

African values and institutional reform for sustainable development in Africa

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Abstract

The way society patterned its institutions and framed its laws, is predicated on the prevalent values of the people, which is rooted in their culture, philosophies, and spirituality. The way such a society makes progress and promotes coexistence is linked to the values that they uphold. Similarly, African values are those axiological principles that form the foundation of social living and social ordering in traditional African society, which can still be relevant today. These social values of the African people are what were used to construct African inclusive institutions in the traditional setting before it was eroded by colonialism and imperialism. Thus, for Africans of today to rebuild inclusive institutions that will guarantee sustainable development across the continent, there is a need to revive and reintegrate the principles from the study of African values into the reform of contemporary African social institutions. Therefore, in this paper, the authors argue that for African institutions to deliver the good of sustainable development, they must be reformed along the lines of foundational principles of African cultural values. The paper employs the philosophical method of critical analysis in dissecting the issues within this discourse.

Keywords:

African values; development; sustainable; institutions; culture.

1 INTRODUCTION

Africa is a continent that is blessed by Nature with various natural resources both humans and materials, which can be used for the development of the continent and her peoples. More so, the continent has the potential to lead the world in everything that is positive and humane. However, this is not the case because of bad governance, failing societal and state institutions in delivering the benefits of sustainable development. Consequently, the majority of her peoples are suffering from extreme poverty, malnutrition, widespread violence, decaying infrastructure, and corruption (Bassey, 2016). Thus, in this paper, we shall critically analyze African values and integrate its foundational principles in the reform of contemporary African institutions in order to reap the benefits of sustainable development. The paper argues that for contemporary African institutions to deliver the dividends of sustainable development, they must be reformed along the lines of foundational principles of African values.

African values are those axiological principles that Africans cherish and holds firmly (Bassey & Bubu, 2019). They were used to order and patterned African traditional society which made mutual co-existence and cooperation possible. These values could also be the regulatory mechanism that shaped human behavior in traditional African society. Although, when we talk about Africans, we mean the totality of the people that are indigenous to Africa who share almost similar cultural identity and values, with little modifications based on place and time. Some of these cultural values include the value of the sacredness of human life, value of the dignity of human labor and creativity, value of religion and the sacred, value of family and kinship, value of community and complementarity, value of self-reliance, value of good relation (Awoniyi, 2015; Igboin 2011; Kanu, 2015). It is these values we shall be appraising and their foundational principles will be employed in reforming contemporary African institutions in order to engender sustainable development in Africa.

Contemporary African socio-economic and political institutions were bequeathed to Africans and after independence, African political elites were unable to redesign these institutions to accommodate the foundational principles of African values. This is so because social institutions are an organic outgrowth from a people's values, culture and history. These institutions shape their behavior and their general outlook of life. Since the current institutional arrangement does not reflect the intrinsic values of Africans, it has consequently promoted a sense of alienation and social dislocation among the people. This has also created a dividing line between the people and their political leaders with some seeing political offices as 'Whiteman' property to be plunder and loot. This has promoted a culture of *neo-patrimonialism* and *prebendalism*, corruption, nepotism, sectional politics, godfatherism and a clientele state that is structured to favor a few at the expense of the majority. This has made independent African State institutions not to "command the respect, loyalty, and dedication that characterize institutions in the full sense of the term" (Goldsmith, 1998:1). Since the ideological foundation of contemporary African societal institutions does not reflect the common values of the people it then, call for a reform that reintegrates it and transforms it to reflect the values, aspirations, and needs of the people. This is the task before this paper.

More so, contemporary African institutional arrangement is extractive in nature, which creates incentives and rewards for a few who are highly connected to the government (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013). This has consequently widened the gap of inequality between people in society. Today, in the name of democracy and a free market, power is now in the hands of a few, who have come to see their offices as an avenue to enrich themselves, family members, ethnic and religious members. This is one of the factors that are responsible for ethnoreligious conflicts across Africa (Chua, 2004). The situation is so pathetic to the extent that young Africans due to the hardship at home, have continuously taken the dangerous voyage of crossing the Mediterranean Sea to Europe, all in the name of looking for 'greener pasture' - some of

them are used for forced labor, prostitution, and slavery. An extractive institutional arrangement is responsible for brain drain syndrome in Africa, whereby the best African minds who ought to be responsible for the development of the continent move to other parts of the world in search of opportunities to better themselves and their families.

Consequently, the pathway to sustainable development cannot be achieved in Africa because contemporary African socio-economic and political institutions are exclusive in nature and it is constructed to favor a few, who are well-connected to Power Brokers in an African nation. It is on this basis that this paper is calling for the opening of the space to reflect that African personality that was the basis for coexistence and mutual cooperation in Africa before the advent of colonialism and neocolonialism. Sustainable development is all about meeting the needs of the present without undermining the capacity of the next generation in meeting their own needs. It is all about social, economic, political and environmental justice which is geared at making humans responsible for their actions in building a just world order.

The core of sustainable development is human development, which fits properly in African ontology that sees human life as the center of all developmental schemes (Bassey & Mendie, 2019). The imperatives of sustainable development are grounded on the principles of African communalism which is amply captured in the axiological principles of “*I am because we are and since we are, therefore, I am*” (Bassey, & Pimaro Jr, 2019: 130). This principle sees the community as the foremost and paramount in the conception, design and implementation of all developmental schemes; because life in the African worldview is a communitarian project in which one individual cannot carry it alone. Therefore, sustainable development in the African sense is pro-life because “it must create life, enhance life, promotes life, protects life, save a life, increase life and prolong life” (Ndubuisi, 2013:228). It is not only the life of the present generation also that of the next generation.

However, for African to reap the benefits of sustainable development, its institutional arrangement must be reform base on the foundational principles of African values. This is so because the way African institutions (especially its socioeconomic and political institutions) are constructed they cannot deliver the good of sustainable development. Thus, in this paper, we will look at the crisis of African institutions, African values and distilled the foundational principles that can be employed in reforming contemporary African institutions, in order, for Africans to enjoy the benefits of sustainable development. The paper is divided into five sections with each containing the issues that inform the writing of the paper. Section one contains conceptual clarifications, section two discusses African values and its endogenous principles. Section three discusses the institutional crisis in Africa, while, section four discusses the integration of the endogenous principles of African values in the reform of contemporary African Society, and section five contains evaluation and conclusion.

2 CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

2.1 African Values

African values are those axiological principles that shaped and guided human behavior in traditional African society (Bassey& Bubu, 2019). Traditional African Society is that society that exists before the advent of slavery, colonialism, and westernization. It still exists in what is today referred to as African rural society (village). These African values are still upheld in the village community’s society, although some are gradually dying due to westernization in the disguise of modernity. However, we shall consider the following African values: the value of the sacredness of human life, the value of the dignity of human labor and creativity, the value of religion and the sacred, value of family and kinship, the value of community and complementarity, the value of self-reliance, value of good relation. These values are an aggregation of ethics, sociopolitical and economic values and aesthetic. It is rooted in the principles of African *communalism* or *Ubuntu*.

2.2 Institutions

According to Robinson (2014:3), “Institutions are those rules (both formal-written laws and the constitution and informal – like social norms) that structure economic, political and social life and generate different patterns of incentives, rewards, benefits, and costs.” This entails that institutions are an organic outgrowth from a people's belief, values, and norms which give society its structure. Gacan (2007:37) also maintains that institutions are those “norms and values of a society, together with those organizations that are capable of changing and promulgating those norms and values”. He went further to submit that, the state, the market, and the civil society are major players in shaping and reshaping society’s institutions which makes the critical players in the development of a society. In precise terms, institutions comprise of the economic market conditions, the legal framework, public policies, respect for human rights, governmental agencies, social services structure, the family structure, religion and the sacred; the educational and the cultural dimensions of society. For any society to function well and enjoy some level of stability its institutions must be strong and democratic that accommodates the majority of the citizens that make up that society. Therefore, to function well, society also needs other public services; roads and a transport network so that goods can be transported; a public infrastructure so that economic activities can flourish, and some type of basic regulation to prevent fraud and malfeasance (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013:76).

2.3 Sustainable Development

According to the United Nations General Assembly (1987:43), sustainable development is a “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. This definition highlighted the importance of meeting humans’ economic needs without doing damage to the environment. The contention among scholars before this definition by the UN is that there is no relationship between economic development and environment sustainability because all productive resources are in the environment which must be exploited in order to foster economic development. Consequently, this has led to pollutions, climate change, global warming, and other environmental hazards as a result of humans’ exploitative activities on the environment. However, currently, the concept

of sustainable development has gone beyond environmental sustainability to include economic sustainability and socio-cultural sustainability.

According to Emas (2015:2), “the overall goal of sustainable development (SD) is the long-term stability of the economy and environment; this is only achievable through the integration and acknowledgment of economic, environmental, and social concerns throughout the decision-making process”. It is within an integrative framework that the concept and practice of sustainable development can be possible. This in turn demands a new kind of thinking that looks at issues of human needs from a holistic perspective that put the imperative of intergenerational equity in decision making. It is in the relation of this, that Emas (2015:6) opines that “sustainable development requires the elimination of fragmentation; that is, environmental, social, and economic concerns must be integrated throughout decision-making processes in order to move towards development that is truly sustainable”. Hence, the goal of sustainable development is to preserve life, protect life, and prolong life not only in a single generation but generations to come.

3 AFRICAN VALUES AND ITS ENDOGENOUS PRINCIPLES

3.1 Value of the Sacredness of Human Life

In the hierarchy of Africa values, the sacredness of human life is the utmost important. The respect and dignity accorded human life cannot be over-emphasized. This is one of the reasons that the Igbo of South East Nigeria uphold the concept of “*Ndubuisi*”, which mean life “*Ndu*” is great (*isi*). Respect for human life spreads beyond the confine of the nuclear family, tribal or nationality but embrace humanity in general. Hence, members of the extended family, community, and tribe are regarded as brothers whose lives must be preserved and protected (Igboin, 2011:99). More so life is seen in two dimensions in African thought; according to the Annang people of South-South Nigeria, life can be viewed from two perspectives which include “*Eti Uwem*” and “*Uwem Akpok*”. “*Eti Uwem*” is regarded as the good life which is characterized by peace, respect, pleasure, happiness, material satisfaction and social relevance. This kind of life is regarded as good and every member of the society desires and pray for this kind of life. On the other hand, “*Uwem Akpok*” means the lizard life; it is a life that is characterized by pain suffering, deprivation, agony, poverty, and low class in society. The society does not regard this state of life as life because it undermines human happiness and fulfillment. The average *Annang* man prays against this kind of life and when this state falls on him, he regards it as a sign that life is not fair to him.

In the African mind, human life has an ultimate worth because it is intrinsically related to the Creator of life (God). The value of life draws its meaning from God the creator of life. Traditional African believes that God creates life and as such, it is the duty of man to preserve and protect this divine gift. This is why suicide and murder are viewed as a serious abomination against the people, the “gods” of the land and the ancestors. The value of life is so engraved in the psychic of the African people that they maintain that their dead relatives still interacts with the living which allows every family to call their ancestors in time of need, celebration and peace.

Since human life is paramount to the African people, the welfare and well-being of man are at the center of all societal thoughts and actions. In other words, man is valued above every other possession. More so there is a connection between the value of human life and a wide range of brotherhood, which may not be biologically based. The concept of brotherhood in Africa goes beyond that of Western understanding. Therefore, in whatever circumstance, the spirit of brotherhood stimulates patriotic response and disposition of one towards another.

However, there are a handful of expressions of the abuse of human life despite the appreciation of life as a value. The case of inter-tribal wars and ethnic conflicts leading to the death of even blood-related African brothers are some of the experiences in traditional Africa setting that negate the spirit of brotherhood. Also Africans involvement in the ignoble slave trade which is a dehumanizing experience in the history of Africa. Although, some African scholars will dismiss these instances by attributing it to be, the aftermath of European contact with traditional Africans. Nonetheless, there used to be the internecine burial of people with decreased Kings and nobles which Gyekeye holds that it is based on false metaphysics (Gyekeye 1996:26). All these instances highlighted above, do not negate the fact that the value of life is the supreme value in the African system of values.

3.2 Value of Religion and the Sacred

Africans are notoriously religious (Mbiti 1969), in the sense that religion permeates every facet of African life. Africans carry their religion everywhere they go. They carry their religion to the parliament and state house if they find themselves in government or politics. If they find themselves in the military, business or in a foreign land, they carry their religion there. This is why in traditional African society, there is no atheist. Africans give a religious interpretation and meaning to everything that happened to them. If they had a bountiful harvest, they regard it as God’s blessing otherwise they regard it as the wrath of God. This entails that all the African does or say and permit is impregnated with a vision of the divine and all natural reality is explainable in relation to the supernatural.

However, moral values rest on religious values that are; it is perverse or sacrilegious to separate moral and religious value. To corroborate the above point, Kanu (2015:157) opines: “it is the presence of religion that lends meaning and authority to (moral) values. The sense of religion which is our spiritual selves is that instinctive feeling of immortality”. The value of religion is the fundamental value that gives meaning to other moral values. This is why African moral imperatives are fully grounded on African religious beliefs. Religion in African worldview is the custodian and enforcer of morality in African society. The Africans use religious practices like Taboo, Totem, armllet, charm, and divination to promote social justice and adjudicate cases. Furthermore, religion in traditional African society is not an individualistic affair but that of the community (Ikegbu and Basse, 2019). Almost everybody worships the god of the community but

each family or clan still maintained their individualize gods or deities. Hence, it is the sense of religion and the sacred that naturally endowed man with respect for human life and human dignity. Again, religion or spiritual element in the African man characterizes his relationship with the divine and it is an indubitable fact that the value of religion promotes moral excellence.

Cosmologically, the universe from the African understanding is a composite one; a blending of the divine, spirit, human, animate and inanimate beings, which constantly interact with one another. These visible and invisible elements that comprise the African cosmology are what have been referred to as the “Force of Life” or “Vital Forces” (Igboin, 2011:98). The vital forces are hierarchically structured in such a way that God, the creator of the universe is at the top. In this pyramid structure, where God is at the top, invisible forces of life like divinities, spirits, and ancestors form part of the hierarchy. It is this God-*Osanobuwa* (Edo), *Olodumare* (Yoruba) *Chukw* (Igbo), *Ubangiji* (Hausa), *Oghere* (Urhobo) and *Abasi* (Efik) that commitment is ascribed. Hence, the ethical or moral standards of the Africans are also believed to be derived from the injunctions of God.

3.3 Values of Community and Complementarity

Africans place a high value on communal living. Communal values express the worth and appreciation of the community; it is the value which guides the social interaction of the people towards a common goal. Interpersonal bonds go beyond biological affinity in expressing the values of communality, Africans share mutually, they care for one another, they are interdependence and they are in solidarity with one another. Whatever happens to one member happens to the community as a whole (Igboin 2011:99). The joy and sorrow of one extend to other members of the community in profound ways. The willingness to help others for the development of the community is reciprocal. It is within this communality that Africans are mostly fulfilled. It is on this note, that Mbiti (1969:1) submits that: “I am because we are since we are therefore I am”. This is dialectically opposed to the Western rugged individualism which has unfortunately threatened the very root of African communalism as a result of colonial activities in Africa.

Africans do not reject individual values but place a high premium on communal values and everything that promote the good of the community. In African society, the individual comes to the awareness of himself as a person through the framework provided by the community. Existence only becomes meaningful when an individual lives in the community of fellow humans. It is beautifully expressed by this Igbo aphorism “*a so adina*” which means let me not be alone. This is so because the community gives the individual its identity and the existential tools for self-realization and actualization. Hence, in a situation where there is a clash between individual value and community values, the community takes precedence over individual values, though individualistic values are linked closely with communal values. Africans have and also appreciate personal will and identity. Among the Edo, individualistic values are expressed in the following Maxim: “You first see the forest before calling the trees by their names”. This means that from afar off the trees make up the forest, but on entering into the forest one can begin to identify different trees by their names. Communal values guide the social life of individual members of the community and appeal to all that matters but when one takes an extensive look at the people, one discovers that there is individualistic value; however, both communal and individualistic values co-exist perfectly together. They may sometimes clash but the communal values are the superintending values of persons in the community and are not consciously trampled upon (Gyekye, 1996:4).

Moral imperatives are usually constructed in such a way that its ultimate end is to promote the community. The total well-being and welfare of the community are essentially important to the extent it informs moral values in African traditional society. Thus, responsibility, kindness, honesty, hospitality, accommodation, generosity, companionship, faithfulness, fruitfulness, love, dignity, diligence; are considered to be moral values. These form the bedrock of social value which abhors ethical egotism. Ethical egotism in its conceptual meaning holds that everybody is to pursue his own welfare and interest (Igboin, 2011:100), which gives rise to selfishness. Thus, communal living and the sharing of the interdependence and interrelationship of the community is what characterizes life in the African sense. Through this value, the African maintains good neighborliness, mutual assistance and sharing of each joy and sorrow.

3.4 Value of Family and Kinship

In Africa, the value of the family cannot be over-emphasized, it is the primary unit of the social life of the community. Its cohesion is a sine qua non for the unity of the community. As fundamental as the family is, it has social and moral values. The nuclear family functions within the extended family. Interestingly children have their rights and obligations towards their parent, likewise the parent towards their children. In this unit, marriage becomes the basic institution for the establishment of a family. Marriage as part of rites of passage into family life has its social and moral code in various societies which makes it worth the name. For a woman to be found a virgin carries a high value and dignity that attracts respect and honors to her parent. To bear children is very important because of the socio-religious implications. Divorce had no place except as an excruciating last resort. Even till date, Africans still view divorce as obstructing the solidarity, mutuality, love, care, togetherness, cohesion, nourishment, fellowship and continuity of the family (Igboin, 2011: 100).

Furthermore, the family and kinship give the individual person its identity and place in society. Any man without a family is a non-existing person. The family is the custodian of the individual person. The family forms the basic unit of the society and it gives the individual person its origin, functions, and expectation as regards the entire society. It is the first part of socialization which the individual receive which equips him or her to function in the society. In traditional African society, the family also guides the career choice of individuals. For example, if a family is known to be very good in a particular craft every member of the family, from one generation to another tends to follow the craft. Therefore, every Africans live to preserve and protect their family names and dynasties because family provides the basis for the engagement of the community.

3.5 Value of Good Relationship

Life in the African community is based on the philosophy of live-and-let-live. The principle is based on the concept of the “clan vital” and applies to a concrete community. The Igbo of South East Nigeria put it this way “*biri ka biri*” which means “live and let’s live in harmony”. The relationship between individuals recognizes their worth as human beings and not only what they possess or what can they do for each other. However, these can come as secondary considerations, in terms of reciprocity and in terms of interpersonal relationship. People help one another without demanding immediate or an exact equivalent remuneration. Everyone is mindful that each person has something to contribute to his welfare, sometime and somehow. A Hausa proverb illustrates this point clearly when they say: “friendship with the ferryman right from the dry season means that when the rain comes, you will be the first to cross”. This proverb emphasizes consistency in friendship, in that, the worth of the ferryman, as a human being is not determined solely by what he can offer during the rains; hence he must be befriended right from the dry season when his occupation is not in strict demand.

The art of dialogue and conversation is a cherished value in African human relations. People freely discuss their problems and look for suggestions and solutions together. The unwillingness to talk to people about either private or public affairs can be interpreted as unfriendly conduct. Above all the African believes that he who discusses his affairs with others hardly runs into difficulties or makes mistakes in the execution of his plans. According to the Igbo of Nigeria: *onye na agwa madu nsogbu ya, na acho uzo niyinyan ka*” which means he who tells people what he is passing through will always find solutions.

In traditional African community everyone is accommodated; the weak, aged, sick are affectionately taken care of in the comforting family atmosphere. The “comforting family atmosphere” is provided by the extended family system also. It is a system that ultimately rested and still rests on the philosophy of live-and-let-live, otherwise known as “the eagle-and-kit principle. The African by this value is obligated to care for the widows and orphans of his deceased relative. Failure to do this earns him strong public criticism and as a result, it becomes difficult to find someone in the community without help. Therefore, no beggar existed in the true sense of the word.

3.6 Value of Dignity of Human Labour and Creativity

The Africans highly appreciate hard work. Even the indolent also acknowledges that hard work is a value that engenders positive influence in the family and communal circles. The hardworking African makes persistent efforts regardless of failures and setbacks. In fact, those who were not industrious became the initial victims of the slave trade (Igboin, 2011:100). Ironically, apart from the children of the kings and nobles, the hardworking people of Africa were almost the last in receiving western education at the inception of Christian missions and western colonialism. Parents only sent their lazy children to school while the hardworking ones were doing the family job. The value of hard work is appreciated as work was regarded as a cure for poverty. Poverty or failure is an orphan while success has many fathers and long genealogy. Nobody wants to associate with lazy people, and many of them cannot even get married or perform the required social responsibilities demanded by the family and community. Wealth results from hard work and the Igbo of Southern Nigeria put it this way “*aka aja ebute onu manu manu.*” The hand that work will put food on the table. This implies that human labour is the gateway to better man’s material well-being in the community. Hence, anyone who possessed wealth he could not account for was viewed with suspicion: the community scorned at such a person. The African uphold the idea that hard work by individuals uplifts the material and intellectual well-being of the community. The human person through its ingenuity creates goods and services that address human want that can be exchanged for other material values. This can boost, the local economy and foster community prosperity. The principle which the value hinges upon is that human life is important and every human effort must be channeled towards the preservation and betterment of that life.

3.7 Value of the Sense of Solidarity

The value of solidarity is evidently seen in the building of a hut or house for a kinsman, especially of someone that is old or a person that is not well to do in the material sense of it. This act is always seen as a collective responsibility that calls for the contributions of many. More so, the whole community or kinsmen as the case may be can mobilize a workforce to the farm of a dead relative or someone who is bereaved to help out in maintaining the farm and keep the bereaved family going. When such a job is to be done, the whole community turns out en mass with their supplies and music and proceeds to sing and dance their way through to the successful execution of each particular job. In this way, work becomes a veritable means of socialization and solidarity, this type of solidarity is a vital value for sustainable African development.

Furthermore, the concept of a man as a person who co-exists with others gives rise to collective responsibility, interdependence and social living which is an important aspect of African socio-religious life. In traditional African society, people help one another without demanding immediate or an exact equivalent remuneration. Everyone is mindful that each person has something to contribute to the general welfare of the society. Also, the African sense of solidarity is evident in people’s action when someone dies in a community or village. In most cases, people forgo their personal businesses in solidarity, not by a sanction to condone with their bereaved family and to assist in burial arrangements and funeral of the dead person. In this way, the entire community gets involved in mourning rituals. Hence, Africans due to their ontological makeup are people who show mass solidarity in the support of individual members of the community who may be suffering from one calamity or the other. In this way, the community is enriched with the true spirit of brotherhood, which to some extent is lacking in today urbanized and westernized African society.

3.8 Value of Self-Reliance

Traditional Africans believe in the capacity of members of the society to chart their own path of progress through independent thoughts and actions by harnessing the resources from their immediate environment without totally depending on others perpetual. Total dependence on someone in Africa is seen as a sign of loss of identity and capacity as a human being. As such, Africans through their value seeks to promise their own development or improvement through the pursuit of their own indigenous methods, principles, and resources without seeing their survival as dependent on someone else. Self-reliance is not self-sufficiency but the ability to meet basic needs without over demanding from others who are likewise trying to meet their own needs. The issue of African interdependence on one another is not based on demand from other to do for one what he can do for himself in normal circumstances.

Therefore, from our study of African values, there is one thing that stands out clearly which is, African values are communalistic in nature. The implication of this is that the principle of social living and social ordering is based on communalism. Communalism as a principle of social ordering and social living is based on the assumption that the community or society is superior to the individual and those who do not share in the interconnectedness and interrelatedness provided by the community is considered a stranger. The individual has duties towards the community and the community has rights towards the individual, which include: his/her properties, body and the way he/she lives. The community is the foundation of all African social arrangements and it is the framework that provides the interdependence, interconnectedness and interrelationship that characterizes life in traditional African settings.

4 THE CRISIS OF INSTITUTIONS IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN STATES

Contemporary African institutions are colonial creation which was bequeathed to Africans after political independence. They do not reflect the values and the culture of the African peoples. They are constructed initially for the good of the colonial masters and their business interests in Africa. In order word, they were extractive in nature with minimal incentives for the majority of Africans. Thus, after political independence, African elites who took over from the colonial master never made any efforts to de-colonialize the very foundations of colonial society, which is predicated on extractive institutions. Post independent African society still maintains the colonial practice of excluding the majority of the mass from resource sharing and allocation of incentives. This time it was no longer between the ‘Whiteman’ and the rest of Africans but with Africans who are in power and those who are not in power. Consequently, this situation has created a backlash in Africa, which has led to wars, civil unrest, political instability and social dislocation. Some of the state structures are weak in Africa to manage the diversities that are inherent in independent African states. Almost, all African states are still battering with ways of establishing their legitimacy before their people because the state does not organically grow from the people values and culture as such, the people still see the state as the property of the colonizers and an arena for misappropriating the common patrimony of the community. This is the root of the crisis of institutions in Africa today.

Legally, contemporary African courts are elitist in nature which has excluded the majority of Africans who are not schooled in the traditions of the west. The court is built to favor the winner and punish the loser in litigations. This win-loss mentality is not African in nature because, in African traditional legal system, it is all about redistributive justice and reparations for offences against the land and the gods. In that system, judgment on any matter is reached based on the reasoning of the elders in council and the verdict of the oracle, which at the end all litigants are happy because even if the elders in council can be manipulated the oracle cannot be manipulated. Today, it is not the case, what we have is a situation whereby justice is for the highest bidder who can manipulate judges with their money to secure court verdict for their favor. This has weakened the people dependency and reliability on the judiciary system.

Educationally, contemporary African education is western not in terms of the content of the knowledge but in terms of the values, it is imparting in learners. The system priced paper qualification above knowledge pursuit and skills development. The system is producing people who cannot link to their root and see everything in their root as diabolic, primitive and uncultured. It is this reason, Africans who after passing through western education see nothing good in Africa again. This is a big problem because an education system that does not develop the inherent capacities of a people, but rather replace it with something that is not intrinsically theirs is not oriented towards development.

5 THE INTEGRATION OF THE ENDOGENOUS PRINCIPLE OF AFRICAN VALUES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Communalism is the endogenous principle from African values which hinges on the axiological principle of “I am because we are since we are, therefore, I am”. Conceptually, communalism is a principle of social ordering and social living which is based on the assumption that the community comes first and it is superior to the individual; and those who do not share in the interconnectedness and interrelatedness provided by the community are not persons (Asuquo 2016:38). In traditional African society, this is the principle that informs the structure of society and the pattern of social ordering. People are disposed and open to the mutuality and the spirit of community and solidarity, which makes cooperation and collaboration possible. It is the need to foster this mutuality that the whole system of African ethics where built.

In traditional African society the principle of communalism was what inform African brotherhood, political organization, and economic pursuit (Samuel & Leonard, 2018). Just as we have established that political and economic institutions are the strategic institutions for developing any society and people. The way public decisions are made, enforced and sustained in the long run is grounded in politics. The way we structure our politics is a determinate factor in the way we can develop as people. Also, the economy is all about, how we share the common goods of the society for the welfare and wellbeing of the majority in an equal playing ground. It determines the material wellbeing of the society which in turn, determines the social consciousness of the people. Economic is all about the wealth of the nation and how

it should be created, administered and share for the total prosperity of the society (Okoro, 2011:12). The prevailing social values and ideology inform the way any society goes about this of the society.

This is why in the West, due to the premium they placed on individualism; inform the creation of liberal democracy as an ideology for political arrangement, and capitalism as an ideology for an economic arrangement. The whole institutional structure of some Western societies is rooted in the individualistic values they hold and it is these values that form the way they engage with the world. Thus, our concern is how we can integrate African values in the reform of contemporary African political and economic institutions for sustainable development. This shows that we need to work out the ideological underpinning principles, which will be the foundation of building African institutions within colonial legacies in Africa. It is a fact in history that Africans existed before the advent of Western and Arabic intrusions into Africa. This entails Africans had their own indigenous way of doing things which consequently was upstaged by colonialism through colonial religions and education. Furthermore, we need to be aware that this effort of using African values as a basis for the reform of contemporary African political and economic institutions is part of the process of African 'self-retrieval and decoloniality', in order to recover the lost indigenous ways of doing things, which can also help in addressing African and human problems today. Since political and economic institutions are the key in the development of any society, our concern will be how we can integrate the principle of African communalism in reforming them, for African to reap the benefits of sustainable development.

Politically, contemporary African political structure is presidential which give power to the center and weaken the peripheral units of the state. Also, African states are becoming democratic in the sense that some usually conduct periodic elections and some have a parliamentary arrangement for lawmaking. But the overall philosophy is built on free-market democracy (Chua 2004). Free market democracy in Africa is an arrangement that includes privatization of state assets, elimination of subsidies in education and health care, open border in the name of free trade and foreign investments; and periodic election with universal suffrage (Chua 2004:16). Thus, the moving force of this arrangement is capitalism, which is what is obtainable in Africa today. The weakness of this system is that it does not have an inbuilt mechanism for wealth distribution because it builds on the "win-loss" philosophy, the individual win and society loss. Therefore, Africans can pride one individual as the richest man in Africa and society is still poor.

This ideology which is the ground norm for formulating public policies in Africa is un-African and it cannot deliver the good of sustainable development in Africa. Hence, to reclaim the communalistic existence of traditional Africa in the modern world, we need to negotiate between socialism and capitalism. Although, we need to be aware that traditional African society is not a society of "I" and "I-alone" neither is it a society of "We" nor "We-alone" but it is a society of "we and I". The implication, therefore, is that the "I" and the "we" were symbiotically entangled (Okoro, 2015:16). In the same vein, Okoro (2015:16) submits that the hallmark of every traditional African socio-politico-economic system is to harmonize the extremes of capitalism and socialism and integrate the two through African spirituality which must be grounded on the doctrine of metaphysical symbiosis. What then is the practical entailment of this submission?

Coming from the on – going, the political cum economic ideology should be built on regulated capitalism as different from *laissez-faire* capitalism and consensus democracy as different from liberal democracy. Regulated capitalism is an arrangement whereby individuals are free to pursue their economic interest but must play by the rules set by the society through the laws of the state. The state through government is the umpire and not a player in economic activities in the society. The state regulates and redistributes the wealth of the society base on the principles of equitable shared prosperity which is rooted in the African communal economy of the "one for all, and the all for the one". The principles of shared prosperity include social justice, equal opportunities, equity, philanthropy and solidarity, and brotherhood and environmental protection and generational investments.

On the other hand, consensus democracy which is an arrangement whereby political decisions, structure, and processes are based on the consensus of the people through their representatives. This arrangement recognizes the power blocs in the community and builds consensus among them. These power blocs include: the ethnic bloc, the educational bloc, economic bloc, territorial bloc and at the apex is the state bloc with all its bureaucracies. The political system must accommodate these blocs and allocate them their area of operation in society. In the selection of people who will man the state bloc, the ethnic bloc, and territorial bloc should be the ground of selection. This entails that from ethnic communities, people can be selected to represent the ethnic communities in territorial blocs who will now form the state bloc. For this to be possible the leadership philosophy should be based on ethical leadership and African ethics should be the basis of testing those who want to function in the state bloc.

6 CONCLUSION

This paper has highlighted African values and distilled it endogenous principle, which is communalism and use same as the foundational principle for reforming contemporary African institutions, in order for Africa, to reap the good of sustainable development. This paper works out, the principles of regulated capitalism and consensus democracy in the reform agenda of contemporary African socio-politico-economic institutions. The paper maintains that traditional African values can be the foundational principles for African social living and social ordering in the modern world. This African alternative to doing things is also necessary for fostering human flourishing in all segments of life. Therefore, for Africans to reclaim their identity in the global space, Africans must globalize their values and Africanize the global with African values.

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