



Obiora Ike and the Challenge of Development in Africa

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Abstract

African philosophers such as Olusegun Oladipo, Lansana Kieta, Kwama Nkrumah and Kanu Ikechukwu proposed to revisit the semantic of the word “development”. From their viewpoint, instead of seeing economic growth as the DNA of development, we should actualize the notion as rather aiming at the universalities of cultures, which could ensure progress and development. Further aspects such as a) the worldview of the Bantu, b) the distribution of resources in large national giant nations as Nigeria, and c) faith-based organization and development with Obiora Ike, justify a closer reading of the concept. It shows that people-oriented development is better adapted to Africa than abstract concepts, which may not include strong reference to the African traditions and belief systems. Sustainable and integrative development should include all major faith groups, which are all part of development, understood as a social and economic investment with social responsibility and faith.

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1. Introduction

A pressing view about Africa's development is the emphasis laid on its evolving nature and peculiarity in recent times. However, in the documentation of the development history of the world, Africa has been tacitly ignored: the majority of Western sociologists, historians, anthropologists, and scholars of other disciplines have held numerous derogatory notions about Africa. This falsehood was compounded by some Westerners and even trained African scholars, who relegated Africa to the back door of development and history. Flowing from this line of thought is a reflective articulation of the developmental analysis of the contemporary African Philosophers in this third world nomenclature like Kwasi Wiredu, Olusegun Oladipo, Lansana Keita, Kwame Nkrumah and more scholars who have made tremendous contributions and constructive insights on the subject of Africa's development.

This study begins by elucidating the background to development in Africa. It goes further to establish an understanding of the thoughts of some contemporary African Philosophers and their approaches to development; this is because they all have their understanding of development from different perspectives. Thus, they need to know their point de parte before any of their thoughts can be understood holistically. Going further, the paper intends to examine the various Obiora Ike's notions of development in the African milieu. This study also attempts to synthesize the challenges to Africa's development, thereby explaining various factors that have caused underdevelopment in Africa.

This paper reiterates that due to these challenges of development, African philosophers have more work to do to truncate underdevelopment, radical individualism, corruption, moral setbacks and so many ills that we experience today. It notes that, for development to be functional and actively incorporated in the African value system, some factors that are indigenous and peculiar to us as a people, such as the people's role in development, good leadership, an affinity for educational refinement, moral development, religious tolerance, security, to mention but a few, must be leveraged to attain the much-desired progress.

2. African Philosophical perspective of development

The At the dawn of African Philosophy as a professional discipline, there emerged the ethno-philosophical school of thought which opined that African philosophy is the world-view of the African people. In response to their viewpoint, the professionals or those we may call the African logico-positivist school, which comprise those who underwent western scholarship in attaining their studies in the philosophical enterprise were of the opinion that there is a need for a new philosophy in Africa. In the words of Olusegun Oladipo, who was a member of the analytic approach, “the need has been generated by the socio-economic transition which is taking place in Africa today. Of particular significance in this respect is the role of industrialization as an agent of modernization and development and its impact on contemporary African Societies.”¹

In the face of this paradigm shift and changes that are taking place, “particularly the tension between the various elements which define the nature of modern African societies, philosophy can no longer be a communal undertaking; it should now be “a matter of individual responsibility.”² This individual approach should focus on theories that can be generated to address the problems of the day within the context of providing principles and ideas that can proffer solutions to the myriads of the social, political and economic quagmire that have overwhelmed the entire landscape of the African continent. For Kwasi Wiredu:

“ The new Philosophy for Africa must be critical and reconstructive. It should be one which is capable of inculcating in a large percentage of the African population those habits of mind such habits of exactitude and rigour in thinking,

¹ Olusegun Oladipo. 1996, *Philosophy and an African Experience: The Contributions of Kwasi Wiredu*, Ibadan: Hope Publications, 16.

² Olusegun Oladipo, *Philosophy and an African Experience*, 16.

the pursuit of a systematic coherence and the experimental approach. (Wiredu 1980: IX)³

Wiredu is advocating a new philosophy that will be at the service of modernization and bring about the desired positive change in intellectual habits, which will lead to a profound quest for development in contemporary African Society.

Therefore, African Philosophers are not philosophers who live in Africa, they are those, whether Africans or not, who concern themselves with the African experience revolving around culture, lifestyle, heritage, language and all that concerns Africans. The new philosophy needs to be sensitive to the specific plight of the African people. It should be sensitive to the specifics of the African situation and experience in his activities.

Whereas the pioneer African philosophers encountered one another on meta-philosophical issues about African Philosophy, their successors in their way and originality, give a novel response to those issues and ended up introducing innovative frameworks, entirely fresh perspectives, new themes and solutions.⁴ It is evident that the concept of development has been a philosophical problem and that different meanings have been ascribed to development by different philosophers from different epochs in the history of philosophy, be it in individual or social spheres.⁵

In view of this clarion call to examine specific issues and problems confronting the African continent, contemporary African Philosophers like; Kwasi Wiredu, Olusegun Oladipo, Lansana Kieta, Kwama Nkrumah, Kanu Ikechukwu and many philosophers attempted to rethink the initial problems that confronted their pioneer counterparts. We shall pay particular attention

³ Kwasi Wiredu, 1980. *Philosophy and an African Culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, IX

⁴ Asiegbu, F. Martins. "Contemporary African Philosophy: Emergent issues and Challenges". *Ogirisi: a New Journal of African Studies* Vol 12 (2016). [www.http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/og.v12i1.1](http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/og.v12i1.1)

⁵ Gregory Ogbenika, 2020. *African Philosophy and the Quest for Development in Africa*, Benin City: Mindex Press Limited, 10.

to the views of Obiora Ike on development; in his honour, this paper is being written.

3. Contemporary Africa philosophers on development

The concept of development in Africa is also shared by many philosophers. For most of them, culture is not so much so differentiated from development. This emanates from the position that holds the culture as the totality of a certain group of people. Thus, if development were to take place or conceived, it will be done bearing in mind, certain people and their culture. Philosophers and other scholars that have contributed in this regard include the following.

Kwasi Wiredu

As a Universalist, *Wiredu* is of the position of the synchronization of values and cultures. He recommends that ‘trans-acculturation will introduce more and more diversity and, by the same token, more and more unity and richness into the lives of all peoples, as the different people, as the different cultures of the world get to know one another more and more.’⁶ Hence, acculturation is a way of development for every culture; for it is through this that the universality of the virtues of a culture is found and united with that of another culture.

He cites the example of Westerners enjoying African music and vice versa, to show that acculturation does not harm any side. This is a sharp contrast to the opinion that commercial globalization will bring greater profits to the Western world and very little to the Third world i.e. African countries. He posits that the African project on development has two main challenges: self-definition and development. While self-definition is identified in blending the positive aspects of African culture with other cultures, that of development is

⁶ Ogbenika Gregory, “African Philosophy and the Quest for Development in Africa”, 70.

found in the cultivation of the rational outlook of life, and scientific and technical advancement.⁷

Lansana Keita

In his work, “Philosophy and Development”, Keita observes that the term ‘development’ is associated mainly with expansion by a process of growth. However, the position he takes is the constant expansion of the underdeveloped societies to be like the developed ones. Yet, he opines that in Africa, the problem is the correct theories in areas of technological, agricultural and economical development.⁸ The colonization of Africa by the Europeans was relative retardation in Africa’s development in contrast to the theory of *Kwasi Wiredu* which postulates that the universalities of cultures ensure progress and development. For him, the struggle for Independence was a way out of the economic exploitation and political subservience of the Colonial masters.

Lansana Keita Ubuntu development theory

This development theory is based saliently on the moral worldview of the Bantu people. This development theory has been applied to a variety of problems in Africa. They include; the political reconciliation in South Africa, the post-apartheid society, to stand as a basis for public policy.⁹ A reoccurring maxim among the Bantu people is that *a person is a person through other persons*; this worldview of the Bantu is divided into 3 facets: ontological personhood, normative personhood and the means to achieve normative personhood.

⁷ Ogbenika Gregory, op cit.75.

⁸ Lansana Keita, 2011. “Philosophy and Development: On the Problematic African Development- a Diachronic Analysis” in *Philosophy and African Development: Theory and Practice*, Lansana Keita (Ed.). Dakar: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 115-138.

⁹ Motsamai Molefe, “Ubuntu and Development: An African Conception of Development” in *Africa Today*, Vol. 66, No 1, Fall Oct. 2019, 96-115.

Kwame Nkrumah

Kwame Nkrumah’s theory of development is based on the empirical study of Europe’s economic development.¹⁰ This theory involved a manner of communal African relationships with each other to aid politically and economically. His theory of development encompassed both the political aspect and the economic aspects. He observes: “The existence of separate monetary zones is harming the growth of trade in Africa. It is leading to illegal trade and revenue losses in many countries and making African Common Market difficult.”¹¹ The overlapping of economic activities and political ones showed the rein with which the colonial controlled the colonized African states and of course, thwarted their development. His idea of development was more of a socialistic ideology. His socialist model, however attractive to some schools of thought in the sense that, it empowered some of the weak and smaller imperial states with major tasks of development in the form of harnessing capital for rapid growth in the areas of technological development and infrastructure, and universal education.

Anthony Ikechukwu Kanu

In his research paper titled ‘African Philosophy and the Issue of Development’, Kanu brings to the fore the effect of philosophy on National development. He posited various perspective points through which philosophy expresses its capacity beyond abstract reflection to concrete and solid historical involvement. They are Mental Decolonization; Critique of Culture; Evaluation of Ideologies; Promotion of Higher Order Thinking; Promotion of values and Promotion of National Unity.¹² Using the case of Nigeria’s independence to expiate the process of development that was envisioned to be attained, the

¹⁰ Cf. Keita, “Philosophy and Development,” 115-138

¹¹ Kwame Nkrumah, *Neocolonialism: The Last stage of Imperialism*, (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd), 1965, 227.

¹² Kanu Ikechukwu Anthony, “African Philosophy and the Issue of National Development” *Igwwebuike: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities*, Vol. 3, No. 6, Sept. 2017, 19f.

first and second development plans focused on agriculture, industry, transportation and manpower development. The third focused on the distribution of resources, a sign indicating developmental progress. Within the periscope of two decades, Nigeria had developed the overall picture of being the black giant of Africa.

Obiora Ike on faith-based organization and development

The fathers of the Second Vatican Council were quite clear and succinct in making it obvious that the human person should be the centre of any form of development. Development should be for man and not man for development. In the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, it states thus: “Man is the author, the centre and the end of all social and economic life. Economic developments must remain under man’s direction” (Gaudium et Spes, n. 63) According to the Council Fathers in another part of the document:

“ The economy is at the service of man. Not man at the service of the economy. Therefore, all economics must be within the bounds of moral order. This refers to the network of relations involving production, distribution and consumption. They need to be made as personal as possible because they are links of service between the brotherhoods of all people.¹³

In line with the directive of the Council Fathers, Obiora Ike is of the view that development should be people-centred. According to him, “People matter. In empowering people, we build upon our most valuable resource. For us, development must be people-centred and the poor, be empowered to participate in their development.”¹⁴

¹³ Gaudium et Spes, No. 64.

¹⁴ Obiora Ike and Ndidi Nnoli Edozien. 2003. *Development is People, Business is Ethics*, Enugu: Catholic Institute for Development, Justice and Peace (CIDJAP), 24.

Obiora sees investments as a part of development, especially when it is ethically driven. He also identified the potentialities of faith traditions in investments. In his words, “It is well established that major institutional faiths are amongst the largest investors in the world. In recent years, this investing power has been used in several ways: – Disinvestment; – Pro-active ethical investment; – Impact investing”¹⁵

They embark on these ethically inclined investments by putting their beliefs and values into the mission through project development and businesses that have investment consequences.¹⁶ In embarking on these projects and businesses, there is a lot of progress and transformation that goes on in the life of the individual, community, the ecclesial community, and the society at large. As he puts it:

“ Finance is only a part of the contribution faiths are already making based on their beliefs and values. The reason that faith can be so powerful – for good, and sometimes for bad – is its personal and community transformative power – which money can sometimes, but not always, assist.”¹⁷

To buttress this role of faith traditions in investments, he referred to a document produced by an Alliance of Religion and conservation to the effect that faith-based organizations are consistent in investments that have led to profound transformation and development in the society. In their findings, it was discovered that:

“ The Faiths own about 8% of the habitable land surface – about 5% of all commercial forests; run, manage or

¹⁵ Obiora Ike, “Religions for Development: Funding and implementing the SDGs by cooperation between Governments, UN Agencies and faith Communities” A power point presentation at the International Conference ‘for Christian investors and Development Agencies’ FaithInvest-Building bridges, held in Geneva, on 22 January, 2019.

¹⁶ Obiora Ike, 2019. “Religions for Development: Funding and implementing the SDGs by cooperation between Governments, UN Agencies and faith Communities.”

¹⁷ Obiora Ike, “Religions for Development”, op. cit.

founded around half of all schools worldwide and in sub-Saharan Africa 64% of all schools; The Faiths have more TV and Radio stations between them than the whole of the EU and produce more books, newspapers and journals than any other networks. They also own an estimated 10% of the world's total financial investment.”¹⁸

In addition, he acknowledged that faith groups are key actors in implementing the sustainable development goals. This they do through small communities, social groups, religious leaders of communities, CEOs and staff of faith-inspired NGOs. They play a significant and diverse role, working in all aspects of human existence and experience. Religious leaders are trusted more often than those in governments as they use their core beliefs, and values and use a language that is accessible filled with compassion, love and trust. They are the best service providers in diverse areas of human endeavours. He also identified other areas in which faith groups have been useful and are still useful, like being reliable fundraisers for societal transformation, as well being well respected in conflict resolutions and complementing governments in social action. He opined that integral development is the way of the future. He stressed this opinion by using the position of African Theologians' statement of 1989 as follows:

“ While in the past, development was principally understood in terms of economic progress, we now have realised and become convinced that appropriate progress should be integral to development. Such development must cater for the whole human person, and encompass the people of the nation as a whole: by developing their spiritual, religious, social, moral, economic, cultural, political, mental, educational, physical and environmental dimensions of life”.¹⁹

¹⁸ Cf. Martin Palmer and Pippa Mose (Compilers) Published in October 2017 by the Alliance of Religions and Conservation, Zug Guidelines on the topic of “Faith-consistent investing”, 5-6.

¹⁹ African Theologians Position Statement, 4th National Theological Week, Katigondo, Uganda Jan. 1989.

Considering this approach to development, the faith groups often challenge national, multinational, public and private corporations to do well ethically. By so doing, “Corporations have the potential to meet societal needs that no entity—especially one that is taxpayer-funded—can address.”²⁰ For him, faith groups can be involved in business and investment and be socially responsible. The craze to maximize profit in businesses and investments should not be a hindrance to the long-term human advantage to individuals and society.

Obiora Ike has been able to put his core values and beliefs into practice. Through the Catholic Institute of Development, Justice and Peace (CIDJAP) which he founded on the 4th of October 1986, he has touched the lives of so many within and outside the Church. Through this institute, he was able to bring to bear, the role of faith-based organizations in the life of the individual and the society. He did not only utilize this platform for the Church alone but, also in the larger society. He was able to mediate conflict resolutions to ensure justice and peace. He established a bank, Umuchinemere Community Bank, with soft loans and minimal interest for individuals and small-scale enterprises to thrive and grow. He also established farms, hospitals, and real estate, through which products and services are rendered not just for the sake of investment, but with a profound consciousness for social responsibility and action. He is a development sustainer, with the aim of individual and societal transformation, progress, social responsibility sustainable and integral development. As a scholar, teacher, writer and professor, he has authored so many books. As a priest of the Most High God, he has ministered the word of God and sacraments to numerous people, within and outside Nigeria. He is the Executive Director of Globethics.net, Geneva, Switzerland.

4. Challenges of development in Africa

It is no longer news that there are a lot of hindrances to all the efforts that are being made to ensure development in the contemporary African States. These encumbrances are so numerous to mention, but to further the purpose of this

²⁰ Obiora Ike. 2003. *Development is people; Business is Ethics*, CIDJAP Publications, Enugu, 7.

paper; it will examine some of these obstacles to development in modern African states as follows:

a. Colonization and dependence

Before colonization, Africans were seen as the land of darkness, the home of monkeys that don't have the capacity to think. The Europeans came to Africa to help further their aims and personal goals. They enslaved the populace and extorted them. Colonization of Africa distorted and retarded the space and tempo of cultural growth and the trend of civilization in Africa and this created a gap between the benefitting nations and the victims of this practice.

Mimiko asserts that the social fabric was completely devastated and a new culture of violence was implanted. Traditional African systems of conflict resolution were destroyed and, in their places, nothing was given. The democratic process, rudimentary though it was, with great potential as accompanies every human institution, was brutally uprooted and replaced by the authoritarianism of colonialism. A new crop of elites was created, nurtured, and weaned on the altar of violence and colonialism armed with the structures of the modern state to continue to carry out the art and act of subjugation of the mass of the people in the service of colonialism.

In this context, one could say civilization was just sugar-coated domination in practice, forcing new cultures onto the old ones. It dismantled indigenous institutions and imposed foreign rule on the people. This had a huge impact on the economy, Africa was primarily just made to produce raw materials for the development of Europe while Africa halted or reduced in development. They produced what was needed less and left what was needed most. This caused an unequal exchange in the balance of trade. Also, the social status of Africa faced many other challenges. These challenges included the individualism of families which goes against the usual African norm of relating with one another. Rapid urbanization has led to a large shift from rural to urban causing a displacement of large segments of the society. This also caused the proficiency of African languages to decline in the continent because of the introduction of western culture and civilization. This effect is even more prominent in our contemporary society as we see many of the youths losing

the value of our culture and their apathy towards it. Many of them cannot speak the local languages of Africa but have rather adopted the foreign language as their mother tongue. Another challenge was the slave trade, which was a key factor in the underdevelopment of Africa and the development of Europe as noted by Walter Rodney. This coupled together with colonization stunted the growth of Africa as a whole.

Kwame Gyekye notes that “it is, of course, a well-known fact that the social order of any African society or community is communal.” According to Gyekye, communalism is a doctrine that the group (society) constitutes the focus of the individual. That is to say that the emphasis here is on the wider success of the society rather than an individual. It was with the advent of western philosophy and colonization that the Africans turned from the doctrine and moved towards the doctrine of individualism. The People no longer lived for the community, but rather in the community for themselves without regard or support for one’s neighbours. As a result, we find various conflicts like tribalism and racism in our country because we have turned from communal living to becoming just an individual in society. The act has spread throughout various parts of the system that runs the government, which has, in turn, led to the corruption that currently ravages the world. It was in trying to make a compromise between both that destabilized the African community. Gyekye asserts that community life is natural to man, therefore, the kind of society that permits him the full realization of his capabilities and aspirations is communal. This is also in line with the “Ujamaa” philosophy proposed by Julius Nyerere.

b. Corruption and poverty

Based on the above fact, the government doesn’t run as it ought to because the minds of individuals that run the states in Africa have been crowded by greed and selfishness. The thoughts of individuals no longer focus on the highest good of the community but personal gains. This corruption has led to poverty, unemployment slow infrastructural and technological development because resources are channelled towards individual and other vague purposes.

c. The African concept of time

Kanu Ikechukwu Anthony in one of his articles on the study of John Mbiti's conception of African time, it was noted that "that the African concept of time is key to understanding the African ontology, their beliefs, practices, attitudes and the general way of life of an African."²¹ This shows that the view on time for an African is by far different from that of the Europeans. Mbiti defines the African concept of time as "a composition of events which have occurred, those that are taking place now and those which are immediately to occur."²² This whole period or time frame is about six months and 2 years at most. He says that they are wrapped around events, that is, time finds its meaning in the events that take place. The Africans place greater importance on what is to happen rather than the mathematical time it is to happen. For example, one might say "I will take my bath at sunset." While the Europeans would work at a specific time, the Africans would say what is important is that the event (bathing) took place regardless, of whether it was two hours late, or 3 hours earlier. This is where we get the expression "no African time", this is because they don't emphasize mechanical time but the event that would take place. If one were to attend any function in Africa, the phrase would most likely be heard "no African time." That is, no late coming. Thus, an African might arrive at a party scheduled for 3 pm at 6 pm. Although Mbiti did a splendid job in his analysis of African time, it does not put Africa in any advantageous position. This concept rather shows how Africans limit themselves. To them, the future isn't important, they only think of what has happened, and what is happening and never think deep into their future.²³ Note that, "the metaphorical concept of African time is one in which tardiness, lousiness and a total

²¹ Kanu, Ikechukwu Anthony, OSA, "J. S. Mbiti's African Concept of Time and the Problem of Development" presented at the ,International Conference on Humanities, Literature and Management (ICHLM'15) Jan. 9-10, 2015 Dubai (UAE).

²² John Mbiti. 1969. *African Religions and Philosophy*, Ibadan: Heinemann educational books Ltd. 17.

²³ Izu, M. O. 2010. "The Problematic of African time". *Uche: Journal of the Department of Philosophy*, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. 16. 19-38

disregard for schedules and programs is made out to characterize all Africans.”²⁴ This implies Africans are poor timekeepers and managers. They often speak of how Europe undeveloped them and never how they continue to underdevelop themselves but clinging to the past and not looking towards the future with countless opportunities. While many may disagree with Mbiti, it is evident that one of the challenges to development in Africa is our nonchalant attitude to time as noted by Kanu²⁵ To foster even more development in Africa, she must change her mentality toward time and its management. Having identified some of the barriers to development in Africa, the paper will now examine the tasks that these impediments pose for the Contemporary African philosopher.

5. The tasks of contemporary African philosophers

In the words of Kwame Nkrumah, “our philosophy must find its weapons in the environment and living conditions of African people. It is from these conditions that the intellectual content of our philosophy must be created.”²⁶ Thus, another way to interpret Nkrumah’s position is: what should the contemporary African philosophers concern themselves, considering the present realities in today’s Africa? What are these realities? This inexhaustible list would include political instability, primordial conflicts, technological backwardness, the unfavourable international climate in all its ramifications, and

²⁴ Izu, M. O. 2010. The Problematic of African time, 19-38, op. cit.

²⁵ Kanu, Ikechukwu Anthony, OSA, J. S. Mbiti’s African Concept of Time and the Problem of Development, *ibid.*, 4.

²⁶ Cf. Matteo Grilli, “A Historiographical Overview of Nkrumah’s Ideology and Foreign Policy”. 2019. *Southern Journal for Contemporary History* 44(2). 29-54.

so on.²⁷ It is from all these, that the task of the contemporary African Philosopher emanates; what are the tasks of the contemporary African philosophers?

a. Proving the existence of African philosophy

One of the primary tasks of contemporary African philosophers is to actually do African philosophy and then to create better knowledge and understanding of African philosophy. It is after this is done that these philosophers now go into the striking realities of Africa in this contemporary time.

In the contemporary world, there are so many striking realities of Africa. Some out of the inexhaustible list of these realities are; technological backwardness, political instability, the unfavourable international climate in all its ramifications, primordial conflicts and so on. Philosophy, on its own, proffers solutions to existing problems in the world, African philosophy too, is not left out and this is also one of the tasks of African philosophers. They are to find the solutions; they do this by, first finding out the problems or the challenges of Africa in the present time and then, with the help of their knowledge of philosophy, finding solutions.

b. Tackling the problem of leadership

In some parts of Africa, we find out that the best brains are not the ones in power and this leads to bad governance and the poor economy. It is, therefore, the task of contemporary African philosophers to probe into these problems and proffer solutions to the existing problems of leadership, that are ravaging Africa. They can do this by reviewing and reevaluating the political, social, and economic ideologies introduced to us by Europeans and adapting them to the African cultural setting.

²⁷ Ademowo, Adeyemi Johnson. "African Philosophers and the Quest for Development in Contemporary Africa". IFRI Research 2013.

c. Awakening of moral consciousness

In Africa and even many other parts of the world, moral values are taken for granted. People no longer have regard or respect for their moral values and this is one of the biting problems in Africa. We find, in Africa, that the society is not growing in character as well as developing its laws in moral consciousness because the human person in the society has not even attained some of these moral values. There is decay in the moral consciousness in the contemporary human person which may have been caused by various factors ranging from lack of religious and moral education in our school, lack of proper family formation and overemphasis on the prosperity gospel in our Churches, at the expense of moral and spiritual conversion.

The African philosophers are saddled with the responsibility of exposing these moral ills and emphasising the need for attaining these moral values. They should be able to project philosophical theories that appreciate the values of hard work, dedication, resilience development, and personal responsibility.²⁸ Essentially, however, we must acknowledge that the core duty of contemporary philosophers is to expose “the contradiction” with which the man in African society is entangled with. By so doing, he or she would be able to “cancel and negate one-sidedness in a more comprehensive system of thought”²⁹

Having carefully examined the Task of Contemporary African philosophers, what still stands is that if African philosophers proffer solutions to most of these existential problems, and these solutions cannot be implemented by Africans, it will come to nothing and there will be nothing to show for it.

d. Obiora Ike on African tradition and development

African Philosophers are to study the traditional belief system of the people because development is people-oriented according to Obiora Ike. This is in

²⁸ Ademowo Adeyemi Johnson, “African Philosophers and the Quest for Development in Contemporary Africa”

²⁹ Horkheimer, M. 1972. “The Social Function of Philosopher” in his *Critical Theory*, Trans. by M. J. O’Connell et al. New York: the Seabury Press. 94. 6.

line with the teaching of the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council that, the human person should be the centre and focus of development. There are so many aspects of the people that need to be considered in the process of putting them at the forefront of development. One important aspect is the belief system of the people. As Peter Bodunrin puts it, the African philosopher, cannot deliberately ignore the study of the traditional belief system of his people. He sees the study of traditional societies as the most probable answer to the current state of philosophy, whereby it is said to be impoverished.³⁰

Following Ike Obiora's approach to the issue of Africa's development, that consciousness of the fact that development should be people-oriented; should also lead to the awareness of the significant role faith groups can play in investment with social responsibility. Social responsibility in the sense of the interest of the common good should be the primary concern of such investment, not profit maximization. Caution must be the watchword in the area of investment to avoid a situation in which instead of investment being done for the well being of the people, the people will be sacrificed on the altar of investment. This may occur when the emphasis on the investment is on profit maximization, not for societal good and harmony. We must not lose cognizance of his advocacy for sustainable and integrative development. Sustainable in the sense of continuity and consistency in development for the sake of the people. Integrative indicates that developmental efforts are not just being in one aspect of life, but an all-inclusive and all-embracing approach to development.

6. Conclusion

The study of development by contemporary African philosophers has revealed the great trouble facing the African people and by extension, the world at large. Anthony Kanu in understanding the point of departure of John Mbiti in his "notion of time," explains that the African concept of time is key to

³⁰ Egbunu, Fidelis Eleojo "A Review of the Question of African Philosophy," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, no. 11, June 2013, 141.

understanding African ontology, their beliefs, practices, attitudes and the general way of life of an African. Thus, for development to be evident, some of these views by Obiora Ike on development like being peoples’ oriented, sustainable, integrative coupled with the role of faith groups in investment with social responsibility and some other salient views by other African philosophers on development as identified, should be actively put into perspective for developmental goals. Following Anthony Kanu’s submission on how to foster development in Africa, there should be a total change of mentality on time and its management. The idea of an “African Time” that is derogatory and retrogressive should be jettisoned for a more purposeful human and sustainable development which was well articulated in Obiora Ike’s notion of development. The emphasis on a people-oriented development implies that those being developed should be carried along and be partners in their development. This is in contrast with new trends of neocolonial and neo imperialistic tendencies that were strongly condemned by Lansana Keita, as a possible clog in the wheel of progress. This corroborates Wiredu’s idea of acculturation which goes along with the principles of self-definition and development which he recognizes as catalysts to Africa’s development. The major difference between Obiora Ike’s idea of development and that of Wiredu is, that while Wiredu believes in humanism as a way to accomplish this goal of development, Obiora Ike strongly believes in the role of Faith organizations in the advancement of Africa in our contemporary Milieu. This paper does not claim a monopoly of having exhausted all that Obiora Ike postulated as far as development is concerned. These ideas are presented so that we can celebrate his immense contributions to knowledge and spur further research into his developmental accomplishment, both in the Church and the society at large.

Finally, it must also be emphasized that the human person and the human society need the divine reality and the enthronement of the proper moral order that Obiora mentioned in his idea of development, to develop fully and holistically, otherwise, the continent of Africa will remain underdeveloped, and as such, it can be a Herculean task for sustainable and even development.

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8. Short biography

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