MULTICULTURALISM AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: IN THE PURVIEW OF INTEGRATIVE HUMANISM

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Abstract
By natural endowment Nigeria has continued to enjoy her multiculturalists’ status and this has manifested in the way the people socialize, worship, and run their governments. This political structure, a multi party based is controlled by the larger ethnic groups who are the majority (the Igbos, Hausas and the Yorubas). The minority suffers the problem of personal identity, inadequate promotion of culture and poor representation in government. This paper is an attempt to insightfully explore some of the impacts of multiculturalism in Nigerian politics toward promoting a positive approach on the need for cultural integration in Nigeria’s political development. Furthermore, we aim to establish the link between multiculturalism and Nigeria’s political structure and its effects on political developments in the country. We posit that, for there to be a political stability within the various ethnic strains of the country, the minority ethnic groups must be integrated in government in line with the method of integrative humanism. Integrative humanism is a philosophy and also a method of doing philosophy that gives credence to social integration, inter-ethnic unionism and harmonisation of thought within and among a people’s reality, and this could be a better approach for social justice, equal representation, and inter-ethnic complementarity in Nigerian political development.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, Political instability, and Integrative humanism.

1.1 Introduction
Nigeria since 1999 has successfully and peacefully transferred four reins of power from one civilian regime to another and a step toward achieving a true democratic state. This has given us a true picture of how zealous the government of Nigeria is in its task to establish a better structure in the train of political development. To achieve a true democratic goal, Nigeria’s political history can be associated with diverse political structures, in other words Nigeria operates a multi-party system.

Multi-party system is a political ideology that permits a country to form and operate more than two political parties; currently, the 2015 general election has the following political parties; People Democratic Party (PDP), All
Progressive Congress (APC), All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) and many others. These parties are allowed to tender their various political manifestos as a way of attracting the interest and support of the masses. In Nigeria these political parties come up with their policies, norms, and possess some, ethnic and cultural influence on the different cultures that make up Nigeria. Nigeria can be truly termed a multicultural state.

In this paper, the term ‘multiculturalism’ is used to describe the political or cultural diversification of a society; more precisely, it is used to describe a society where a variety of different political parties with different cultural backgrounds coexist to seek for political power. These have resulted in poor representation, losts of personal identity and losts of cultural promotion of the minority ethnic groups. As a result of this, there is need for redress and corrections to be affected to enhance political stability in the country.

What we seek to achieve is to show the developments that tends to undermine Nigeria’s multicultural state and suggest ways of improving the coexistence of the different cultural typologies in order to ensure political stability in Nigeria. We contends that, Nigeria is a multicultural country with a multicultural political structure, and these have caused political, social and economic instability due to poor management of cultural and ethnic structures of the state by political parties and government fully dominated by the larger ethnic groups. It has caused a serious damage to the political character of the country due to poor management of the ethnic and cultural character of the country that has resulted to political instability. This paper contends that there is need to restructure our political system by integrating all political groups in line with the method of integrative humanism. We recommend a two party system for Nigeria. And attempt must be made to aggregate and integrate the interests of the different ethnic nationalities that make up Nigeria. Let us have a deep reflection on the concept of multiculturalism.

1.2 An Exposition of the Concept of Multiculturalism

The term multiculturalism can be used in two conceptual ways; multiculturalism as a concept that describes the nature of society and multiculturalism as a policy for responding to cultural diversity. These two concepts are used by contemporary political philosophers, which also form part of this research. Let us briefly articulate the various meanings of multiculturalism.

I. Multiculturalism as a describing concept for society

Multiculturalism in this sense is a concept that is used to describe the cultural diversities that exist in a particular society. A society that has more than one culture and ethnic group can be said to be a multicultural society. This is a society where a variety of diverse cultures coexist for common social, economic and political goal.
Many countries around the world are culturally diverse, because in such countries they have diverse languages, belief systems (religious beliefs), and cultural practices. Nigeria is one example with the Annangs, Igbo, Yorubas, Hausas, Fulanis, Efiks, Ibibios, Tiv and many others. Some of these ethnic groups apart from Hausa, igbo and Yoruba belong to the minority in terms of equal representation and participation in national development. Diversity in sense manifests in the people’s culture, language and religion. Different cultures have different days in which they celebrate the cultural heritage of their people. For example, in Urua Inyang, a community located in Annang ethnic group in Akwa Ibom state Nigeria; the people celebrate what they call *usen edia afa* (new yam festival). The *usen edia afa* is quite different from any other cultural day. It is celebrated to mark the end of the planting season, and to allow yam be sold publicly in the market place and to prepare for a new planting season. It is a very significant day for the people of Urua Inyang and it takes a very different shape on how it is celebrated each year.

Furthermore, multiculturalism through diversity can manifest in the language, boundary and historical background of society that makes it different from any other society, thus it seeks for the recognition of minority cultures than assimilation, every other culture is important and has the right to be respected.

II. Multiculturalism as a policy

The concept ‘multiculturalism’ is use as a kind of policy to denote two main characteristics. First, to examine the different demands of cultural groups; in other words, it is a kind of policy that refers to the different normative challenges like ethnic discord, internal liberalism, federal autonomy, and many others that arise as a result of cultural diversity. For example, these are policies that aim at addressing vividly the different normative challenges that arise from minority groups as a result of oppression by other majority groups. They are policies that aim at correcting the problem of unequal treatment of the component cultural units that make up a country. In the case of Nigeria, this has led to oppression and injustice in the way the country is structured and administered.

The second sense of multiculturalism as a policy is aimed at providing groups the means by which individuals or ethnic groups can pursue their cultural differences with the objective of preserving their cultural practices through celebration of traditional festivals. It does not entail of separating themselves from others in such a way as to cause disharmony in the society, but its objective is to allow and give the means for groups to pursue their differences toward positive goal. Within this sense, an ethnic group can celebrate their cultural day as in *usen edia afa* (*new yam festival*), which is celebrated to mark the end of the planting season, and to allow yam be sold publicly in the market place and to prepare for a new planting season without
being inference from the government or any other group. In view of the above exposition, we strongly believe that Nigeria as a nation that has many ethnic group with different cultures separated by boundaries and diverse historical origin is qualified to be termed a multicultural state.

The question is that how can we establish the multiculturalist positive goal with the Nigerian politics? Is Nigerian government doing so well to ensure that all the ethnic groups and their cultures are preserved? Another thought provoking question is, what are the impact or role of Nigeria’s political development and the objectives of multiculturalism. These are some of the questions that form the crux of this research. And as such we shall examine their link and further establish some of the fundamental issues that may need redress to ensure that the minority groups are integrated in Nigeria government as a requirement for true multicultural state.

Let us attempt to examine some of this issue, as we articulate on the history and problems of political development in Nigeria. This is because this paper shows that the true multiculturalist status is not present in Nigeria, and therefore we shall picture some of the problems from the history of Nigerian politics vis-a-vis from the independence of Nigeria that are responsible for this state of affairs.

1.3 Criticism of Multiculturalism

The concept has continued to raise a lot of issues in modern days, because instead of unity, multiculturalism is diversifying a country from its primary goal. Given that some groups have more mobilization than others, it is sometimes dismantles holism and divides more than it unites. Every group tries to promote their cultural interests at the expense of those of others. The question is what about the national entity that they all belong?. It focuses more on depoliticizing difference and these issues differ from one society with another. In some societies, the issue may be on language, and in some others it may be political, social and economical as the case may be.

Multiculturalism has been attacked by so many scholars, one of the famous criticisms according to an English political scientist called Samuel P. Huntington in his book *Clash of Civilizations theory*, posits that multiculturalism is basically an anti-western culture because it the policy that helps to “attack the identification of the United States Western civilization, denied the existence of a common American culture, and promoted racial, ethnic, and other sub-national cultural identities and groupings”(8). This implies that the policy strengthens the existence of cultures in diversity and the national ethnic culture suffers, and in most cases leads to fractionalization of a country, people become loyal to their group or their cocoon and not to the national unity and patriotism to one’s country at this point suffers some deviations and necessary attention.
The concept only celebrates the diverse cultures but loses the state culture and in some cases, the minority which is promoted by multiculturalism can oppress the majority. This was the case in South Africa where the minority white were oppressing the majority Blacks.

Let us proceed to expose the history and problems of political development in Nigeria in relation to multiculturalism.

1.4 History and Problems of Political Development in Nigeria

Since 1960 when Nigeria gained her independent from the hand of the European masters; who came as a result of scrambling for power, resources and to rule Africans. Nigeria has continued to strive for self development, inter-ethnic unionism, terrorism, militancy, political crisis and a government that is greatly determined and presided by the three major ethnic groups (Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa).

As we look at the Nigerian currency notes, we see this discrimination unabashedly displayed. The imprint of this oppression and marginalization is made clear by having the images of prominent sons of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria. The minority tribes have no place in the share of such national honours. These are some of the ways we observed to be so abnormal and may cause Nigeria not to attain full integration as one country if not corrected. As a multiculturalists state it is not the case that only the major ethnic groups should be acknowledged, but others must be carried along in line with the principles of multiculturalism and as a democratic state.

In spite of the above shortfalls, Nigeria has made considerable progress in political development since her independence in 1960. Some aspects of this development will be examined as follows:

1. The making of Nigerian constitution
2. The election of the presidency
3. Human rights advocacy and
4. Census

1. The making of Nigerian constitution

The constitution is the hallmark of every democratic nation, without one such a country may be ruled by dictators, the constitution expresses the desire of the people and establishes and guarantees sovereignty to the country. It is a legal document enacted by law to direct and serve as the driving force of any politically organised state. In view of the above description of a constitution, Malemi contends that:

A constitution is an instrument of government made by the people, establishing the structure of a country, regulating the powers and functions of government, the rights and duties of the individual and providing remedies for unconstitutional acts (2).
The Nigerian constitution can be characterized by its written form, its rigidity. It is written because all its contents can be found in one document, and can be easily procured and consulted on any issue covered by it (Malemi, 20).

According to S.O. Jaja, Independent Nigeria has so far experimented with five constitutions, the 1960, 1963, 1979, 1989 and 1999 constitutions (The 1989 Constitution was not promulgated). The 1999 Constitution has given birth to the Fourth Republic, though with problems for which it faces demands for a revision or amendment. The first two of these constitutions were drawn up during civilian regimes while the last three were made or promulgated during military regimes.

Some of the lessons learned by Nigerians during these exercises are enduring. The lessons have been taught and learned that no constitution is perfect; that ineffective constitutions can be amended or completely altered; that constitution - making, whether under a military or civilian regime, calls for adequate consultations and experimentation. Jaja further contends that, as was the experience with the 1963, 1979 and 1999 Constitutions, any constitution that is hurriedly drawn up and not tried, stands the risk of failure when subjected to the pressure of political, legal, economic and social forces in and outside the society (Cited in http://nmonlinenigeria.com/templates/?a=138).

2. The election of the presidency

The modern Nigeria since 1999 have successfully and peacefully transferred four reins of power from one civilian regime to another and a step toward achieving a true democratic state. In 1999 to 2007, there was a peaceful election that brought in Olusegun Obasanjo to power as the president, and from 2007 to 2015 Yaradua and Goodluck Jonathan’s government. These four reigns adds greater merit to Nigeria in her history of political development.

3. Human rights advocacy

The Nigeria I know has a Considerable progress for the protection of human rights. Proper provisions have been made for the enforcement of the fundamental human rights of Nigerian citizens which are all supported by Nigerian Constitution and are regularly checked by the judiciary when they are violated. The Nigerian Constitution also guarantees all Nigerian citizens the right to fair hearing and representation by counsel of choice. The Constitutional right to freedom of conscience and religion has been upheld by the courts. The Constitutional right to freedom of expression, movement and to hold opinions has also been upheld by the Courts as stipulated in the constitution.

4. Census

Census is another area one must consider when examining the political development of any country. In other words, it is an essential activity that helps to determine the political and economic force of a country. In 1993 and 1973, a
disputed census was carried out and cancelled, due to irregularities. In 1991, Nigeria recorded one of the successful censuses in the history of Nigeria. It was carefully planned and was executed to the satisfaction of the majority. Census helps to determine the total number of citizens in any particular country, and help to justify the quota of sharing revenue for the benefit of members of the country.

1.5 Multiculturalism vis-a-vis political development in Nigeria

In view of the various shortfalls in Nigerian political development due to major ethnic dominance in political affairs of the country; multicultural scholars contends that the minority should be integrated to fast track quick development. As such they dwell on the issues of personal identity and respect for cultural difference in the arena of politics. They advocate for equal appointment of political officers from all the ethnic groups, in other words, number should not be a criterion but the personal identity and cultural differences should be taken into consideration.

The multiculturalists believe that a country grows from the arena of cultural differences and not by negligence of some culture. Politicians should not regard one culture as superior than others. In Nigeria, this is mostly the case, the Igbos, Yorubas, and Hausas are often considered to be more superior to others. These three ethnic groups often decide the political fate of the country. In 1970, the causes of civil war in the country was as a result of the Igbos being treated badly and were most time killed in numbers in the Northern part of Nigeria. This informs us that, at any time any of the three ethnic group falls short of any convenience or are not favoured, there is a great tendency for disintegration in the country. From this perspective, one can solidly posit that Nigeria is ruled by the three ethnic groups, in other words, the unity of Nigerian democracy depends solely on this major groups.

Conversely, the question is, are these three groups the only ethnic groups in Nigeria? Why should they be seen as the only major force of Nigerian political status? Is Nigeria really a multicultural state?. These are some of the thought provoking questions this paper have observed. As a free thinker, it is so clear that Nigeria is subject to disintegration if these issues are not addressed. However, that is why integrative humanism becomes necessary as the subject matter of this research.

Let us examine this issue from a critical point of view using a method and a philosophy of integrative humanism as a panacea to the above multiculturalist problems.

1.6 Way forward: An integrative Humanist Approach

To articulate integrative humanism as a panacea to the prevailing problems militating against Nigeria's political development, one may be asked what
integrative humanism is? Let us proceed by exposing our mind on this concept.

What is integrative humanism?

Integrative humanism is a philosophy and also a method of doing philosophy that gives credence to social integration, inter-ethnic unionism and harmonisation of thought within and among a people’s reality. Integrative humanism is a philosophy and also a method of doing philosophy championed by Godfrey Okechukwu Ozumba, a Nigerian born philosopher, born on the 6th of December 1960. He founded the idea to show how the society can be integrated through philosophical conceptualization of ideas. Integrative humanism as a philosophy according to Ozumba is as follows:

Integrative humanism as a philosophy adopted as a guided but open attitude in approaching issues of knowledge as they affect humans directly or indirectly. This attitude takes a serious view that all parts of reality constituting matter and spirit, the plant and animal world as an integrated ecosystem of which no part can be isolated without dire consequences. Integrative humanism as a philosophy can therefore be applied as a beneficial approach in studying any facet of existent reality (Ozumba, 23).

Integrative humanism as a method he further contends:

Integrative humanism becomes a method when it is articulated and used either in interpreting a mass of reality or an instrument in conducting a research or as a way of bringing a new understanding to bear on old facts. For instance, a student applying the method of integrative humanism in research may want to know what different positions exist, and what constitute the limitations of these different positions (of say truths) and how an integrative approach of sifting and welding can bring about a better or more acceptable harmonious whole (23).

Furthermore, okeke explicates Integrative humanism as an intercultural philosophical theory that sees reality as having both physical and spiritual dimensions; the self and the other; the past and the present; as well as harmonized future framework in which seemingly opposed variables unite without contradiction to achieve progress, success and harmony of contraries. It is a ratio-empirico-spirito-centric approach to doing philosophy where realities are contraries rather than contradictions. The essence of integrative humanism is to show that through physical and spiritual insights we can provide answers to most of the questions that confront us in our daily lives. These questions may be ethical, epistemological, metaphysical, logical,
jurisprudential, political, religious, aesthetical or scientific. The methodical demands of integrative humanism are contextual, analytic and mutual integration. Therefore, integrative humanism is a cautious management of relevant variables in a context-dependent dynamic network for resolutions of tasks that would rather prove difficult for mono-sequestered and non-contextualized theoretic applications.

This paper adopts the above method as a panacea to the prevailing issues of multiculturalism in Nigerian political development. Therefore, we advance by articulating the following as a way forward using integrative humanist method which include as follows:

i. **Developing and promoting policies of the minority interest**: Rural development is one of the essential measures on how to revitalize a democratic state. From an integrative stand point, integrative humanism as a method of philosophizing is of the opinion that there is need for proper research to unfold new possibilities within all necessary links of reality (Ozumba, 24).

As such it becomes a fundamental issue in the growth of Nigerian politics to promote political activities, enhance minority groups for the growth of such society. If this is not done, the multiculturalist status of Nigeria will still be questionable. Nigeria will only grow if all the ethnic cultures are integrated and promoted. By this no culture should be seen as superior to the other.

ii. **Forming government from the grass root level**: The grass root is one of the key powerhouses of a true democracy; it involves house to house renovation, rejuvenation and development in all the ethnic communities, proper orientation of the uneducated rural people and seeing their importance in political affair. This is called Town Hall Meeting in modern politics.

iii. **Appointment of leadership role to all ethnic groups**: Most times, the minority are not given any role to play in a democratic state like Nigeria. This is because of the role democracy plays in effectively promoting leadership by majority. Integrative humanism as a method of doing philosophy do not totally agree with the negligence of the minority; in other words attention should be given the ethnic minority if Nigeria's political development must be revitalized. The minority should have a quota in leadership role of every country, because they from part of the whole, and if bifurcated, they become missing links and their problems, voice and demands can never be achieved. Within an integrative standpoint leadership roles should be assigned to all
Ethnic groups for an integrative government. There should be a political accommodation between the minority and the majority. And if the minority is in power they must give political accommodation to the majority as demanded by multiculturalism. Integrative humanism sees every ethnic group as constituting link in the formation of the full spirit of the nation and therefore should not be marginalized.

iv. **Execution of key national project across all ethnic group:** The essence of democracy as against dictatorship is the existence of equality, fairness and justice; these three concepts are well connected to give the masses freedom to seek social equity, freedom in fair hearing and a just treatment. By implication, it means that economic distribution, execution of vital projects must cut across all ethnic society and must be equally distributed not from the formula of majority rather from the minority. This is the only way of showing the importance of government to the minority ethnic groups.

v. **Educating the youth on the needs for integration:** Some of the major political violence in Nigeria, and the problem of militancy, terrorism (Boko Haram) are all driven by the youth as majority. The youth constitute a centripetal force of Nigerian political development and as such they are to be educated and controlled. To avoid some of these major issues propelled by the youth; integrative humanism recognises proper orientation of all the youth, and not in some part of the country but across all the ethnic groups. Thus, integrative humanism understands the concept of holism, and not in parts. By implication, the youth can only be rescued from wrongness if they are properly educated. This education policy will take place through public awareness, workshops, seminars etc. The focus of this education must cover the needs for the country to be free from political violence, the benefits of peaceful co-existence and how national integration can be attained.

vii. **The Practice of Religion:** Religion is one of the major contributors of political development of a country. In other words, religion influences the political affair of a country. From this perspective there must be freedom of worship for all ethnic cultures; no ethnic group should be forced to believe in any religion against their will. From the integrativists perspective, all religious practices must be promoted, maintained and sustained.
1.7 Conclusion

Multiculturalism is a body of thought in political philosophy about the proper way to respond to cultural and religious diversity. By natural endowment, Nigeria has continued to enjoy her multicultural status and these manifests in the way the people socialize, worship, and extensively the political structure they operate. This political structure is such that the larger ethnic groups who are the majority (the Igbos, Hausas and the Yorubas), make the minority to suffer the problem of personal identity, inadequate promotion of their culture and poor representation in government.

Thus, Nigerian government has continued to undermine the existence of these other diverse cultures, creating a gap between the major ethnic groups with the minor groups. These have caused Nigeria to lose her multiculturalist status.

This paper has pondered on the above issues and their various manifestations and has posited that, for there to be a political stability within the various ethnic strains of the country, the minority ethnic groups must be integrated in government in line with the spirit and philosophy of integrative humanism. Integrative humanism is a philosophy and also a method of doing philosophy that gives credence to social integration, inter ethnic unionism and harmonisation of thought within and among a people’s reality, and this could be a better approach for social justice, equal representation, and inter-ethnic complementarity in Nigeria’s political development. What we are saying is that majority culture should allow the minority culture to thrive in a mutually benefiting harmonious existence. The majority culture should not force the minority culture to be assimilated into their culture; assimilation policy is a violation against multiculturalist’s spirit.

References