



THE POLITICS OF CORONA VIRUS IN NIGERIA: AN ETHICAL CRITIQUE

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Abstract: This paper extols the virtue of “common good” in resolving conflicts associated with the spread of corona virus pandemic in Nigeria. This paper employs the notion of ethics as an essential exercise in self-understanding of environmental crisis management, towards the unilateral power of reconfigurations of the political community of united citizenship in Nigeria. Every ounce of a political community is reconfigured to accept the community/national development along the linear path of the good health management services for the sustainability of individual life expectancy in the state. This is purely determined for the increase in capacity for greater freedom, self-discipline, and creativity and material wellbeing of the individual existence. The society is basically made for the common good. So, the paper therefore is an attempt to investigate the structure that will determine the realization capacity of societal good in Nigeria, where every individual come will be working for the common good. This will be with respect to the control of COVID 19 pandemic and other environmental crisis in Nigeria. Thus, it is in this trajectory that our central task in writing this paper, will be to evaluate the moral structure associated with these problems. What alternative normative structure that is logically available to use for handling such situation like corona virus pandemic in Nigeria. Considerably, we are herein in this paper to discuss the moral justifications of common good in avalanche of the heteronormativity of cultural differences in Nigeria. There must be a unilateral support for life, irrespective of differences in economic class, societal and political variables of the Nigeria State sovereignty. The findings of the study support the thesis that, under a public policy directives, the whole aim of human rights are for the “common good”. It is to carve out a protected sphere of the sovereign political community into amiable one of human existentialism.

Introduction

The buildings of political communities are mostly along the reconfigurations of the ethnic interest for common good. It requires building of bridges on the part of equity principle for distribution of national resources for economic development. It is also requires the sense of equality before the law in the distribution of benefits and burden of the state economy. In the case of the

imperatives of common good in the budding corona virus pandemic in Nigeria, however, the health management services are notoriously unflattering. What we often hear is confusion of sagacity of ideas in the political, social and economic differences in the Nigeria state heterogeneity. There is no systematized concept of common unity for common good, and this has led to the dysfunctional process in the combat of the corona virus in

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Nigeria. The political class and the economic class are not literally in the same platform or within the plethora of execution of common good in the issues of transnational health, and environmental problems in Nigeria. Bangura corroborated this in this manner:

If we are to listen only to the supposedly self-glorifying rhetoric, we might well come away with the idea that the country's national relations comprise a brutal battle for survival, devoid of rules, trust, or courtesies in which much less altruism and concern for the public good are sheer folly. (Bangura, ed. By Shedrack G. Best, 2006:445).

Basically in the same plethora of individual interest, we might come to believe that the aim of the country's national relations is to get there rich ahead of others without recourse to the public good. Strikingly lacking is a vision and failure to the national system with the rhetoric of the political interest or ethnic chauvinism. Considerably, this condition of anonymity in the political and economic life have implications in the establishment of a genuine national goal for conflict and health management in Nigeria. Presumably, quite a number of these are factors delineating the lack of good public policy initiatives in Nigeria. We read and hear about other things affecting the nation's domestic relations: tribal politics, corruptions, nepotism etc. all these are impediments to the genuine democracy in Nigeria.

It corroborates to the state of poor health management services in which it is very evident in the spread of COVID19 pandemic. Given the proceeding excerpt then, we should analyze the concerns for state and society in the threats to the environmental problem of COVID19 pandemic in Nigeria.

The mechanisms for dealing with environmental matters lie within the structural system of the Nigeria state, in which there is a mismatch between the scale of the problems and the tools available to deal with them. This mismatch has led to calls for the governmental

collaboration to combat environmental spread of this plague (COVID19).

Thus, we have predicted that increasingly wide spread of this virus will require a serious reduction of the individual space right of autonomy in getting line with the state workers on how to track the spread of the virus. There were other issues of impending problems that need to be lacked in our states of sovereignty. This in particular reflects to the point of scarce resources needed to combat the threat to life.

There is a shortage of personal protective kits, medical personnel and laboratories in a developing country like Nigeria. All these are barriers for co-operation in the health management services in Nigeria.

This actually calls for international security to redefine the purpose of life of individual in states sovereignty. Nigeria at this point requires both financial and medical assistance for the control of COVID19 pandemic. The problem simply cannot be solved by states working alone. Transnational health services will not be stopped by national level law enforcement. These problems will force states fundamentally revise the system of state of sovereignty by giving the real governmental authority to international organizations for help, thereby surrendering state sovereignty, not defending it tenaciously.

Theorizing the Reconfiguration of Political Community: The Imperative of "Common Good" in the Budding Corona Virus Pandemic in Nigeria

The spread of corona virus is distinctively global about the current concern with environment. It is a problem that is reoccurring today in the world over. Though, the principle could be resolved perfectly well on a country-by-country basis. The way it is spreading from country to country is largely an indication that is a matter of domestic political concern. Since all nations are linked together in one way or the other, the industrial nations used the same technological channels to reach to other nations of the world, demands a control for combating



diseases, most especially the spread of corona virus pandemic which is currently ravaging the world.

Ideally, this situation of pandemic cannot be solved by single countries or even small groups of countries will find it difficult to cope with the challenges of combating the spread.

Presumably, our argument here will build on that observation. We have much to talk about the environmental issue or political maneuvers surrounding the health management challenges. Hence, on a related note, our concern will instead be with the deeper structure of these problems, concentrating first on philosophical aspects. What alternative normative structures are logically available to us for handling such situations? Here, our main task really will be on the philosophical insight regarding the appropriate structure of the national interest for “resolving the full range of environmental problems that we now face” (Goodin, 1995:308).

To foreshadow our orientations to the public policy initiatives in combating of this COVID19 plague in Nigeria, will be that our traditional structure of sovereign constitution of national law guided as it is by notion of autonomous national actors with strong rights that all other national actors similarly share is widely inappropriate to many of these new environmental challenges. A system of shared duties or better yet, shared responsibilities is a more fitting model, given the nature of task at hand.

The first task then is to explore alternative normative structure for coping with issues of the heterogeneity of people in Nigeria towards the acceptance of the common good, in building and sustaining the environment for the good of all. Perhaps, this is the plight for supporting the existence of a political community in a show benefits all existential nature.

The existential problems in COVID19 pandemic will continue to erode the states monopoly of powers, and national governments will come under growing pressure to shift important responsibilities to the new political

authorities. The outline of this is very evident in Nigeria, where individual and groups are not committed to the idea of public good in creating the atmosphere of positive peace building in the support of human life. The individuals are more committed to the cause of their own protections, rather than the conditions of the public good where individuals will be committed to helping others.

So, in reconfiguring of political community, there must be a system of unity in diversity, collective will, committed love in the sense of altruism in environmental crisis management, acceptability of volunteers in the service of the communities wellbeing and humanitarian paradigm.

Corroborating this, (Bull, 1977:273) asserts that “tyranny of the concept of the Western political imagination, and left it ill prepared for current challenge of rethinking the foundation of modern community”.

This very assumption is one of the propositional logic of Nigeria state, where individuals are not generally committed to the condition of supporting the state in configuration order for public good, due to ethnocentrism, religion and system of corruptions in Nigeria. Obviously, most people in Nigeria do not see this attitude as bad, but rather as ways to make a living out of every given situation. Today in Nigeria, there are no efforts by the citizens to support the government initiatives in the control of corona virus pandemic in Nigeria. The individuals are at will promoting the cause of capitalism in the arbitrary increase of the commodity products, and food stuffs instead of normal prices of goods. Thus, all those problems are as a result of the systems that are inherently absorbed in the political community. How do we reconfigure this to the system of universality is our main task in this study.

The principal countervailing trend, which is best represented by the writing of Kant and Marx, placed bounded political communities at the centre of social and political analysis. Their writings analyzed the processes of change influencing the future of such communities and



the fate of the distinctions between domestic politics inside, the inner circle of harmony and progress and the recurrence of competition and conflict which have typified the unstable state of a political community. Really, there are some weaknesses in the writings of Kant and Marx, but that notwithstanding in the contemporary world politics because any approach to the potential transformation of political community which seeks to integrate normative, sociological and praxeological concern must first settle accounts with their writings.

One of their shared assumptions was that there are no immutable structures which demand that human loyalties must stay confined within the limits of the parochial sovereign nation-state. There is no structural logic which prevent human beings from recreating political life, or which decree that a progressivist interpretation of society will forever be frustrated. Really, their concern is on the level of extension of boundaries of association and the enlargement of systems of co-operation in which they occur in world history emphasized the long transition from the original, barbaric state of nature to the civility of the modern society of states.

This was very prevalent in Marx philosophy of History as well. For both Kant and Marx, “the destruction of small bounded communities and the dramatic acceleration of the universalization of social and economic relations were extraordinary dimensions of human history”. (Linklater, 19990a, Chs. 6-8, 1990b, Ch.2).

Ideally, an engagement of Kant and Marx in the reconfiguration of the political community was improbable that the modern sovereign state is the final stage in the development of human capacity for creating frameworks of close political cooperation. Kant and Marx brought specific observations about the main developmental logic in the contemporary era to their reflections on the central dynamics of world history. Within this dimension, Kant comments on the ethical limitations of bounded communities indicate that he believed that the bonds between citizens and the state had

to be renegotiated since the whole human race comprised a single moral universe. This issue can be linked to the Nigerian state sovereignty where the individuals and the state executives are in juxtaposition to each other. There is no united front for common good or provision of universal concept by the executive by which the citizens will unilaterally use as the praxis for common good.

Today, the spread of corona virus has become a big challenge in the annals of history in the Nigeria’s political, economic and social order, in the quest for public good. There must be a condition of civility on the side of the citizens to abide to the rule of engagement for the control of the disease. Granted the complexity of the relations between the government and citizen on the nature of information and action, it seems plausible that the government executives must live up to their oath for proper guidance to the rule of law in preservation of life of the individuals. The government policy initiatives must be strictly adhere without any form of prejudices. It must be accompanied with the sense of utilitarian assumption in the execution of projects, for the realization of common good, rather than sectionalist ethnocentrist ideology or paternalism. Quite essentially, this calls for situation ethics in combating corona virus in Nigeria.

Ethics and Self Interest in Combating Corona Virus Pandemic in Nigeria

Why is the spread of corona virus become very outrageous in one country than another. Perhaps the most obvious reason is normative. It seems immoral or unethical not to try to do something. Ideally, it is a true fact indeed that all countries in the world places considerable value on the willingness to combat the plague. On a less rhetorical level, nearly everybody who sees the picture of the pandemic of COVID19 with the death of the citizens feels that something ought to be done to help. Professional ethicists also provide detailed philosophical arguments showing that the government and the citizens have an ethical duty to maintain and protect. First, they have to preserve individual life.



Secondly, they have to preserve the individual autonomy of space, through social distancing. Thirdly, they have to protect the social, political and economic import of the state institutions, so as to survive the pandemic of the corona virus.

Literarily, the state intervention to promote the common good are opposed on a number of grounds, not only by libertarians who opposed to state intervention as a matter of principle but also by deontologists who opposed to the utilitarian with good outcomes. What matters much more to them are individual's motives and intentions. It is not enough for them, that the right thing be done. They also insist that it be done, and be seen to be done, for the right reasons.

Thus, for example, deontological moralists and social critics under their sway are anxious to know whether we are altruistic enough to do the needful in determining the right sense of justice in combating corona virus in Nigeria. Are we genuinely altruistic concern in protecting every person's life, providing for the needy and giving assistance to the health workers in elations to the provision of personal protective equipments. But it is doubtful whether this is the main concern about the state executive problems in combating COVID19 epidemic in Nigeria. "They are instead, primarily concerned with the preservation of the existing economic order" (Heyter, 1981:9).

What is common to all such cases is an attempted differentiation. Any particular piece of behavior might have sprung from any number of different underlying motives, commentators (Moralists, social critics) wants to know which is the real motive. Here we shall show that this characteristics quest for motive differentiation is misguided.

Considerably, it is under this specter of reasoning that we should discuss the social and moral agents that determine the perspectives of the Nigerians personnel in the combating of COVID19 pandemic. What may tend to obscure these simple logics of reason is that they are from

different heteronumentivity of cultures, from different sociopolitical background, and as such have different conditions to be reasoning and act differently in a situation like this.

In most of the standard social situations, it makes no material difference for agent's actions whether they act from one sort of motive or another. And in such circumstances, pressing the motivational issue will usually lead only to mischief of both a pragmatic and a moral sort.

The simple observation to which this argument builds is the activities of the just recent COVID19 pandemic in Nigeria where most people most of the time have many different reasons for performing one and the same action. Ideally, in the cause of combating the pandemic of this nature, we expect that the government, citizens, and medical personnel will be determined to work for the common good in seeking to safeguard the life of individual, rather than with the egoistic considerations, up to relaps in doing something different from the cause of common good. Really, the assumption is that, in a situation of COVID19 pandemic, there ought to be a principled, altruistic concern on almost any reading of the public policy that will preserve citizens right to life. We corruptibly take this to be an absolutely standard social situation in guiding and protecting citizens.

Nothing could be further from the truth, however. In deciding whether to genuinely subscribe to the public conduct of ethics in working for common good is highly desirable, and would consist in making the state a real political community of united citizen. (Nisbelt and Wilson, 1977:231-59) corroborated it in this way:

Whenever there are in any of these ways, many converging reasons for an agent to perform one and the same action, there are no particularly good grounds for that agent himself to bother pinning down his own "true" motives that is the ones "really" guiding his behavior.



It is under this perspective that we expect every individual to have strong pragmatic grounds in being very altruistic in a situation of this kind of COVID19 pandemic. There must be a collaborative effort of all individuals to work for common good. This is the reason why the nation should discuss to work for common good, in addressing the pandemic. It is about having the game plan on how to save the nation from the menace of COVID19 pandemic. It is through the various accessible goals that will save the nation from destruction. These factors are part of measures for arriving at the common good in utilizing our energy and time in reconfiguration of the political community.

The Tragedy of the Commons

A collective action problem is a situation in which a group or nation has a common interest but cannot collaborate to achieve it. One familiar way to explain this is on the recent environmental issues of combating the corona virus pandemic in Nigeria. It is known as the tragedy of the commons in seeking a common ground of unity in combating the spread of the virus in Nigeria. It extols the virtue of “Ubuntu” ethics in seeking to work collectively for common good and that is the only way we can realize ourselves as a sovereign political community. As Goodin expressed it:

A corollary of this universality is impartiality. It has long been supposed that moral principles and therefore moral agents must at root, treat everyone the same ... the ultimate principles of morality must not themselves play favorites. (Goodin, 1995:266)

On this much, at least we can come into terms that a manifestation of our impartial respect for each and everyone promote unity for common good. In the cause of environmental conflict, it will help us more to safeguard life and protections of the political community. Thus, this tragedy is that in the spread of COVID19 pandemic in Nigeria, when each individual citizen acts according to his or her individual interest, the result is

collective catastrophe. The individual life with its economic resources, and the state political community with its organizational socio-political and economic institutions will all be annihilated, if there is no common unity in the combating the spread of corona virus pandemic in Nigeria. Perhaps, this unity involves the building of common good through the collective actions of supporting, “isolating those infected and keeping people apart in general were the only measures to combat the spread of the illness” (Paul D’Anieri, 2011:313).

The transnational spread of COVID19 also can take forms of physical/social distancing, sanitization of the environment, practices of the personal hygienic culture by washing of hands, fumigations of the environments. Also, the governmental role in procuring personal protective equipments, food supplies to those who are at home etc are all important measures of collective unity in the combat of COVID19 pandemic.

The question relating to us more in this paper is on the emerging political front to understand the crisis of state formation in combating of the spread of COVID19 pandemic in Nigeria. However, it is under this trajectory, that there are phenomena of internal politics methodological and philosophical challenges which arises as a result of conflicts with COVID19 pandemic. The challenges it brought to humanity are many. How upon a nation like Nigeria with so many internal politics can live to discharge the environmental care of COVID19 effectively without some lapses in it. Another normative question is this; how will they relate to be perfectly permissible to comply with international standards to protect the lives of every individual during the process of this pandemic. On these questions, therefore, there should be no moral qualms to doubt our probity in this crisis, because, it entails judging literarily from the experience drawn here in Nigeria.

The consequence is that in many states and local government of federation the NCDC committee are confronted with many problems in Nigeria. The issues of



corona virus are trivializing in politics, relating to the non policy implementations towards the government effort to give citizens credit of economic cash transfer to reduce hunger. More so, there is the government inability to safeguard borders strictly in context of social physical distancing. These are found to not strictly managed in Nigeria. In spite of the national and state policy, the people somehow disrespect the law on the basis of economic survival and personal rule paradigm on who is who interest.

Again, the poverty level in Nigeria is very high and individuals are struggling for economic survivals. The policy of social distancing is really difficult to maintain under the classical period of hunger. Majority of people are poor and cannot relent to stay at home without food. So, it calls for moral judgment in determining what is morally right or staying wrong at home to die of hunger or staying at home to prevent the spread of corona virus. Of course, these are moral contradictions in which there is no implicit or explicit answer. Because of this inability of collective action in combating the spread of COVID19 in Nigeria, some researchers have argued that strong constitutional agreements will be needed to solve the spread of COVID19 environmental problems in Nigeria. There are four factors, however, that make national environmental collaboration especially difficult.

1. Conflict with Existing Agreements

First, in Nigeria, there are some constitutional laws that cannot be bridged on the emergency situation due to the fact that the national constitution is sacrosanct. Allowing the states to lockdown their local and international boundaries would have helped in combating the spread of COVID19 much earlier in Nigeria. There are some existing laws that ought to have been backdown on, in safeguarding the environment and people's life too.

2. Competing Priorities

Secondly, the goal of environmental and health management protection are much greater priority in Nigeria, but today with the recent spread of this

COVID19 pandemic, not much have been prioritized in area of health management in Nigeria. In the budgeting of the priorities of national institutions, health and education have been marginalized. There is no spread of a proper health tourism industry in Nigeria. No good spread of medical and quality management in the health sectors. The hiring of 18 Chinese doctors for combating corona virus is indeed an evident in the lack of proper health management system in Nigeria. Lack of improvement in educational and health management is one vital cause of brain-drain in Nigeria. This call for concern, as our elites intellectuals are migrating abroad for better life and in the upward development of those nations.

3. Equity

Third, efforts to mitigate the national spread of the disease become tied up with problems of inequality and underdevelopment. From the perspective of economic stimulus to state in the combat of COVID19 epidemic, the state could have been given funds unilaterally on the basis of equity principle. A state with more intensity to the hazard of corona virus should be given more funds than others. More so, a state that has introduced more measures on ground in protecting the environment should also be compensated with the economic stimulus.

4. Scientific Uncertainty

Finally, there is the problem of scientific uncertainty. It is difficult to undertake economic sacrifices when it is unclear how dangerous the threat is. The role played by our transnational leaders in promoting research laboratories, building of hospitals, promoting good scientific education for health management services are seriously lacking in our leadership skill to match up with the combat of this kind of COVID19 pandemic in Nigeria. The importance of achieving scientific certainty and fostering shared purpose for predicting efficiently and producing of a viable vaccine, capable of exterminating the virus pandemic. A nation must have a body that can assess scientific research on climate change for decision makers.



Conclusion

In Nigeria society, there is a lively awareness of ethics in the constitution. The ethical obligations are there to influence the moral behaviours into the altruistic benefits of others in the society. The issues of “common good” are there to activate the life of every citizen as a duty to others (Wasserstrom, 1985:84) expresses this as thus, "that Kant suggests that duties to oneself are a precondition of duties to others”.

In given these premises, we then acknowledged a responsibility of a moral integrity that were not accomplished in the spread of COVID19 pandemic in Nigeria. This is sequel to the fact that in the current scenario of the threat of corona virus pandemic in Nigeria, that there is a lack of synergy of cooperation between the individuals and government in the conduct of public good. There is no synergy of conformity between the citizens and government in the common good to the threat to life. Everything is running parallel with the scenario of unchecked individualism, self seeking, corruption, ethnicism, ethno-religious sentiment and materialism to the greatest threat of this dreadful pandemic.

So, it is on a related note that in this paper, we tried to articulate the normative institutional structure that affect the combating of corona virus pandemic in Nigeria. We observed that the forces of the ethnic paternalism and personal rule paradigm are most of the negations to the enforcement of humanitarian paradigm to the people. It jettisons the realization of the common good in giving welfare to the people. It affects the smooth running of the environmental collaboration in combating the dreadful COVID19 virus in Nigeria.

My argument so far in this paper, trails the implications it brought in the confine of the existing political community. In this perspective, we must bridge the gap or lacuna of conflict that affects the realization of common good in the face of environmental crisis.

Thus, it is somewhat ironic to have us so deeply disturb over these problems without recourse to the existence of genuine causes of conflict. There is no particular or real significance, but we extol the virtue in the following as impediments to the imperatives of “common good” in budding corona virus pandemic in Nigeria. Seen in this light the issues of existing agreement, conflict of competing priorities, lack of the principles of equity in distribution of the COVID19 stimulus relief package to the states of federation are impediment to this crisis.

More so, there is need for provisions of scientific certainty for predictions and planning in the case of environmental crises, to show the implications of climate change in the cause of a possible flu pandemic in Nigeria. Really, it is on this trajectory that we will affirm or disallow the realization of authentic national development in Nigeria. If they are to be theoretically and practically fruitful in reconfiguration of good and authentic political community, then, variant issues of impediments to environmental crisis would be controlled properly in Nigeria.

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