

THE CAREER-TALENT PHILOSOPHY OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AND THE SUSTENANCE OF SOCIAL ORDER IN NIGERIA: SOME PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

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INTRODUCTION: THE NEED FOR A PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIETY

In looking at the urgent desire to establish a stable and viable social order, there is need to conceptualize a philosophy of society. This can be done by sustaining mechanisms of social control and progress. A key step is to define accepted and established rules for harmonizing the diverse interests of the groups for national development. The current state of affair reveals that there is a dislocation between the acquisition of education and the possibility of increased social responsibility, freedom and purposive action. There is another disconnection that is clearly seen in the lack of shared beliefs, attitudes and values among the rulers themselves, the rulers and the ruled, as well as between the various segments of the Nigerian society. This situation has ensured that insecurity, indifference and conflicts remained endemic in the nation. These have triggered questions about human survival and have forced a return to the study of the basics of human nature especially the ways that natural abilities can be tied to socially grown skills. There is a disconnection here that requires some clarification. Therefore, in order to overcome a recalcitrant human nature and social system, a higher value needs to be identified, entrenched and given legitimacy as a directing principle of a viable, stable and progressive social order. Social order aims at discovering how people can live in peaceful cooperation,

obedience to laws, and amenability to social organization. The quest for social order is based on the search for a philosophy for society that is fashioned out of a climate of beliefs, behaviour and actions.

The climate of a society depends upon the ideas that are prevalent at the time¹. Such beliefs are aimed at attaining the common good of all and the human dignity of individuals. These two values aim at ensuring progress. Progress is made through invention of new global concepts.² The special thing about a good social philosophy is that its basic principles can easily be adapted to the different facets of social and national life. The search for a philosophy of the society is to seek a specific and unique ideology that can serve as the focal or rallying point for all individuals and groups as well a template for national development. However, such a philosophy should abide by the core value of respect for the principle of the value of human life, understood as respect for the dignity of man in his freedom and responsibility. Freedom and responsibility can be more easily attained by linking up natural abilities with socially acquired knowledge. This is what is referred to as the career talent interface. It is by this means that human life can have a value that is enduring and worth striving for. It is by these means that we can measure the success or otherwise of an individual's contribution to society.

The recognition of the value of life is an imperative, if any social philosophy is not to suffer the failures associated with the old communalism (which generated hegemony, anachronism, irredentism and disaffection) and crass pragmatism (which generated manipulation, irrelevance, otherness and cultural disdain) in the body polity. The practical consequence of the recognition of the value of human life is the intensification of the mechanisms and strategies for the establishment and sustenance of procedural and social justice in the society. The ontology and axiology of justice will trigger the arousal of a deep belief in the power and capacity of the society, its custodians and its institutions to make a change towards the assurance of the freedom, well-being, opportunities and progress of the generality of the citizens. A philosophy of society is nothing other than the totality of the principles, values, concepts and structures that will ensure that individuals give a fuller loyalty and commitment to the society and can have the best opportunities for actualizing their potentials and making their contributions. Is such a philosophy desirable? Is it attainable? **Let us define the concept of career-talent in the philosophy of education.**

SOME CLASSICAL PERSPECTIVES ON A TALENT- CAREER INTERFACE IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

To what extent can we conceptualize a proper philosophy of social order through youth or citizen education? In what way can we apply the career-talent paradigm especially given the development issues facing much of the African continent? First let us have a view of philosophy of education or some philosophical issues in education. To start with, some have argued that to talk of problems of philosophy of education is to talk of problems of traditional philosophy. If we accept this assertion, then, “the general nature of any philosopher's philosophy of education will inevitably be governed by his own general philosophy.” This work can be justified by the fact that we are specifically looking at building a philosophy of education that focuses on the career- talent approach to youth development and empowerment. Previous works have expounded individually the ideas of philosophy of education, education, development and youth. However, our work tries to systematically pull these salient concepts together into one coherent, holistic framework for interpreting the role of the youth in social development especially the fashioning of a philosophy of education that can work for the youth so as to contribute to the society.

Let us further expand our theory and knowledge of the classical philosophies of education by having a review of the contributions of a few of the classical writers on the talent -career interface in youth education for development and empowerment starting with Plato one of the masters of the antiquities. We shall only select a few out of the many philosophers of education listed by Haack (1976) as “Plato, Aristotle, Comenius, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, Mill and Dewey. From the standpoint of their general conception of education and its aims, they were able to make, and in fact did make, critical evaluations of educational institutions and practices and policies for the betterment of these institutions” (Haack 1976:159). Let us analyze a representative number of these classical masters of the philosophy of education starting with Plato.

Plato

Plato presents a philosophical system for the training and education of the youth. He pushes an argument of education as improvement of the human person in all departments of his life. All efforts to bring up the child are aimed at the improvement of the understanding, character, behavior and actions up to the very end of life. This conception of education is holistic in nature with every part or member of the society

playing its own unique nature given or designed role at its own time in the life of the child. As such the parents, care givers, teachers and others involved in nurture offer to the child a total package of education and admonition⁴. Parents teach honor and justice to their children. Teachers instruct the young ones in knowledge, letters and character. The gymnasts or physical instructors train the child to develop and improve the child's body. Even the state teaches the child the laws of the land⁵. As such the training or formation of the child is divided into sections handled by different persons.

In working out the outlines of a thorough and profound philosophy of education Plato affirms that “are not the best agriculturists those who are most agricultural? And a man will be most careful of that which he loves? And assuredly he will love that most whose interests he regards as identical with his own”⁶. The point here is that like will beget like as Plato says “your children will generally resemble their parents”⁷. There is a link between these tendencies and the principle of justice whereby a person ought to do that which he is most suited to do. Justice “has to do with that inward performance of it [his own work] which truly concerns the man himself, and his own interests: so that the just man will not permit the several principles within him to do any work but their own”⁸.

To push the argument further Plato recognizes the existence of different natures whereby some natures by design perform different tasks or duties from others. For instance, the natures of men are different from the natures of women (Plato *Republic* 1997:74). To link up the argument from nature and difference to talent Plato posits that “tell us whether when you say that one man possesses talents for a particular study and that another is without them, you mean that the former learns it easily, the latter with difficulty, and that the one with little instruction can find out much for himself in the subject he has studied, whereas the other after much teaching and practice cannot even retain what he has learnt; and that the mind of the one is duly aided, that of the other thwarted, by the bodily powers? Are not these the only marks by which you define the possession and the want of natural talents for any pursuit?”⁹. For Plato then the concern is to apply human beings to those areas of life that their abilities and potentials are most suited so as to get the best out of them. Plato views human beings as creatures of capability and action guided by natural and social purpose. Let us review Aristotle's position.

Aristotle

Aristotle on his part in building a philosophy of education makes the argument that what we do or our actions define who we are. He uses the

idea of act and potency to show the link between talent and career. The breadth and motivation of our actions serve as parameters or standards for evaluating or measuring who we are. According to him “now each man judges well the things he knows, and of these he is a good judge. And so the man who has been educated in a subject is a good judge of that subject”¹⁰. This means that “the function of a lyre player is to play the lyre, and that of a good lyre player is to do so well, any action is well performed when it is performed in accordance with the appropriate excellence. The excellence we must study is human excellence.”¹¹ To say that X is good is to say that X possesses the quality of excellence, that is, to give the best output or high grade production. We may note that excellence is about very high standards, expectations and performance.

Given the focus on the key quality of excellence Aristotle separates the moral from the intellectual excellence. Moral excellence comes from habit while intellectual excellence arises from teaching and learning due to time and experience. Excellences do not arise in the human being by nature rather human beings are “adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit. Of all the things that come to us by nature we first acquire the potentiality and later exhibit the activity, but excellences we get by first exercising them e.g. men become builders by building, we become just by doing just acts. Excellence is a mean between two vices, that which depends on excess and that which depends on defect.”¹² In pushing the argument that excellence is a mean, Aristotle is arguing for a link between high performance and discipline in rule following or moderation behaviour.

Aristotle makes a link between excellence and youth by arguing that giving the young people a right upbringing for excellence requires that they are brought up under the right rules, statutes and ordinances that define the way they are brought up and the work they do¹³. Within the political society the role of education is well expounded by Aristotle. The idea is to assign citizens functions and positions on the basis of merit after learning the characters of those to be assigned duties. The young people need to be habituated so that their human nature and habits can be well formed. This means that the education of the youth is a priority in the state and needs to be regulated by laws.¹⁴ For him human nature and its potentials are not enough to form the human being completely. Human nature needs to be channeled to the building of the good citizen. Let us review Rousseau's position.

Rousseau

Rousseau on his part makes an argument for education by offering a critical perspective to education that objects to some of the classical

masters. He also establishes some fundamental dualisms in the conception of education. He starts by saying that we need to expunge the visions and values of communal education as expounded by Plato in the *Republic*. Rousseau is emphatic that “communal education in this sense, however, does not, and cannot now exist”¹⁵. On the contrary Rousseau argues that there is a difference between education in the social order and education in the natural order. Within the social order every station of life or social role is defined and immutable or fixed. People are brought up to fit into these fixed roles. Within the natural order, every human being is equal and upbringing to become a man or a member of mankind, is the primary and common vocation or calling¹⁶. Educating a human being requires an appropriate constitution or “the right man for the duties in respect of age, health, knowledge and talents”¹⁷. As Rousseau opines the real foundation of philosophy of education and “most certainly a fundamental principle in all good education is not a question of teaching the sciences [or knowledge] but of giving a taste for them, and methods of acquiring them when this taste is better developed”¹⁸. This pursuit of taste is to help children predict and forecast their expectations and needs. Once this tendency to foresee is developed then we may surmise that the intelligence of the young ones has made real progress and the concept of time now has a value for them. Thus the real task of education is the development of a set of interests including the desire or preference for knowing otherwise, building up a spirit of inquiry, curiosity, quest, experimentation or discovery. Is this desire the same in men and women? Plato had argued for a difference in the male and female sexes according to their natures. What is Rousseau's position on this matter?

Rousseau argues further that the sexes understood as male or female are different in their constitution or make up, character and temperament. If the above is the case then men and women ought to have different education. They ought to do different things. There is a need to follow the path defined by nature in guiding the sexes rightly. Concerning the general training of men and women, it seems that it is the norm that a sex trains its own sex. “When have men ever had to do with the education of girls? Who prevents mothers bringing up their daughters as they please?”¹⁹. The point is that differences in sex affect talent, choices and careers. Let us review Kant's idea of education.

Kant

Kant had a view of the philosophy of education that necessarily linked the human nature with the need for education. Human nature requires moderation if it is to be of any use to itself or others. This moderation is delivered through education. So education is that instrument for

changing the human person into something worthwhile. This is seen in the need for and use of reason among human beings. By virtue of their constitution, human beings have to design or build up a plan of behavior for himself.²⁰ The core values that make a human being something of value are discipline and instruction. The effects of discipline are to restrain the human person and prevent or slow down unruliness. “By discipline men are placed in subjection to the laws of mankind, and brought to feel their constraint”²¹.

The human being becomes truly human by education. The human being is what education makes of him. Education defines the human being and attempts to make perfect the human nature. “It is difficult for us accurately to estimate man's natural capabilities, since some things are imparted to man by education, while other things are only developed by education. Education is an *art* which can only become perfect through the practice of many generations”²². The link between education and human nature is to be seen in Kant's view of 'germ' or natural gift. He says that “there are many germs lying undeveloped in man. It is for us to make these germs grow, by *developing his natural gifts* in their due proportion, and to see that he fulfils his destiny. Since the development of man's natural gifts does not take place of itself, all education is an art”²³.

The natural gifts or talents of human beings are not enough and have to be structured and improved by the educational process that builds the capacity to work. It is very vital that children learn to work. “Man is the only animal who is obliged to work. He must go through a long apprenticeship before he can enjoy anything for his own sustenance. The youth should have a certain set task. If we wish to *form the characters* of children, it is of the greatest importance to point out to them a certain plan, and certain rules”²⁴. There is a need for cultivating the memory and understanding as well as the general and particular mental faculties²⁵. The understanding of talent needs to start from the idea of skill. One of the key qualities of a skill is that you acquire it thoroughly. The acquisition of the feature of thoroughness ought to become a habit, a natural inclination this is because “thoroughness is an essential element in the formation of a man's character, while skill is necessary for talent”²⁶. Beyond the classical masters of education, there are some ideological views of education such as the liberal or communist types. Let us look at the communist type as an example.

Elements or Aspects of Communist Education

A communist society is one where resources are owned collectively, there is no private property. The collective has a pride of place in terms

of values and interests. In a collectivistic society as in the then communist Russia, the youth as immersed in the state socialism development process and philosophy, had some problems of self expression, self determination and individual development as the society basically controlled all activities. "Russian society has traditionally been group oriented." There was a high level of state ownership and state centralized planning of the economy particularly education, healthcare, transport and communication which were collectively owned²⁷. Within such a system the state supervised the acquisition of profit and loss, disregarding effort and initiative thus ensuring exploitation, lack of control and insufficient incentives to the workers within the production process²⁸. The implication of the above is that all facets of social life are bracketed within the collectivistic vision and mission meaning that talents in individuals are to be viewed as corporate assets belonging at a level to the community. What is the consequence of this viewpoint?

This entire philosophy is summarized in the words of Lenin that "the entire purpose of training, educating and teaching the youth of today should be to imbue them with communist ethics. A communist morality is based on the struggle for the consolidation and completion of communism"²⁹. Why did Lenin hold this position? What sort of education existed before the agitation for a communist style ethos and pedagogy? According to Althusser (1971) children as a whole learned techniques and knowledge, otherwise knowing how to do things. They also learn morals and good conduct. But they equally learn the 'right' attitude or disposition about their proper place in the production process, otherwise what they are 'destined' to do. Put simply, they learn "a reproduction of submission to the rules of the established order, a reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology"³⁰. The point here is to suggest that there is no value neutral society or cosmology. Every society is driven by national values and political ideologies that suggest a core interest. Even the talents and careers of individuals within a society are driven by ideological elements so that these features are linked to certain utilitarian or pragmatic tendencies or ends beyond the pure character of the attributes.

One key interesting point to take away from the above analysis can be summarized thus; all the masters of the philosophy of education "intertwined their theories of education with their theories of the kinds of societies which they considered to be beneficial to man"³¹. In this case we are concerned with studying certain philosophies of education that may be beneficial to the citizens of a country. The career talent system of education if grafted on the present social and education systems can

reduce unemployment and insecurity in this country by guiding people and allowing them more choice and voice as stake holders and contributors to the common good and social order³². Specifically this guidance and choice needs to be seen empirically in their career choices, hence ensuring that they do those subjects or courses that they are interested in and which match their personality and areas of natural strength. The aim is that even if no industry or company employs them, they can draw inspiration from their natural qualities, combined with their educational training which must have sharpened their natural talents to start up on their own. Ultimately the aim is for individuals to be useful to themselves and to the society. This pursuit is feasible because education is meant to refine a person's natural potentials. If a person studies a course that she is not interested in and which is not compatible with her natural talents, then she is most likely merely waiting for an already existing company to employ her since currently the society seems to cherish paper qualifications more than the demonstration of ability or the exploration of refined natural potentials. This opinion may not be popular but if you train a person in line with his natural talents, he will get a job even if you don't give him one because you have taught him how to act from a position of strength³³. Let us have a deeper study of the theory and knowledge of career talent paradigm for sustaining social order.

SOCIAL ORDER AS A BASIS OF CITIZENSHIP AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Social order can be relevant to holistic human development by helping us to review or revise some of our models of human society as zones of human freedom and human dignity. The ultimate end of freedom and dignity is to ensure the value of life and develop strategies for ensuring the common good of all citizens. The society is to be seen as a place where each person or group can realize their fullest potentials for humanity in a fair, just, equitable and humane manner. How do the African societies intend to achieve these goals of freedom and dignity. Oladipo observes that “the man centeredness of the African conception of reality makes pragmatism a powerful current in African thought”³⁴. Pragmatically, we seek to focus on “the development and maintenance of social institutions through which viable social orders can be established throughout the African continent”³⁵.

The point needs to be made that in many of the African societies certain institutions are already in existence. Some of these institutions have been beset by a combination of man-made and structural problems leading to their vitiations and even outright failure. The problem of

identifying a set of core moral and democratic values necessary for the sustenance of social order or our schemes of social relations is most relevant for the promotion of the dominant social paradigm (DSP) of peace, dialogue and security in the conflict-ridden, multi-religious, multi-ethnic societies of Africa³⁶. As Ujomu³⁷ has noted many societies in Africa are faced with the challenge of internally creating sustainable forums for problem solving, intercultural communication and social reconciliation. These societies are faced with the challenge of providing basic frameworks for defining and articulating mutual experiences on the basis of dialogue and compromise. Most of these African societies have actually failed to create or establish the norms and opportunities that can facilitate the fullest development of human personal and social life.

Social order refers to the social systems and schemes of social relations that define the political, economic and social roles, rights and duties of people in a society. It is the sum of all the human arrangements, values, rules, norms, regulations, ideologies and institutions that enhance the proper functioning of the various parts of the society or community³⁸. The real question is: Can African societies establish and sustain stable and viable social order? In what way, if any, does the social order facilitate the proper functioning of various parts of the society? Social order is a set of arrangements put in place by man in order to attain certain important ends like justice, peace, self and group actualisation as well as the general well-being of all in a social system. Social order arises out of the need to balance the conflicts and interplay of interests existing among individuals and between individuals and the society. It means that a community or society will possess a framework that defines rules, roles and functions of its members (Ujomu 2001:7). Social order is akin to a skeleton that supports a body, a scheme of social relations or a social system that underlies our real life actions as members of a society.

CONCLUSION: PROMOTING THE GOALS OF SOCIAL ORDER VIA THE CAREER TALENT PATHWAY

What goals, if any, do human beings have in mind when they try to establish and sustain social order? How can the talent career interface assist in sustaining social order? One of the most important goals of social order is to achieve the security, protection, safety, defence and preservation of the lives and property of people in a society³⁹. There is the view that the protection of lives and property is the central goal of social order because society cannot survive for long in any meaningful sense if the safety of life and property is not maintained. This is the issue

of security. This goal is assured by identifying and distributing properly certain roles, rights, duties and benefits that accrue from effective social co-existence among people. The most suitable approach to defining roles is to elicit the natural abilities and gifts of each person and then build up such through the discipline of learning and skills. The goal of this process or procedure is to weigh in on people's advantages or areas of strength so that we can have the best qualified people to fit into positions they are most suited for. This is aspiration of a proper allocation of roles and functions to members of the society according to what they have been best prepared to do. There are certain benefits of adopting such a merit driven, talent defined approach to social responsibilities.

This proper allocation of goods, duties and burdens in line with talents and skills, will establish order among the members of a society. While placing citizen's in their proper social positions, another key advantage will be that every member of the society would possess some stake or interest in the society which induces him to strive for individual and collective security and protection. To ensure security of lives and properties, the social order allows each person to have certain valuable possessions and commitments which can only be retained within a social environment that is secure and safe. The attributes of pursuing the common good, safety and protection of lives and property, can be attained by defining social functions and roles, hence, making sure that individuals have a stake in the commonwealth among others.

A second goal of social order is to ensure that things are done in the common or public interest. This means that the social order ensures that people do those things which assure the sustenance and security of everyone in the community. Common interests are thus separated from the private interests of individuals or even the group interests of associations which serve personal or sectional ends. The idea of common interests or public interest suggests the conscious promotion of the shared interests of a community as an effective means of guaranteeing certain rights and advantages to individuals and groups. Such advantages include security of lives and property, peace, freedom, and mutual co-operation. These would constitute the central and basic focus towards which the energies of all the members of society are directed. Individuals in the society would better accomplish their goals if their natural areas of advantage and acquired abilities are blended together to propel them towards their areas of greatest strength.

Social order is also agreed towards achieving peace among all and sundry in the society. Peace in the community is emphasized because, it is only in an atmosphere of peace that any community can survive and

make progress. A peaceful environment allows all the social rules, policies and institutions to operate efficiently and purposefully towards the central goal of the society in whatever way it has been designed. The suggested design is to apply citizens to those areas of life that they have been best prepared for by nature and nurture.

A fourth goal of social order is to promote love, good conduct and morals within the society. Social order is impossible without these qualities. The coexistence of any group or community of people requires some level of friendly feelings shared among them. Such friendly feelings facilitate mutual cooperation, communal rapport and integrated activities. These friendly feelings also help to manage and control inevitable differences of opinion and interest that can arise out of communal co-habitation. It is also impossible for people to live conveniently together within a community if morality is absent. Morality is what defines the way people conduct of people, morality also guarantees the harmonization of diverse interests through the promotion of the disposition by individuals to take the interests of others into account. The assigning of social functions will help to distribute the duties and burdens of human life in the social order in a fair and equitable manner to all concerned.

The aim is that all players would be participating or contributing to the society from a position of advantage that draws on their areas of strength. It stands to simple reason that no one man would have all the strengths needed to exist peacefully in the society and so each man would presumably offer his best on the belief that others finding themselves in a similar position of service delivery would perform to the best of their ability. This is a way that the principle of harmony can be attained both at the moral and professional levels. Therefore, a significant level of good conduct is vital to the survival of individuals and even a community.

Lastly, social order aims at ensuring the progress, prosperity and wellbeing of all in the society. Socio-economic progress and prosperity are vital elements in the maintenance of a social order because for social order to be functional and meaningful people need to be induced to make a commitment, and contribute to the well being and progress of the community by their different activities. The people's interest and dedication to preserving the social order is assured if they have made some valuable and perennial inputs to the prosperity and wealth of the society. Persons are more likely to be economically comfortable when their natural abilities are tied systematically to their lifelong skills and employment tracks.

END NOTES

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