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National Identity and Nationalism in a Globalized World: Implications for Kenya

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I. Introduction

One of the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals in 2000 is the achievement of a global partnership for development, including a fair global trade system. The globalized development is based on market freedom, the rule of law, individual liberties and observance of human rights (Markus, 2005). The globalized world provides opportunities for marketing national product and purchasing global goods. The greatest challenge precipitated by globalization is competition. For a country like Kenya to adequately benefit from a globalized world, it requires to have citizens with indigenous innovative skills to enable the nation favourably compete with other nations. To achieve meaningful competition and marketing of Kenyan ideas, citizens should have a strong and clear national identity reflected in their national and moral principles.

The national identity and meaningful nationalism can be realized through national based practical philosophy and positive psychological orientation. A country that enters into a global league without a unique identity, philosophy and psychological basis will, as Kom (2005) asserted, apply and depend on social, economic, political and strategic policies developed by other countries. Citizens will hardly be prepared to think by themselves or take initiatives of any importance without the opinion of the master. Global development does not imply abandoning indigenous psychological orientations and imitating foreign principles. As Olukoshi and Nyamnjoh (2005) argue, no people can develop themselves by the goodwill of others, however genuine, or by charitable acts of others, however generous. In a globalized world, any country that aims at meaningfully benefitting her people should take into consideration the national strengths and weaknesses in order to be able to take advantage of the opportunities and challenges offered by the global environment.

The focus of this paper is on the implication of philosophical identity and psychological orientation to Kenyan nationalism in a globalized world. The paper also discusses the importance of national identity and nationalism in marketing Kenyan innovativeness and increasing the Kenyan purchasing power in a globalized world. In addition, the paper highlights the importance of philosophical identity and positive psychological orientation in building a competitive Kenyan identity and nationalism. The contention of the paper is that without a distinct indigenous Kenyan philosophy and positive psychological orientation, it is not possible to achieve good and acceptable governance that can result in equitable and sustainable growth and development.

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II. Philosophical basis of National Identity

National identity entails characteristics of people that distinguish them from groups of people belonging to other nations. National identity portrays people as unique. National uniqueness should be based on a philosophy which mainly focuses on the thinking process underlying the behaviour of the citizens. A philosophy implies rational critical thinking involving four areas, namely: metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and logic.

Metaphysics provides a conceptual analysis and reasoning about the general nature of the world and the theories applicable during the process. Through metaphysics, the characteristics of a globalized world should be identified. The constituents and purpose for the existence of the global world should be put in context. The existence of interrelationships among elements of the global world including various states or nations or countries should be explained based on a specific accepted philosophy. The information derived from metaphysics should help in the study of the forces that govern the co-existence in a global world. Metaphysical philosophy is supposed to critically answer questions such as: How did the world come into existence? How did elements of the world such as plants, minerals, animals, and human beings come into existence? Why does the environment exist? Does God or a spiritual being exist? Why and how do things (living and non-living exist?

Epistemology is concerned with generation of information about the belief system of human beings in the world. The focus is on the justification of the beliefs guided by theories of knowledge. Epistemology is important in debates concerning philosophical assumptions about knowledge and its value. There are debates about objectivist and subjectivist epistemology, qualitative and quantitative epistemology, naturalistic

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and scientific paradigms, and metaphorical approaches to epistemology.

There are different methods of knowing or establishing truth. Objectivism requires that information should be scientifically objective in order to establish the truth. There should be the use of data collection and analysis techniques that yield results reproducible and verifiable by others using the same techniques. Subjectivism in establishing the truth bases validity on an appeal to experience rather than scientific methods. Knowledge is largely conceived as tacit rather than explicit; it is internalized within an individual in ways that are not explicitly understood or reproducible by others.

Utilitarian epistemology emphasizes the determination of knowledge by assessing the overall impact of knowledge on those affected. In support of this philosophical approach, House (1976) suggests that the greatest good of valuable knowledge is that which benefits the greatest number of people. According to the intuitionist-pluralist philosophical approaches, the value of knowledge depends upon its impact on each individual. The value position is that the greatest good requires attention to each individual's benefit. There are several principles derived from intuition and experience. The individual feelings are the ultimate criterion of knowledge. The focus is on establishing the distribution of resources or gains by considering individuals and sub-groups. In this respect, each individual of every nation is the best judge of events about the self in the global world.

Qualitative inquiry in philosophy focuses on the testing of specific hypotheses that are smaller parts of some larger theoretical perspective. The emphasis is on experimental design and statistical methods of analysis during the production of knowledge. There should be standardization, precision, objectivity and reliability of the instruments used in order to achieve replicability and generalization of the findings. Qualitatively, knowledge should be generated through inquiry carried out in natural settings. Here, the investigator is the chief instrument for both data collection and analysis. The main concern is the description from the perspective of the interest groups or individuals.

Metaphorical approaches are processes whereby the meanings and relationships of one theory or model may be used to suggest meanings and relationships in another area for which no theory or model currently exists. There is an implied comparison in which the meaning of a term or phrase is transferred from the object it ordinarily designates to another object so as to provide insight or perspectives on the latter. Different metaphors are held by different people, practitioners and communities.

A group of people with a national identity should have a distinct conduct of life, which is a set of principles of ethics. The ethics of a people should have clearly accepted theories of value. An ethical philosophy governs how people interact with others and the type of accepted interrelationships in communities. The main concern is how people conduct themselves and relate to others. This includes the protection and respect for the self and others' property, space, rights and dignity.

National identity should be reflected philosophically in a peoples' logic. In this context, logic refers to analysis of correct and incorrect reasoning. Logic is used to explain the reason underlying why people engage in various activities, or why they explain the activities or behaviours that occur in the environment.

III. Implications of National Philosophical Identity

The national philosophy should guide the conceptual analysis and reasoning that form the basis of education, history, language; law, life, mathematics, mind, religion, science, politics, economy, world and underworld. National policies regulating programs and development strategies should be based on an accepted philosophy. The philosophy facilitates people as a nation to focus their mind towards achieving common goals using same methodology.

A national education system is intended achieve national goals of education. The development of an education system involves among other things the identification of community needs, which should at least focus on economic, social and political issues as expressed in the philosophy and practices of the community. From the needs, the objectives of education are derived so as to identify the activities in which the people in the community can participate in as individuals or groups in order to achieve the needs. Lack of national philosophy makes it difficult to specify the acceptable conditions under which the activities aimed at achieving the needs; and result in adoption of irrelevant foreign education systems that do not reflect the needs of the nation in the global world.

The philosophy guiding the formulation of an education system is subsequently supposed to form the foundation in the development of the curriculum. The curriculum should at least contain the educational objectives, subject content, methodology, learning conditions and evaluation process. (Worthen and Sanders, 1987). In Kenya, there are concerns about the quantity and quality of education as manifested by protests from various stakeholders. There are concerns about class-size (enrolment per class), facilities, student-teacher ratio, and overall achievement of learners in the education institutions, among others. To resolve these concerns there is need for a national philosophy that can develop a relevant educational evaluation system; that focuses on the achievement of the Kenyan educational goals. Without an educational evaluation system grounded on Kenyan philosophy, the

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agents of Kenya in the globalized world will not represent the needs of Kenyans. The standards used to identify representatives of Kenya in the globalised will not reflect the true image of Kenyans.

In Kenya, there are political, legal and constitutional concerns as demonstrated by arguments of stakeholders such as politicians, religious leaders, professionals in various fields of specialization, champions of human fights and interested individuals in the society. For example, it is proving to be difficult to agree on the action that should be taken in reference to be people who are alleged to have caused damage to property, security and lives of others as a result of the year 2007 general elections. This is a probable indication of lack of Kenyan ethical and logical philosophical principles that are accepted by a majority of Kenyans. Subsequently this shows that there is divided nationalism. Why should the Kenyan stakeholders in the aftermath of the year 2007 general elections find it difficult to agree on what is correct and what is incorrect? This is a pointer to the application of different philosophical approaches by different personalities.

The problem of unemployment has proved difficult to solve using the resources available in Kenya; despite the claims that there are many 'well qualified' Kenyans, but they have been 'denied chances' to participate in nation building by being offered relevant jobs. A well-qualified person can only be unemployed if there are wrong epistemological approaches to knowledge. There is a possibility that there is overemphasis on knowledge 'that' at the expense of knowledge 'how'. In this case, people are aware of a lot of information from many sources at different levels, which they consider as knowledge, and yet the information cannot be used to solve problems in their lives.

Lack of philosophical basis for operation distorts the conceptualization of nationalism; as a result, different personalities will consider different elements and even foreign criteria in the development of nationalism. The importation of foreign philosophies in national development precipitates different and even opposing approaches to the achievement nationalism, and hence the needs of the people. Different national agents will market and purchase different values in the globalized world, resulting in a fragmented nation.

IV. Psychological basis of National Identity

Nationalism requires cognitive, affective and psychomotor commitment from the citizens. This is easily achieved if there is a homogenous psychological basis of national identity. A psychological basis starts with an individual and national collective conceptualization of psychology. What should be the focus of study in psychology? Should the focus be in the mind, behaviour or problem solving? What should be the elements of the components of focus in psychology? Responses to such questions should be provided based on nationally accepted psychological prescriptions.

Psychological prescriptions are predispositions to react in a relatively consistent way towards problems in specific fields at any particular time in history. These attitudes, once established, take on an imperative character. They are acted upon without psychologist having to devote much thought about the activity. For psychological prescriptions to be relevant to the development of nationalism, they should originate from the aspirations and needs of the people. Some of the psychological prescriptions that have been identified are quantitativism, methodological objectivism, mechanism, determinism, empiricism, monotheticism, naturalism and idiographism. The prescriptions change in manifestations overtime, in emphasis and terminology used to describe them (Meyer, 1979).

A nation that aims at contributing significantly to the globalization of the world should identify relevant psychological prescriptions to the needs of its people and advance pertinent schools of psychology. The schools of psychology will form the foundation of different theories that will dictate how individuals or groups of people in the community interact and participate in various activities within a nationalistic psychological frame of reference. Some of the schools of psychology that have been advanced and structuralism, functionalism, behaviourism, humanistic, Gestalt psychology, psychoanalysis and existentialism (Meyer, 1979).

A nation that claims independence in a globalized world should base her policies and strategies on a nationally recognized school of psychology. School of psychology should guide in deciding what constitutes learning, teaching, acceptable personality, behavioural disorder, human development and any other traits that distinguish human beings from other beings. The schools of psychology provide efficient criteria for explaining behaviour, predicting behaviour, controlling conditions and changing behaviour displayed by people.

Specific psychological theories developed under each school of psychology focus mainly in explaining, understanding, predicting and controlling specific behaviour. In each school there can be several theories centred on learning, forgetting, remembering, personality development, cognition, moral judgement, psychotherapy, criminology punishment and any other issues that the community considers acceptable for inquiry. The inquiry is supposed to generate knowledge that is important in solving problems. An autonomous nation should identify itself with its indigenous theories

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apart from being aware of theories advanced based on foreign principles.

V. Implication of National Psychological Identity

A cohesive national psychological orientation is an important ingredient in conflict resolution, national unity and overall national development. People with common psychological principles can easily perceive issues and changes in the environment in the same perspective with minimum discrepancies; this homogeneity enables the global world to easily accept indigenous ideas from such nations. In a globalised world, a sovereign state should ask herself: on what psychological principles are the operations of the country based?

In Kenya there have been reports on conflicts due to several causes, some of the conflicts have turned to be violent and catastrophic, like in the case of violence related to the year 2007 general elections. The inability of Kenyans to perceive occurrences and changes in the country based on the same psychological principles can partially account for the violence Kenyans mated against each other. Why should somebody destroy a neighbour's property or kill because a favourite political candidate has lost an election? Such an occurrence is a reflection of absence of common psychological basis for phenomena perception; and hence the existence of delusional nationalism in Kenya.

There have been complaints about criteria of decision making in the Kenyan education system. There have been allegations of cheating in examinations and misuse of examination results. The educational evaluation system in Kenya cannot effectively be improved unless there are clear theories and models based on Kenyan needs. These psychological principles should specify the learning conditions, development of instruments to measure the achievement of the needs, conditions under which the instruments can best measure the achievement of the needs and administration of the instruments under the required conditions. The system should also clearly prescribe the procedure for the rating the measurements obtained from the instruments, and interpretation of the results - to facilitate authentic provision of feedback to the community.

One of the most important vehicles for the development of national identity and nationalism is language. According to Ongeti and Wasike (2008), human beings express their knowledge through language; which is an asset that learners acquire to raise productivity. They further argue that, as a resource, language enables learners to understand scientific, cultural and developmental concepts, to discuss these concepts and utilize them in the exploitation of resources of production. Language expresses thoughts and determines the limit of one's world.

As reported by Ongeti and Wasike (2008), Kenyan learners experience difficulties in learning mathematics and sciences because many abstract concepts do not exist in Kenyan languages. Learning achievement among learners is made more difficult by the multilingual state in which the learners find themselves. They strongly recommend that there is need for language policy-makers in Kenya to develop a language, which will meet the needs of the global world. The development of a language policy and attainment of a language competitive in the globalized world cannot be achieved without a strong philosophical and psychological foundation. It is very difficult to express and transmit Kenyan culture in a foreign language.

VI. Conclusion

A discourse of philosophical and psychological foundation of national identity and nationalism in Kenya in the context of a globalized world constitute reflections on lamentations. It seems evident as Masinde (2008) asserts, many African states are accused of inheriting foreign systems of operations or haphazardly developed and implemented educational systems without an indigenous frame of reference, which has perpetuated a dependence syndrome on foreign masters. The paper is in agreement with Masinde by making the conclusion that without a political philosophy, no education philosophy, however pragmatic can liberate the beneficiaries of education and empower them ideologically, politically and economically in a globalized world. There is need to develop a Kenyan based philosophy to govern national operations in order for to have a meaningful identity in a globalized world.

An obsession of the interactions among Kenyans and approaches to issues reveals lack of common psychological principles in perceiving changes in the environment. It seems difficult to outline an acceptable procedure to be followed in order to achieve the greatest common good suitable to all or a majority of Kenyans. To achieve the common good it is necessary, as Mulambula and Zalo (2008) suggest, to develop a nationalism friendly education system that would eliminate social, economic and political imbalances. The education system should be anchored on schools of psychology formulated based on Kenyan accepted psychological prescriptions. Kenya requires to develop an indigenous psychological orientation in order to market her innovations to the globalized world.

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