

**APPIAH'S COSMOPOLITANISM AND IGWEBUIKE PHILOSOPHY AS CATALYSTS FOR
NIGERIA'S NATIONAL UNITY: A PHILOSOPHICAL ASSESSMENT**

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ABSTRACT

The amalgamation of Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba and other minor ethnic groups into one country called Nigeria has been in serious crises not long after its formation as there was no strong basis for this unity. Since Nigerian independence, the country have witnessed series of agitations, riots, ethnic clashes and even civil war. In the 21st century, these ethnic tensions persist and have intensified, now compounded by various forms of terrorism. The Fulani headsmen appear to be among the deadliest terrorist group today. Other security threats include: Boko haram group, un-known gun men and agitators of various groups across all parts of the country. Under the poor leadership of All Progressive Congress (APC) government, terrorism, agitations, and ethnic clashes and ethnic cleansing seem unlikely to end any time soon. From a philosophical perspective, Appiah's cosmopolitanism and his emphasis on inter dependence as portrayed in the Ethics of Identity; serve as a catalyst for national unity. Similarly, the Igwebuike philosophy rooted in Igbo world view emphasizes unity and cooperation despite differences in identity or ideology. Both philosophies advocate for unity in diversity as foundational principle for nation building. The lessons from these two philosophies converge: they propose that unity amidst diversity is possible and essential. Through the application of Igwebuike philosophy, even the deadliest acts of terrorism by herdsmen and other violent groups could be curtailed, ethnic rivalries could be reconciled and peace restored to the nation. Our methodology is philosophical analysis. We analyze concepts, words, ideas, experiences to bring deeper meaning and clarity of thought. This involves resolving complex expressions into simpler foundational ones and elucidating their use within a given discourse

Key words: Cosmopolitanism, Philosophy, Igwebuike Philosophy, Nigeria, Catalyst and National Unity.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, Nigeria is almost becoming Afghanistan owing to violence and lawlessness. Fulani herdsmen since 2015 has been terrorizing and killing Nigerians in hundreds and more in some parts of the country, particularly in Benue state, Plateau, Enugu and Ebonyi states, one of the recent incidence is June 14, 2025 massacre of over 200 persons in Benue state.¹ They not only kill, they also immediately grab the land and re names the villages as well. The Nigerian security personnels always pay nonchalant attitude to this mayhem as they are already de-radicalized and bastardized by mingling or infusion of terrorists within their groups. There is fear and hunger in the land as many farmers cannot freely access their farm lands and even herdsmen terrorist take their herds of cow to graze on the cultivated farm lands and their cows always eat up the farm produce. Many Fulani and Hausa youths also are dispatched at different forests in the country with sophisticated weapons and local ammunitions, where they come out now and then to the main roads to attack buses, kidnap passengers and request for ransom in millions of naira and in thousands of dollars. The Nigerian police and army also pay nonchalant attitude to this as they are already compromised. This is Nigeria as of the moment, but one thing certain is that these abnormalities started gradually through minor ethnic clashes and later escalated to this level. Worst still is that some individuals that were entrusted with security and nation building like the former president Buhari instead of stopping this nefarious acts he even supported it by not only opened the borders and gave access to more foreign Fulani all over Africa to come into Nigeria and settle without visa, he also de-radicalized the nations' army by incorporating the terrorists or those he called repented Boko haram terrorists into the Nigerian Army there by bastardizing the system. There are also other agitation groups in the country like the indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB) led by Mazi Nnamdi Kanu and Yoruba led by Sunday Igboho agitating for Oduduwa Republic through his liberation movement called Oodua Peoples' Congress (OPC) and Ariwa nation by Hausa Fulani Youths. All these separatists groups are from various ethnic groups advocating for their own nation as the unity formed by Lord Lugard does not work any longer, if there has ever been a time it ever worked at all. Human beings are really difficult to handle. Man is an enigmatic being and he is also an impossible possible being.²

Looking at the above situation, An English American Professor, Appiah and his philosophy of Cosmopolitanism and Independence becomes very crucial as it will help each ethnic group to live in peace in themselves and live in peace with other ethnic groups within the country. Again the Igwebuike African and Igbo communalistic philosophy is a philosophy of unity which has helped Africans of yester years and of nowadays and will equally help all the ethnic groups within the Nigeria to unite and vie for peace, defeat external enemies and be develop.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS:

Philosophy/Philosophical Assessment: Philosophers are not in agreement on the meaning of philosophy, but they agreed on its etymology, hence, we can say, “philosophia esti philia tes Sophias” (philosophy is love of wisdom). A philosopher is a lover of wisdom, a person strongly desirous of wisdom. Wisdom here begins with wonder, that is, astonishment. This kind of wonder is not ordinary wonder but of deep curiosity. An embracing wonder, that is, wonder about things in totality and not in bits by bits. Plato says, “It is through wonder that those who began philosophy started off” Also, “The sense of wonder is the mark of a philosopher”³ Philosophers wonder about things through reflective thinking. They wonder about things through their ultimate causes or from their fundamental point of view. Hence, the scholastics define philosophy as “Scientia rerum per ultimas causas” which means “Science of everything through their ultimate causes.”⁴ based on the light of reason.

Philosophy is a critical reflection on the realities in the universe; this includes the human person himself or herself. For C. B. Okolo, philosophy is a “critical enterprise, something dynamic, a quest, a search . . . , a spirit of evaluative inquiry into all area of human experience, of the world in which we live, of man himself and his place in the universe.”⁵ He further contends that it is the duty of philosophy to give a “coherent and systematic account of the multifaceted universe of being and knowledge of what is, and how man knows it.”⁶ This implies that philosophy covers every aspect of human endeavors. In other words, it studies the whole of reality. Thus, it is most ambitious. In other words, a **philosophical assessment** is to apply the tools of critique and objective scrutiny in its assessment of its subject matter. The focus here is on Nigerian ethnic or tribal crises to bring about unity and nation building. We concentrate on two philosophical theories: Appiah’s cosmopolitanism and Igwebuiké Philosophy. They are complementary in their doctrine of unity in diversity. We elucidate Nigeria briefly.

NIGERIAN BAD LEADERSHIP: A THREAT TO DEVELOPMENT

Nigeria – The most populous country in Africa and it is located at the western coast of Africa. It is bordered to the north by Niger, to the east by Chad and Cameroon, to the South by the gulf of Guinea of Atlantic Ocean, and to the West by Benin Republic. Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba are the major tribes and we have other prominent tribes like: Fulani, Ibibio, Efik and the likes. Almost since her Independence in 1960, bad leadership and corruption have been its greatest challenges to development till date. Bad leadership has been the bane of Nigerian underdevelopment. Nigeria is a product of strange amalgamation of about 250 ethnic groups in 1914 by a representative of British imperial majesty, Sir, Lord Lugard. Nigeria gained independence in 1960 and became a republic in 1963. So, the federal republic of Nigeria can be traced to British and Roman colonialism (Roman colonized British) and this link explained the modeling of Nigeria constitution after European concept of law and justice. Therefore, on paper, Nigerian constitutional law provides the principle that could sustain good governance and ensure a just and egalitarian society because it was an offshoot of English law. For instance the popular law of general will was the basis for 1999 Nigerian constitution, a thorough look at the Nigerian constitution will show that all the major concepts of Rousseau’s General will is contained in the Nigerian constitution, of which if applied and implemented, the problems and issues of bad leadership will be a thing of the past. This bad leadership is also the root of some ethnic crises in the country.

In a clearer elucidation of Nigerian democracy, one sees that the political class or the managers of democratic governance in Nigeria are ill equipped or ill disposed to render selfless services to the country. They submerged the general will to an individual class will or sectional will. The executives are draconian, corrupt and incompetent; this is evident in eight years Buhari’s regime. The legislatures are sycophants and ill equipped to perform the function of check and balances on the executives while the judiciary is afraid to render justice. The concern for positive change and transformation arose out of the way successive government have dethroned general will and substituted it for individual will while piloting the affairs of the country. Nigerian politicians are bereft of the idea of good governance. This stemmed from the age longed practice of god-fatherism which encourages the enthronement of stooges. This scenario enables people with less moral standard to bastardize and loot the treasury for their self-aggrandizement and personal gain. Men of proven integrity, ability, zeal and determination who can better the lot of the masses are discouraged from aspiring to lead by such vices as god-fatherism, rigging of election, kidnapping, elimination of dissenting voices and opposition. This just concluded Nigerian 2023 Presidential election is best fitted example. The aforementioned ills have inflicted Nigeria with apathy and lackadaisical attitudes towards political institution and consequently eroded their confidence on this institution of governance. The reality nowadays is this docility, apathy, and inaction by the Nigerians is certainly creating on an enabling environment or terrain for more bad leaders in Nigerian political arena, which now is a major avenue for them to get rich instantly. Corruption is the major factor militating African development especially in Nigeria. Ehuasani writes that:

Nigeria has been stripped naked by corrupt, greedy and callous elites. They have been humiliated, pauperized and reduced to a state of destitute by the combined forces of military dictatorship, political subterfuge, economic profligacy and moral degeneracy.⁷

The Nigerian state is corrupt and has been managed and even presently been managed by corrupt leaders who have made the state an instrument of capital accumulation rather than using it for the interest or for the development of the citizenry. Africans and Nigerians may have a good plan for development, but as is supervised by corrupt leaders, they can hardly do a thorough job as corruption and development are antithetical.

NATIONAL UNITY

National unity refers to the state of cohesion and solidarity within a nation, despite diverse backgrounds, cultures or beliefs. It involves fostering a sense of shared identity, purpose and belonging among all citizens. This can be achieved through various means including promoting cultural common values, ensuring social justice and encouraging participation in national life.⁸ It's in the above sense that Appiah's cosmopolitanism and Igwebuike philosophy quicken this national unity. Other factors that can cushion national unity include: effective governance (example is government of national unity that carries along all the parties in its legislation functions), Social justice, education, economic development, media and communication. Nigerian government is yet to meet up in all these. National unity is a continuous process that requires ongoing efforts and commitment from all members of the society; it is not merely the absence of conflict rather a positive and proactive state of cohesion and solidarity.⁹

APPIAH'S DOCTRINE OF COSMOPOLITANISM

Kwame Anthony Appiah defines cosmopolitanism as a concept that helps us to comprehend our shared humanity and moral responsibilities. It includes our universal values while also honoring cultural distinctions, which he captures with the phrase "universalities plus difference." He asserts that cosmopolitanism acknowledges the idea that all individuals belong to a single community and that we have ethical duties to everyone, not just those within our familiar communities and cultures.¹⁰ He holds that cosmopolitanism does not advocate for uniformity in living or values, rather, it stresses significance of cultural diversity and the worth of various life styles, all while maintaining universal moral standards.¹¹ He views cosmopolitanism as a rational call for mutual respect and understanding among individuals from different background, cultures and beliefs. In a world that is increasingly interconnected, Appiah contends that cosmopolitanism provides an essential framework for addressing ethical challenges and promoting a more just and equitable society¹²

Cosmopolitanism is promised on the idea of being a world citizen rather than too much attachment to a particular tribe. This does not in any way diminish where one is coming from but it only helps to make humans of diverse backgrounds to see themselves as one.

Appiah's cosmopolitanism advocates for a world where individuals recognize their shared humanity and interconnectedness, acknowledging both local and universal loyalties. It is a nuanced approach that encourages engagement with diverse cultures and perspectives while recognizing the importance of local context and responsibilities. Appiah's view avoids both extremes of cultural nationalism and a detached impartial universalism.¹³

In his key aspects of cosmopolitanism, he talks of partial cosmopolitanism which recognizes the value of both local and universal loyalties. He believes that the individuals can and should embrace both local allegiance and their sense of global responsibilities. His ethical foundation for cosmopolitanism is rooted in ethical consideration, focusing on moral obligations individuals have to all human beings, regardless of nationality or other group affiliations. Again, he talks of celebration of difference where he acknowledges and celebrates the diversity of cultures and perspectives, encouraging open dialogue and mutual understanding between different groups.¹⁴

On shared Humanity, Appiah, despite acknowledging differences, he ultimately emphasizes the shared humanity that connects all individual and the moral obligation that arises from this connectedness.¹⁵ On responsibility and Agency, he believes that cosmopolitanism empowers an individual to take responsibility for their own lives and to engage with the world in meaningful way.¹⁶ Talking on openness to change, he holds that Cosmopolitanism is not a fixed ideology, but rather a dynamic approach that allows for ongoing learning, adaptation and the development of the new perspectives.¹⁷

On conversation and understanding, he talks on idea of engaging in conversation and dialogues across cultures to promote understanding and break down stereotypes. He believes that by learning about different perspectives, we can expand our own understanding of the world and foster a more inclusive and tolerant society.

Finally, on avoiding extremes, Appiah's cosmopolitanism is a middle ground between extreme nationalism which prioritizes one's own nation above all else and extreme form of cosmopolitanism that disregards local loyalties. He argues that both extremes can lead to harmful consequences.¹⁸

APPIAH'S COSMOPOLITANISM: A CATALYST TO NIGERIAN NATIONAL UNITY

Appiah's doctrine of cosmopolitanism is a sound one that when followed, Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba tribes historical and unhealthy competition for political and economic dominance that is still ongoing and always accompanied with tension and conflicts will be a thing of the past. However, other minor tribes are not left out as cries of marginalization and exclusion are always their frequent complaints. If all as Appiah has taught, could acknowledge the idea that all individuals belong to a single community and that we have ethical duties or responsibilities to everyone, peace must surely reign in Nigeria. So, his philosophy will help to reduce social division and promoting harmony and cooperation among different groups within the nation.¹⁹ However, Nigerian case is a matter of selfishness as one tribe (Northern Hausa and Fulani) felt that they were born to rule and have been ruling and Buhari the last man that ruled, just like other generals before him was a complete disaster to the country. His leadership is corrupt and incompetent one and he added more ethnic crises by bringing foreign Fulani terrorists to destroy the country and this is Nigerian greatest problem nowadays.

National unity involves shared identity, cultivating the sense of we-ness among the citizens, where they are identify as part of the same nation, despite individual differences.²⁰ Appiah's doctrine can also help to solve Nigerian regional division that is faith based and the tension and conflicts are always instigated by Muslim fanatics who loves violence and killing all the time, while the southern predominantly Christians due condone such ungodly attitude many times as they try to live their lives in accordance to Christian principles of love of God and neighbor. Again is farmers – herders clashes in the middle belt which has turned into ethnic cleansing and land grabbing by foreign Fulani terrorists and herdsmen. They also engage in kidnapping, Fulani terrorist are now Nigerian's most current problem. They fight for land and resource control and are into banditry as well. Owing to ethnic rivalries, there have been secession movements like MASOB (movement for the actualization of sovereign state of Biafra) and currently IPOB for self determination and Yoruba Nation by Odua People's Congress and Hausa Ariwa nation and other localized tensions particularly in the Niger Delta and Middle Belt regions. All these brings crises and instability to the country, but, if all the tribes are to be trained on Appiah's idea of engaging in conversation and dialogues across cultures to promote understanding and break down stereotypes, conflicts would have been reduced. He believes that by learning about different perspectives, we can expand our own understanding of the world and foster a more inclusive and tolerant society. Certainly if gradually, this doctrine is incorporated by each tribe, there will be positive change in their approaches to Nigerian issues and un-approachable Fulani man will surely be approachable. If Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, Fulani and other ethnic groups have lived their lives following Appiah's philosophy, the numerous ethnic based conflicts, competitions and rivalries between the major ethnic groups, the divisions between religious and regional identities and especially clashes between herders and farmers that is on its apex these days would have never been witnessed as such. Historical grievances, economic inequality and political polarization are also the challenges of Nigeria as far as national unity is concerned. So, Appiah's philosophy will help in recognizing and valuing the unique cultural, linguistic and religious differences that exists within the nation while still promoting unity and this is unity in diversity.²¹

THE CONCEPT OF IGWEBUIKE AND ITS PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS

"Igwebuike" is an Igbo philosophical concept and it signifies "strength in unity" or strength in numbers". Igwebuike is a philosophical concept that emphasizes the importance of collective action and power of complementarity, the complementary nature of reality and the importance of harmony and togetherness. It's often described as the underlying principle of African philosophy, pointing towards the interconnectedness and balance of all things, interconnectedness of the spiritual and material worlds and the importance of social institutions. Essentially, Igwebuike promotes harmony, complementarity and the strength found in collective action. Igwebuike can be employed as a word or used as a sentence. As a word, it is written as *Igwebuike*, and as a sentence, it is written as *Igwe bu ike* with the components words enjoying some independence in terms of space. The three words involved: *"Igwe"* is a noun which means number or multitude, usually a huge of number or population. *"Bu"* is a verb, which means is. (indicating existence or being) *"ike"* is a noun which means strength or power.²² Here, we mean ability, capability or resilience to overcome challenges. Thus, Igwebuike means number is strength or number is power. There is strength in unity. When human beings come together in solidarity and in complementarity, they are powerful or can constitute an insurmountable force.

Igwebuike Philosophy: Igwebuike as a concept in Igbo ideology is that of strength in numbers, where togetherness in one accord remains the watch word and the spirit of engagement.²³ Igwebuike is a key concept in

Igbo Philosophy and culture, highlighting the importance of cooperation, harmony and the recognition that strength lies in the collective rather than in the individual dominance. It is a principle that encourages individuals to come together and work towards common goals, understanding that their collective power is greater than the sum of their individual efforts.²⁴ Igwebuike emphasizes interconnectedness and complementarity among individuals and realities, promoting collective growth, cooperation, and mutual understanding.²⁵ Igwebuike philosophy is founded on four principles:²⁶

Principle of identity: The principle of Identity asserts that every being is determined in itself, it's one with itself and it is consistent in itself. So, we talk of oneness and uniqueness of a being.

Principle of Hierarchy: This principle holds that every reality in the universe has a force, but not of equal force as there is categorization of forces according to classes of being. We have Ontic being (non living being like stone) and we have Ontological being (human being). We have being *qua* being, entity *qua* entity (this one can refer to as God) as he is the purest of beings and with the greatest force.

Principle of contrariety: Here we talk of otherness of reality or the contrary of reality or difference or otherness of reality.²⁷ (Contrary or differing in genus or specie, and cannot belong at the same time to the same subject). Thus, Igwebuike accepts contrariety as part of the natural universe as it recognizes that individual prosperity is linked to the well being of the community.

Principle of unity: Here, the emphasis is on the importance of unity and cooperation in achieving common goal. Principle of unity tells us that in spite of contrariety of reality, in spite of the singular identity of each reality, there is something common to everything. Igwebuike understands every individual reality as part of and completion of the whole and thus, there is unity in diversity. Igwebuike presents a being as that which possesses a relational character of mutual relations. Thus to be is to live in solidarity and complementarity and to live outside the parameters of solidarity and complementarity is to suffer alienation.²⁸ The four principles explained above collectively promote a holistic understanding of existence and social cohesion. Igwebuike transcends natural boundaries, advocating for universal relevance in addressing human challenges and fostering communal well being.

IGWEBUIKE PHILOSOPHY: A CATALYST FOR NIGERIA'S NATIONAL UNITY

Having exposed Igwebuike philosophy with all its principle one sees that it is an African philosophy with versatility, as it can work to cushion unity in different areas where there is crisis or conflicts, and even where there is no conflict. It helps to bring enormous development through working together as a group, as a family, as a state, region, and as a nation. Applications of Igwebuike philosophy know no bounds. For the functionality of the entity called Nigeria, the ethnic tribes must work together and form a synergy and lift the country up and it will develop like other nations. They must join hands and remove tribal sentiments or parochial sentiment and with respect justice and enjoy peace, also with authentic unity and peace, development and nation building is assured. Nigeria has been ruled and it's still ruled by corrupt leaders and corruption is antithetical to development. Many times, when some enforcement agencies comes after corrupt politicians, tribal sentiments creeps in, but if all the tribes will rise against corrupt leaders and say enough is enough, Nigerian situation will improve. Igwebuike philosophy operates with three principles: identity which portray that each person or each tribe is unique and can be identified differently from others owing to some characteristics. Principle of contrariety tells us that two things are contrary or different, example; Igbo tribe is different from Yoruba tribe. And finally the principle of unity tells us that irrespective of the unique identity of each tribe and irrespective of their differences or contraries and hierarchies, the three major tribes can still be united many times to form unity in order to develop the nation and themselves, hence, nation building. By nation building, we mean: the process of constructing or strengthening a nation, both politically and socially. It involves unifying people within a defined territory, under common institution and fostering a shared sense of identity and purpose. This process often involves establishing a national identity, developing political institutions and promoting economic growth and social cohesion.²⁹ National unity results to nation building. Igwebuike philosophy promotes national unity and nation building.

ASSESSMENT OF IGWEBUIKE PHILOSOPHY IN ACTION (INSTANCES)

Igwebuike philosophy has been exhibited in so many instances in the past like in the areas of community service, for example, during COVID 19 pandemic, there was lockdown in so many countries, Africa and Nigeria inclusive. Africans practiced Igwebuike philosophy exemplified in helping each other to survive. This they did in helping their neighbors in observing the pandemic's code of conduct and observing necessary hygiene needed. There was distribution of palliatives by both the governments, philanthropists, churches, and especially by individuals and generous neighbors. One still recalls that such practice was done during Ebola pandemic and the spread was curtailed instantly. In like manner, in the midst of insecurity and insurgency in the Nigerian communities, the youths have a lot to do. They have to rally round and provide security through Igwebuike philosophy which is deep-rooted in African communalism. Through Igwebuike philosophy, the youths have to secure their

communities through formation of vigilante groups and work in synergy with their neighboring towns and villages and never to wait for Nigerian corrupt government to come and secure them.

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

Thus far, we have been elucidating Appiah's cosmopolitanism and Igwebuike philosophy to explore how these frameworks can promote ethnic and National unity, thereby putting an end to long standing tribal crises that have held Nigeria in bondage. These crises have significantly hindered the country's development often exacerbated in corruption masked by ethnic sentiments. Appiah cosmopolitanism is a powerful ideology that fosters ethnic unity by promoting shared humanity while simultaneously celebrating cultural diversity. It encourages open dialogue and mutual understanding among different ethnic groups. This kind of philosophy outlook is what Nigeria needs to move forward. However, the challenge lies in the collective adoption of this doctrine by all ethnic groups. Among Nigerian three major ethnic groups, tensions often arise surrounding the Hausa – Fulani block, which is frequently and unfairly generalized as uneducated. This stereotype may stem from the visibility of many underprivileged children (almajirai) on the streets, but such assumptions are misleading and unhelpful. Nevertheless, social realities in some northern communities reflect patterns reminiscent of Hobbes' state of nature where lawlessness and violence still persist. Cases of unprovoked violence such as those involving some militant herdsmen, underscore the urgency for philosophical and ethical reorientation. If the educated elites within the Hausa – Fulani community would embrace these philosophical doctrines and actively teach them within their communities, behavioral transformation could occur. This could foster peace and national cohesion.

On the other hand, Igwebuike philosophy is already familiar across so many African societies as it reflects the principles of African communalism. It is a practical people centered world view that emphasizes interdependence and cooperation. Igwebuike affirms that no person is an Island. This is captured in the Igbo proverb: *Otu onye noduru onwe ya, odudu atagbue ya* ("If one isolates himself, the tse-tse fly will bite him to death"). *Ahu ibe na-eche ibe ya* ("One's neighbor protects him"). This philosophy teaches that no tribe can thrive in isolation. Progress and security are only possible through mutual cooperation. Igwebuike can be applied to counter insurgency and terrorism as it emphasizes solidarity and shared humanity – recognizing that man is inherently a social and political being. The main obstacle to the success is the persistence lack of unity among Nigerians ethnic groups – both major and the minor. However, the day the various tribes come together in genuine cooperation, unity and peace will be achieved. Insurgency and terrorism and even corruption will diminish, paving the way for real and sustainable development. In conclusion, Appiah's cosmopolitanism and Igwebuike philosophy offer promising philosophical frame works for fostering national unity. When supported by each other critical factors, such as effective governance, social justice, quality education, economic development and responsible media engagement, they can significantly contribute to building a peaceful and prosperous Nigeria.

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