social context. Somehow we tend to think of democratization as an abstract process dissociated from a specific human context...But that is only another way of describing our blindness to the sociology of democratization... (Because) democratization ... has to take us as we are, not as we ought to be, or even as we can be.

Rather than take Nigeria as it is, just as traditional political systems did, we see modern democracy presenting the country in borrowed robes and descriptions. It talks of Nigeria with peoples that do not fit any description instead of recognizing them as belonging to ethnic nationalities. The peoples of Nigeria, to be

taken as the platform for democratic governance and the real custodian of the Nigerian society, must be presented as they really are, and this as members of ethnic nationalities. The argument has always been that ethnicity is divisive and that democracy would flounder on its divisive pressure. But the truth is that ethnicity is part of the reality of existence of the Nigerian people and what is reality has to be acknowledged for democracy to have any chance of surviving and being sustained. This is the time to proclaim Nigeria as a country of ethnic nationalities so that the democratic process would deal with concrete reality and not abstract entities. The Nigerian peoples have not been able to relate well to the abstract platform of the state divisions they have been crammed into and this has particularly been negatively helped by the uncaring and ineffective performance of these artificial creations. This has left Nigerians in the continuing comfort of ethnic nationalities and it is time for this to be made the platform for democratic engagement.

Another change that has to be made in line with the light shown by traditional political systems in Nigeria is in the area of the uncritical acceptance and imposition of so-called democratic values related to other societies to the Nigerian nay African society. It has been said that democracy is universal in terms of representing the attempt to fully involve the people in the governance of their own affairs. But how this attempt plays out in reality would have to be in relation to the realities of the societies concerned, particularly taking into cognizance historical conditions obtaining in the societies. It is the case that modern democracy, particularly the liberal variant, has been linked particularly to individualism, with the rights and activities of the individual at the bedrock of democratic construction. Larry Siedentop (1983) has however argued that the individual 'presupposed here is not just the physical body, but a 'type of social role, resting on a set of normative and material preconditions'. These conditions, according to Claude Ake (1996: 24), include 'a society which is essentially a market, a society in which people are highly individualistic and dedicated to the pursuit of their interests which are in real and potential conflict, ...and whose solidarity is like that of shareholders in a

joint stock company'. Where these conditions exist, it would not be wrong to pursue democracy based on individualism. Yet, we know that the Nigerian situation does not approximate this. Rather, the reality of Nigeria is communalism, with people prone to give their loyalty to the community, defining themselves in terms of group identity, and it is in their oneness with such identity, it has been contended, '(they) enjoy freedom, pursue interests and actualize...(their) potentialities'. The implication of this is that individualism as basis of democracy would not apply to Nigeria and yet this is what we have been having in the name of democracy. Nigeria's democracy is all about equality of individuals and the protection of the individual's rights, particularly the right to vote. This would have to change to reflect the reality of communal existence, because in Nigeria, 'the emphasis is on the collective rather than the individual'; and it would be more appropriate, for instance, 'if representation in...legislatures was on the basis of peoples, communities or nationalities' to reflect the collective essence of living. (Burns and Peltason, 1954; Ake, 1992: 6)

Contrary to the situation in traditional political systems where the location of the government house – the *oba's* palace – also promotes the importance of the people and their welfare in the workings of government, modern day – so-called democratic – government houses are not only not accessible for the people, they are located far away from people to show a distance and disdain for them by the 'democratic rulers'. The new government houses do not allow the new rulers to reflect the living conditions of the people and this must mean that the people and their welfare are not the primary preoccupation of the rulers. In reality, where the people are the masters of the governing process, the government houses must be people's houses where they could access to relate to those they have invested with the powers to manage their affairs. But the current government houses stand as instruments of oppression, far removed from the reality of the people and barricaded in order to protect them from the people. There is a dissonance between democracy and the current location of government houses and it is only by turning them into people's houses through a more appropriate

location that they would be made to serve the purpose of democracy.

It is possible for democratic practice in Nigeria to benefit from the insights of traditional political systems highlighted above because while past practices emphasized the place of the people in governance, present practices tend to be abstract and removed from reality and, therefore, do not advance the cause of democracy. The lessons to be learnt from the past include the need to reflect reality appropriately by presenting Nigeria as a land of ethnic nationalities, where political life is manifested at the group level because of the dominance of collective consciousness, and where real democratic rulers are not afraid or averse to live among the people. The contention here is that these lessons would serve to advance democracy in Nigeria as democracy thrives where reality is reflected, such that the people are able to relate to its structures, see it as serving their interests and work for it to serve those interests. The lessons from the past highlighted here could therefore serve as bridge between democracy and reality and between democracy and the people, which yawning gaps represent veritable limits to the practice of democracy in Nigeria.

## **Conclusion**

Proceeding from the standpoint that history and culture are essential to any worthwhile existence, this chapter has argued that there are lessons to be learnt from the past, traditional political systems in Nigeria in seeking to strengthen democracy in the country. In particular, the point is made that traditional political systems in Nigeria made the people the centre-point of governing activities and reflected this reality well in making sure that structures put in place were such that would deliver the dividend of appropriate monitoring of the governing process by the people, with the rulers presiding over these structures also conducting themselves in line with such dictates. In line with these insights, the argument is advanced that a more appropriate democratic presentation would be such that depicts Nigeria as composed of ethnic nationalities, a more appropriate democratic

representation would be such that is based on the group rather than the individual, and a more appropriate democratic location for the government house would be one within the living reality of the people rather than outside of touch with and in disdain of the people. These are real democratic lessons from the traditional political systems.

Would these lessons be incorporated to help actual democratic practice in Nigeria? The answer is that it could well be. There is nothing disturbing the adoption of these lessons if those in charge of democratic practice in Nigeria really want the people to be fully involved in their own governance as should obtain under democracy. But the reality is that this has not been happening and those who have hijacked the democratic process would prefer to keep on benefiting at the expense of the people. This means that the people must come to their own rescue by seizing every opportunity to put their interests on the democratic train including asking for the lessons highlighted here to be adopted. This is a struggle they must be prepared to wage as they would be opposed by those who stand to benefit from the limits of the democracy currently on offer. The people would need all the help they could get in this struggle and it must be emphasized that one area of help is in clarifying the process of engagement as this chapter and conference have done, such that no false hopes would be nursed or entertained. It is in the reality of struggle, shorn of false hope, that the future of real democratic sustenance in Nigeria lies.

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# Rejuvenating community spirit for accelerated socio-economic development

- Ayo Olukotun<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

This chapter discusses within the broad matrix of employing culture as a tool of political and economic development, the issues connected with the refocusing and deployment of *community spirit* in the search for accelerated social and economic development.

The chapter is premised on the position that culture is the incarnation and expression of a people's entire way of life as they confront the challenges, political, economic, ecological and social, of their respective environment. The throes of incomplete modernization and the psycho-spiritual aftermath of colonisation which taught the colonised to regard their culture as exotic or somehow inferior have resulted in an attitude which equates culture with colourful displays and arresting dancing styles. If culture must be pressed into the service of political and economic development, it must first be liberated from a mind-set

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which views it as either anachronistic or the shameful or merely picturesque relic of an unhappy past. For one of the high points of rapid economic development in the contemporary Asian world is the meshing of growth with the preservation of culture or put differently, the employment of cultural attributes and values to jumpstart hitherto laggard economies.

Regarding communities and the mainstreaming of the community spirit, it is interesting to observe the changing tides of social science scholarship on the phenomenon. Communities loomed large in early anthropological studies many of which obsessively chronicled the customs and traditions of the communities, although as maybe expected of colonial scholarship, with a derogatory or condescending slant. Similarly, ethnic communities and groups featured largely in the early studies of scholars who wrote under the modernisation paradigm.

Indeed, several of those scholars saw African politics turn on the ethnic conundrum; under the influence of radical scholarship, ethnic groups/conflicts and by implication, autochthonous communities were relegated for 'classes' which were elevated in Marxist social science as the *primus mobile* of Nigerian and African politics. In the late 1980s and 1990s the study of communities and indigenous groups made a strong comeback, following what is generally regarded as the failure or atrophy of the centralised state model. Similarly the 'third wave' of democratisation, promoted a new emphasis on local structures, local initiatives, the rights of indigenous peoples (marked by the United Nations) and a participatory approach to development and communication. On the global scene, even unitary states such as Britain began to experiment daringly with devolutionary political structures featuring new grass root initiatives while globalization studies produced a new emphasis on the intersection of the global and the local, underlining the ways in which local communities re-appropriated or redefined global tendencies and trends to suit their peculiar circumstances.

Within Nigerian scholarship, it should be noted; there were very few actual works on community power and self-help projects as most scholars in this tradition were local government

specialists who adopted a narrative and historical approach to understanding governance at local levels. This scholarly lacuna is amazing given the ineffectuality of government at the local level and the open divorce between institutions of community power such as age grade groups, credit associations as well as various local guilds and the formal institutions of government. It is agreed that an appropriate scholarly and policymaking focus on the rekindling of the community spirit may well contain a lot of the answers to the familiar puzzles and paradoxes of Nigerian politics

In the next section of this chapter I provide further conceptual elaboration of these concerns as well as a critique of extant approaches to rejuvenating the community spirit.

### **Culture, community power and development: conceptual elaborations and critique**

It was argued in the introductory section that a holistic view of culture as the warp and woof of societal undertakings, in their, ideological, political, economic and technological ramifications holds promise for a productive unveiling of the interface between culture and development.

As Andah (1988: 45) instructively observed, such a view of culture must look at it:

In material, institutional, philosophical and creative aspects. The material aspect has to do with artefacts in the broadest sense of the word (namely tools, clothing, food, medicine, utensils, housing, etc.). The institutional aspects refer to the political, social, legal and economic structures created to help achieve the material objectives while the philosophical aspect refers to the realm of ideas, beliefs and values.

This is of course not to say that culture thus defined is static; on the contrary it is a dynamic concept, adaptable to changing economic and social circumstances. However, efforts to graft on values, ideas and techniques into cultural surroundings to which

they are alien may not yield much fruit even when such efforts are well meaning.

Implicit in the National Cultural Policy as set out in a 1988 document is the idea of culture not as excrescence or a super phenomenon but as an organic expression of the entire way of life of a people. Hence, culture is defined as

The totality of the way of life evolved by a people in their attempts to meet the challenge of living in their environments which give order and meaning to their social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious norms and modes of organization (Cultural policy for Nigeria, 1988, p. 5).

Culture, here, is seen not as a residue of material forces but as the bedrock which shapes and gives meaning to existence. In this perspective, community self-help projects and economic activities must be viewed and organized within their specific cultural matrixes and understood in their primordial contexts for them to be effective.

Turning to communities, they can be defined broadly, following Cox (1970: 101) as a *territorial organization of people, goods, services and commitments*. This definition is elastic enough, however, to include even homogenous states as communities. More specifically and more related to this discussion is the conception of a community as

A place of interacting with social institutions which produce in the residents an attitude and practice of interdependence, co-operation, collaboration and unification. It is a web of social structures that are closely interrelated (Baskin and Aronof cited in Onabajo, 2005: 18).

The concept of development has been variously defined by social scientists working from a plethora of perspectives but most of them would agree that it ought to include

Increased economic efficiency, expansion of productive capacity of the nation's economy [as well as]...increasing

self-reliance, a reduction in dependence [and] increased political participation, acceptable government and respect for human rights (*Oxford Dictionary of Politics*, pp. 137–138).

In the context of local communities and micro-politics, development can be seen as the successful mobilization of the latent energies of the members of the communities for individual and collective self-actualization, as well as for environmentally sustainable growth in economic activities and in the level of political participation. It should be noted, as mentioned earlier, that emphasis on the capacity of communities to rekindle the community spirit is underlined in the Nigerian context by the failure of local government structures to connect with the lives of the communities and to spur meaningful development particularly at grassroots level. Part of the reason for this is that there is nothing really local about local governments, to the extent that they are viewed as outposts of a remote central government rather than institutions and structures that relate to the vital concerns of the communities.

Although written for the Tanzanian context the observation of Nwakosa cited in Enemuo (2000: 190) is particularly apposite for Nigerian local governments:

The interest of the central government has dominated local government policies and practices from the colonial times to the present. The demands and interests of the people have counted very little, if at all, in the development of local government. As a result the role and function of local government have been greatly distorted. People look at local authorities not as their institutions but as central government organs. The government, for its part treats local authorities like tools created for its use and disposal.

In Nigeria, this was the case under both military and civilian governments, with the result that the legitimacy of these political institutions is low as they are viewed with suspicion and distrust.

Similarly, several community-centred initiatives by international organizations and non-governmental organizations including those claiming to feature a bottom-up approach are

tainted with the brush of paternalism, claiming to know what is best for the communities or relying on visible political structures. Take, for example, the participatory development workshops organized by UNICEF in the 1990s, with a view to empowering the communities for development. The programme had the commendable objectives of

- (a) empowering the communities through education in order to induce attitudinal and behavioural change. Helping communities to tap their own resources and skills; and
- (b) producing communities with the tools they may require to advance in the way they deem fit (UNICEF publication on community empowerment 1994, p. 2).

This was an ambitious project expected to cover the entire spectrum of the Nigerian federation and it had educational modules on such topics as community participation, community resource management, village profile and community leadership. It targeted, however, 40 people in each community made up of 28 cross-sectoral local government officials, 4 state civil servants, 4 community leaders and two academics. While such projects are not without their pay-offs, their heavy reliance on extant political and bureaucratic structures obviously limit their influence and reach.

In the next section of the chapter, I take an empirical excursion into community self-help projects and conclude the chapter with synthesis and prognosis.

### **Empirical excursions in community governance**

In her insightful study of localism and nation-building in Nigeria, Mae C. King (1988) argues that mankind's deep attachment to the place of origin constitutes a powerful emotional basis for galvanizing communities into developmental activities and political participation.

Hence, self-interest constitutes a basis for communities to come together and achieve developmental goals. Under these

auspices, various state governments in the country openly support or give subventions to communities that initiate projects. For example at the recent celebration of the 2008 Omu – Eleni day in Ijebu – Omu in Ogun State, the governor of Ogun State, Otunba Gbenga Daniel reiterated his government's policy of providing 50 per cent counterpart funding to communities which construct amenities and flag-off projects. This is partly a revisiting of a policy that had been in existence in some other parts of the country. In the mid 1970s for instance, the Imo state government reimbursed communities up to 50 per cent of money expended on development projects such as bridges, roads, clinics and bore-holes. Similarly, the government part funded projects with employment generating potential as a spur to establishing a variety of agricultural and industrial outfits (Mae C. King 1988). Indeed, therefore, several communities across the country have hooked on to this strategy as a way of providing themselves the amenities of life.

Currently, several towns and villages employ the occasion of their annual day celebrations to generate funds for the face-uplift of their communities. The 2008 Omu-Aran day celebration was employed to launch a billion development fund which will enable the construction of a modern town complex, rehabilitation of Omu-Aran Ring road as well as the upgrading of broken down infrastructure in 4 community secondary schools in the town. The event which was attended by some state governors such as Senator Lyel Imoke was apparently spearheaded by an eminent Omu-Aran son, Bishop David Oyedepo, who set the financial ball rolling with a donation of ₦5million and a pledge to build a ₦100 million multi-purpose town hall (*The Nation*, April 11, p. 24). Substantial sums were also donated by a galaxy of office holders and businessman at the occasion.

It was revealed, too, that similar community initiatives in the past had resulted in the execution of such projects as a post office, a town hall, micro finance bank and several community secondary schools. In other words, by and large, we are dealing with a model of community self-help that has been widely applied to criticism of traditional and national political

authorities, aspects which have been effaced with time, Olukotun (2004).

Regarding this strategy of revitalization, it should be noted that while they are undoubtedly helpful, they are increasingly redolent of what Peter Ekeh (1989 : 2) described as 'high community culture' which are oriented towards the elite rather than towards the masses, we see similar pitfalls in the 'community development strategies' of the oil multinationals which are geared towards status quo forces and in the direction of visible 'publicity-seeking' projects rather than tackling endemic poverty.

### **Towards genuine community mobilization**

The vertical structure of power of the Nigerian state in which power trickles down from top to its base, the communities, ensures a ritual marginalization of rural and semi-urban Nigerian in varying degrees.

As argued, were local governments to be effective, it should have been possible to build a more inclusive nation, in economic and social terms. However, governmental decay or state failure is perhaps most palpable at the level of the grassroots where local government officials do little more than share monthly allocations in their respective local government headquarters, only at election times are the people factored in as objects in strategic political calculations of the political big-wigs. This is the impasse that provides a context for rekindling the community spirit as a vehicle of economic and political rejuvenation.

As we have seen, governments, non-governmental organizations, international organization and the communities themselves are involved in grass root development and community mobilization; most of these, however, are top-heavy and tap into existing elite networks rather than reach down the base of society. The Niger Delta area is a spectacular illustration of the failure of several development strategies ostensibly aimed at the communities but which merely perpetuate and recycle existing elite networks based on patronage and primitive

accumulation. A serious and sustained mobilisational campaign must go beyond these existing approaches to connect with the real lives of the communities, such a suggested strategy will take a census, for example of traditional development and commercial institutions surviving in the communities, age grade groups, community based associations, religious associations and other institutions of rural power.

Too often, what we have is an attempt to graft on development activities to existing structures without engaging in genuine dialogue with those structures by understanding the way they function. In other words what passes for community development are little more than extensions of the top-heavy structures of the state into the level of the community. The problem of growing youth unemployment and the associated one of rising crime in the communities are hardly addressed by existing mobilized strategies which are all too focused on creating more amenities through the annual celebrations of certain days. A more holistic strategy will recognize the gains and limits of this approach and seek to tap the energies of the youths in productive activities, build agro-allied industries and mitigate poverty. This will also avoid duplication of amenities among neighbouring villages and refocus community aspirations in the direction of contributing more meaningfully to the national patrimony.

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## Chapter 10

# Culture as an instrument for sustainable development and national integration

- Prof. Steve A. Nkom<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

It has become obvious to most Nigerians that the mere possession of abundant natural resources does not in itself guarantee development. Neither has the variety of economic blueprints attempted in Nigeria made a fundamental difference to the economic and social well-being of the average citizen. The paradox of mass poverty in the midst of abundant oil and other natural resources, and the inability to translate ambitions and well-crafted development plans into concrete reality have all driven home the centrality of the human factor in the progress and development of nations. The significance of the human factor brings us squarely to the domain of the attitudes, the orientation, the vision, the motivations and the values underlying the behaviour and actions not only of the general population but

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particularly of the governing elite which steers the mantle of leadership in the society. This underlies the need to understand the role of culture particularly as it relates to development and nation-building.

This chapter therefore addresses the dialectical relationship between culture, development and nation-building. It begins with a discussion and explanation of the tendency to neglect or underrate the role of culture and art in the discourse on the economic and political development of Nigeria. It proceeds to assert the centrality of culture as an essential element, and critical missing link, in the country's efforts at national development. It draws attention to the imperatives of a culture-centred strategy of development and the rich cultural potentials that can be exploited for a more meaningful and sustainable development in Nigeria. The next section of the chapter addresses the issue of national integration and examines the role which a more informed understanding of the social and cultural composition of Nigeria can play in achieving national integration. It ends with an advocacy for an appropriate, humane social order within which Nigeria's rich cultural attributes can yield best results for national integration and sustainable development.

It is important to stress at the outset that culture as used in this chapter is defined in the broader sense to include the arts. Defined in this holistic or broader manner, culture encompasses the *world view* of a people; the *cognitive processes* which structure the thinking and mindset of the people; the *linguistic forms* through which they communicate or express their ideas; the *aesthetic manifestation* of their feelings and creativity in art, music, dance and other aesthetic forms; the *behavioural patterns* which shape their actions; and the *patterns of social structure* which govern their ways of interacting with individuals, groups and peoples both within and outside their society. In addition to these elements is the *conative dimension* which relates to the skill and knowledge framework for getting things done, for inventing and producing those tools, implements and appliances which facilitate work, comfort and leisure. These material accomplishments which derive from the people's indigenous science and technology are as much a part of culture as are the

customs, traditions, arts, dances and festivals which are often emphasised in discussions on culture. Given the strategic and encompassing nature of culture, it is inconceivable to imagine how a society can achieve meaningful development and national integration without a sound cultural base.

### **Culture as the foundation for development**

It is important to start this section with the simple adage that “nations are like apples; they grow from their roots”. The roots or the foundation for the growth of any nation lie in the cultural heritage of its people. Development, regardless of how it is defined, ultimately entails an attempt to build a “better society”: a society characterised by greater material prosperity and better life chances for the people; a society characterised by significant improvements in the people’s capacity to understand and to tap the resources of their environment for their own good and the good of humanity; a society which opens up new opportunities for personal upliftment and collective advancement; and a society in which creativity, productivity and popular participation are enhanced. While there has been a tendency to see science and technology, artificially divorced from culture, as the primary tools for the realisation of development, it is the cultural orientation and attributes of the people which give content, meaning and direction to their vision of the desirable society. It is culture that gives meaning to a people’s developmental struggles and aspirations, which sets the goals and parameters of their efforts, and which provides substance and direction to their development agenda and actions. As Salim A Salim emphasized in his opening remarks at a World Bank International Conference on Culture and Development in Africa, “a people does not fully commit itself to a development undertaking unless that undertaking corresponds to its deeply felt needs. In other words, people should be in a position to derive the means and motivation for their development from their own cultural roots” (Salim 1994; 10).

One of the most profound legacies of colonialism was the inherited tendency towards the suppression, degradation and inferiorisation of Africa's indigenous cultures and the deliberate attempt to gradually replace them with western cultural values, philosophical outlooks, and ways of doing things. This partly explains the fanatical attachment of Nigeria's governing class to the western model of development. For a number of decades since independence the country's development efforts seem to have been informed by the modernisation philosophy of "catching-up" with the West, itself a euphemism for westernisation. Under the cloak of trying to develop, Nigeria has reproduced or copied many elements of the western model of development. Despite attempts to make this model look as if it was neutral or universalistic, the fact remains that its content and objectives are rooted in and derive essentially from western culture.

Dazzled by the west's material prosperity and technological greatness, Nigeria's ruling elites have wallowed under the illusion that a selective transplant of certain elements of the western model into Nigerian soil will automatically confer or guarantee the full benefits of western development. The illusion of "technological transfer" often ignores the reality of the enabling cultural foundation which nurtures and sustains the material and technological imperatives of western civilisation. Notice that at the economic level, Nigerians have accepted the western preoccupation with achieving rapid growth but without the culture of productivity and efficiency which galvanizes it. We have borrowed the West's profit motive and its acquisitive appetite for wealth accumulation but failed to imbibe the entrepreneurial and investment spirit of capitalism. We have imported all manner of western technological gadgets and machines but without embracing the culture of invention, laboratories and research which is the foundation for the west's technological progress. This is clearly evident from the scant regard paid to research and development in all sectors of the economy. Consequently our economy has not moved forward.

At the cultural level, we have continued to buy some of the most expensive watches but without imbibing the accompanying

spirit of punctuality. As a result, "African time" still dominates our day-to-day activities despite the beautiful watches adorning our wrists. In our attempt to look "correct" in the eyes of the world, we have grafted unto our political culture a thin layer of concern for human rights, including the right to life, but without investing in the creation of a humane social order that will give people a reason to want to live. In other words, we are trying to build a modern economy modelled on the west but without the enabling cultural environment.

Commenting on Nigeria's development strategy, Nnoli (1981: 21) has argued that "Nigerian academic, social, political and military leaders still look at the development of their country in terms of seeking to achieve many of the conditions of good life in western Europe, America and Japan. These include industrialisation, economic affluence, military hegemony, advanced technology, urbanisation, and the parliamentary political process. The concept of development involved here is that of a checklist of artefacts" such as cars, roads, hospitals, computers, good houses, airways, iron and steel complexes, agricultural machinery and even cosmetics. The mere acquisition of these artefacts is assumed to be significant indices that development is being achieved; an illusion which is far from the essential prerequisites of development.

The most fundamental flaw inherent in the imitation or "catching-up" philosophy is its erroneous focus on the income-gap or the difference in material affluence between societies. In actual fact, differences in attitudes, cultural outlook and action-orientation (especially as it relates to the skills and technical achievements of a people) are, on the whole, more basic than differences in income in determining the destiny of a people. You cannot change a society and its development chances without a fundamental transformation of the social and cultural orientation of the people. The *human* or the *cultural* element is far more constraining than the purely technical aspects of development. That is why the issue of "technology transfer" misses the point and has, quite understandably, not worked anywhere.

### A culture-centred strategy of development

A people's culture is one of the most invaluable resources on which to draw in the process of development. It provides the basis for a development which is at once meaningful and sustainable. In fact, development is not possible without an enabling cultural foundation.

An understanding of the dialectical relationship between culture and development is important in sensitising both scholars and policy-makers to the danger of treating culture as if it was a tangential or irrelevant aspect in the struggle for economic development and social transformation. Culture, after all, is the dynamic outcome of a society's struggle to harness the resources of its environment to meet its material needs. It is a *living product* of a society's history. It is that distinct *way of life* which a people have fashioned out for themselves in the process of living in a particular physical and social environment, in the process of harnessing the resources of nature to meet their materials and social needs, and in the process of creating a suitable institutional and normative framework for regulating social relationships.

Culture, therefore, is not a static or *fossilised* legacy passed on from generation to generation. It is subject to creative and continuous renewal from within, as well as constant borrowing and addition from other societies with whom a people interact. It is not simply a *normative* and aesthetic blueprint. It embodies the skills and technical achievements of a people. There is an intricate and dialectical relationship between the material and the ideal, between the past and the present, and between the internal and the external. Seen in this way, culture thus becomes a living and dynamic reality.

Quite apart from its ideological function in terms of setting the agenda, the meaning, content and motivational orientation of the development process, culture also has a strong and strategic economic role in sustainable development. It is one of the vital catalysts for the promotion of the grossly untapped potentials of the tourism sector. A lot can also be earned from the development and sale of Nigerian *cultural property* including

films (as Nollywood has revealed), indigenous craft items, art souvenirs, indigenous textile fabrics, local cuisines, and other cultural artefacts. In fact, cultural promotion is an important revenue-spinning venture. While recognising that the cultural sector, if properly harnessed, can generate probably more than oil is currently contributing, it is necessary to warn against the one-sided commercialisation or commodification of culture such that it gets reduced simply to ossified or objectified elements for the purpose of boosting tourism or for the entertainment of our fun-seeking elites and their foreign friends. This form of cultural rejuvenation could tear culture from its functional and productive linkage to people's daily existential struggles and realities and transform it into a mercenary item of merchandise.

The strong insistence here that meaningful development must be anchored in a people's culture is not a call for some morbid form of cultural particularism by which societies try to re-create a mythical cultural syndrome based on a romantic and static vision of their past. It is a call for societies to re-discover the creative initiatives of its people, to re-activate the people's accumulated wisdom and technological skills as a basis for problem-solving action, and to optimise the exploitation of available resources for sustainable development. It is a call to give the development process a *new content* based on the needs and philosophical outlooks of the people. It is a call to re-animate those elements of cultural renaissance which would enable societies to reject harmful foreign influences. It is a call for people to throw off the yoke of cultural inferiority and to resuscitate the spirit of self-confidence and self-pride which alone can enable them take full control of their development process. It is a call for a conscious battle against various forms of cultural imperialism and economic dependence.

Cultural revival has to be part and parcel of the entire process of social transformation designed to produce the new society we desire. It is neither meaningful nor possible to do this without addressing the structures of underdevelopment, economic exploitation and political domination. Cultural rejuvenation must come along with a fundamental improvement of the people's material and social conditions. As Verhelst has

emphasised, every civilisation which is based on poverty, no matter its cultural credentials, "is in the process of dying through degeneration into object destitution" (Verhelst 1990: 33).

The western model of development which Nigeria has been mimicking since independence has actually aggravated poverty, inequality and ecological disaster in the country which in turn have led to social disintegration and cultural alienation. The acceptance of this model of development by the elites reflects their consumerist longing for the glamorous, materialistic and individualistic life style of the West. This lifestyle is not only incompatible with the indigenous culture of the Nigerian majority but even ignores the productive, inventive and innovative aspects of western bourgeois culture. The shift to a culture-centred approach to development would once more enable the society to harness the major strengths of its indigenous culture and social dynamism for a more humanly-satisfying pattern of development.

This position is fortunately captured in the *Cultural Policy for Nigeria* which was released in 1988. As this *Cultural Policy* correctly argues, one cannot talk of any meaningful national development without using "culture as the fountain spring of all policies whether educational, social, political or economic. The (country's) strategies of national development would thus depend on the understanding of culture, the adaptation of its elements for political, educational and economic development, as well as its strengths for social integration and development". This policy document goes further to state that the adoption of the policy became imperative because of the need to incorporate the essential ingredients of the country's historical and cultural heritage into its development process, foreign policy objectives, and domestic political orientation (Nigeria 1988: - 6).

Looking at the gap between policy objectives and the actual realities of Nigeria's development process, Nasidi (1990) described this policy as an excellent piece of "cultural rhetoric". Since it does not appear to have been informed by a clear conviction "that culturally we have a problem which needs a rational and systematic approach", the policy is not more than a convenient social and ideological package without "a vision of

what kind of men and women we want to produce in this country" and without an "authentic idea of what kind of society we want to produce" (Nasidi 1990).

### **Culture and national integration**

Sustainable development is impossible without a reasonable level of social and national integration. Any meaningful discussion of national integration must involve an understanding of the entity being integrated. Many analysts have located the primary obstacle to Nigeria's development and integration in the multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multicultural nature of the country. The ethnic, cultural and political diversities of the country have been perceived as the source of its fragility and instability as well as its inability to evolve a cohesive strategy of national development and integration which enjoys the support and commitment of all Nigerians. The citizens have become so conscious of their differences that they often forget the things that bind them together.

What are the real differences that divide Nigerians? Are they only the conventional ones we hear every day such as ethnic, religious and cultural differences? Or does the problem really lie in the ever widening gap between the poor majority and a tiny group of rich elites, who have survived and continue to prosper by manipulating the divisive forces of ethnicity and religion in order to hold the society hostage? Our approach to national integration will depend on which of the two parameters we emphasise. So popular has the paradigm of ethnic and cultural diversity become that most people hardly remember that the vertical class divide is also a major problem to the national question.

While the idea of using culture as a basis for social or national integration, as mentioned in the cultural policy, sounds attractive, one is left with the puzzling dilemma of whether one can really put his finger on something called *Nigerian culture*. Does Nigeria really have a *common* or *collective heritage* which can be used as an organic framework for integrating the people into a coherent whole with a common identity and a shared

vision? The answer will be "yes" or "no" depending on our concept of Nigerian society.

Time will not permit a detailed review of all the available competing conceptions of Nigerian society. Suffice it to mention only two. The first conforms with Awolowo's conception of Nigeria as "a mere geographical expression" (Awolowo 1947). This conception emphasises the fact the Nigeria was an accidental creation of British colonialism, grouping together a disparate array of diverse ethnic nationalities with little in common except the artificial boundaries within which they were all encapsulated. Consequently, the loyalty and allegiance of the citizens are to their "natural", primordial ethnic units and not to the artificial entity called Nigeria. Seen from this perspective, the ethnic entities or nationalities are the real social units which make up Nigeria and which define the culture and identity of the average Nigerian. They are thus the *culture-bearing* units. Consequently there is really nothing like *Nigerian culture* except if we use that appellation very loosely to refer to the collection of the cultures of the various Nigerian people. In other words, one can only correctly talk of *Nigerian cultures*, a perception which carries with it the notion of cultural fragmentation and division. What will cultural revival or rejuvenation mean within this context? A preservation, promotion and revival of these disparate and divisive cultures? How will this further the objective of national integration? This conception thus leaves us with a lot of hard thinking about how to create a *national culture* not only as an integral part of, but also as an instrument for, national integration.

The second conception of Nigerian society argues that Nigerians share more in common than they are conscious of. Long before colonialism there had emerged intricate patterns of economic, cultural and political interrelationships between and among the various peoples, kingdoms, emirates, chiefdoms and empires which make up contemporary Nigeria. Summarising these shared patterns of interaction and interrelationship, the well known historian, Thomas Hodgkin, pointed out that:

A variety of links existed between the various states and

peoples which were the predecessors of modern Nigeria: between Kanem-Bornu, the Hausa states, Nupe, the Jukun Kingdom, the Empires of Oyo and Benin, the Delta states, and the loosely associated Ibo communities. These relationships sometimes took the form of war and enslavement. But they expressed themselves also through diplomacy, treaties, the visits of wandering scholars, the diffusion of political and religious ideals, the borrowing of techniques, and above all trade (Hodgkin 1960:2).

Usman (1994) has taken this argument further by emphasising that the level of economic integration, the patterns of crisis-crossing trade, and the intricate "political, military, cultural and ideological networks" which had developed among the peoples of this region had transformed the Nigerian area into a clearly distinct and distinguishable economic zone. According to him, "it is not by accident" that Nigeria emerged as a single colonial entity. The patterns of conquest and amalgamations that took place were clearly dictated by the strategic design of the British to capture this area into one single political and economic entity.

The historian, Obayemi (1994), has also argued that the political entity called Nigeria, even if it became a single *political community* for the first time as a result of British colonial adventure, already enjoyed a collective *precolonial heritage*. He sees this precolonial collective heritage as the "cultural historical foundation" of modern Nigerian society. Can you add to the picture what our sixty years of colonialism did to this common heritage by way of further integration? Further add what level of economic and socio-political consolidation has been achieved over more than forty-seven years of independence. Even if Nigeria arguably started as a "geographical expression", it has like all other heterogeneous nations, such as the United States of America, Canada, Sweden, India, Brazil and Indonesia, moved toward a distinct national community and society without necessarily dissolving all the indissoluble natural differences among its people.

The problem with any discussion of national integration or national unity in Nigeria is that most people do not make a distinction between the *objective parameters* of national integration and the *subjective dimensions* of people's national consciousness, loyalty, patriotism and sense of oneness. The *objective* aspects encompass legal, political and economic parameters in addition to cultural variables. Legally speaking, nobody disputes the fact that "Nigerians" consist of all *bona fide* citizens of the country called Nigeria. This country has a clearly defined territory, demarcated by internationally recognized boundaries, within which all citizens identify and are identified as belonging to the country. There exists within this territory a common legal framework and a minimum code of rights and duties that apply to all the members of this legal community.

Politically, all people who belong to the political community called Nigeria are Nigerians. This community is known to be a self-determining unit, with its sovereignty and some common political institutions which give expression to the community's common national objectives. The existence of state organs which regulate the affairs of the entire political community, and the use of symbols such as the *national flag*, the *anthem*, and a *common currency* all represent and symbolize the *oneness* of this community and its citizens. Objectively speaking, all Nigerians belong to this political community even if they lack a sense of *subjective attachment* to it. It is the weakness of this subjective attachment to the nation which creates the doubts in people's minds about the collective identity of Nigerians as a united nation.

At the economic level, it is indisputable that Nigeria has become a well integrated economic unit. Note the level of trade and economic inter-penetration that has developed among the different sections and groups in Nigeria. Examine the level of economic interdependence that has developed between different parts of the country. Take into consideration the rapid movement of goods and services between different parts of the country; the crisis-crossing patterns of migration, work and settlement of Nigerians in different parts of the country; and the common patterns of consumption, tastes and even food habits

that have developed between different parts of the country. These numerous and uncountable binding forces are such that no section of this country can survive comfortably in isolation from the others.

The cultural dimension of national integration and national unity is usually the most complex. It takes a much longer time to evolve. We are talking here of the emergence of a shared life-style, a common value system, an acceptance of all groups as fellow compatriots, an enlarged empathy, the propagation of ideas which promote national pride and solidarity, the consolidation of an integrating cultural framework which renders people's unique cultural and ethnic affiliations less and less significant to their national identity and survival. Cultural unity or fusion connotes the gradual breakdown of these social fragmentations and the emergence instead of a shared national identity characterised by common bonds of oneness. As Ali Mazrui (1972:278) has put it, it involves a commitment to indigenise what is foreign, idealize what is indigenous, nationalize what is sectional and emphasize what is Nigerian or African.

Some aspects of social integration and cultural fusion are purely objective processes which emerge spontaneously in response to the forces of social, economic, technological and political change. They may take place unconsciously without people even noticing that greater understanding, common experiences, and shared patterns of thinking are emerging among the generality of the people. Some aspects are subjective, long-term and require conscious planning by the state.

### **The way forward**

We cannot proffer solutions to the Nigerian problem without going beyond the over-emphasised problem of ethnic pluralism to the equally important issue of the class divide among Nigerians. The worst victims of our national malaise are the poor majority, particularly in our rural areas. It is therefore appropriate to start looking at the solution to the national question from the perspective of these suffering masses. Genuine

national integration is impossible unless and until we come out with solutions that would make this poor majority acquire a sense of belonging, a level of social and political participation, and a significant share of the resources of the nation such that will make them develop a stake in the continued unity and stability of the country. This is not a matter of pragmatic political engineering, crafty constitutional reviews, or appeals to cultural sentiments. It is a matter of social justice, fairness and commitment.

The first step in building national integration lies in a strong commitment towards the creation of a just and humane social order, a society where things work, a society where equity and fairness are the basic ethical rules of conduct. Such an enduring social order does not simply lie in cosmetic ethnic balancing measures such as federal character, zoning, geographical spread, or the creation of smaller and smaller states and local governments. It lies, first and foremost, in the fact that people's dignity is upheld, their fundamental human rights respected, and a minimum threshold of privileges, benefits and securities guaranteed them as citizens of the country.

Secondly, there must be a strong commitment on the part of the government to provide a minimum level of education, housing, health care and income earning opportunities that guarantee for the poor majority a decent standard of living. There must be more to being a Nigerian than the mere accident of being born in the geographical area called Nigeria. Nothing ensures loyalty and commitment to a nation better than those basic social and economic opportunities which are guaranteed one as a citizen of the country.

One often hears many references by the leaders and policy-makers of this country to the admirable propensity of the masses or "ordinary" Nigerians to mix freely, to transact business amicably, and to pursue their objectives without any ethnic or religious rancour. Unfortunately, it is hardly ever mentioned that this unity or *esprit de corps* was not brought about by constitutional provisions or crafty political arrangements but by the common exigencies and conditions under which such Nigerians live and struggle. The biggest ethnic and cultural

solvent for differences in fact lies in those common circumstances and aspirations which people, either by design or accident, come to share in the struggle for human existence.

Unfortunately, this kind of unity which is imposed on ordinary Nigerians by the tyranny of shared poverty and suffering is not conducive to progress and national integration. It engenders hatred, apathy and disenchantment towards the fatherland. It turns people into saboteurs, willing betrayers of the national cause, and uncommitted workers because they have no stake in the system. Citizenship has to translate into something concrete and not a vague form of symbolic loyalty to a nation. Sound economic management, distributional justice and guaranteed minimum economic support that ensure survival and sustenance constitute the real foundation for genuine national integration. The "freedom" to starve to death is an abuse of the dignity of man.

Thirdly, the level of autocracy, abuse and arbitrariness in the exercise of power which have become part of our national malaise must be swept away through genuine democratization of the structures of governance at all levels of society. There has to be a much higher level of mass participation in decision-making and in the determination of the direction of public policy at all levels of government. Democracy here should not be reduced to the mere creation of political parties or formal structures through which the struggle for, the capture and exercise of, power are conducted. These formal structures can easily be hijacked by sugar-coated demagogues and kleptomaniacs who have no commitment to or respect for democracy. Democracy means more than the periodic endorsement of the mandate of the leaders through elections. It implies a situation where the government derives its legitimacy from the people, is responsive to their yearnings, and is guided by the principles of probity, accountability and fairness in its style of governance.

Fourthly, all avenues must be explored and all hands should be on deck to promote and enforce accountability and probity in public life. The real essence of public office which is about service and public trust must be re-asserted. The conception of leadership or public office as a banquet of unrestrained personal

accumulation without responsibility or accountability must stop. The existing level of corruption and indiscipline in the public service has not only undermined people's loyalty to the nation but has engendered the compulsive tendency to want to put one's kith and kin in government by hook or by crook as a way of ensuring a "share" of the national cake. Existing mechanisms of public accountability should be strengthened and all legal provisions and moral codes enforced. The freedom of the press to investigate and report all cases of fraud, administrative arbitrariness, corruption and abuse of office should not be curtailed through non-legal or extra-legal restrictions of any kind. There must be a critical review of the prevailing belief that the best way to ensure one's future security is by corruptly amassing personal wealth and not by building a society where things work and where one's basic needs are assured both now and in the future.

Finally, government should, as a matter of urgency, initiate the funding of comprehensive research into various problems of national unity. This should go beyond issues of ethnic and cultural diversity to include problems such as the fate and welfare of identified minority and under-privileged groups, policies that threaten unity and national interest, and the detection of emerging problems which may require urgent government attention. Policies and strategies of national integration in Nigeria have often been based on untested assumptions and beliefs. It is high time we subject such policies and strategies to continuous review based on concrete research findings and national discourse.

## **Conclusion**

The overriding thesis of this chapter is that culture is one of the most invaluable resources for sustainable development and nation-building. The dialectical relationship between culture and national progress is such that any attempt to divorce culture from the process of development and nation-building is an exercise in futility. It follows that every strategy of national development and integration should incorporate a deliberate and

well planned cultural component. In Nigeria there has been a tendency not only to underrate the place of culture in national development but also to over-emphasise the ethnic and cultural differences among the people at the expense of those shared historical and cultural elements which Nigerians have in common and which can constitute a solid cultural foundation for national integration. Nigeria cannot move forward without evolving a humane and democratic social order which can accommodate social differences, which can nationalise what is sectional, and which can transform all Nigerians into principal stakeholders in the continued existence of the country as a single entity. Once the necessary political will emerges, the cultural foundation to be harnessed is there.

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# Index

- 2Face Idibia: 61  
Abubakar Tafawa Balewa: 101  
Achebe: 9  
Achonwa, R. E.: 70  
Adebayo Olukhoshi: 118  
Adeyinka Aderinto: 31  
Africa and the Arts, African Affairs:  
11  
Agbaje, Adigun: 28  
Agbo Areo Publishers: 118  
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria: 91,  
147  
Aina, T. A.: 53  
Akeem Ayofe Akinwale: 31  
Akinsola, E.: 118  
Akpakpan, E. B.: 28  
Akpan G. E.: 28  
Alfred A.: 118  
Ali Mazrui: 159, 163  
Amin, S.: 51, 99  
Amy, H. 2000: 52  
Andah, Bassey: 145  
Anderson, A.: 51  
Angelique Kidjo: 61  
Annan-Yao, E.: 52  
Anthony Enahoro: 19  
Anthony H.M.: 93  
Archer, MS: 10  
Arts and culture as tools of national  
integration: 1-12  
Asante, SKB: 10  
Asobie, A.: 117  
Awilo Locomba: 61  
Ayo Olukotun: 137, 146  
Bagchi, A. K.: 117  
Bangura, Y.: 117  
Benin Kingdom: 35  
Bilesanmi – Awoderu, J. B.: 71  
Binder Leonard: 10  
Bloom, D. E.: 29  
Boafo-Arthur, K.: 51  
Bodenheimer, S. J.: 51  
Bowditch J L: 10  
Britton, S. G.: 70  
Buhari-Idiagbon: 9  
Buono A F: 10  
Cavalcanti, J. G.: 51  
Chachage, C. S. L.: 53  
Charles Derber: 22  
Chris Agibe: 62  
Christensen SL: 11  
Christopher N. E.: 28  
Chukwuwa, I.: 29  
Citadels of Violence: 118  
Clash of Civilizations; 52  
Claude Ake: 120, 130, 134  
Colonialism and Social Structure: 52  
Commentary on the Constitution of  
Kenya: 52  
Concept of the Goodman in Hausa:  
95  
Cox, Fred: 145

- Crisis and Adjustment in the Nigerian Economy: 118
- Cross River State: 58, 70
- Cultural Diversity and Theories of Political Integration: 11
- Cultural Domination and Political Subordination: 53
- Cultural Engineering and Nation-Building in East Africa: 163
- Cultural Historical Foundations and the Modern State of Nigeria: 163
- Culture and Development in a Globalizing World: 52
- Culture as an instrument for sustainable development and national integration: 147-164
- Dahomey Empire: 35
- Daiyabu Muhammad Hassan: 91
- David McKay Company Inc: 135
- David Miller: 135
- David Oyedepo: 143
- Democracy and Stability in West Africa: 51
- Demographic Transition and Economic Miracles in Emerging Asia: 29
- Developing the Nigerian Economy for an Enduring Democracy: 28
- Development as Freedom New York: 118
- Donald Duke: 58, 62
- Dukana B. Ikpe: 13
- Dynamics of American National Government: 135
- Economic Restructuring Coping Strategies and Social Change: 118
- Edward Tylor: 34
- Ekanem M. Ekanem: 13
- Ekeh Peter: 145
- Ekeh, P. P.: 52, 145
- Elphick, R.: 52
- Enemuo, Francis: 145
- Envisioning values-based leadership: an exposition of the concept of Mutumin Kirki: 91-102
- Evans, P.: 118
- Eze Bassey Eze: 55
- Fadipe: 42, 52
- Fatton Jr, R.: 118
- Feasibility of Democracy in Africa: 134
- Fela Kuti: 7
- Florence Ita-Giwa: 62
- Formation of the Nigerian Economy and Polity: 164
- Fracchia, J: 11
- Frank, A. G.: 52
- Gbenga Daniel: 143
- George Allen: 70
- George Ehusani: 100
- George W. Bush: 22, 27
- Gibson, John: 29
- Giddens, A.: 29
- Gimode, E. A.: 52
- Globalisation and Social Policy in Africa: 52
- Globalization, Islam and social policy in Kenya: 52
- Goldberg, DT: 11
- Heinrich Barth: 96
- Henrich Joseph: 11
- Henry Brisbane: 62
- Hodgkin, T.: 163
- Holzner B: 11
- Human Side of Mergers and Acquisitions: Managing Collisions Between People, Cultures, and Organizations, Beard Books: 10
- Huntington, P.: 52
- Ideology of Developmentalism: 51
- Ikpe, U B: 29
- Integrating African arts and culture into the school curriculum: models, challenges and prospects: 71-90
- Isaac Boro: 19

- Jeffrey G. W.: 29  
 Jega, A.: 118  
 Jegede, S.: 118  
 Jesse Jackson: 22  
 K. K. Greene: 28, 95, 98, 101  
 Kanem-Borno Empire: 35  
 Kenyatta, J.: 52  
 King, Mae: 146  
 Klitgaard, R.: 118  
 Kolaja, Jiri: 11  
 Kolington Ayinlla: 9  
 Kuper, L.: 11  
 Kuran, T.: 11  
 Landecker, WS: 11  
 Larry Siendentop: 131, 135  
 Law Enforcement Agencies and  
     Nigerian Official Policy on  
     Youth  
 Lea, J.: 70  
 Lee Kwan Yew: 100  
 Lewis, C.: 118  
 Lewontin, RC: 11  
 Lijphart, Arend: 11  
 Liyel Imoke: 58, 62, 143  
 Maduagwa, M. O.: 118  
 Mahatma Gandhi: 108  
 Mali Empire: 35  
 Mamman Shata: 7, 9  
 Mary-Slessor: 62  
 Mathieson, A.: 70  
 Maximizing the economic potentials  
     of the Calabar Cultural  
     Carival: 55-70  
 Merton, R.K.: 118  
 Michael Cornfield: 29  
 Miltleman, J.: 52  
 Mitchell, G. D.: 52  
 Mkandawire, T.: 118  
 Mobilizing for a new political  
     culture: 28  
 Morton, A.: 52  
 Muhammad Lawal Amin: 92  
 Muhammad-Oumar A. A.: 1  
 Myth of Cultural Integration: 10  
 Narain, Iqbal: 11  
 Nasidi, Yakubu: 163  
 National Integration and  
     Political Development: 10  
 Nature of Political Theory: 135  
 Ndidem Usang Iso road: 62  
 Need for Regional Integration: 10  
 Nemetz PL: 11  
 New role of government in youth  
     empowerment: 29  
 Niven, Alastair: 11  
 Nkom, S. A.: 98  
 Nnamdi Azikiwe: 19  
 Nnoli, Okwudiba: 163  
 No Life Without Roots: 164  
 No Longer At Ease: 9, 52  
 Noss, J.B.: 52  
 O'Leary, Michael: 29  
 Obafemi Awolowo: 19, 156, 163  
 Obayemi, Ade: 163  
 Obi, C. I.: 52  
 Ojo Maduekwe: 58  
 Okediji: 42, 52  
 Okondo, P.H.: 52  
 Olukoshi, A.: 118  
 Omoluabi, P.: 118  
 Onabajo, Olufemi: 146  
 Origins, Dimensions and  
     Consequences of the Nigerian  
     Economic  
 Oyeleye Oyediran: 28  
 Oyo Empire: 35  
 Paden JN: 11  
 Partrick Archibong: 29  
*Path to Nigerian Freedom*: 163  
 Peter N. U.: 28  
 Political Behaviour and Electoral  
     Politics in Nigeria: 29  
 Political Economy of Development  
     Berkeley: 118  
 Politics of Structural Adjustment in  
     Nigeria: 118  
 Problems and Prospects of Local  
     Governance in Hyden Goran:  
     145  
 Radcliffe, S. A.: 52  
 Ralph Nader: 22  
 Rana Chachine: 29

- Rejuvenating community spirit for accelerated socio-economic development: 137-146
- Remi Aiyede, E. 103
- Remy, R.: 135
- Return of Science: Evolutionary Ideas and History: 11
- Riding the Waves of Culture, Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business: 11
- Rise and Fall of the Second Republic: 135
- Robert Merton: 109
- Roberts, J. T.: 52
- Sahnoun, M.: 53
- Salim, A. Salim: 164
- Sandholm, W.: 11
- Schaps, E.: 118
- Seers, D.: 118
- Sen, A.: 118
- Shivji, I.: 70
- Shongai Empire: 35
- Singham, A. W.: 53
- Singham, N. L.: 53
- Smith, MG: 11
- Sociological Aspects of Rehabilitation of Beggars: 52
- Sociology of the Yoruba: 52
- State and Civil Society in Africa: 118
- State, values and development: towards re-orientating Nigerian youth for leadership: 103-118
- Steed, C.: 53
- Steve A. Nkom: 147
- Strategies of Community Organization: 145
- Strengthening democracy in Nigeria: lessons from traditional political systems: 119-136
- Suffering without Bitterness Nairobi: 52
- Sundkler, B.: 53
- Sunny Lionheart: 7
- Sunny Neji: 61
- Tai Solarin: 111
- Tim Murray: 22
- Tourism and Socialist Development: 70
- Traditional socio-cultural systems as models for stability and security in African societies: 31-54
- Transition without End: 28
- Trompenaers, F.: 11
- Umobong, E. O.: 29
- Umo-Udo, N.S.: 29
- Usman, Y.B.: 164
- Valdes JC: 11
- Vantage Publishers: 28
- Verhelst, Thierry: 164
- Victor Uwaifo: 7
- Waheed Olaitan: 119
- Wall, G.: 70
- Wanyonyi, P. K.: 53
- Warren F.: 118
- White, L.: 53
- Wole Soyinka: 9
- World Bank Economic Review: 29
- Yakubu Gowon: 19
- Young Democrats of America: 29
- Young, G.: 70
- Youth Empowerment for sustainable Development: 28
- Youth mobilization strategies for political participation: 13-30
- Zulu Kingdom: 35



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*Cultural Rejuvenation for National Integration and Sustainable Development in Africa* is the outcome of a two-day international conference hosted by Centre for Black and African Art and Civilization (CBAAC). Given decades of "false starts" and development crises in Africa, attempts based mostly on externally recommended and sometimes imposed strategies, policies and models, which aggravated internal contradictions through culture shocks and more, the need to deliberate on culture for societal rebirth and sustainable development seems compelling. This implies that African development efforts and quest for national integration therein have suffered reverses because of a vital lacuna; that is, the failure to incorporate indigenous cultures into such efforts - cultures which were expected to adapt to some disembodied "development". These concerns and the quest for more meaningful cultural and economic development in Africa are reflected in the contributions by experts, making this book a worthwhile contribution to the search for much-needed answers.

#### **Chapters:**

- Arts and Culture as tools for national integration.
- Youth mobilization strategies for economic participation
- Traditional socio-cultural systems as models for stability and security in African societies
- Maximizing the economic potential of the Calabar cultural carnival.
- Integrating African Arts and Culture into the school curriculum: models, challenges and prospects
- Envisioning values based leadership: an exposition of the concept of Mutumin Kirki.
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- Rejuvenating community spirit for accelerated socio-economic development.
- Culture as an instrument for sustainable development and national integration.

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