Multicultural Education in Nigeria

Festus E. Obiakor

Nigeria is the most populous Black nation in the world and richest nation in Africa. It has multiple tribes, cultures, languages, religions, and values. It gained its independence from British colonial rule on October 1, 1960. Even with independence, colonialism has had aftereffects that have exacerbated sociocultural maladies such as tribalism, religious fanaticism, massive corruption, military coups, and devastating conflicts (like the 1967–1970 Biafra-Nigeria War, which took millions of lives). While education is a powerful tool in socioeconomic and political developments, it has not been philosophically changed to respond to the cultural, linguistic, and religious diversities of Nigeria's citizenry. Can an adequate educational foundation be instituted without valuing the multicultural strengths of Nigeria? Can Nigeria's progress be advanced without paradigm and power shifts in the education of all students? Can Nigerians' freedoms be equalized without respect for all tribes? Nigeria must foster multicultural education to advance itself at all levels.

Works on the barbarism of slavery and colonialism have tended to emphasize the draining of human and natural resources from Black people in and out of Africa, and rightly so.[1] But while the slave "masters" and colonialists must take their share of the blame, it is time African scholars started interrogating ourselves and looking deeper into the scary happenings of postcolonial eras.[2] If we assume, as we should, that Africans are as intelligent as (or even more intelligent than) the enslavers and colonialists, then we can no longer condone the exoneration of African peoples and their leaders from the barbaric ways that they have treated or continue to treat their fellow citizens just because they belong to different regions, tribes, and religions. It is imperative that we examine the intricacies and nuances of democracy. Recognizing basic human values and how we respond to differences is crucial in promoting multicultural understanding and education.[3] Failing to appreciate the deeper benefits of multicultural valuing and education has been very costly to African nations like Nigeria.

Nigeria should be a country in a hurry; but it is not. It gained its independence from England on October 1, 1960, almost sixty-five years ago. Colonial rule brought the paternalistic tools of supremacy, domination, and victimization. In addition, it created some perennial problems that permeated and continue to haunt Nigeria's national developments in education, economics, politics, religion,

© 2024 by Festus E. Obiakor
Published under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) license
https://doi.org/10.1162/daed_a_02113

and society at large. Since independence, there have been five military coups in Nigeria, and each coup had falsely promised to save the country from corruption and demise. Between 1966 and 1999, dictatorial military governments forcefully ruled Nigeria, save for a brief civilian return to democracy of the Second Republic from 1979–1983. Instead of saving Nigeria, military governments lavishly rewarded themselves while brutalizing their people and mismanaging and destroying the country. Sadly, some of these military leaders (such as Generals Olusegun Obasanjo and Muhammadu Buhari) returned to rule the country during the civilian democratic era, thus perpetuating Nigeria's persistent problems.

With all its human and natural resources, Nigeria is the richest nation in Africa and most populous Black nation in the world. It has more than 225 million people living in thirty-six states, in addition to Abuja, the capital city. Its magnanimous stature in Africa and the world should have built and cemented Nigeria's reputation as an exemplary multicultural "African Giant." Instead, Nigeria has consistently floundered in mediocrity, given the intense hate among regions, tribes, religions, and peoples.[4] The crux of the matter is that Nigeria has failed as a multicultural nation to value and take advantage of all its people's gifts and talents; and its leaders have not been visionary in managing and taking advantage of its resources.[5] This devaluing of multicultural education has forced Nigerian citizens to personally export their gifts and talents to more welcoming parts of the world, thereby brain-draining Nigeria and enriching other lands. In this essay, I highlight this critical issue and suggest ways that Nigeria can foster multicultural valuing and education to advance itself at all levels.

Several quagmires have prevented Nigeria from becoming a multicultural nation. The country continues to produce leaders who consistently use their regions, tribes, and religions as weapons while rhetorically talking about national unity. Nigerians are dealing with a rising misery index, driven by the country's worsening sociocultural problems, which in turn fuel other national ills and intensify the deep sense of dissatisfaction. Despite their abundant natural resources, Nigeria and other African nations are struggling with extreme poverty, with an estimated 422 million Africans expected to be living in poverty by 2025. At the same time, the Western world is debating the misery index and its interrelatedness to equality or inequality, or to the benefits or dilemmas of competitive markets.[6] All the while, the National Bureau of Statistics of Nigeria in 2022 revealed that 130 million Nigerians are already living in poverty: that is, 63 percent of the nation's population.[7] Given such gloomy data, it is no surprise that Nigerians feel disenfranchised, disadvantaged, disillusioned, and demeaned – leading to widespread disarray and disunity.

Many of Nigeria's problems have stemmed from colonial rule and domination. Typically, building national character was not the intent of the colonial mas-

ters and their political tools, who skillfully played cat and mouse with those they ruled.[8] Education scholar Udo Bude reaches similar conclusions in his work on "The Adaptation Concept in British Colonial Education."[9] And historian Adiele E. Afigbo found that when the colonial masters designed educational programs in their works with Indigenes and, later, nationalists, their goal was to purposely divide and conquer Nigerians and formulate transactional relationships based on their own arbitrary interests.[10] Of course, it was comfortable and easy for the colonial leaders to work with the majority Hausa tribe's men and women who live homogenously in the northern parts of Nigeria. Rather than concentrate on their enhancement programs, colonial leaders narrowly focused on the fact that "Hausa people have a homogenized culture and are known for raising cattle, growing crops, and trading."[11] Such homogeneity has served them well in politics, but ironically has limited them from exploring the wonders of the multiculturalism and multidimensionality of Nigeria. However, after almost sixty-five years of independence, it is unproductive to blame all of Nigeria's dilemmas today on colonialism.

Officially, Nigeria is a secular nation with no official state religion. However, the country has significant religious diversity. Nigeria is home to some of the world's largest Christian and Muslim populations – with Christians living mostly in the South and Muslims living mostly in the North. In addition, Indigenous religions, including atheistic practices, are most visible among Yoruba and Ibo ethnicities in the South.[12] Unfortunately, religious fundamentalism in Nigeria has had far-reaching and devastating effects. For instance, it is no secret that some religions do not view women as equal to men. And most Indigenous religions embed superstitions, taboos, and assumptions in their practices. Some examples of these beliefs include: twins are evil and must be killed, people with disabilities are cursed by God, and disabilities are retributions for families' past and current evils.[13] Generally, these beliefs carry with them some retrogressive voices and actions that are antithetical to societal and multicultural progressive views. One can reasonably argue that these beliefs are not rooted in colonialism and that colonialism actually helped to eradicate some odd inhumane traditions.

Yet based on religious plurality in Nigeria, the question remains why its leaders have failed to use such diversities to build a multicultural nation where all people are valued and appreciated. Rather, some political leaders have harped on religion to build political influence and victimize their fellow citizens who practice other faiths.

Nigeria's leaders and their actions have rarely reflected national unity, even though they talk about it. For a country that is so naturally favored with different cultures and languages, multicultural efforts have frequently been based solely in rhetoric. In 2020, journalists Peris Walubengo and Adrianna Simwa acknowledged that "Nigeria is a linguistically diverse country. English is the official lan-

guage, and the people speak over 500 ethnic languages."[14] In addition, "the country has 371 tribes. Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, and Fulani are major tribes in Nigeria, and they have the most influence on the course of the development of the country."[15] Each tribe prides itself on rigidly protecting its cultural values. This cultural protectionism leads to rigidity that, in turn, creates boundaries that magnify the venom of tribalism, nepotism, religious bigotry, dogmatism, and fanaticism. As a consequence, the country has many unwritten and unproductive rules even as it professes to be multiethnic and multicultural – some Northern leaders and citizens would rather recruit or hire a white expatriate or a Black Muslim from another nation than recruit or hire an Igbo or a Yoruba Christian fellow citizen, even if the Nigerian candidate is more qualified. As it stands, most Nigerians are skeptical of people from regions, states, tribes, and religions other than their own. Even within individual groups, skepticism and distrust are prevalent and make it difficult to formulate policies in nondiscriminatory ways. With such cultural and religious rigidities, multicultural education has become a far-fetched ideal in Nigeria.

Today, Nigeria is experiencing a very dangerous brain drain that has the potential to economically devastate the nation. Nigerians are leaving the country and venturing into the Western world. In fact, Nigerians are even migrating to other less developed African nations for work opportunities. Clearly, people from Nigeria are not valuing each other, and measurable efforts are rarely made to institute and make multicultural education a reality in Nigerian schools, businesses, organizations, communities, states, and the nation itself. This inaction has hurt many Nigerians and has had costly, immeasurable, and negative consequences for the country. Consider the case of an Ibo child called "Sunny":

> Sunny was an Ibo boy born in Sapele, Delta State of Nigeria. The Indigenes of Sapele are the Okpes (also called Urhobos). It was a thriving coastal city with businesspeople from all over Nigeria and West Africa and was a seaport where people exported and imported goods to and from all over the world. Sunny's father was one of the successful importers. Sapele was also home to the African Timber and Plywood (AT&P) company that at one point was one of the largest timber exporters to the West. Many Ibos like Sunny's parents had to move from the Eastern region to settle and raise their families in the thriving city of Sapele. The dream of Sunny's father and mother was for their children to be educated and for their son to go to London to study and come back to practice law in Nigeria. In Sapele, they came with nothing and later built a fifty-two-room house that became a tourist attraction. Due to their hard work, they were able to put Sunny in a very reputable private pre-kindergarten program that gave him an excellent academic head start. Sunny went through academic enrichments, promotions, and accelerations in elementary and secondary schools. Things were going as planned! In Sunny's Class 3, there was news of a military coup. Then General Johnson

Aguiyi-Ironsi, who led the countercoup, became the head of state. Before long, Ironsi was killed during a retaliatory military coup, and Lt. Colonel Yakubu Gowon was named the new head of state. During the coup, Ibo officers and citizens were killed and slaughtered, especially in the Northern parts of Nigeria. In fact, babies were plucked out of the wombs of pregnant Ibo mothers. The killings were so outrageous that Ibos started coming back home to the Eastern region of Nigeria. Lt. Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, the military leader of the Eastern region, started agitating, and then launched the secession of the region under the name Biafra. Gowon commanded the military to invade Biafra, and a three-year war ensued.

Before long, Biafran soldiers invaded the Midwest and schools were closed. As a result, Sunny and his family ran back home to Obodoukwu, the birthplace of his father. As a result, Sunny and his family confronted the perils of war – they were devastated with intense hunger and diseases related to malnutrition, such as kwashiorkor. Schooling and other life-sustaining activities were invisible. Obodoukwu became the location of the Biafra Radio Station; and next to Obodoukwu was a little airport at Uga. Both attracted Nigerian fighter planes and bombs. Ojukwu pleaded with the Western world to stop the pogrom against the Ibos, yet no one cared. With millions of people dead, most from starvation, the Biafra-Nigeria war ended, and the Ibos were told that there was no victor or vanquished. But that was mere rhetoric. As the war ended, Sunny continued his secondary education. After graduation, he went to college in the Rivers State of Nigeria and did his National Youth Service Corps in Ondo State, a state of Yoruba Indigenes. After Sunny's youth corps service, he taught in secondary schools at Anambra and Imo States. Instead of going to England to study law as his parents had wished, he decided to go to the United States to study special education; he earned two master's degrees (one in special education and the other in psychology) and a PhD in special education. After Sunny's terminal degree, he thought about going back home to Nigeria, but still felt traumatized by his experiences as a young Ibo child. Though Ibos are brilliant and talented, Sunny had wondered why Ibos are rarely (if ever) given opportunities to lead the country. In the end, Sunny decided to settle down with his family in the United States and establish himself as an internationally known professor, scholar, and professional. He has educated Americans, enriched the American economy, and advanced American society.[16]

It is clear that Sunny, an Ibo, has experienced living among people of different tribes and in more places than an average Nigerian. However, he has also experienced some socioemotional trauma that has haunted him. Sadly, there are many Ibos like Sunny all over the world (including the late novelist Chinua Achebe, novelist Chimamanda Adichie, and the late anthropologist John Ogbu). Nigerian and African leaders who lack vision do not seem to recognize the loss when talented individuals such as Sunny immigrate to other nations. While Sunny's devastating experiences may have fueled his zest and drive to succeed in life, they have

also negatively affected how he feels about Nigeria and its leaders. These experiences further demonstrate why multicultural education seriously matters (and should matter) in Nigeria. In a nation as diverse as Nigeria, valuing and fostering its multicultural society is rarely a serious discourse. It is frequently viewed as a favor by those who think that they control Nigeria because of their tribe, religion, or who they know. Nigeria's ills are systemic, endemic, and long-lasting because of their depth, intensity, and multidimensionality. When it comes to multicultural valuing, abnormality has largely become normalcy in Nigeria, and vice versa.

Education has an important role to play in building a multicultural Nigeria. The Federal Ministry of Education oversees education in the country, while local authorities implement state-controlled policies. The public school system offers kindergarten, primary education, secondary education, and tertiary education. Since the federal government has been unstable without solid philosophical footing, Nigeria has continued to lack unified educational policies that could make integrated and measurable differences in the lives of the citizenry.[17] Without solid foundational policies, necessary and new ideas such as multicultural education, gender education, special education, mental health education, and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education will be seen through a narrow lens.

In Nigeria, regional differences in quality, equity, curriculum, funding, and implementation seem to dominate the systemic process of education.[18] This lack of unified direction has created problems that affect students over the course of their lives.[19] For instance, as great as Nigeria is or pretends to be, it sadly has the largest population of out-of-school youths in the world.[20] These youths make up the at-risk and vulnerable populations that are visibly disenfranchised, disadvantaged, disillusioned, and demeaned. It is no wonder that antisocietal groups (such as Boko Haram, bandits, kidnappers, Islamic State of West Africa, Fulani herdsmen, and Indigenous People of Biafra) are flourishing in Nigeria. While it is easy to discount all these youths and adults as hooligans and criminals, they are Nigerian citizens who have been failed by the system. In other words, they are crying for some redemptive attention and help, and they deserve well-organized and systemic multicultural educational, counseling, psychological, and service-oriented programs.

Women are critical to the advancement of any community and nation; yet the plight of women in Nigeria is disappointing. Even though they provide about 44 percent of the entire Nigerian labor force and make up about 56 percent of teachers in Nigeria, women account for only 30 percent representation in the political sphere.[21] A few years ago, Nigeria and the world were shocked when bandits and terrorists in a Northern part of Nigeria kidnapped young girls from their schools. Many of them were abused, molested, raped, and treated as sex slaves, and efforts to rescue them have been opaque and irresolute. No society can ignore the well-being of young girls

and still count itself as a civilized space. Education of all has been proven to be a fundamental human rights issue. As a result, Nigerian girls and women deserve to be educated and encouraged to be future leaders. More than half a century ago, Federal Commissioner of Education Abudu Eke was correct when he noted that Nigeria's national educational objectives are to make the country: 1) a strong and self-reliant nation, 2) a great and dynamic economy, 3) a just and egalitarian society, 4) a free and democratic nation, and 5) a land full of opportunities for all its citizens.[22]

What has become of egalitarianism in Nigeria since its independence? Sadly, based on economist Eugene Staley's conclusion more than six decades ago, Nigeria may have taken some steps backward.[23] Consider these examples. Nigeria is still a developing country with a low per capita income; an economy based in peasantry and agriculture with inefficient and poor organization; education offerings that have little relevance to the philosophical and material needs of the people and that result in brain drain; a transitional political system despite multiple decades passing since independence; a society still influenced by its history of colonial rule; and a high mortality rate due to disease. By all measurable standards, Nigeria is not where it should (and could) be when one revisits its initial educational goals and objectives.[24] But if the leaders infused multiculturalism into all spectra of Nigerian education and society, the citizenry might begin to appreciate and value the talents and gifts of its fellow citizens, and the economy and political system could grow beyond imagination.

People with disabilities matter: they are human beings who have human rights and deserve to enjoy the quality of life that others take for granted. As data analyst Ode Uduu pointed out in 2022, there are over twenty-five million Nigerians who are excluded from the workplace due to disabilities.[25] There have been modest attempts to correct these biases, but their implementation is flawed and their benefits limited. In September 1976, Nigeria took a giant step to institute universal free primary education (UPE) with the aim of eradicating illiteracy and ignorance. However, nearly fifty years since its inception, the UPE continues to suffer from setbacks such as poor organization, poor financing, zero emphasis on rural education and special education, and a lack of specialists and experts among its staff.[26] With regard to special education, the Federal Ministry of Education in 2015 renewed its efforts to improve its policies.[27] However, educational researchers and scholars such as Ruth Ogbue, Gathogo Mukuria, Maxmary Offor, and myself have identified endemic problems that continue to hamper thorough implementation of special education in Nigeria and other African nations.[28] These problems include few teachers and professionals who are trained specialists, few categories of exceptionalities that are catered to, no recognized facilities for preschool children, a lack of reliable funding sources outside of ministry subventions and donations, and no readily available systemic screening and assessment facilities. Based on all this information, one can argue that individuals with disabilities are not genuine-

ly valued as human beings with rights and responsibilities in Nigeria, despite what they bring to the table. People with disabilities, their voices, and their experiences must be included in determining educational policies.[29] To maximize their fullest potential as practiced in the Western world, there must be provisions for free and appropriate public education, educational placement in the least restrictive environment instead of indiscriminate inclusion or exclusion, parental involvement, nondiscriminatory assessment and evaluation, individualized educational plans, personnel and professional development, procedural safeguards and due process rights, and consistent programmatic funding.[30]

A good moral compass is a part of human valuing and multicultural enlightenment. When we do not value people, we do not see or hear them.[31] Many Nigerian politicians and citizens use their regional, tribal, and religious affiliations to mislead their people. They are consistently dishonest and untrustworthy to their fellow citizens, and sadly, their tribes believe them. For example, during the early years of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, some leaders stated that HIV/AIDS was not real and that it was manufactured by white people to hurt Africans. Yet these same leaders protected themselves and their families from the disease. As a result, many of their fellow citizens fell sick and died. Likewise, during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, many leaders told their citizens that the disease was not real, though they wore their masks and received vaccines that were not made available to their fellow citizens. Some of these leaders take advantage of their tribe and religion to deceive their fellow citizens, engage in massive corruption, and embezzle money shamelessly. It is disheartening that some of these leaders fervently protect their daughters and send them abroad to pursue their education, while at the same time encourage the marriage of underage daughters of ignorant, uneducated, and poor parents under the banner of religion. These kinds of behaviors devalue humanity and fail to authenticate democratic ideals and principles that flourish in multicultural spaces and environments.

It is critically important that Nigeria divorces itself from colonialism and its embodiments. As a democratic nation, it must actively embrace multicultural education, which has the power to promote inclusivity and respect for the civil rights of all people.[32] Implementing multicultural education in Nigeria will demonstrate that the country is ready to play and compete with the rest of the developed world. Nigeria's cultural, linguistic, and religious diversities can serve as unifying forces that foster a common bond and help to reduce or eliminate hate. Implementing multicultural programs in public education will nurture the talents that Nigerians have been exporting to other parts of the world, especially Western countries, and help to stop the brain drain.

Making Nigeria a multicultural reality will not be easy. Powerful and brilliant minds will need to come together. For multicultural education to flourish, de-

mocracy and its educational inclinations must similarly flourish. This means that valuing humans as individuals and acknowledging their rights must be central in educational processes. In other words, all human beings are important, each with roles to play for the initiation and maximization of paradigm and power shifts in education, culture, society, religion, politics, and economy. Together, these shifts will create a magnanimous collaborative, consultative, and cooperative networking system that separates itself from animus and hate. About fifty years ago, Frederick Mayer argued for a dynamic education that restructures and formulates a new society: "from kindergarten to graduate school a cosmopolitan perspective should prevail, so that the distance needs become immediate responsibilities."[33] Democratic ideals support multicultural values that emphasize the importance of individual worth, social responsibility, self-governance, and freedom. Clearly, for multicultural education to work properly in Nigeria, there must be respect for traditional education and values.[34] It is important to honor the elders and appreciate their historical contributions while also promoting the cultural heritage of the community at large. We need to avoid creating divided societies with vague ideals that are disconnected from cultural roots and realities.

For multicultural education to succeed in Nigeria, the society requires a new breed of political thinkers and stalwarts. While politics cannot be divorced from education, culture, society, religion, and economics, new paradigms and powers must foster a multicultural, democratic, and progressive society. Put another way, new ways of thinking and doing must be instituted in Nigeria to support widespread multicultural education. It is imperative that:

- Multicultural education starts at birth and is integrated throughout all levels of education.
- Multicultural education classes are compulsory and taught by multicultural researchers, scholars, educators, and specialists.
- Illiteracy and ignorance are eradicated to advance the employability of educated people without bias.
- The whole of national kindergarten, primary, junior high school, secondary, and higher education curricula are revamped to reflect multicultural attributes and values.
- Patriotism and national interest are emphasized in all policies and activities.
- Foreign interference in national policies and activities is stopped to reaffirm national independence.
- Politics ceases to be a lucrative profession for Nigerians, and political manifestos take precedence over tribal or religious affiliations.
- Innovative and "new" leaders are nurtured and given opportunities to serve.

- Military, autocratic, and dyarchic governments are discouraged and avoided. One party and dictatorial governments are discouraged and avoided.
- People in power are held accountable and this accountability is enforced.
- Educational, cultural, societal, religious, and economic policies are not held hostage by politics.
- Funding of all programs (such as multicultural education or parental education programs) is targeted to respond to diagnostic, formative, and summative issues.
- Terrorism, tribalism, nepotism, and kidnapping are investigated without prejudice.
- Corruption and embezzlement of public funds are dissuaded and confronted without prejudice.
- All Nigerians are valued and respected at all times, even when their voices appear heretical.
- All Nigerians respect the country's laws, just as the laws respect them without fears or favors.
- No Nigerian is above or below the law – equal justice is paramount.
- Nigerians with gifts and talents are nurtured, rewarded, and motivated to contribute to their country.
- Nigerian unity is genuinely upheld, irrespective of prejudiced views.

While colonialism has devastated Nigeria and other African nations, it is disingenuous to blame it for all of Nigeria's maladies. It is critical that we Nigerians begin to assume responsibilities for some of these problems. We must value multiculturalism as an avenue for paradigm and power shifts in economics, politics, religion, culture, and language. We must intentionally build harmonious relationships among peoples to uplift society and humanity.[35] Nigeria must embody multiculturalism in words and deeds; and Nigerian leaders and the citizenry must see it as the strength of a modern Nigeria. In addition, Nigerian citizens need to understand that failing to value multiculturalism has damaged Nigeria's image as the richest and most populous nation in Africa. Put another way, Nigeria must take advantage of its multicultural strengths and energies and harness the gifts and talents of all its citizens.

Today, Nigerians of different tribes, religions, cultures, languages, abilities, and genders are living and working around the world, producing wealth and stability for different communities and nations. Imagine where Nigeria would be today if it chooses to counter the evils of hateful tribalism; to hear, see, value, and appreciate its citizens without bias; to design strong multicultural programs from

kindergarten to university levels; and to proactively and measurably implement multicultural programs that will advance democratic ideas, schools, businesses, organizations, communities, and states across the nation. Nigeria needs leaders who are African- and Nigerian-centered, who have a bold vision to make Nigeria prosperous. Tribalism has failed Nigeria; religious dogmatism has failed Nigeria; and Nigerian political leaders have failed Nigeria. The only remaining option is to change. If Nigeria refuses to change itself, it will be consumed by change from outside its borders.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Festus E. Obiakor is the Chief Executive Manager of Sunny Educational Consulting. He has served as Chair of Special Education at the City College of New York and Valdosta State University. His works include *Reducing Hate through Multicultural Education and Transformation* (2023), *Multiculturalism Still Matters in Education and Society: Responding to Changing Times* (2021), *Multicultural Special Education: Culturally Responsive Teaching* (2007), and *It Even Happens in "Good" Schools: Responding to Cultural Diversity in Today's Classrooms* (2001).

ENDNOTES

[1] Adiele E. Afigbo, "Background to Nigerian Federalism: Federal Features in the Colonial State," *Publius* 21 (4) (1991): 13–29; and Jacob U. Gordon, *African Studies for the 21stst Century* (Nova Science Publishers, 2004).

[2] Michael O. Afolayan, *Higher Education in Postcolonial Africa: Paradigms of Development, Decline and Dilemmas* (Africa World Press, 2007); Asa G. Hilliard, *SBA: The Reawakening of the African Mind* (Makare Publishing Company, 1998); and Festus E. Obiakor and Gregory P. Maltby, *Pragmatism and Education in Africa: Handbook for Educators and Development Planners* (Kendall Hunt, 1989).

[3] James A. Banks and Cherry A. McGee Banks, eds., *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*, 6th ed. (Wiley, 2007); Festus E. Obiakor, *Multiculturalism Still Matters in Education and Society: Responding to Changing Times* (Information Age, 2021); Festus E. Obiakor, "Seeking Equality of Educational Outcomes for Black Students: Response to Louise Taylor," *The Psychology of Education Review* 45 (2) (2021): 39–45; and Festus E. Obiakor, *Reducing Hate through Multicultural Education and Transformation* (Information Age, 2023).

[4] Obiakor, *Reducing Hate through Multicultural Education and Transformation*.

[5] Larry Diamond, "Nigeria in Search of Democracy," *Foreign Affairs* 62 (4) (1984): 905–927.

[6] Doris Dokua Sasu, "People Living in Extreme Poverty in Ghana 2016–26," June 30, 2024, https://www.statista.com/statistics/1439971/number-of-individuals-living-in-extreme-poverty-in-ghana.

[7] Jason Furman, "Equality and Efficiency: A Global Perspective," paper presented at the World Bank Group Macroeconomics and Fiscal Management Global Practice Annual Forum, Washington, D.C., 2016; and Arthur M. Okun, *Equality and Efficiency: The Big Trade-Off* (Brookings Institution, 1975).

[8] Diamond, "Nigeria in Search of Democracy."

[9] Udo Bude, "The Adaptation Concept in British Colonial Education," *Comparative Education* 19 (3) (1983): 341–351.

[10] Afigbo, "Background to Nigerian Federalism: Federal Features in the Colonial State," 13–29.

[11] Peris Walubengo and Adrianna Simwa, "Major Tribes in Nigeria and Their States of Origin: Detailed 2024 Update," Legit.ng, August 15, 2023, https://www.legit.ng/1142953-major-tribes-nigeria-states.html.

[12] Leo Igwe, "Atheism in Nigeria," *Sahara Reporters*, September 13, 2012, https://saharareporters.com/2012/09/13/atheism-nigeria-leo-igwe.

[13] Ibid.; Festus E. Obiakor, "Comparison of Special Education Programs in Nigeria and the United States of America," *Resources in Education* 21 (7) (1986): 57; Festus E. Obiakor, "Cultural and Socioeconomic Factors affecting Special Education Policies in Nigeria," *International Journal of Special Education* 6 (1991): 271–278; Festus E. Obiakor, "Special Education Reform in Nigeria: Prospects and Challenges," *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 13 (1998): 57–71; and Obed L. Onwuegbu, *The Nigerian Culture: Its Perception and Treatment of the Handicapped: Unpublished Essays* (Federal Advanced Teachers College for Special Education, 1997).

[14] Walubengo and Simwa, "Major Tribes in Nigeria and Their States of Origin."

[15] Ibid.

[16] This is an autobiographical statement written by the author.

[17] Festus E. Obiakor, "Building Patriotic African Leadership through African-Centered Education," *Journal of Black Studies* 34 (2004): 402–420; and Obiakor and Maltby, *Pragmatism and Education in Africa*.

[18] Jibril Aminu, "Education in Nigeria: Overcoming Adversity," *Journal of Education Finance* 15 (4) (1990): 581–586.

[19] Hasan Aydin, "Education Reform in Nigeria: The Case of Multicultural Education for Peace, Love, and Tolerance," *South African Journal of Education* 33 (1) (2013): 1–20; and Obiakor, "Building Patriotic African Leadership through African-Centered Leadership."

[20] Danjuma Abdullahi and John Abdullah, "The Political Will and Quality Basic Education in Nigeria," *Journal of Power, Politics, and Governance* 2 (2) (2014): 75–100.

[21] World Bank Group, "Labor Force, Female (% of Total Labor Force)–Nigeria," https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTL.FE.ZS?locations=NG (accessed October 21, 2024). Note, however, that the National Bureau of Statistics of Nigeria estimates women's share of the labor force overall as significantly higher, between 60 percent and 80 percent. See Ode Uduu, *Discovering the Potent Force that Is Nigerian Women* (Dataphyte, 2020).

[22] Abudu Y. Eke, *Eradication of Illiteracy* (Academy Press, 1972).

[23] Eugene Staley, "Guidelines in the Process of Change," paper presented at the UNESCO Conference, Geneva, Switzerland, 1963.

[24] Federal Ministry of Education, *Education in Nigeria* (NigerPrint, 1977).

[25] Ode Uduu, *Over 25 Million Nigerians Excluded Due to Disability* (Dataphyte, 2020).

[26] Obiakor, "Comparison of Special Education in Nigeria and the United States."

[27] Federal Ministry of Education, *National Policy on Special Needs Education in Nigeria* (Federal Ministry of Nigeria, 2015).

[28] Gathogo Mukuria and Festus E. Obiakor, "Special Education Issues and African Diaspora," *Journal of International Special Education Needs* 7 (2004): 12–17; Ruth M. Ogbue, "Experiments in Integration: The Nigerian Experience," *Educafrica*, December 1981, 135–152; and Festus E. Obiakor and Maxmary Offor, "Special Education Provision in Nigeria: Analyzing Contexts, Problems, and Prospects," *International Journal of Special Education* 26 (1) (2011): 25–32.

[29] Julia Biermann, *Translating Human Rights in Education: The Influence of Article 24 UN CRPD in Nigeria and Germany* (University of Michigan Press, 2022).

[30] Tachelle Banks, Festus E. Obiakor, and Anthony F. Rotatori, *Enhancing Partnerships in Special Education: Innovative Collaboration, Consultation, and Cooperation* (Information Age, 2021).

[31] Obiakor, *Reducing Hate through Multicultural Education and Transformation*.

[32] Festus E. Obiakor, *It Even Happens in "Good" Schools: Responding to Cultural Diversity in Today's Classrooms* (Corwin Press, 2001); Festus E. Obiakor, *Multicultural Special Education: Culturally Responsive Teaching* (Pearson/Merrill Prentice Hall, 2007); Festus E. Obiakor, *100 Multicultural Proverbs: Inspirational Affirmations for Educators* (Corwin Press, 2008); Festus E. Obiakor, *The Eight Step Multicultural Approach to Multicultural Learning and Teaching* (Kendall Hunt, 2008); Festus E. Obiakor, *Powerful Multicultural Essays for Innovative Educators and Leaders: Optimizing Hearty Conversations* (Information Age, 2018); and Festus E. Obiakor, *Valuing Other Voices: Discourses that Matter in Education, Social Justice, and Multiculturalism* (Information Age, 2020).

[33] Frederick Mayer, *Education for a New Society* (Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1973).

[34] Babatunde A. Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria* (McMillan Education, 1976).

[35] James A. Banks, *An Introduction to Multicultural Education* (Allyn and Bacon, 1999); Paul C. Gorski, *Multicultural Education and the Internet: Intersections and Integrations* (McGraw Hill, 2005); and Obiakor, *Reducing Hate through Multicultural Education and Transformation*.