

Spatio-Diversitism and Nation Building in Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper takes a critical look at the lack of a coherent philosophical tool to galvanize development in the Nigeria nation-state. Since 1914 after the amalgamation of the northern and the southern protectorate into the Nigeria nation, no concrete philosophical tool has been developed. The country is culturally diverse and spatial entities are distinct. Thus spatio-diversitism as a proposed national philosophy explore the spatial diversity of the nation to build strength on existing values of all ethnic nations of the federation. Thus the paper hopes will build inter-ethnic confidence on a robust industrial drive to attain national and regional aspirations

Keywords: spatio-diversitism, philosophy, spatiality, development

Introduction

The object of contemporary geographic studies has span the pre-institutionalized era or oral tradition through the medieval, to the contemporary. The object of man environment interactive relationships has not changed significantly but the pivot or philosophical underpinning of such thought system is what has been modified in time and space. The modification or outright change of philosophical and methodological tools was born out of the need to answer the questions which existing philosophical tools are not answering properly. This creates a phase of revolution and the evolution of a new paradigm to properly answer the issues or questions posed by the practitioners of the any discipline.

Philosophers have noted that the phase of professionalization precedes revolution and crises phases in the event of a shift in paradigm. In other words when the paradigm could not explicitly explicate or provide potential answers then the quest or search for a new philosophical focus and methodological framework within a discipline. In essence, the need for a shift is borne out of the necessity to answer the questions which existing tools of philosophy and methodology could no longer provide relatively absolute answers.

Cultures, modernization, technology and industrial drives of states have propelled divergent ideologies in the bid to stand out in the comity of nations. The quests for a pivot for societal development as well as a direction for intellectual discourse have characterized several societal aspiration to grow over time and in space. The notion of what direction should constitute the trend of reasoning and activities have permeated society age long historical development on all fronts. The French grew to prominence by developing structuralism. The Germans anchored most of its thought on Marxism. However, the capitalist thought move the Americans while the socialist philosophy was driven by the Russians. Each sovereign state with well defined ideologies begin to sell same to their allies. However, the development trend or pivot for intellectualism, commerce, policies and diplomacy, were anchored on such thought processes. Such nations like the United States Russia, Britain, Germany and France drew their national and regional strength from such defined philosophies.

The food for thought is that if Nigeria is a sovereign state, a regional and continental giant what philosophy guides our informal development, intellectual discourse, regional policies or global diplomatic relations. Intellectual development at the tertiary level started in the late 1940's at the university college in Ibadan in 1948 after the Second World War.

Nigeria in 1914 inherited a culturally diverse colonial empire and troubled by diverse minority issues anchored on ethnic and religious biases till date. The journey from independence through the civil war to the 21st century has shown that the expected development, social integration and economic status as a nation is a far cry. In essence as a nation-state, the pivotal philosophical tool to harness both national and regional integration is still a mirage. Thus, one will like to ask, where is our national ideological pivot, upon which the ethnic nationalities radiate within the federalism. If Geography as a discipline together with its practitioners would like to contribute to national development, what is our philosophical tool? If there are pluralized tools or analysis, what is the extent of the local content in them? To what extent have these tools answer the national questions in line with our disciplinary philosophical matrix.

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From the foregoing, it is clear that Nigeria has no clear philosophical tool for national discourse. This has affected even political formations without a clearer vision of where we are what to do as well as where we are going as a nation. Each leader steer the ship of state based on personal emotions instead of national philosophy.

Nigeria is noted to have over 250 micro, meso and macro cultures and tongues. This means that we are spatially diverse and since we choose to live together through the Amalgamation of 1914 till date, the spatio-

diversitism tool must be explored to get Nigeria on its foot for purposeful national and regional development. The question is where are we after 100 years of inter-cultural, political and social marriage as a nation? Where are we after 55 years as a sovereign independent state? These are questions begging for answers and where are we going?

The vision 2000 and 2010, came and gone without attainment of stated goals because there was no national coherent pivot of action. No philosophy of national orientation and no coordinates to locate the philosophical stands of the nation state. If Nigeria is to develop, we must look inward for an indigenous philosophical tool that has significant local content that is peculiar to our culture and social orientation. In essence, development or nation building must necessarily anchor on the present locational pivot of any society. This will enable the nation choose the relevant philosophical trajectory or vehicle to get its dream true.

The Nigeria philosophical vehicle for national development and proper regional integration must align with its spatial diversity to build an indigenous strength and will for national and regional cohesion. Thus, Nigeria must assess its strength, weakness, opportunity and threat (SWOT) analysis on its current position and on its dream or aspiration. Hence, our strength is more in our population, localized technology, market size, culture, terrain, diversity among others. This is the Nigeria of today. However, the Nigeria of our dream can now harness her strength and vision of tomorrow into a workable tool for proper analytical framework that will propel our collective goal. This must be anchored on the necessary philosophical vehicle that will carry us into the future.

The strength of Nigeria is mostly in her diverse cultural background which has given us the spatial structure called Nigeria. The strength is in the ethno-cultural nature of the country which is spatially unique, distinct and colourful. Hence, the cultural uniqueness of each niche must be harness into a national philosophy. This must note the peculiarities of each culture, religion, social ideology of each ethnic nationality as well as project same to achieve a national goal and regional strength. In essence, ethnic supremacy and religious bigotry should be discountenance with and rather pursue the vision of egalitarianism within the boundaries of spatiality.

The advocates of regionalism noted the uniqueness of regions, each region in Nigeria or culture or people are unique. This spatio-diversitism as a national philosophical tool embraces the tenets of uniqueness as well as equality of culture and people. Equality is not in size per se but in identity and spatial equality must note the cultural expression of each people, their collective aspiration as a cultural entity as well as social challenges to growth and development.

If Nigeria is to develop, then each unit, culture, people must develop together. This approach will avoid the pitfalls of selective geo-political development and a lop-sided country. This development must identify necessary growth poles within culture or regions to drive the spatial dynamics of socio-cultural challenges of the country.

CONCLUSION

The Nigeria of today is not the dream of her founding fathers. The problem is still there with us as it concerns national integration, socio-cultural transformation in the face of lack of interethnic harmony. Thus, the gross lack of an indigenous philosophical pivot to drive national dreams has threatened the vision of an industrial giant of Africa. Development must be anchored on the cultural, social and political fabric that put us together as a nation. So after a century of living together with over 55 years of post independence experiences Nigeria must embrace a national philosophical tool to move us forward. The answer is in the philosophical vehicle of spatio-diversitism as spatial diversities are unique. Hence, the identification of these uniqueness will enabled us to move together stronger and better into our national dream.

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