Managing Multicultural Societies: A Nudge Towards A Cultural Purity in Nigeria

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Abstract

Contemporary multiculturality is historically unique and cannot adequately be analysed within the framework of the nation state without recourse to the ambivalence of a genuine cultural purity. It must really exercerpates the lure of personal identity in the multicultural societies. A plural society must need to strike the right balance between the demands of unity and diversity, by securing and affirming their identity in uncoerced interactions while ensuring that their members can interact as fellow citizens in the share public realm. It is only when a political community cultivates the spirit of responsible and common citizenship that it can sustain its unity and diversity. Such apprehensions about the subversive effect of disunity in the multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-lingual nation of Nigeria, solely-admonishes with the theoretical framework of social constructionist theory based on mutual existentialism to bridge the gap between them. If a plural society is to hold together, it needs a shared self-understanding and national identity. In as such, a political unity does not require homogeneity, and is best preserved in a climate of flourishing and self-confident cultured diversities. It is considerably on this ground, that the findings of the study suggest the thesis that, in Nigeria, each time there is need for a cultural purity of nationhood, there is always resistance by the empires hegemonic culture for the revival of their ethnoreligious identity.

Keywords: Multicultural-Societies; Cultural Purity; Politicization; Hegemony; Personal Identity

Introduction

Nigeria is a multicultural society that requires a cultural purity during its politicization of pluralism. This is to say that it consists of several distinct and self-conscious cultural communities and managing them is not easy. How can we resolve the political conflict of convergence or coexistence of cultures amongst varying empires hegemonic cultures in Nigeria? How will it be resolved into a unity of purpose, despite their differences, because cultural communities cherish their identities and rightly wish to preserve these. However, under this consideration, they must find enough in common to enable them to live together as a single community. Thus, this paper therefore, hinges on the propositional reconciliation between the demands of diversity on the one hand and social unity and cohesion on the other.

In Nigeria, managing a multicultural society is particularly a problematic conceptual task, especially for someone who does not share the naïve view that there must be a consensus of unity in diversity kept in splendid isolation for common goal of running the affairs of the state. A multicultural society as I believe, has both normative and empirical aspects. It tells us something about how we do believe even as it provides an ideal of how we ought to behave. Attempts to extricate our ideals from our actual practices usually succeed in determining the importance of living together in our mutual existentialism. It is "to promote good conduct which in turn breeds peace and concord necessary for building a nation" [1]. My object, here is to illuminate the conception of its integrity in the Nigerian state, which is generally plagued with division, contradiction, and anarchy. This very fact, will be analysed in detail in the main body of this paper, that there is need to unite all the various differences in the Nigerian state, because a political unity does not require homogeneity, and it best preserved in a climate of flourishing and self-cultural diversities.

The Synergy between the Homogeneity and Heterogeneity of Nigerian State

The synergy between the homogeneity and heterogeneity of life in Nigeria is within the dynamics of social change. The system may be scientific, language, religious, aesthetic, philosophical, family, economic, political and social, but one vital thing is the interchangeability of forces of history. This milieu of changing

systems and forces is the vital force of change and permanent in the multi-cultural societies. Nigeria as a multi-cultural state, in this case, has evolved from one stage of development to the other. As a multi-cultural society, it has undergone some transformational changes from the normativity of heterogeneity to homogeneity or visa vice. Social change in this dimension, has conventionally come to mean the natural evolution of its member in adapting to the state of its sovereignty, by engaging to live harmoniously together in mutual existentialism. Over the years, since the inception of the Nigerian state in 1960, she has confronted with several socio-political and economic conflicts due to the nature of its multi-culturality. So many things are underpinning towards that, to the point of her constant political strife, economic deprivation, bloodshed and wars [2]. Expressed it as thus: With the emergence of ethnic militia and their deep divides between various ethnic groups, religious intolerance has become more violent and bloody.

Observers of the Nigerian political scenario has noted that lack of national integration has enormous negative impact on the multi-cultural state of Nigeria. It leads to high state of confusion, and clashes between the Christian South and Moslem North. It has become increasingly destabilizing in the political and economic lives of the people as Quinn & Quinn [3] put it. "It is remarkable that Christian/Muslim violence of the 1980's and 1990's, claimed about 5000 (five thousand) lives" [3]. Religion as an element of social change dynamics has played a crucial role in politics in Nigeria. "The struggle for power in Nigeria is rooted in the political and religious history of competing world views embodied by chiefs' ethnic leaders and religious leaders" [4]. The inter-religious violence are interwoven with the ethnic communal conflicts and this has predominantly affecting the nature of polity in Nigeria.

Heterogeneity of Nigeria

The vitality of the issue lies not just on religion alone but rather, and to a larger extent, on the heterogeneous nature of the topography and cultural differences in the six geo-political zones in Nigeria. Regarding the phenomenon of heterogeneity, Ball & Dagger [5] acknowledged that: Nigeria's heterogeneous character is evident in the diversity of its ethnic and religious groups. These diversities have often constituted a source of conflict within entity. For clarity as put by Ball and Dagger, Nigeria is one of the most plural countries in the world and has been polarized along its ethno-religious lines of the predominantly Christians in the South with 45% of Nigeria's population, and predominantly Moslem in the North with the 43% of the Nigerian population. The remaining 2% are people that are based on indigenous religion and have non swag in any socio-political conflict.

The demographic statistics show that, Nigeria is a complex country of over 160 million people with many values within it. In fact, the expanse of land that is toady Nigeria, was inhabited by different ethnic groups, each of which has the status of kingdom or a nation. They are endowed with different natural economic opportunities. The nation is divided into two major cultural hegemonies of Moslem North and Christian predominantly in the south. Apart from the conjuncture of the heteronormativity of the ethnoreligious culture in Nigeria, we also have the language pluralism, which has enormous negative effect on the collective homogeneity of Nigeria.

Language Pluralism

Language pluralism is a major feature of multicultural society, and Nigeria is one of them. In Nigeria, we have about 500 languages and with many dialects. Blench narrated it in this way: "that Nigeria has about five hundred languages, through the exact number is not known since new languages are constantly being discovered and some go extinct with time" [6]. However, it is in this instance, that we can say that there are many languages in Nigeria. Language pluralism poses a major threat to national integration as speakers of the different languages are bound to cling to theirs. Language is very chauvinistic, to the extent that people/their ethnic groups are using it to influence and dominate the other. This is sequel to the fact that some see theirs as superior to others. However, on the nature of genuine multiculturalism, Nigerians if well integrated can gain more in the climate of flourishing and self-confident cultural diversities. It can be understood that it is important to give all citizens equal sense of belonging. It is only when Nigerian citizens are given enough opportunity to feel and act as true Nigerians that there can be national integration and will in turn engender patriotism from all categories of citizens. There is no way of living harmoniously than to respect each other's different roles, languages, cultures, race, and integrity amongst the Nigerian people. This is the only way they can bond together as a political community, in cultivating the spirit of responsible and common citizenship, that can sustain its unity and diversities.

Managing Multi-Cultural Societies: A Nudge towards a Cultural Purity in Nigeria

Multi-cultural societies are not new to our age. They have existed in premodern times as well. In political terms, multiculturism meant accepting that there would be many states rather than a single homogeneous one covering all the states. Nigeria is not a single nation based on one homogeneous culture, or religion. Instead, Nigeria is a heterogeneous nation with many ethnoreligious cultures with various rulers having immense authority within their territories and not outside of them.

However, Nigeria as a multi-cultural society has so many ranges of characteristics:

a. It has a cultural diversity, so many aspects of cultures within its locality.

b. It covers a wider variety of areas

c. It is grounded in profound differences about the conceptions of good life and religious ideology.

d.   It does not share of many important moral beliefs and social practices.

e.   It has more defiant as it relates to the modern society in seeking for rights, power and equality amongst members of the political community.

f.   It is a multicultural society in the context of increasing globalization.

Globalization in this respect, powered mainly by Western governments and multi-national corporations is a paradoxical phenomenon. On the one hand, it leads to homogenization of ideas, institutions, and forms of life. On the other hand, it also leads to heterogeneity. But if the meaning of "multi-culturalist is stretched so wide that virtually in all the above characteristics in which it depicts Nigeria as one, the word is trivialized. In calling it a democratic society, because, we would not be ruling out any way it deals with the purity of it cultures, in living harmoniously in existentialism. Thus, within this trajectory, there are so many impediments that promote cultural differences, loss of a society's identity and stimulating of resistance and rediscovery or invention of indigenous traditions. Perhaps, all these factors have enormous influences on the political unity of a multi-cultural state. Nigeria as a multi-cultural state, since its independence in 1960, has been traumatized by conflicts of cultural differences, ethno-religious conflict, economic poverty, and various socio-political rift, due to the wider gap in cultural underpinnings of Nigeria state.

Considerably, it is on this ground that, Nigeria can seek to be represented in a very different view of social unity. It was born with so many cultural differences of liberal individualism. It has Euro-Christian tradition; Arabi-Islamic tradition, African-Indigenous tradition; and the national-governmental traditions. All these culminated in widening the gap in its social unity. More so, the cultural phenomenon of globalization, encourages migrations of individuals and even communities, and diversity every aspect of our national traditions. It also, provokes fears about the loss of a society's identity and political resistance among varying ethnic identities. So, with all these premediated factors above, Nigeria needs to strike a ground of social unity, that does not require homogeneity but rather will be on the implicit agreement of a cultural purity in which they will remain firm against the insurgent cultural challenges occurring from various ethnic nationalities. John Locke in his theory of social contract edited by Arthur Shapiro and Troop (2001) in Asike [7] established this very fact as thus: The commonwealth seems to me to be a society of men constituted only for the procuring, preserving and advancing their own civil interest... it is the duty of the civil magistrate, by the imperial execution of equal laws, to secure unto the people in general, and to everyone of this subjects belonging to this life... the powers of the state, however, are limited by the original reasons that would motivate people to join and accept its authority. As the contours of the modern world system crystalized more in this 21st century for globalization of

socio-political among nations, so it is in this perspective, that Nigeria needs to consider very carefully the classic observation of its institutional problems, and to check the strength and scope that determine the level of institutionalization within its structures.

Although, the fact remains that the mode of institutionalization of structure is the same mode of securing social unity in the modern state. The mode is culturally specific, it entails considerable moral and physical violence. It only makes sense in a culturally and socially homogenous society. In a highly diverse society, it runs into all kinds of problems. This is because some groups of people might refuse to see themselves as individuals or as individuals only and might press for communal or what are clumsily called collective rights. Different communities might have different needs, and demand different rights and powers. To rule these out in the name of a narrow definition of equality is not only to provoke resistance but also to deny them justice. Again, different communities might have different customs and practices, and might find it difficult to agree on a common body of laws concerning culturally significant areas of life. Since such common laws are not culturally neutral and often represent the customs and practices of a specific community, they can easily become a vehicle of domination by the majority community. Marx stressed this, in respect in which the extension of the boundaries of association and the enlargement of systems of cooperation had already occurred in world history, and asserts that: The mode of production of material goods determines the political, social, intellectual, and religious life and institutions of a given people in each era of history. It is not the mode of consciousness that determines their consciousness. Those who own the means of production control the entire gamut of the people's culture [8].

Here, Marx is saying that it is the material condition of existence that moulds the ideas of the people who, mistakenly, assume that it is their ideas which shape their mode of living. The capitalists who own the means of production or control the mode of production are they people who control the ideas of mankind. It is considerably on this argument that, my proposition stands to assert that the dialectical interplay between universality and difference is as evident in national societies as it is in the development of international relations. In national multicultural societies, the extension of the same legal and political rights to all citizens reveals the influence of universalistic conceptions of ethics which hold that individuals should be treated similarly unless there are morally relevant differences between them. Presumably, the scenario can be critically re-examined in Nigeria, where there is incidence of ethno-religious conflicts and rivalries of politico-regional enclaves. These are sparks of differences that require real national integration in Nigeria.

It has led to the domination and privilege of the Christian and Moslem hegemonic culture to ignore the needs of the universalized type of culture in Nigeria. This inevitably, reveals

the widening of moral horizons to embrace questions of otherness and difference. The Thesis that the public realm can be enriched by drawing on moral latitude of unity in diversity in Nigeria is very doubtful. The politics of difference intersects with the defence of universality to produce new images of political community has not yet been attain in Nigeria. The universalistic response to the problem of community challenges, the respect in which the totalizing project has estranged citizens from their hegemonic culture. The universalistic ethical worldviews are inherently dominating and underpinned the systematic exclusion of minority cultures within national boundaries and the ruthless exploitation of the minority culture. Perhaps, this is one vital problems with the modern globalization, in the domination of other minor cultures by the western civilization. It uses its epistemological inquiry of normativity to clone the rest of other cultures.

I have so far argued that contemporary multiculturality is historically unique, and that we cannot adequately deal within the framework of the nation state without recourse to the ambivalence of genuine cultural purity. For this, there are many conflagrations of attachments that jettisons the appeal for real national unity in Nigeria, and this has brought rifts in so many areas of our national lives in areas like politics, educational curriculum, economic, religion and ethnic politics. This raises the question as to whose or what version of ethno-cultural civilization is to underpin the state, who take a different view of it. I also at this juncture, fear that the kind of combination of politics and culture that emanates from this civilizational contest on the national psyche, will corrupt both the people and the Nigerian culture.

How can we intelligibly eradicate this problem of disunity to arrive at a pure consciousness of a cultural purity? What is the best way to conceptualize and cope with deep, defiant and organized cultural diversities? The assessment of these problems can be analysed with a few general observations, which are below accrue:

a. A plural society needs to strike a balance between the demands of unity and diversity. If it privileges unity and ignores or marginalizes diversity, it provokes resistance and endangers the very unity it seeks. Thus, it is under this consideration that, the reconciliation of the demands of unity and diversity can only be specified on the objective ground, and not to be specified in the abstract for mode of reconciliation obviously varies from society to society. Nigeria society ought to live more with diversity than others, because of its peculiar features of cultural attachments with colonialism. It covers wide range of cultures, and such should be organized, institutionalized, clearly defined, and maintain a singular source of unity.

b. With respect to these differences, no mode of reconciliation of the demand of unity and diversity is likely to succeed without recourse to the autonomy of individual space in which different communities can feel secure and both affirm and negotiate their respective identities without juxtaposition with each other. This autonomy of space will include such thing as the freedom to regulate their internal affairs themselves and to set up appropriate cultural and educational institutions, with state support and subsidy when appropriate. Thus, the autonomy here will very on the needs of the state culture by given the citizens a cultural stake in the state.

c. There must be a need for the orientation of national integration, the principle that will propel love for real national integration in Nigeria. A political community must ensure that their members are willing and able to interact as fellow-citizens in a shared public realm. A citizen is not different from the state; he/she belongs to the state. Citizenship has some basic dimensions. It is a legal status with civil and political rights. Citizen must also have a political status – a way of the conduct of the public affairs. And the third is that a citizen must be free to relate with others in the state without any juxtaposition or segregations. A political community in a multicultural society is, therefore, not a transcendental entity but a body of citizens thinking and living in a certain way. They determine the quality of the collective political life of the state, because it is the politics of the citizens that determines the nature of the state public policy.

d. Citizens in the multicultural societies must share a common political realm, deliberate about collective affairs in a common public language and relate with each other not as Christians, Moslems, or fellow members of a specific community. They are like judges in a court of law without any form of personal attachment.

e. In the multicultural societies, a citizen must be critical and just without sentiments. He/she must be very conscious of being in relationship with others, by conforming to the rule of law, with the capacity for political judgement, reasonableness, prudence, and ability to make and receive arguments. Thus, the citizens competencies must be altruistic with the public spirit, strong sense of justice, a passionate concern for others welfare.

Perhaps, it is very passionately given that it is in these above circumstances, that a political community cultivates the spirit of responsible and common citizenship that can sustain both its unity and diversity. A citizenship relationship with the political community are complimentary and regulate each other, and without any citizenship the diversity if empty. Moreso, without a secure and flourishing diversity, common citizenship becomes thin, lacking in moral and cultural depth, and in constant danger of politicizing all areas of social life. This fact is the real reason, why Nigeria needs a cultural purity, to harmonize their citizenship ideals with the sovereign political community. And one important ways of adoption of virtues of citizenship

is through the educational institutions the colleges and universities. They are subject of collective control and involve working and living together with people of diverse backgrounds, religions, ideologies and interest.

Managing Multicultural Societies: The Views of Marx and Rawls

Building a system of consensus for rational human existentialism is one of the major tasks of philosophers. They tried to build a consensus around cultural purity to create the possibility of forms of community which are simultaneously more universalistic and more sensitive to cultural differences. Their goal is on the ethical ideal of a cultural puriety that will determine the unity in diversity among the various cultures. Perhaps, under this trajectory, John Rawls and Karl Marx introduced a model of rational consensus that will determine a cultural puriety of inclusiveness of cultures and harmony of the differences in the state. Both Marx and Rawls are emissaries of the state harmony under the trajectory of conflict. "Marx's famous critique of Hegel's political philosophy stressed the failure of the modern state to satisfy the basic material needs of the subordinate classes". Here, Marx is of the contention that, it is the economic factor that determines the social consciousness, man cannot think at all, unless his material needs are satisfied, and then what he does think will be dependent upon the material mode of production of the society in which he lives. Here, we borrowed a leaf from Marx which seems to have rejected the evils of industrialization with capitalism on the ground of relationship of the material conditions, in which people lives to the ideas and beliefs they hold. His assessment of the evils of the bourgeoisie reminds us of the dangers of class disparity and the separation of reward from performance. His overall cultural importance to the point of expression in pluralism is on the avalanche of bridging the gap or hiatus between the classes. It is a form of cultural purity in promoting unity of human collaboration, inclusiveness and collectively of cultures within the multicultural state.

Considerably, Marx in the light of these expressions have jettisons the class division between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. He proposes that, an economic factor is the real essential product of determining the social consciousness of cultural purity in a state. He is more of a revolutionary than Rawls, who is a social reformer of the capitalist society. John Rawls as a social reformer, is one of the contemporary philosophers on the issue of distributive justice. He argues that the task of social and political institution is the preservation and enhancement of individual liberty and well-being. In his work: "Justice and Fairness", he attempts to reconcile the demand for equality made by radical tradition with the demand for liberty and freedom from control made by individualism. He expounds a set of moral principles designed to regulate the basic institutions of any just society, arguing that social life is marked by both cooperation and by conflict, and that these principles determines how the fruits of co-operative endeavours are to be distributed.

Thus, according to Rawls, the questions of justice arise when a society evaluates the institutions and practices under which it lives with an eye toward balancing the legitimate competing interests and conflictive claims which are pressed by the members of that society. Here, Rawls, wants to determine the language of rights, to avoid the legitimate competing claims which usually come into conflict. Rawls in this perspective does not view the citizens of a state as naïve moralists searching for a utopian ideal. Rather, he sees them as enough self-interested individuals who which in pursuing their own individual interests and achieving their own individual goals. Presumably, Rawls vision of fuller, better life adds him to the list of champions of "Social reformer" who advocates the harmony of individual liberty during multicultural society.

Once we highlight the dynamics of state membership - the interaction between associational life and vicissitudes of personal existence is determine by the individual and state through the essence of humanitarian paradigm, which is the policy prescription able to adequately address the imperatives needed to preserve the individual in the human society.

Conclusion

It can be observed that most countries in multicultural society, have cultural purity which transcends the bounds of ethnicity, religion, race, gender and language differences. And the issues of divisions, contradiction, and exclusiveness are incidentally in countries which attach graver moral; concept to personal identity of homonormativity. In most of these countries, a strong indication of personal identity is enough to jettison the socio-political process and brings disunity or disparity among the people. In Nigeria, there is no real sense of cultural purity and this is symptomatic of the efforts of this country to ensure that they have a cultural purity, that will determine the stability of heteronormativity of culture. This is not feasible, even on the theoretical level of public policy, where the government have not agreed on the restructure of the institutions. Really, the crux of the argument is for the moral probity of our leaders, the very makers and executioners of the law, to adopt a unifying principle of culture that will determine unity among them.

Considerably, it is in this perspective, that a cultural purity will solely transcends the bounds of religious differences, ethnic chauvinism, racial slurs and language differences. Here at this juncture, we adopt Marxian approach of conflict resolution, in seeking to bridge the hiatus or gab between cultures in Nigeria. Our common interests, therefore, will depend on shared economy inform of farming, industrialization, banking arrangements etc. It is this according to Marx, that it is an economic factor that will shape our lives in the society. It determines our social consciousness of everything. It will bring the model of cultural purity, and thereby dissolving the intensity of the general cultural differences in Nigeria.

A genuine economic factor will promote a secularization of culture in a divided society. It will promote the idea of living

together in mutual existentialism. Secularity as a cultural purity is a condition in which our experience of and search for fullness occurs and this is something, we all share, believers and unbelievers alike. Thus, it is in the light of this trajectory, that the evolution of the cultural purity would be born in Nigeria, because, "it is the material conditions of existence that mould the idea of people who, mistakenly, assume that it is their ideas which shape their mode of living" [8]. Thus, in following this methodology in the classical intellectual epistemology of Marx, it is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. It is the mode of production of material goods that determines the political, social, intellectual and religious life and institutions of a given people in a society.

When men/women are exposed and influenced by the economic factors directly or indirectly for socio-political and cultural development, they designed that to form alliance irrespective of their diversity and heteronormativity of cultures. Thus, in Nigeria, the case is different, there is no economic configuration as a model to mould people's behaviour into a form of cultural purity. Asike and Anwuluorah in this regard, corroborated this, by saying that in Nigeria: There is no individual political will to sustain the federal structure. The political arrangements are shaped in such a way that religion, ethnicity serves as the ideological preference for national identity much more than any configuration along cultural or historical lines… The nation's political elites were unwilling to maintain Nigeria's tradition of pluralism and tolerance, for the sustainability of a genuine political and economic development [9].

However, it is in consonance with the above explanation, that we believed that a political development has no terminal end; it is always in a state of flux, revolving around those internal and external circumstances confronting it in an epoch. It is within the foregoing context that the Nigerian national cultural purity can arrive on the concept of economic interest as stipulated by Marx and Rawls. A nation state must be in a transformational goal in which they will be structured, organized, and shall be guarded by some procedural rule of law controlling and regulating the people. Summarily, it is in this way that any nation can survive the distinctive ways of division, dispute, quarrel, squabble, disagreement, dissension etc. And a nation divided against itself shall not stand or survive.

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