Philosophical Education toward Democratization and Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria

Felix Okechukwu Ugwuozor[1]

[1] Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Foundation, University of Nigeria Nsukka, Nigeria

Correspondence: Felix Okechukwu Ugwuozor, Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Foundation, University of Nigeria Nsukka, P.M.B. 410001, Enugu State, Nigeria. Tel: 234-806-747-9873. E-mail: fugwuozo@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper examines Nigeria's democratization dilemmas and the imperatives of an educational framework against the backdrop of the Boko Haram insurgency. It identifies and connects the pattern, character and dynamics of the existing educational system. It also discusses the system's failure in calling for a new approach to overcome the prevailing dearth of civic order and the increasing spread of dissent groups. This new method is about acculturating Nigerian youth into a more civic culture, a Nigeria where citizens can live side by side with each other in peace." While examining both theoretical and practical characteristics of this new educational agenda, the paper especially examines the link between philosophical education and the development of a civic culture, trusting that such a connection suggests an approach to education that may assist future policy makers, educators, and teachers. Specific theoretical analysis of pedagogical and philosophical education contained here can further the current understanding of how philosophical education is likely to facilitate the development of the values, beliefs, and attitudes that generally underpin the operations of a civic society, developments desperately needed to address the problem of Boko Haram and the increasing spread of dissent groups in Nigeria.

Keywords: Boko Haram, civic society, culture, democracy, education, philosophy, P4C

1. Introduction

The experience of a democratically elected leadership in Nigeria in the last sixteen years marks a watershed in the nation's efforts to fashion a free society. Nevertheless, having witnessed Nigeria's political process for nearly two decades, I can attest that the political future of the country is in no way assured, especially given the way the ship of the state has been buffeted by regional and ethnic storms. More critically at this time, the nation's political process is hemmed in by the Boko Haram insurgency, a plague that offers the most clear evidence that the political future of the nation as a whole is open to question.

While some previous studies suggest improvement of institutional and structural designs as solutions to the pressing dangers, others have predicated the problems on boundary resolutions, espousing that solutions to these specific structural and institutional anomalies will automatically lead to a true democracy, and the resolution of Boko Haram insurgency (Demilitarization and Prospects for Democracy in Nigeria by Agbese, 1993 and Restructuring Nigeria Federalism by Suberu, 2001). However, with the current democratic experiment in Nigeria beset as it is, now may be the time to subject present realities and the democratic conundrum to an educational critique of major proportions. Such studies try to attack real and existing serious political issues in Nigeria, but at the same time, they detract from what I see as the critical issue regarding Nigeria's fledging political process and how to achieve lasting change, given the precarious state of affairs in which the country finds itself. "The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled" are words written by the Greek historian Plutarch that still ring true 2,000 years later. I believe they lend credence to my overarching premise, that democratization in Nigeria and, by extension, all efforts to address the issue of Boko Haram, may well have been rendered impotent by the dearth of democratic virtues in Nigeria, a cultural failing which accounts in no small way for the present-day ills. While some scholars might question such a linkage, I intend to make clear that any successful long-term process of democratic consolidation in leading the mind's battle against insurgency must integrate an effective educational stratagem that is an essential requirement for a civil society.

Nigeria's solution to its socio-political crisis will begin, I contend, by inculcating democratic values and virtues

in the next generation of Nigerians. This, of course, will mean a reconstruction of Nigeria's education from its traditionalist-didactic framework, a reform that will transform the school into "a place where citizens are created, inspired by a conception of education as preparation for democracy" (Estarellas, 2005, p. 144). Education needs to be seen here in its broader context, as a process toward building a democratic culture, not only in schools but by government policies addressing, at minimum, the economic needs of the people.

This paper takes up four major tasks. The first is to explore the theoretical foundations of an educational framework called philosophy for children (P4C), the literature as well as the conceptual framework. Next, I turn to the discussion of the P4C classroom "Community of Inquiry," which facilitates the development of cognitive, affective, social, political and ethical skills required to live in a democratic society. While there are many specific philosophically oriented education programs, the P4C community-of-inquiry approach shares relevant characteristics of the model of democratic-oriented curriculum that will serve adequately in a Nigerian context. It promises significant challenges and reforms to the current colonial-oriented education practices in Nigerian schools that obfuscate rather than provide solutions to the problems. Further, I discuss what makes P4C a relevant and effective pedagogical strategy and a paradigm of philosophical education which facilitates the developments of skills, tools to counter the spread of Nigeria's major political and social challenges, namely (a) the deepening lack of political culture, and (b) insurgency and violence often associated with the problems of ethnicity and political corruption.

Second, I discuss philosophy for children in light of the existing education in Nigeria. Precisely, I redefine the argument that democratization in Nigeria and the fight against Boko Haram require reforms of the existing educational system. I argue the pre-eminent worth of philosophy for children to the conditions of democracy and resolutions of insurgency in Nigeria. Specifically, I make a case for framing education in a new way, mounting a defense of the practice of philosophy for children as central to an adequate pursuit of a civil society.

A principal argument in this section is that the current educational practices, which reinforce Nigeria's socio-political issues, are unable to produce a vibrant civil society or to solve issues of Boko Haram. In addition to whatever merits Nigeria's present educational system might have, it is imperative that the "habits of the heart" are firmly implanted in the character of the Nigerian citizens to maintain a sustainable civic order (Patrick, 2003). One crucial concern is to establish the normative foundations for philosophy for children in Nigerian schools. Such an education will aim to inculcate the basic democratic skills and virtues needed for a civil society to flourish.

The central premise of the third section of my paper is that there is need for a revival in Nigerian education by rethinking its philosophical foundations. It derives, firstly, from the inadequacies of the traditional colonial theory of education, which, despite the strength of its social and political benefits, did little or nothing to equip the Nigerian people toward an authentic civic relationship and political process. The current educational system, despite its contribution in the areas of institutional and structural development, has also failed to acculturate the Nigerian people into a civic culture. Such a dearth of civic relationship and culture has led, in turn, to the growing political apathy clearly evidenced among Nigerian youth and to the formation of dissent groups.

Fourth, I discuss the prospect of philosophy for children in Nigeria. Drawing from the preceding discussions, particularly those regarding curriculum, I examine the future of such an educational framework in Nigeria and, in particular, how philosophical education can best socialize and engage future generations of Nigeria in the vital project of self-government. Such engagement, this section suggests, goes beyond the capabilities of simply reforming social and political institutions. Both, after all, are part of the bigger problem and cannot be relied on to promote civic values and virtues. We cannot, to borrow a Biblical analogy, put new wine into old wineskins for fear that the wineskins will rupture. No, the new wine of youth must be put into a new educational wineskin, not only to develop future Nigerian citizens who will actively engage the political process, but also to equip them with skills to manage conflicts. As Gutmann (1995) has acknowledged, "the realm of public [education] is a democratic government's single most powerful and legitimate means of teaching respect for reasonable political disagreement" (p. 579). Thus, the main thrust of this paper is to examine Nigeria's democratization dilemmas and the imperatives of an educational framework against the backdrop of the Boko Haram insurgency.

2. Method

2.1 Literature Search

I conducted a systematic literature search from several databases until February 2016. The MEDLINE, Scopus and Google databases were explored for scientific papers relating to Boko Haram, culture, democracy and Education in Nigeria, philosophy and P4C.

2.2 Selection Criteria

I included review papers and research articles relating to Boko Haram, culture, democracy and Education in Nigeria, philosophy and P4C.

2.3 Data Collection

To gather the required data for the qualitative analysis, two review authors were asked to independently appraise and get hold of data from the main reports.

3. Results

3.1 Theoretical Foundation of Philosophy for Children (P4C)

The pedagogy of philosophy for children is particularly associated with Matthew Lipman and Ann Sharp and is generally influenced by the pragmatism of John Dewey and Charles Pierce. Central to the heart of philosophy for children is the "Community of Inquiry" drawn largely from Charles Pierce's (1905) interactive discourse among scientists. Put another way, the P4C program takes up classroom practices known as the "Community of Inquiry," in which students are encouraged to engage in a dialogue (interaction among participants) to identify, problematize and clarify varied issues that matter to their daily life (philosophy as inquiry). As Wendy Turgeon (1998) pointed out, the key concepts that capture the dynamics of this social classroom setting include a demonstration of thinking that is caring (each member is supported and allowed to be an integral member of the community), creative (new ideas are sought out and encouraged) and critical (good reasons are expected for one's ideas and positions) [Others include] fallibilism (a willingness to be corrected and an acknowledgment of possible error).

Drawing from diverse philosophical, social, political and ethical traditions, philosophy for children aims to promote critical thinking, creative and caring thinking (Lipman, 1984). Borrowing specifically from the work of Vygotsky (1986) and Dewey (1958), P4C focuses on the development of the cognitive and social skills needed to live in a social and political environment. Ontologically, P4C assumes that human intelligence is not static, and as such, P4C's epistemic aim is neither to discover absolute and universal truth nor to construct a subjectively acceptable view, but rather to discover and create tentative, fallible views that make sense of the philosophical problems we currently face (Clinton, 2007). Thus, the underlying logic of P4C'smethod of open inquiry reasons that cultural perspectives yield a better reality and more open access to the complexities of the human heart (Turgeon, 1998). This disposition to open inquiry demarcates P4C essentially from the current traditional instructional method of education in Nigeria. While traditional instructions focus largely on acquisition of a predigested educational product, P4C views knowledge as a product of social interdependency and of social interaction (Dewey, 1938; Freire, 1985; Lipman, 1984), and while the former is founded on a system of education that privileges an atomistic and individualistic conception of knowledge (Freire, 1970), the latter derives from a system oriented toward shared collaborative knowledge and learning.

Substantively, the core methodology of P4C educational strategy eschews teacher-fronted, whole-class teaching. What is interesting is that the P4C educative paradigm is structured around problem-posing, inquiry-based pedagogy, and the curricula are based on the integrated individual, social and political life of students. The P4C pedagogical structure is grounded on the belief that classroom engagement (community of inquiry) has the potential to enable students to tap into one another's experience to support the development of transferable social skills. Engaged participation (community of inquiry) will enable students to tap into one another's social and political experiences, particularly those having significance and value, that matter to their lives and that will shape their future. Such engaged participation holds the possibility of facilitating thinking, developing a sense of working together among students, and of strengthening social bonds. As Burgh (2003) argues, such a classroom, which draws on the life experiences of the students, is more likely to prepare students as future citizens in a democracy. A commitment to developing students' capacity to think, reason and collaborate with others lies at the core, arguably, of P4C educative pedagogy. Cam (2004), in his work Twenty Thinking Tools, elaborates on the societal benefits:

This kind of collaborative inquiry encourages the social communication and mutual recognition of interests that Dewey identifies with a democratic way of life. Such an engagement develops the social and intellectual dispositions and capacities needed for active citizenship, while liberating the powers of the individual. That is to say, in learning to think together in these ways, students acquire the forms of regard and the practices of social exchange that help to sustain an open society at the same time as they learn to think for themselves (p. 8). Both Burgh (2003) and Cam (2004) posit that this aspect of education, which connects learning and democracy, is needed to boost civic literacy, while other scholars view it as a way to advance students toward active

membership in a democratic society (Boyer, 1990; Dewey, 1916; Freire, 1973; Lipman, 1987; Sharp, 1991). Indeed, for the interest of the society in general and Nigerian society in particular, this connection is crucial, as it is the role of education to help students develop attitudes, habits and dispositions required for autonomous, active, democratic citizenship (Burgh & Davey, 2004, pp. 331-338). The hallmark of P4C is the strong commitment to critical inquiry, fairness, social justice, and other democratic virtues, which go beyond the mere testing and grading of students. As Lipman (2003) stated, a commitment to developing students' capacity to think, to reason, to care, and to create are the core concerns of P4C.

3.2 Philosophical Education P4C versus the Current Education in Nigeria

The advantages as well as the drawbacks of the current system of education in Nigeria have been elaborated elsewhere (Anih, 2000; Dike, 2001; Solarin, 1972). To be fair, the educational system in Nigeria, four decades after independence, has made strides in the areas of school infrastructure, efforts to provide mass education, and increasing the number of graduates from both secondary and university education. Nevertheless, the quality of education has yet to be improved markedly. In his State of Education in Nigeria, Dike (2001) acknowledged as much. While many would say that increased funding and improved teacher quality are needed, more and more are starting to concede that the problems go deeper, and in fact, may be rooted in the philosophy of education itself (Anih, 2000; Fafunwa, 1978).

The problems of quality are tied largely to the inherited colonial structure and method of instruction (Fafunwa, 1990; Solarin, 1972), the curriculum essentially still similar to the colonial manipulation of education as a tool for processing graduates to address labor needs or to give students more specialized study for more competitive positions, but with no overarching civic aim. The recent Commission on Nigerian National Empowerment and Development Strategy (2005) pointed out that the central issue with the nation's educational system is that it emphasizes theoretical knowledge at the expense of practical knowledge.

Beyond that, some critics of Nigeria's current educational system have pointed to a lack of internal coherence in curricula, and hardly any plan for interconnected learning (Anih, 2000; Dike, 2005; Fafunwa, 1978; Solarin, 1972). In the State of Education in Nigeria, Dike (2001) writes of this growing tendency. Also contributing to the fragmentation is inadequate teacher preparation and an emphasis on theoretical learning and test-oriented curriculum, strategies that create artificial boundaries between scholarship, learning and life (Fafunwa, 1978). Such a disconnect between the classroom and the real world goes far in explaining the lack of eagerness in participating in the nation's political process among Nigerian youth. Education's lack of socio-political relevancy to students (Kymlicka, 1989; Taylor, 1996) may also be a contributing factor to much of the violence and upsurge in dissent among young Nigerians, right at the time when schools could be empowering students on how to effectively formulate their own version of a good life (Moses, 2004). Such an antiquated educational system obviously is unlikely to address the problem of differences in the student's (citizen's) perception of values deriving from social conditions of culture and ethnicity. This problem has compounded the issues of ethnic, cultural and religious differences that often generate violence and formation of tribal insurgent groups that have remained the bane of Nigeria's civil society for too long.

By not addressing cultural differences, current educational practices foster, among diverse populations, ethnocentric and parochial attitudes that frustrate every effort toward social unity or what John Rawls (2005) calls an overlapping consensus, which means a disposition that ought to be exhibited by adherents of different compressive doctrines and the commitment that ought to be common to the reasonable fragment of each of the main fragments of doctrines in pluralistic societies. Other philosophers, including Thomas Aquinas, have argued that the creation of an overlapping consensus is a positive good in itself. Both theoretical and practical educational frameworks that engage the different students of the various cultural groups as a democratic community are needed, frameworks that allow students to understand their ethnic and cultural identities, and at the same time, look beyond individual differences and work toward a shared vision of the common good.

On this score, the advantage goes to P4C, a radical alternative to the content-based curriculum (Burgh, 2003), focusing more on the process than on the product of learning (Lipman & Sharp, 1993) and refusing to rely on the test-oriented methods currently practiced in most schools, institutions in which rote learning accentuates the development of extrinsic rather than intrinsic skill (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993; Apple, 1999; Freire, 1978; Kohn, 1996).

P4C offers just as many challenges to the teacher as to the system itself, positioning the instructor clearly as facilitator in shared inquiry rather than as information giver (Feuerstein et al., 1980; Freire, 1973). One result is that both teachers and students play active roles in the learning process. Rather than present the educational process as the accumulation of discrete facts, teachers are called on to have students critically analyze, interpret

and integrate what they have learned, to transform and apply their understandings to new situations, new problems, and new environments.

3.3 Philosophical Education and Civic Culture: Socialization toward Integrated Living

As previously discussed, the P4C classroom enables students to reflect and critically evaluate their own "beliefs, attitudes, and unreflective opinions, about their ethnic, cultural or religious heritage irrespective of where they came from, or of how adults, from their more sophisticated perspectives, might judge them" (Splitter & Sharp 1995, p. 169). Instead of reproducing some set of proper attitudes that privileges "impulses and desires over thinking" (Dewey, 1989, p. 64), the P4C classroom engages students in the habit of considering the consequences of their actions, actions which take into account one's prevailing attitudes and beliefs about life, as well as the student's cultural makeup and socio-political experiences, all of which are looked on as educationally valuable. As Sharp and Splitter (1995) pointed out, these experiences and opinions are "raw ingredients" of inquiry, rather than something to be overcome through education.

Where else does this more open-ended approach to learning lead? A commitment to inquiry and encouragement of dialogic engagement represents a significant challenge to the legacy of "direct instruction" in Nigerian schools, but one that would bear much fruit. As students are engaged in the dynamic process within the community of inquiry, they master a repertoire of understanding, skills and habits of the mind that affirm their capacity not just to work with others but to see things from the point of view of those that are different from them. They also develop a sense of taking ownership of their actions (Lipman, 1983; Sharp, 1988). In these ways and more, a classroom that encourages inquiry among students is conducive to collaborative living and nation-building.

Lipman (1983, 1985, 2001, 2005) and Sharp (1984, 1991) identify this process of student engagement as a key to developing a critical mind, a sense of self-awareness and the ability of expressing oneself, building both a sense of autonomy and a sense of common purpose that is essential for establishing a civil society. To understand their interests and be able to shape their environment, students must understand who they are, become conscious of their environment and have the capacity to express their ideas (Freire, 1978; Giroux, 1983; Lipman, 1995). The communal framework of the P4C classroom is built to boost student achievement in ways that the present apparatus cannot. P4C offers greater latitude for the development of self-awareness and self-expression more than a top-down traditional classroom, one that is likely to provoke students to reflect upon their perspectives, experiences, and character and to develop a sense of themselves as unique and distinct from others, as well as similar to and connected to others (Splitter & Sharp, 1995, p. 32).

Is it possible that traditional classrooms could allow for some degree of self-awareness and self-expression through its own practices? Perhaps, but having self-awareness and being able to express yourself are not sufficient to achieve autonomy required to live side by side in peace with others. On a deeper level, P4C has the potential to promote critical awareness, to develop individuals who are aware of their environment, who can express themselves and who have the ability and willingness to reconstruct themselves and their environment (Bleazby, 2001, p. 44). In essence, P4C promotes autonomy and development of individuals (agencies), who have the capacity to revise and transform previously accepted beliefs (Dewey, 1966, p. 305).

The increasing ethnic and religious violence in Nigeria and the menace of Boko Haram have led to the realization that unreflective beliefs, opinions and assumptions of both students and citizens are often too subjective, too ill-founded and too inflexible to facilitate autonomous interaction among the nation's diverse configuration on this crisis. While Nigeria's ethnic and regional issues, largely influenced by "entrenched dispositions" (Dewey, 1989, p. 133), are unlikely to promote conscious effort toward collaboration, nation-building or democracy, the philosophical dimension of P4C could provide students with both critical and social tools needed to articulate and understand the problems of ethnicity, of religion and culture. The P4C classroom provides students the opportunity to share their perspectives and opinions with one another but it also helps students problematize their unreflective assumptions, beliefs, and opinions, a process in which they come to understand that their own ideas are dependent upon other people who can support or impede them (Bleazby, 2001, p. 44). An emphasis on empathy, open-mindedness, self-correction, reasonableness, and care for one's ideas and those of others are cultivated as beneficial to promoting procedures of inquiry (Bleazby, 2001).

Through the community of inquiry, P4C has the potential to provide students with a dispositional attitude to remain open-minded, to change their views when the evidence warrants it and to transform their opinions and assumptions into a more comprehensive world-view, through reflective and self-correcting dialogue, that is, through the activity of the community of inquiry (Lipman, 1992; Sharp, 1991; Splitter & Sharp, 1995). As students engage in dialogue in the community of inquiry, they come to clarify their once uninvestigated beliefs about their culture, religion and life in general. In such open-minded and empathetic atmosphere, students come

to understand how abstract values relate to decisions in their lives; they learn to appreciate others, while also assuming accountability for themselves, their complex identities and their conduct (Bleazby, 2001; Lipman, 1983).

Clearly, P4C shares unique philosophical educational agendas through the generic initiatives such as critical thinking, emphasis on participation and attention to the development of social and political skills needed to live in a civil society. Although students may not be directly involved in the decision-making process within the mainstream sections of the society, the increasing attention to participation in inquiry on social issues give students a "voice" in evaluating their social and political conditions. A P4C classroom within Nigerian schools will likely reinforce the notion of students as stakeholders within the school and outside in society and will likely increase their collaborative skills and participation in the political process. When students have the reassurance that their voice on social and political issues bears some significance, they will likely show more commitment in the political process.

Another enduring and relevant practice within the P4C pedagogy is the shared commitment it fosters among students and teachers and the moral imperative it provides. These elements are crucial in understanding P4C as a practical philosophical educational strategy. As students engage in inquiry on social and cultural issues that matter to their lives, they learn how different their individual ideas are on these issues, but at the same time, they discover shared concerns and a sense of shared commitment in addressing these issues, the equivalent of a moral voice that scholars of community theory of education say compels students to pursue their commitment, and to become self-managing (Sergiovanni, 1996, p. 58).

The ideas of shared commitment and moral imperatives have the potential to revolutionize participation in the political process as students come of age as citizens. P4C, with its requirements of trust and openness, is uniquely suited instructional strategy in civic living. While students do indeed bring some form of moral consciousness into the classroom, from home and elsewhere, and even though every educational activity carries moral overtones (Sergiovanni, 1996, p. 58), moral responsibility under the current system in Nigeria is hardly conceived in terms of shared commitment among citizens but on self-development linked to ethnic and regional allegiances.

P4C burrows much deeper, rolling up its sleeves to achieve the commitment for a common agenda, such as the diffusing of ethnic sentiments in favor of a more inclusive vision that "encompasses critical engagement and democratic participation" (Frazer, 1997, p. 19). Make no mistake, P4C recognizes the importance of the individual, self-interested mode in every citizen as well, but it contends that the ability of the acting self to make worthwhile personal choices is deeply affected by how well they are anchored within a sound community and sustained by a firm moral and emotive personal underpinning, in other words, by a community they perceive as theirs, as a "We," rather than as something imposed, a restraining "They" (Etzioni, 1988).

One of the most effective weapons in the fight for promoting democratic values and disarming Boko Haram in Nigeria is nonviolent in nature. The problems of lack of participation in the political process, violence and terrorism have plagued Nigeria too long for us as a nation not to use every means possible to stop the bloodshed and bullying. An educational agenda that prioritizes the development of dispositional attitudes such as the ability to think critically, to reflect, to care and to work with others must be at the heart of the nation's school curricula. The best way to "domesticate" often unchecked, ethnic-driven sentiments involves equipping students with alternative social and political consciousness, teaching them the appropriate way to act in relation to others. Critics such as the proponents of the liberal individualistic educational agenda warn that shared commitment and living in harmony with others carries a negative side, that it frustrates individual autonomy and leads to mindless conformity and a compromise of one's personal identity while stifling personal initiative. Others argue that P4C is simply not a viable alternative given the nature of the indigenous African culture.

While it is easy to think that P4C is inconsistent with the idea of an individual thinking autonomously, that is not the reality, and here, we must be sure not to confuse the P4C educational framework with a prearranged community agenda, the kind that rarely brings about significant change (Kahne & Westheimer, 1996). As Bleazby (2001) delineates, the prearranged community agenda by itself reinforces and perpetuates the social problems it is intended to solve (p. 12). For instance, most Nigerian students are often required to join their ethnic groups in the acts of violence against other purported enemies such as those who share different ethnic, cultural or religious orientations. However, students are not provided with the opportunity to investigate the personal, social, economic, political and environmental conditions that warranted such violence, nor are they given the tools to pursue a peaceful solution to such problems. Consequently, students are unlikely to develop a critical attitude or the autonomy needed to resist the demands of this kind of prearranged community agenda.

The motives behind this type of agenda are politically driven, and mostly orchestrated by the political elite to maintain the status quo. You might say that a prearranged community resembles the knowledge transmission methodology of traditional classrooms, which encourages students to be uncritical thinkers, dependent on others for knowledge and education. Both (prearranged community agenda and traditional-classroom knowledge transmission) strategies are not likely to promote civic or democratic living.

The framework of community of inquiry is not an either-or, but allows persons to think for themselves while at the same time taking into account guidance from communal specifications regarding their responsibilities (Dewey, 1938; Lipman, 1987). As to whether P4C is a viable option within the African indigenous culture, it is important to state that the idea of individuals who can think for themselves but with guidance from others is not foreign to (African) Nigerian traditional indigenous educational methods and ways of life. To understand this better, we must study the African social and educative structure, particularly before colonialism to appreciate how feasible the P4C democratic educational strategy is within the (African) Nigerian context. Conceptually, the structure of African societies can be examined in two different ways: first, the traditional communalistic social and education structures and values that existed before colonial inversion; second, the colonial social structure, that is, values that emerged from Africa's colonial experience (See Ekeh, 1978; Osaghae, 1998; Suberu, 2001). For want of space, I will address the former and leave the latter for further research.

The African indigenous education focuses largely on integrating individuals in the African social environment, using oral transmission to grow a sense of communal responsibility. The goal for children also includes having them grow into autonomous and rational adults (Ikuenobe, 2005. Notice how, just as with P4C, education in African indigenous culture incorporates communal processes and principles, a project, which demands reliance on tradition and placing oneself as part of a community. Just as with the P4C agenda, the moral reasoning in indigenous African culture (education) also assumes the idea of human autonomy, in addition to the idea that one's rationality can be shaped, cultivated, and nurtured by the community in which one is raised (Ikuenobe, 2005, p. 14). Both educational frameworks emphasize personal as well as community developments. The underlying reasoning in African indigenous culture involves a rational process of justifying an action by harmonizing the individual's interests with those of their community. By demanding that people be sympathetic to other people's interests and welfare, such moral reasoning or consciousness (Habermas, 1998) holds the potential of enhancing people's lives by virtue of encouraging them to live harmoniously in a community.

Overall, the African indigenous education, as well as P4C, place significant emphasis on communal obligation, based on appreciating differences–cultures, ethnicity, gender, race, etc. As indicated, such emphasis is ignored by the current colonially oriented education system in Nigeria. Thus, there are fundamental differences and conflicts between the African ways of life and the principle underlying the nation's current socio-political and educational structure. These differences indicate that we cannot solve the nation's ethnic conflicts and Boko Haram issues by maintaining the current system of education, which aids the forces of division. So the validity of adopting P4C in Nigeria is supported by the fact that the indigenous African culture in its educational methods of transmission is coherent and consistent with P4C's community of inquiry values.

In summary, while the traditional classroom is likely to reinforce and reproduce attitudes that fosters inaction and lack of participation in the political process, P4C provides the pedagogical procedures and content needed to facilitate a critical mind, openness to different points of view, ability to participate and collaborate with others, and achievement of various social skills needed for a person to live in a civil society.

4. Discussion

4.1 Prospects of P4C in Nigeria (Africa)

Is P4C a viable practice in any context, or would it foist non-African values on the African people? The existing educational system entered during the half-century colonial era, and continues to remain in force, even though its subject-specific, result-oriented approach is foreign to Africa. As for P4C, it is certainly true that its philosophical underpinnings, and such ideas as dialogue, transformative learning theory, and teaching for critical reflective thinking, are concepts developed outside Nigeria, particularly by Dewey (1916), Freire (1970), and Lipman et al. (1980).

Are these ideas no more relevant to the Nigerian context than its residual colonial system? It is not so simple, according to some scholars. Lipman (1984), the founder of this program, believes that even though P4C was developed in the United States, its pedagogical tools are boundless and are not limited to any particular cultural context. In addition to the claim that philosophy is the foundation of learning (Lipman, 1987; Sharp, 1991), and that it is of inestimable value to learners of all ages; a strong case can be made that the pedagogies of P4C could be useful to Nigerian students in their efforts to deal with the massive changes going on in the world.

Since its introduction in 1990, the growth of the P4C program in Nigerian schools supports these claims. The program was formally launched at the Institute of Teacher Education, Enugu, Nigeria, following an international conference on philosophy in schools. Although it initially confronted a number of challenges, including the systemic inertia of Nigerian politics, lack of funding, and less than promising dispositions on the part of teachers and students, the program was successfully planted in Nigerian soil, rocky as it might be. Despite the lack of policy support to make P4C part of the teacher training development program across the country, both north and south, more than 30 schools in southeastern Nigeria have integrated P4C academic as their core curriculum agenda.

That is not all. With permission from the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC), Professor Stan Anih, the coordinator and director of philosophy for children programs in Nigeria, has adapted and translated the original philosophical novels and manuals by Matthew Lipman to suit the Nigerian (Africa) context and to make the P4C curriculum culture-friendly. In addition, he has written various philosophical novels, in the form of children's stories that are appropriate to students' abilities and grades, as a trigger for philosophical classroom discussions. Influenced by Lipman's (1980) ideas that the existing traditional literature tends to "pre-empt the [students'] imagination" (p. 35), Professor Anih and his coworkers have developed and incorporated provocative African tales, folklores, stories, and philosophical manuals designed to stimulate students' thinking about fairness, truth, moral goodness, gender relations, individuality, commitment, and friendship. As with Lipman (1980), his assumption is that inquiry, particularly ethnical inquiry, is "ethical craft" and that students are "apprentices in that craft" (Lipman 1980, p. 139).

It should not be surprising that while the P4C programs in America and in Nigeria share similar theoretical, ideological, and even epistemological frameworks, the methodology in Nigeria has still not shaken off the top-down educational framework. However, a more positive reading would point out that P4C has positioned itself somewhere between didacticism and facilitation in the educational framework. Moreover, there is growing evidence that P4C in schools that use the program has progressed greatly to align with a progressive, student-centered approach. As Anih (1993) has pointed out, the Institute of Teacher Education and more than 30 schools in Nigeria have all been transformed since P4C was added to their curricula. "There is overwhelming evidence of the difference that using philosophy can make in the classroom learning and in school where philosophy is not part of the curricula" (p. 67).

It would be imprudent to judge Nigeria by the same yardstick as America, Canada, Britain, and Australia; democracies where the practice is wide-ranging and flourishing, especially due to the prescriptive national curriculum at primary and secondary schools in the former. Nevertheless, the thinking-skills agenda has now become a permanent feature of education discourse among teachers and schools in the schools in Southeastern Nigeria where P4C has been introduced. Recent conferences and workshops examining themes of leadership, citizenship, democracy, and philosophy for children (Anih, 1989) that were sponsored by the Board of Education in three states of Eastern Nigeria in collaboration with the Institute of Teacher Education were successful, as demonstrated by the more than 250 educators from five states that participated in the seminars and workshops. What's more, there is evidence that P4C is being creatively and enthusiastically adopted by an increasing number of schools and educators. Clearly, P4C holds the prospect of bringing about future educational reforms in Nigeria by emphasizing dialogue and critical thinking rather than rote learning.

Optimism over its growth in Nigeria notwithstanding, P4C certainly faces a number of challenges. In addition to systemic inertia that was previously mentioned, difficulties come in the form of individuals, particularly in the corridors of political power, who readily view new ideas as suspect and harmful to traditional methods, a Nigerian sociocultural atmosphere and school system that retain legacies of patriarchal, hierarchical, and authoritarian administrative practices, all of which act as deterrents to student-centered learning and inquiry-centered learning.

Experience has shown that teachers teach the way they were taught. As Ellison (1988) argues, the overall structure of an educational process greatly conditions what is learned, not only in terms of cognition, but in attitudinal development as well. In fact, the educational structures, processes, and teacher–learner relationships frequently condition long-term learning outcomes more than the content of the course (p. 211). To break the systemic inertia within the present-day school system would require a complete change in the way teachers are trained. As Sergiovanni (1996) writes, "Changing the culture of institutions is the real agenda" (p. 171). Adopting that "real agenda" will demand determination driven by a high level of ingenuity and persistence. To implement a change, and to bring radical innovation, calls for flexibility, courage, and creativity. As a 2015 Manhattanville College Keynote citing Wolfgang Furniss, points out: One can buy almost anything today. We can buy ideas, buy knowledge, buy materials and resources, even buy (the use of) money. The only thing one

cannot buy is the courage, commitment and persistence that are required to implement creative ideas (p. 8).

Also weighing on the prospects for P4C in Nigeria are the characteristic attitudes of the (African) Nigerian culture, behavior that tends to avoid practices or actions that make one appear to be weak or a failure—"the concealment of vulnerability," as Elmer (1993) puts it. It is not normal for someone to openly discuss his or her distorted assumptions, since that would make one appear vulnerable. Such a practice is not instinctive to Africans and can pose a barrier to the growth of the inquiry-centered approach to education. Then there is the tendency of the African to respect and defer to authorities. Developing critical, reflective, and dialogue-centered dispositions as forms of learning seem to go against cultural tendencies that call for respect and submission to authorities and hierarchical structures. It will take time to change the general African mindset that some experiences cannot be questioned, that a critical mind is too unbridled, or that, going even more extreme, the inquisitive child could, in fact, be possessed by a demon.

What could speed the process of change? Look no farther than P4C, with its promise of serving as an antidote to the prevailing curricula based on the "banking" conception of education that reinforces antidemocratic attitudes and norms. As delineated earlier, P4C can facilitate Nigerian students' ability to see Nigeria and the world anew, and to name, define, and recreate their community for more peaceful living, an educational renaissance that is likely to counter the entrenched authoritarian culture and unreflective attitudes and mindless conformity, prevailing attitudes that do not merely lead to conflicts with others but to actions that can destabilize an entire nation. P4C can change education in Nigeria, a crucial element that Mandela (2011) thought to be the most powerful weapon, which you can choose to change the world.

This work does not lend itself to a summation in a smooth, compact framework. The work will have been more robust if it highlights some possible logical solutions to Nigeria's socio-political trend, wracked as it has been by the increasing dearth of political culture among the youth and the rising number of dissident groups. To the extent that the social, political, and institutional reforms are acknowledged, the tendency has been to call broadly and generally for greater and more sustainable socio-political and institutional reforms. It is clear in this work, however, that the effectiveness of such reforms will be narrow unless they are complemented by educational practices that dismantle the deeply entrenched parochial or ethnic mental attitudes and beliefs that remain the bane of the Nigeria's political process. To put it bluntly, institutional reform agendas alone will not produce the fundamental changes in attitude that are necessary for Nigerian people to live in peace with each other or live in a democratic society if you will. This underscores the need to go beyond merely procedural, institutional, or physical solutions toward programs that are transformative—that will change the underpinning logic and structures of political actions or behavior among the Nigerian people. Certainly, the implication of this is that the transformation of Nigeria's political culture will vigorously decelerate unless efforts include institutional as well as pedagogical and educational reforms. The educational analysis approach of this work is a first step in establishing an understanding of the role of philosophical education as a project for democracy in Nigeria, the fight against Boko Haram and other dissident groups, and in breaking away from the merely structural or institutional reforms toward those that will be transformative. The contribution of this work is that it highlights the dynamics of Nigeria's political trends, and the negative impact of the prevailing dearth of political culture; that of insurgent groups, which is reinforced by current educational practices. To this end, it identifies the broad as well as the specific pedagogical imperatives likely to facilitate the development of political culture: the values, beliefs, and attitudes, which generally underpin the operation of a democratic society, and are particularly needed for Nigerians to live side by side in a relatively peaceful atmosphere.

Acknowledgments

References

Agbese, P. O. (1993). Demilitarization and prospects for democracy in Nigeria. *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*, *22*(3), 315-327.

Anih, S. (1989). *The crucified nation. Prospects of Ecumenical Education in Nigeria*. Enugu, Nigeria: Snaap.

Apple, M. W. (1999). *Official Knowledge: Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. London: Routledge.

Aronowitz, S., & Giroux, H. A. (1993). *Education Still Under Siege*. South Hadley, MA: Bergin-Garvey.

Bleazby, J. (2001). Autonomy, Democratic Community, and Citizenship in Philosophy for Children: Dewey and Philosophy for Children's Rejection of the Individual. *Analytic Teaching, 26*, 30-52.

Boyer, E. L. (1990). Civic education for responsible citizens. *Educational Leadership*, *48*(3), 4-7.

Burgh, G. (2003). Democratic Education: Aligning Curriculum, Pedagogy, Assessment and School Governance. In P. Cam (Ed.), *Philosophy, Democracy and Education*. Korean National Commission for UNESCO, Seoul.

Burgh, G., & Davey, S. (2004, 6-8 December). *Learning for Democracy: Caring, dialogue and deliberative communities*. Paper presented at the Education and Social Action Conference, Centre for Popular Education, University of Technology, Sydney.

Bush, K. D., & Saltarelli, D. (Eds.). (2000). *The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict: Toward a Peace building Education for Children*. Florence, Italy: Innocent Research Centre.

Cam, P. (2006). *20 Thinking Tools: Collaborative Inquiry for the Classroom*. Camberwell, Victoria: ACER Press.

Clinton, G. (2007). *Pragmatism, Constructivism and Socratic Objectivity: The Pragmatist Epistemic Aim of Philosophy for Children*. Paper presented at the Philosophy of Education Society, Australia.

Delanty, G. (2003). Citizenship as a Learning Process: Disciplinary Citizenship versus Cultural Citizenship. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, *22*, 597-605. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0260137032000138158

Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*. New York: Free Press.

Dewey, J. (1927). *The Public and Its Problems*. Denver, CO: Swallow.

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and Education*. New York: Collier.

Dewey, J. (1941). *Education Today*. London: Allyn & Unwin.

Dewey, J. (2004). *Democracy and Education*. New York: Dover.

Dike, O. K. (1956). *An Introduction to the Economic and Political History of Nigeria*. Oxford, England: Clarendon.

Dike, O. K. (1962). *Report on the Review of the Educational System in Eastern Nigeria*. Enugu, Nigeria: Government Printers.

Dike, V. (2001). *The State of Education in Nigeria and Health of the Nation*. Retrieved from http://www.afbis.com/analysis/education10204234737.htm

Ekeh, P. (1975). Colonialism and the Two Republics in Africa. A Theoretical Statement. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, *17*, 91-111. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0010417500007659

Ellison, E. J. (1988). Designing Leadership Education. *Missiology: An International Review, 16*, 201-215.

Elmer, D. (1993). *Cross-cultural Conflict Building Relationships for Effective Ministry*. Downers Grove, Il: InterVarsity Press.

Estarellas, P. C. (2005). *Democracy, Culture and Education in Ecuador: Philosophical Education as a Means to Promote a Culture of Democracy*. Montclair, NJ: Montclair State University.

Etzioni, A. (1988). *The Moral Dimension*. New York: Free Press.

Fafunwa, A. B. (1967). *New Perspectives in African Education*. London, England: Macmillan.

Fafunwa, A. B. (1972). Memoirs of a Nigerian minister of education. In A. Adaralegbe (Ed.), *A Philosophy for Nigeria Education: Report of the National Curriculum Conference* (p. 69). Lagos, Nigeria: Heinemann.

Fafunwa, A. B. (1974). *History of Education in Nigeria*. London: Allen & Unwin.

Fafunwa, A. B. (1975). Education in the Mother Tongue: A Nigerian Experiment. The six-year (Yoruba Medium) Primary Education Project at the University of Ife, Nigeria. *West African Journal of Education*, *19*, 213-227.

Fafunwa, A. B. (1982). African Education in Perspective. In A. B. Fafunwa, & J. U. Aisiku (Eds.), *Education in Africa: A Comparative Survey* (pp. 14-22). London: Allen & Unwin.

Fafunwa, B. (1994). *History of Education in Nigeria*. London: Allen & Unwin.

Feuerstein, R., Tannenbaum, A., & Klein, P. (Eds.). (1980). *Mediated Learning Experience*. Tel-Aviv, Israel: Freund.

Frazer, J. (1997). *Reading, Writing Justices: School Reforms as if Democracy Matters*. New York: SUNY Press.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Seabury.

Freire, P. (1973). *Education for Critical Consciousness*. New York: Continuum.

Freire, P. (1976). *Education: The Practice of Freedom*. London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperatives.

Freire, P. (1985). *The Politics of Education*. New York: Bergin & Garvey. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-17771-4

Freire, P. (1993). *Pedagogy of the City*. New York: Continuum.

Freire, P., & Giroux, H. (1989). Pedagogy, Popular Culture and Public Life. In H. Giroux, & R. Simon (Eds.), *Popular Culture: Schooling and Everyday Life*. Gramby, MA: Bergin & Garvey.

Freire, P., & Macedo, D. (1987). *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World*. Praeger: Westport, Connecticut.

Giroux, H. (1983). *Theory and Resistance in Education and Society. A Pedagogy for the Opposition.* South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey.

Giroux, H. A. (1992). Educational Leadership and the Crisis of Democratic Government. *Educational Researcher, 21*, 4-11. http://dx.doi.org/10.3102/0013189X021004004

Giroux, H. A. (2001). *Stealing Innocence: Corporate Culture's War on Children*. New York: Palgrave Press.

Giroux, H. A. (2002). Democracy, Freedom, and Justice after September 11th: Rethinking the Role of Educators and the Politics of Schooling. *Teachers College Record*, *104*(6), 1138-1162. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1467-9620.00199

Gutmann, A. (1995). Civic education and social diversity. *Ethics*, *105*, 557-579. http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/293727

Habermas, J. (1998). *The Inclusion of the Other (C. Cronin & P.D. Greiff)*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Habermas, J., (1990). *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*. Cambridge, England: Polity Press.

Idowu, W. (2004). Ethnicity, Ethnicism and Citizenship: Philosophical Reflection on African Experience. *Journal of Social Sciences*, *8*, 45-58.

Ikuenobe, P. (2005). *Ethnicity, Colonialism, and Democracy as an Agent of Globalization*. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press.

Kahne, J., & Westheimer, J. (1996). In the Service of What? The Politics of Service Learning. *Phi Delta Kappa*, *77*, 592-597.

Kenty-Drane, J. L. (2002). *What is the Purpose of Education in American Society: A Contribution from the Sociology of Education, Educational Theory*. Boston: Routledge.

Kohn, A. (1996). *Beyond Discipline: From Compliance to Community.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Kuhn, T. (1962). *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kymlicka, W. (1999). Education for Citizenship. In J. M. Halstead, & T. H. McLaughlin (Eds.), *Education in Morality* (pp. 79-102). London: Routledge.

Lipman, M. (1984). The Cultivation of Reasoning through Philosophy. *Educational Leadership*, *46*, 29-34.

Lipman, M. (1988). *Philosophy Goes to School*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Lipman, M. (1997). Thinking in Community. *Inquiry:Critical Thinking Across the Disciplines*, *16*(4), 6-21.

Lipman, M. (1998). Teaching Students to Think Reasonably: Some Findings of the Philosophy for Children Program. *Clearing House*, *71*, 277-280. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00098659809602723

Lipman, M. (2003). *Thinking in Education* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511840272

Lipman, M. et al. (1980). *Writing: How and Why: An Instructional Manual to Accompany Suki*. Upper Montclair, NJ: Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children, Montclair State College.

MacIntyre, L. (Reporter). (2002, January 23). Scandal of the Century [Television series episode]. In H. Cashore (Producer), *The fifth estate*. Toronto, Canada: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

Mandela, N. (2011). *Nelson Mandela by himself: The authorized book of quotations*. South Africa: MacMillan Press.

Manhattanville College. (June 3, 2015). *Keynote, Unlocking Your Leadership Potential: 4C's to Success.*

Retrieved from http://pegasus-global.com/assets/news/Manhattanville-College-Keynote-2015-06.pdf

McLuhan, M. (1970a). *Culture is our business*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

McLuhan, M. (1970b). *From cliche to archetype*. New York, NY: Viking Press.

Mellers, B. A. (2000). Choice and the relative pleasure of consequences. *Psychological Bulletin*, *126*, 910-924. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.126.6.910

Moses, M. S. (1997). Multicultural Education as Fostering Autonomy. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, *16*, 373-388. http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/A:1004957802575

Osaghae, E. (1998). *Crippled Giant: Nigeria Since Independence*. London: Hurst.

Patrick, J. J. (2003). *Essential elements of education for democracy. What are they and should they be at the core of the curriculum in schools?* Paper presented in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Calabasas, CA: Center for Civic Education. Retrieved from http://www.civiced.org/pdfs/EEOEforDemocracy.pdf

Pierce, C. (1965). *Collected papers*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap.

Postman, N. (1979). *Teaching as a conserving activity*. New York, NY: Delacorte Press.

Postman, N. (1985). *Amusing ourselves to death: Public discourse in the age of show business*. New York, NY: Viking.

Rawls, J. (2005). *Political Liberalism*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Semenak, S. (1995, December 28). Feeling right at home: Government residence eschews traditional rules. *Montreal Gazette*, p. A4.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (1996). *Leadership for School house*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Sharp, A. M. (1984). Philosophical Teaching as Moral Education. *Journal of Moral Education*, *13*, 3-8. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0305724840130101

Sharp, A. M. (1991). The Community of Inquiry: Education for Democracy. *Thinking: The Journal of Philosophy for Children,* 9(2), 31-37. http://dx.doi.org/10.5840/thinking19919236

Splitter, L., & Sharp, A. (1995). *Teaching for Better Thinking*. Melbourne: ACER.

Strong, E. K. Jr., & Uhrbrock, R. S. (1923). Bibliography on job analysis. In L. Outhwaite (Series Ed.), *Personnel Research Series: Vol. 1. Job analysis and the curriculum* (pp. 140-146). http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/10762-000

Suberu, R. (2001). *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria*. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Turgeon, W. (1998). *Metaphysical Horizon of Philosophy for Children*. Paper presented at the 20th World Congress of Philosophy, Boston. http://dx.doi.org/10.5840/thinking19981424

Udogu, E. (1999). The Issue of Ethnicity and Democratization in Africa: Toward the Millennium. *Journal of Black Studies*, *29*, 790-808. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/002193479902900603

Udogu, E. I. (2001). Ethnicity and Theory in African Politics. In E. I. Udogu (Ed.), *The Issue of Political Ethnicity in Africa* (pp. 13-34). Aldershot, England: Ashgate.

Vygotsky, L. (1986). *Thoughts and Language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Copyrights