A CRITIQUE OF ASOUZU'S CONCEPT OF *IBUANYIDANDA* PHILOSOPHY EXAMINED IN THE LIGHT OF CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN SOCIETY

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 Abstract
This paper examines Asouzu's conceptualization of ibuanyidanda philosophy as an integrative philosophy of social movement and cultural rebirth. It is aimed at addressing the contemporary Nigerian challenges of socio-political and economic development. Nigeria as a country has been bedeviled by myriad of fundamental problems such as corruption, abject poverty, hunger, food crises, ethno-religious crises, herdsmen-farmers' clashes, religious fundamentalism, socio-cultural chauvinism, poor economic growth and political instability. Rousseau's views influenced Asouzu's standpoint of complementary reflections. This paper is analytic in explaining the conceptual frameworks of Asouzu's ibuanyidanda philosophy. Asouzu's concept of ibuanyidanda philosophy is a theoretical framework for African communalistic experience. The African communalistic experience reveals African democratic setting. It is the philosophy of culture, "belongingness principle"and fundamental wholeness. It represents the need for ethical objectivity and universal dialogue. Ibuanyidanda philosophy represents the fact that human beings are major drivers of their immediate environment and they are masters of their socio-political, ethical, cultural and physico-existential world. It reflects the need for cultural rebirth, moral answerability and the normative expectation of human relationship. It demands the need for authentic human existence. Ibunayidanda philosophy represents universal humanism. It is an integrative philosophy that calls for good will, good governance, purity of intention and a good sense of social justice. Finally, it calls for the beneficial scheme of social cooperation and mutual understanding among rational persons. It is an existential reflection of positive social integration of African society.
Keywords: Ibuanyidanda, Philosophy, Politics, Society, Common Good, Communalism

Introduction

This paper attempts to critically examine Asouzu's conceptualization of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy as an integrative philosophy of social movement and cultural rebirth. The problem of human existential relationship and "African predicament" has been a source of concern to African scholarship. African Continent is one of the richest Continents in the world, but it is bedeviled by myriad of fundamental problems. These fundamental problems include abject poverty, hunger, food crises, sickness and diseases, bribery and corruption, god-fatherism, ethno-religious crises, herdsmen/farmers clashes, religious fundamentalism, socio-cultural chauvinism, poor economic growth and political instability. Asouzu's conceptualization of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy as an integrative philosophy reflects these fundamental challenges; it calls for fundamental wholeness. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy reflects African ideology of communalistic experience; it reveals the need for African democratic citizenship or good governance, human existential relationship and African development. This paper analyzes the conceptual framework of Asouzu's*ibuanyidanda* philosophy as a "positive integration" of human existential relationship. The term "*Ibuanyidanda*" is derived from the observational experiences of the Igbo speaking peoples of Nigeria. It depicts mutual understanding or positive social integration. It is an integrative philosophy of mutual trust. It is a philosophy of social movement. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy simply means working in mutual unison. It means mutual cooperation in a typical African setting. It depicts the African way of life. Asouzu, however, asserts that:

> Generally, "ibu- anyi- danda" is one of the most important observational statements in the language of Igbos of Nigeria and is constituted for the following words: ibu-load; anyi-not insurmountable for; danda- a species of ant. Hence, the expression translates to: "no task is insurmountable for danda- the ant". Igbos derive the statement by observing a colony of the ants "danda" which have the capacity to carry successfully loads that appear bigger and heavier than them when they work in mutual unison. Ibuanyidanda philosophy, the new integrative philosophy of mutual complementation in Africa, is a reaction to what this statement seeks to claim.[1]

Asouzu's concept of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy and it contemporary significance to the Nigerian democratic society is quite apt and imperative. There is so much abject poverty among Nigerian citizens. The *ibuanyidanda* philosophy is aimed at addressing the agonies of Nigerians in the midst of abundant natural and human resources. This paper is compartmentalized into various subsections. It discusses the conceptual framework of ibuanyidanda philosophy as an existential reflection. Asouzu's conceptualization of *ibuanyindanda* philosophy represents universal humanism.

It also discusses *ibuanyidanda*philosophy as the legitimizing foundation of the common good, *ibuanyidanda* philosophy and the Nigerian democratic experience, Rousseau's idea of the common good examined in the light of Asouzu's concept of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy, understanding Asouzu's conceptualization of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy have great implications for Nigerian contemporary society. This paper therefore, concludeswith a critical evaluation and concluding considerations on Asouzu's theoretical approach.

A Conceptual Framework of *Ibuanyidanda*as an Existential Reflection

The concept of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy has failed to address the leadership problem facing Nigeria as a nation-state. Nigeria as a country is bedeviled by corruption, greed and self-interest. The notion of the common good which reflects equal access to natural resources has eluded the Nigerian contemporary state. The idea of the common good is quite fundamental to human existential relationship. Consequently, it is believed that the problem of human interest is the root of all forms of corruption, ruthlessness, thoughtlessness, murder, god-fatherism, lawlessness, confusion, mutual suspicion and injustice. What is most prevalent in the Nigerian system is that the common good is opposed by many Nigerian politicians. Self-interest has become one dominant factor in Nigerian politics and public service. There is the urgent need to redefine ourselves on the legitimate foundation of the common good. The legitimizing foundation of the common good defines who we are as people. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy reflects in the missing links of this existential reality. It showcases the thought pattern of mutual enrichment and mutual understanding.

Furthermore, a critique of Asouzu's concept of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy as the philosophy of culture and its contemporary relevance to the Nigerian democratic experiencereveals the fact that the concept of ibuanyidanda is more theoretical

than practical. It is a conceptual framework that is aimed at addressing the idea of the common good in contemporary society. It aims at addressing the human pseudo-interest that tends to negate the proclivity for normative peace and progress in human society. Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* philosophy reflects in the normative and legitimate expectation of human existential condition in their immediate society. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy demands absolute commitment to the purity of intention and the need for the honesty of purpose. *Ibuanyidanda*philosophy does not just focus on the mere empirical conditions of human beings, but it addresses the model of categorical demands that tends to suggest that human relative condition is an existential burden that must be linked to the concept of reality. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy is not only relevant to African philosophy alone but its great contemporary relevance could be traced to address more fundamentally the existential question of human ambivalent situations. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy is a cultural philosophy that reveals that human beings are bundles of confusion or an embodiment of paradoxes; and that of the good and evil. It has a great relevance in the area of African politics and African democracy and it could be seen as a form of holistic humanism. Its theoretical foundation is founded on confidence-building and the absolute negation of this confidence-building among African leaders and their peoples has been the major bane of African democracy and African development. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy reveals the importance of a harmonious whole. It reveals a system and method that is crafted as a theoretical tool designed to penetrate reality as a whole. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy as a theoretical tool reflects in a system and method or a problem solving mechanism. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy centers on the idea of the good and the issues of Africa's democratic sustainability. *Ibuanyidanda philosophy* as a cultural philosophy or a complementary reflection is not only adaptable to the African society alone but it is a universal phenomenon that seems to address human pseudo-interest in the socio-political and economic community in a globalized world. It reveals the regulation of the deliberate choices and actions of human beings in their immediate society. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy has become a more relevant, necessary and useful philosophical tool for governing the cooperative affairs of the African people; it has become relevant in the sense that, as a complementary reflection, it has portrayed both a theoretical re-orientation and a practical demonstration for any forms of democratic setting in global society. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy as a complementary reflection reveals specific African existential or ontological condition, and it is a rational practice directed towards solving human fundamental problems. As a complementary reflection, it attempts to

investigate the fundamental character of democratic governance and African leadership structure.

Moreover, the political significance of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy becomes more fundamental and glaring when its relevance is grounded in a wider universal framework both theoretically and practically. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy as a cultural philosophy provides a normative criterion or credible horizon for the existential analysis of human inter-relationship. The idea of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy as a complementary reflection establishes a credible horizon of the existential framework of the fundamental issues of African politics. The existential dimension of mutual compatibility is explored through the normative-expectation of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy. Its philosophy involves a thematic or synthetic analysis and systems of democratic affairs of human beings. The idea of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy as a normative context entails a praxiological implication. The issue of democratic governance is situated or circumscribed within the credible horizon or the given normative context of the idea of *ibuanyidanda philosophy*. Most fundamental to some of the features of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy is that those African leaders entrusted with the act of governance are adhering negatively to the dictates of their ego. The human fundamental instinct of self-preservation is to always seek their personal or egoistic interests at the expense of the African peoples.

In addition, *ibuanyidanda* philosophy is the necessary pre-condition for any form of meaningful interpersonal human relationship. It reflects in normative foundation in which any form of moral reciprocity is reflected. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy reveals the normative possibility of the common good. The common good helps to reduce the tension arising from the ambivalence of human pseudo interests. The idea of the common good reflects in the common source of collective legitimization beyond the dictates of the human egoistic tendencies. Asouzu argues that i*buanyidanda* philosophy entails seeking harmony in complementarity; even in a symmetrical situation of power imbalance because bad governance connotes the excessive exploitation of asymmetrical situation of power-imbalance towards fostering egoistical interest. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy reveals that even in the midst of our human pseudo interests or asymmetrical relationships, all human beings are stakeholders who undertake measures to steer the course of their socio-political, existential and corporate world. It presupposes an existential condition of normative possibility of all signifying signification. It reveals essentially a philosophy of the ontology of our being. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy is an affirmation of our most dynamic interplay of

human relations which is essentially characterized by the notion of reality as a 'missing link'. It frowns at the perpetuity of social vices in human beings and guarantees the principle of collectivism and social integration. Moreover, human interest has lost its strength and significance and it is opposed to the idea of the common good. Contemporary Nigerian society has degenerated into a level where the majority of peoples have been sidelined and this Nigerian situation has led to a senseless mismanagement of the country's natural and human resources.

Moreover, human relation has been characterized by injustice and fear or lack of trust among African leaders and those they governed. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy brings to the fore the need for human attitudinal change. It is a theoretical reconstruction that attempts to solve the fundamental problems in contemporary Nigerian society. Human problems ought to be addressed more fundamentally. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy as a social movement is merely explanatory and not systematic, rigorous or methodical enough in solving the plethora of fundamental human predicament. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy only seems to address just a fragment of human issues. Human beings are major drivers of their socio-political, existential, practical, religious and economic environment. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy accommodates a higher logical legitimizing force that can bind human beings as stakeholders together or disintegrate them. It is deeply rooted in African socialism and it is invariably a holistic humanism. Asouzu argues that *ibuanyindanda* philosophy is a philosophy of the ontology of being, holistic/universal humanism, philosophy of culture and social integration. *Ibuanyindanda* philosophy is a philosophy of socio-cultural integration. *Ibuanyindanda philosophy* as socio-philosophical movement serves as a system and method that helps to curtail the fundamental primitive drive of self- preservation among human beings. Human beings have the innate natural tendency to self-preservation or self-determination. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy aims at ensuring mutual control among potentially dangerous rational beingsor persons in their egotistical tendency and deception. It is a social movement that tends to address the fundamental goodness of the human nature. In this human nature, *ibuanyidanda* philosophy as a philosophy of cultural integration and a social movement reveals that the human person is not totally bad and at the same time, he is not totally good. It guarantees the advancement of human freedom, human rights, the concept of the good and human deliberate choices and actions. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy as cultural pluralism reflects the philosophy of "we-consciousness".

Nevertheless, *ibuanyindanda* philosophy remains a veritable platform in addressing the anomalies bedeviling the contemporary Nigerian democratic experience where corruption reigns supreme. One of the paradoxes facing Nigeria as a country is the issue of widespread corruption. The concept of the common good has eluded contemporary Nigerian society. What characterizes the contemporary Nigerian society includes high profile corruption, bad road network, poor health care system, poor power supply, low life expectancy, poor educational system, lack of portable water supply, poor tax system, poor democratic system, terrorism, ethno-religious crises, herders-farmers clashes, kidnapping, rape, ritual killings, food shortages, hunger and other forms of social vices. All these are as a result of greed, corruption and poor leadership structure facing contemporary Nigerian society in particular and the African Continent in general. The notion of the common good is most fundamental or essential to the normative ethics of human flourishing. Human beings are fully conscious of their existential nature and the common good is fundamental to human society. The common good remains the guiding tread of contemporary human society. *Ibuanyindanda* philosophy is a systematic philosophy that is not grounded in selfish interest but in common interest of all in society. Self- interest connotes the tendency to always seek one's interest at any given opportunity at the expense of other people. The idea of communalism has been misrepresented or misconstrued. It has been misunderstood as an idea that is characterized by negative connotation. The hallmark of communalism is the sense of belongingness, and it represents we-consciousness. Communalism is not targeted at tribal discrimination or tribal affiliation. Tribalism and communalism share certain things in common. Tribal discrimination is an existential human tragedy. Tribalism has deteriorated to the level of nationalism or racial discrimination, even among African descents.[2]However, the xenophobic attack by South Africans against other African nationalities is a case in point. The African Continent is disintegrating. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy is simply an existential praxis. It is an existential imperative that stipulates that rules and regulations that are meant to guide human conduct and the optimization of these human conducts is the most paramount and fundamental. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy thrives to go beyond the preservation of private human interests. It is a conceptual scheme that guarantees the need for mutual understanding. Differences are part and parcel of our humanity. Broadly speaking, the recourse to *ibuanyidanda* philosophy as a social movement is a logical analysis of human relations towards validating their deliberate actions as an attempt to seek existential authenticity. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy reveals a practical-political

correctness.[3]It reflects an existential and objective truth that is geared towards the principle of social integration. Philosophy is a rational discipline and it is all about systematic thinking. Society is conceived as a social system. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy has its explanatory model. Society is geared towards a teleological system. As a teleological system, society is rested on the dynamic inter play of the common good. It is obvious that every government seeks to attain the common good of all the member of a society.

Ibuanyidanda **Philosophy as the Legitimizing Foundation of the Common Good**

Ibuanyidanda philosophy as the legitimizing foundation of the common good can be seen as a practical philosophy. African leadership structure is anchored on the legitimizing foundation of the common good.

The common good always serves as the litmus- test for the success and effectiveness of African leadership structure. The African leadership structure is deeply rooted in poverty and corruption. The collective interest of the people is reflected in the common good. We become a group of people brought together by personal interests towards the formation of a coalition of interests. However, the idea of the common good, however, rests on the binding force of communalistic existence. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy reflects "community based pedagogy" and the purity of intention, honesty of purpose and a sense of goodwill. As a social movement, it rests on the principle of harmonious complementation; the principle of harmonious complementation states that: anything that exists serves as a missing link of reality; and it is this principle that compels us in all we do as human beings.[4]Nonetheless, the principle of harmonious complementation demands the need for an authentic human existence. The process that enters into the formation of a system cannot make harmonious whole where each link does not perform their function for which it is ordained. The principle of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy is aimed at the idea of goodwill, social justice and communication. It, however, reflects in a philosophical foundation of holistic humanism in African politics. *Ibuanyidanda* has been regarded as a theoretical re-orientation that is geared towards ensuring human flourishing; and good democratic governance in African politics. African politics has been bedeviled by the violation of confidence building or mutual trust. However, Asouzu argues that *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy reflects a philosophical foundation which provides a method and some basic principles in view of penetrating reality in a consistent systematic way. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy forms a harmonious whole such that theory and praxis are

interrelated. It indeed reflects a social system. Thus, systems and methods are theoretical tools devised to penetrate human reality. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy as a complementary reflection centers on African contemporary political philosophy. As a philosophy of culture, it centers on the issues of African democratic sustainability. Asouzu argues that one of the central issues of democratic governance is to determine the ideal of democratic governance. African people ought to be adaptable to the act of good governance. The philosophy of *ibuanyidanda* is the regulation of the actions of human beings in society. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy becomes more relevant in the sense that as a harmonious complementation, it portrays both a theoretical re-orientation and a practical demonstration for any form of African government. Forms of government become necessary as situations demand.[5]*Ibuayindanda* philosophy as a complementary reflection serves as a rational theory and praxis. Theory and praxis does not just reflect in specific African existential conditions but it is a rational praxis directed towards solving human problems. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy is an African philosophy that is deeply rooted in cultural rebirth. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy as a principle of harmonious complementation investigates the fundamental character of democratic governance as a rational praxis directed at the overall welfare of individuals and community as a whole. The issue of good governance has turned out not to be a specific African problem, as many would be misled to assume but it is a global problem.

Ibuanyidanda philosophy as a complementary reflection concerns good governance in Africa; and its contemporary significance becomes more fundamental and clearer when its relevance is grounded in a wider universal framework. It has a wider universal relevance both theoretically and practically. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy provides a credible horizon and normative criterion for the existential socio-political analysis of human inter-relationship. Moreover, the idea of ibuanyidanda philosophy establishes a credible horizon of this existential reflection and normative framework of the issue of good governance in Africa. In Africa, there is the need to establish a credible horizon for this existential analysis of human cooperation. Asouzu, however, argues that:

> This credible horizon is provided by the idea of ibuanyidanda philosophy as a complementary reflection of human existence and it is one within which to articulate the issue of good governance and the ethics of an emancipated global society. With this, we can say that the act of good governance loses its democratic legitimacy, either as things involving systems or as democratic affairs of human

beings. In other words, within this horizon, the issue of good governance can be articulated as the capacity for units to build a mutual complementary harmony within any given normative framework in the evident insight that anything that exists served as a missing link of reality.[6]

Good governance brings about an emancipated global order. The concept of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy is deeply rooted in good governance. The issue of good governance is situated within the credible horizon or the given normative context of the idea of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy. Accordingly, Asouzu, therefore, argues that if good governance is deeply rooted in the capacity to build a mutual complementary harmonious-whole or framework, bad governance would subsist in those measures that undermine this harmony. Most fundamental to some of those measures is when those entrusted with the act of governance adhere negatively to the dictates of the human fundamental instinct of self-preservation to the extent that they always seek to put their interests first at the expense of the common good of all. The common good, for instance, ought to be the legitimizing foundation for the act of good governance in Africa in particular and the world at large. It is one thing to refer to the common good as the legitimizing foundation of our human interests and another thing for it to be really so. It is within this normative context of reciprocity as we encounter it in every situation of interaction that the idea of the common good shows itself as the necessary condition for any form of meaningful interpersonal relationship.[7]

The common good reflects in the normative foundation on which any form of reciprocity is erected. The common good helps to reduce the tension arising from human pseudo-interests. The idea of the common good refers to a common source of collective legitimization beyond the dictates of the ego.[8]The idea of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy becomes very relevant to human community as a whole and which is fundamentally good to the contracting individuals in democratic society. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy as a normative context addresses the need to seek mutual harmony among African peoples and the globalized world at large. Good governance entails seeking harmony even in a symmetrical situation of power imbalance, bad governance connotes the exploitation of a symmetrical situation of power imbalance towards fostering personal interest. Moreover, the practical relevance of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy to good governance reflects the fact that any form of government is measured good, as stakeholders undertake measures to steer the human instinct for self-preservation for the good of all stakeholders.[9]Asouzu argues that we have seen that being in its most dynamic relational essentiality is fully affirmed and takes full force to render each other in

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mutual complementary dependence. In other words, missing links are bound to each other. Such rights turn out to be moral obligations we owe to each other, at the same time. In this case, one can say that we claim the right to be served mutually. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy reflects positive integration. As a philosophy of being and as a complementary reflection it helps to put human excesses in check, because, *ibuanyidanda* philosophy as a philosophical movement and African ideology serves as a system and a method to curb the fundamental human primitive drive of self-preservation in a negative sense and human tendency for corruption.[10]Alluding to the Hobbesean sense, Asouzuthat argues human beings are innately corrupt. It is this innate corruption that necessitates organized forms of democratic governance, which subsists in a union of contracting individuals in view of checking excesses and abuses. It is based on this form of mutual control among potentially- dangerous individuals, that the human innate natural tendency to be selfish can be put in check. On the other hand, alluding to the Rousseauian conception of human nature, *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy is deeply rooted in the fundamental goodness of the human nature. Asouzu argues that Rousseau calls our attention to the fundamental goodness of the human nature. He demonstrates that the issue of corruption of human nature is as a result of the devastating influence of history and civilization. Asouzu argues that Rousseau sets out to show how this fundamental innate human disposition to goodness can be developed under the natural conditions devoid of artificial methods of education.

In his classic, the "*Social Contract*", he sets out to demonstrate how human innate goodness can be explored for a democratic form of government. Thus, for him, the state is a union of free and fundamentally good contracting individuals. The practical relevance of good governance is a difficult task in Africa due to the evils of corruption and god-fatherism. In other words, unless drastic measures are taken to reverse a precarious human condition, we can never think of human beings governing themselves. The idea of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy as a complementary reflection and its relevance to good governance does not just permit a free-rider system where there is no restriction to human freedom in their process of mutual complementary relationship or social interaction. Governance and with it good governance ensues when human beings are forced to be something other than what is natural to their nature.[11]*Ibuanyidanda*philosophy reveals that the human person is not totally bad and he is not totally good. He must abide by the rules and regulations guiding his immediate society in terms of his socio-political and existential relations with other human persons. We all know that the human person is neither a devil nor

an angel, but a being caught in the tension created by his existential situations. The idea of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy as a philosophy of culture reflects in the philosophy of universal human reason, this cannot thrive in an atmosphere of bad governance, and it can impinge on the normative peace and human progress of such a democratic society. The causes of bad governments are those negative factors that impinge on peace and progress in human society. The issue of good governance is made dependable on the realization of sociological, economic, psychological and political conditions which are categorically demanded. For Kant, good governance has to do with the ethical character of the acting subjects who have to act categorically for higher motives beyond mere empirical conditions. If we transfer the demands of Kant's approach to the issue of governance, we can say that good governance subsists not in those acts that focus on mere empirical conditions, but on those that go beyond these as to demand absolute commitment.[12]However, *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy reflects Kant's categorical imperative.

*Ibuanyidanda*Philosophy and the Contemporary Issues in Nigerian Society

The idea of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy as an integrative philosophy has eluded the contemporary Nigerian society. Today, Nigeria as a country is battling with myriad of fundamental human problems such as: bribery, corruption and greed, poor road networks, low life expectancy, poor power supply, weak government institutions (e.g. The Police, the Judiciary, and the Correctional service), high infant mortality, poor infrastructural facilities, poor health care system, poor educational system, poor economic programmes, poor water supply, the menace of cybercrimes.

violation of human rights, poor electoral system i.e vote buying and vote selling, abject poverty, ethno-religious crises and Boko Haram insurgency or Islamic fundamentalism, social vices such as kidnapping, rape and ritual killings, sicknesses and diseases, food shortages and hunger. Nigeria as a country is bedeviled by corruption, greed and self-interest. Self-interest is the negative disposition, always, in all situations to take undue advantage of other human persons. When a person seeks his personal interest within the common good he is being selfish. Broadly speaking, the notion of the common good reflects in the equal access to those common resources that are fundamental to human existence. We appear to be mismanaging the natural resources we are endowed with due to the inherent human pseudo-interest in many things we do in Nigeria as a country. Human selfish-interest is the root of all forms of corruption,

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ruthlessness, thoughtlessness, murder, god-fatherism, politics, confusion, mutual suspicion and injustice.[13] Self-interest has become prevalent. This notion of self-interest connotes the perpetuation of interest. For Asouzu, self-interest goes beyond taking what is one's due in all fairness and justice. It connotes the tendency, always, to seek one's interest at any given opportunity and in the event of doing so, injustice ensues. Whenever we pursue our mundane interests and thereby commit acts of injustice, we are always entangled in contradictions when we are pursuing self-interest. Here, our interest has lost its focus and is now opposed to the common good.[14]A person who pursues self-interest is thus on the path of error; Nigerian societies have degenerated to a level where the majority of human interests have undergone senseless mismanagement of Nigerian natural and human resources. The success or failure of any social order largely depends on the ability of individuals whose interest are at stake and who also suffer injustice and fear for their lives. For Asouzu, the legitimizing foundation of the common good defines who we are as a people and as moral and rational human beings. The sooner we learn to define our actions on the legitimacy provided by the common good, the sooner also would we be in a position to emancipate ourselves from the worst forms of self-inflated problems.[15]The common good defines Nigeria's democratic legitimacy.

Ibuayidanda Philosophy and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Ibuanyidanda philosophy as a social movement has become a mere theoretical exercise because its pragmatic context is yet to be realized. It has a contemporary political significance towards the Nigerian predicament. Many Nigerians are groaning and are experiencing agony in the midst of abundant natural and human resources. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy is closely linked with the Millennium Development Goals. The contemporary Nigerian society is still groping in the dark and the Millennium Development Goals are yet to be realized.

These Millennium Development Goals are: poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent working environment, reduction of child mortality, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability, and developing global partnership. Moreover, *Ibuayidanda* philosophy is a normative philosophy of mutual complementation. It brings to the fore the need for a cultural philosophy. It brings to the fore the need for an attitudinal change of human behaviours. Asouzu's concept of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy as a system and a method sounds theoretically plausible

but it is not rigorous enough to be accrued such a status. It is just a theoretical reconstruction that if it is well nurtured, it could stand the test of time in terms of its attempts to solve fundamental human problems. It reflects problem solving mechanism. The idea of human problems is more fundamental to the extent that mere theoretical or academic exercise can never be in the good interest of fundamental human problems, like lawlessness, murder, social disorders, corruption, god-fatherism, greed, hatred, wars, global terrorism, ethno-religious crises, religious fanaticism or Islamic fundamentalism, hunger, man's crave for wealth, fame, recognition and power politics. For Habermas, politics has to be understood as a sphere of decision and power and not of reason.[16]The idea of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy is just a fragment of all other philosophies which can be used as a re-direction to solving fundamental human problems.[17]Accordingly, Asouzu succinctly argues thatwhen we talk about good governance, the notion of ibuanyidanda philosophy should be able to address more fundamentally the contemporary issues facing Nigerian society. He asserts that:

> Those entrusted with leadership betray the trust vested on them and follow personal interests even the risk of negating the interests of the Nigerian masses. The notion of ibuanyidanda philosophy should be able to address more fundamentally at any given opportunity the fundamental question of human situation from an objective perspective rather than on a subjective dimension because human beings are actually an embodiment of paradoxes- good and evil. And the most radical form of expression of this ambivalence is in the paradox it generates in all existential situations.[18]

Consequently, the issues of good governance become problematic due to human problems and errors. Asouzu observes that some of the intricate problems connected with government are human problems. However, the idea of *Ibuanyidanda* only addresses just a fragment of human problems and it focuses more on African social system or traditional African society.

Rousseau's Idea of the Common Good Examined in the Light of Asouzu's Concept of *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy

Rousseau was a political philosopher and writer whose works has influenced many Enlightenment thinkers. His political thought has influenced the progress of the Enlightenment period of 17th century as well as aspects of the period of the French Revolution of 1789. His work influenced many philosophers such as Kant, Marx, Hegel, Locke, Voltaire, and Montesquieu and some African writers.

He theorizes that people give consent to join a rational society. This consent by the people is what gives political legitimacy to such legitimate government. The role of the social contract is to guarantee the fact that members of such rational society have good conscience or reason to endorse such a political legitimacy. His idea of the social contract is deeply rooted in fundamental problem of human nature. For him, the social contract was relatively peaceful and rustic. The social contract becomes necessary to overcome the boot-traps of human conflicts that will impede the socio-economic growth and the political stability of the political state. His political theory is a social construct that is solely grounded in the normative possibility and the legitimate expectations of civil society. For Rousseau, the individual will is subjected to the general wills of all in civil society. A social contract implies a rational agreement of human persons by which they agree on the rules and regulations or laws governing such rational human society. He believes that legitimate society exists by which the rational consent of the people in such a society is recognized.

Furthermore, it is germane to assert that Rousseau's concept of human nature and his idea of the common good cuts across Western and African culture. Rousseau's idea represents the principle of collectivity. He also argues that man is corrupted by society. The main objective of Rousseau's theory of the social contract is to guarantee the normative possibility and the legitimate expectations of the common good in human society. Rousseaus's idea of the General Will indicates that the individual will is subservient to the collective will of all individuals in society. Rousseau's political philosophy is in tandem with the contemporary African philosophy of Asouzu's notion of *ibuanyindanda* philosophy as an integrative philosophy and the philosophy of culture or social movement. Rousseau believes that civilization has made man more selfish and corrupt. The main objective of the formation or establishment of the political state is to guarantee the general happiness of all citizens. Asouzu draws his inspiration from this Rousseauian perspective and the Kantian template of the normative context of the good as it affects the contemporary Nigerian society. One weakness with Asouzu's notion of *ibuanyindanda* philosophy is that his theoretical cum African philosophy has not been able to grasp the present complexities facing the contemporary Nigerian society. Modern societies have become very complex and theory is not just enough but practice remains the key to ensuring human socio-economic growth and political development. Rousseau's social contract theory has theoretical affinity with Asouzu's conceptualization of *ibuanyindanda* philosophy as a contemporary African philosophy which is deeply rooted in African communalism. Rousseau and

Asouzu's conceptualization of the common good reflects the normative foundation of contemporary society. The common good as the normative foundation of society represents the formation and the transformation of character.[19]Moreover, the conceptual framework of the common good is grounded in the beneficial scheme of social cooperation. Rousseau's version of the common good has a great influence on the Humean and Kantian template of the good in civil society. Kant's idea of political theory is deeply rooted in the Rousseauian notion of the general will. Kant and Rousseau strongly believe that human society is grounded in the universalization of reason and moral principles. Society is governed by moral precepts. Society is not only characterized by the normative possibility of the good but it represents the legitimate expectation of the network of social relationship. For Ferrante, society is a large complex of human relationships: a system of interactions.[20]Society is described as a permanent battleground between rival systems of beliefs.[21]Asouzu's*ibuanyindanda*philosophy as a complementary reflection represents a sort of African communalism. It has a lot in common with Rousseau and Kant's contemporary political philosophy. Kant's argument of the philosophy of right is understood from the influence of Rousseau's idea of the General Will. Kant's political thought illustrates the ideal fundamental, compositional, foundational, and the normative structure of the good in the social world. Kant, Hume, Rousseau's idea of the good and Asouzu's notion of *ibuanyindanda* as a variant of African communalism or African philosophy reveals the conception of the good. In every human society, the normative possibility of the good can bring about the principle of social order. However, Asouzu's version of *ibuanyindanda* philosophy as a complementary reflection represents an expression of a sort of universal humanism fundamentally designed to make the world a better place for all based on equal opportunities, rights and privileges.[22]His philosophy is holistic humanism and the philosophy of culture.

Evaluation

The concept of *ibuanyidanda* represents an integrative philosophy and a social movement. It represents the means for dialogical engagement in human community. The community constitutes the point of orientation for almost all human activities and determines human life. The idea of the community can also have a disintegrating dimension that can impinge on good governance. However, the concept of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy connotes the concepts of

African socialism and communalism. It reflects the need for mutual enrichment and dialogical engagement of human persons. This mutual enrichment and mutual dependence arising from the African ideological construct reflects pedagogical freedom and a practical-political perspective.[23]

The notion of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy does not seem to grasp the present complexities facing the contemporary Nigerian society and our humanity at large. Our humanity is at crossroads. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy represents an overlapping consensus and a global interpretation of fundamental wholeness. However, from the Asouzuian perspective, it reflects the political system of society and the democracy of everyday speech. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy as a social movement, African communalism, cultural philosophy and a holistic humanism reflects the philosophy of public affairs. The philosophy of public affairs relates to democratic issues. A democracy may, then, appear as political system by which the society can achieve a consciousness of itself in its purest form. The state is a special organ whose responsibility is to work out certain representations which hold good for the collectivity. It represents a continuous learning process or the pedagogical process of teaching.[24]It is a philosophy that teaches us how to become better citizens. The concept of *ibuanyindanda* philosophy as an African communalistic idea reveals the need for democratic citizenship and sense of belongingness. It is a philosophy for "communicative actors" and "communicative actors" play a social role. For Habermas, communicative actors are role players.[25]*Ibuanyidanda*philosophy demonstrates the call for moral accountability. Accountability is at bottom a moral-practical category. For Asouzu, even if human beings have localized conceptual schemes that determine the way they use certain words and ideas these differences can only be thought of within a normative framework of mutual enrichment and mutual dependence in the genesis of ideas and thought patterns. We can hardly grow through distancing ourselves from each other unduly. Ideas and conceptual schemes stay to each other in an existential relationship of mutual complementary enrichment beyond ethnocentric and egoistic dimensions. Asouzu therefore, argues that we aspire towards validating all actions seeking authenticity both materially and formally. This we do, the moment we comply to the demands of that method that sustains all acts of intending, willing, judging and knowing. What this indicates is that logic either as an act of the mind or as a discipline can hardly achieve its set objectives if it fails to comply with the demands of a whole.[26]*Ibuanyidanda* philosophy incorporates all the theoretical tools needed to achieve what we may call socio-economic order and political accountability. It represents an objective validity and truth expected by all and

sundry in democratic society. Asouzu holds that there is need for *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy to comply fully with the universal principle of social integration.[27]*Ibuanyidanda* philosophy as a theoretical construct reflects the new integrative philosophy of mutual complementation in African milieu. It reflects a normative assumption of some existential challenges within a global context. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy is a philosophy of African culture and African communalism. It is a community-based pedagogy.[28] However, it represents the principle of collectivity.

Ibuanyidanda philosophy reflects the need for universal dialogue and African communalistic experience. Asouzu's conceptualization of *ibuanyindanda* philosophy as a complementary reflection is deeply rooted in contemporary African philosophy and it represents a self-transformative moments of existential reflections.[29]Asouzu's theoretical approach is a social construct and it is an attempt to solve human fundamental problems. For Odimegwu, fundamental problems require fundamental solutions.[30]His philosophy reflects what he calls a fundamentingwholeness.[31] Moreover, it is germane to assert that Asouzu's philosophy represents ethico-political realism. It reflects the fact that African politics is grounded in virtue ethics and the pursuit of the common good.For Mackenzie, politics is best thought of as the pursuit of the common good.[32]Asouzu's theoretical approach is fundamentally designed for the betterment of an emancipated global world and it reflects human emancipation.The conceptualization of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy designates the form of interpersonal relations which is made possible by an ethical objectification of the world.[33]According to Asouzu,*ibuanyidanda philosophy* is an indication of the philosophy of culture.[34]His philosophy represents the call for the African family.[35]The "African family"represents African brotherhood. Asouzu's ibuanyidanda philosophy represents the idea of the common good. For Chuka, the common good of society determines and defines the right order of relation between persons as social entities and the society itself is understood as a relation of order.[36] The common good is possible by moral obligation. The common good implies great moral obligations for human persons and society.[37]The common good indicates a consciousness of openness to others, of acceptance of others and of self- giving.[38] According to Mauritan, the common good is not a set of advantages and utilities, but also integrity of life, and end good in itself…a bonum honestum.[39]Asouzu's theoretical approach is in tandem with Mauritan assertion that the common good should be in accordance to justice and moral goodness; it is the good of a people, and the body politics, and not the good of a mob of gangsters and murderers.[40] For Carden, people have desires for

the good, however, those goods are classified or ordered; people also have respect for duty and for obligations imposed by law.[41]

Concluding Reflections

We have attempted and critically examined Asouzu's conceptualization of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy as an integrative philosophy of social movement and cultural rebirth. His philosophy tends to address the contemporary Nigerian society. The contemporary Nigerian society has been bedeviled by myriad of fundamental problems. These fundamental problems are hunger, food crises, herdsmen-farmers clashes, terrorist attacks, socio-cultural chauvinism, poor economic growth, poor political development national identity problem, poverty of the Nigerian population, corruption among influential Nigerians, inequality between wealthy and poor Nigerians, child mortality, high rate of unemployment, ethno-religious crises, low level of education, poor road network, poor electricity supply, poor water supply, low life expectancy, drug abuse and juvenile delinquency. Contemporary issues in Nigerian society are all serious issues that require fundamental solutions and one of those solutions are the ones championed by Asouzu's theoretical framework. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy represents the beneficial scheme of social cooperation and community based pedagogical framework. It demands the need for an existential reflection, self- transformation and African communalistic experience. It is a reflection of positive integration. Asouzu's African philosophy reveals a culture of sharing, open-mindedness, mutual dependence, universal dialogue and interpersonal encounter. Asouzu's concept of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy should be able to address the myriad of fundamental challenges facing the contemporary Nigerian society today but it has not been able to grasp with the present complexities of the contemporary Nigerian society. He presents an invigorating new approach to African philosophy in the normative context of the good.

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