## MOAMMAR EL KADHAFI ON NATIONAL INTEGRATION: SOME COMMENTS[1]

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### Introduction

The creation of nation-states in Africa in the nineteenth century by European colonization brought many different tribes and ethnic groups into contact within the same boundaries. The countries formed across the continent were not national entities prior to colonization. Their arbitrarily imposed geo-political boundaries rarely corresponded with existing ethnic or linguistic boundaries. Some of the groups that were brought together had hitherto been in antagonistic relations. Others had never had any intimate relationships. Over the years, however, African countries have experienced many dramatic structural changes, especially since World War II. National bureaucratic institutions and various political and economic representations have evolved.

Despite the improvements in social and intergroup relations in the post-independence era, the African countries still remain predominantly mosaic. During the early decades of African political independence and nation building, it was observed that most African states were below the threshold of integration and that the ruling elite was preoccupied with the task of uniting different ethnic factions (Rubin and Weinstein, 1977). Wriggins observed that under the prevailing circumstance, country-men were often times set apart from each other by more than what bound them together.[2] As Wriggins has further noted:

> Fellow feeling is difficult to develop when language differences isolate one from another... Regional loyalties and differences remain one another. People feel themselves to be part of their region, tribe, or caste before they sense loyalty to the wider nation... The art of empathy, entering into the imagination and subjective experience of another, is difficult, if impossible... Deep down in the innermost part of one's being, it is felt to be dangerous to reach out to people in other parts of thesociety (p. 198).

Although Wriggins' observation is somehow exaggerated and is of limited applicability to present-day Africa, it comes close to describing the situations in times of conflict and social cataclysms. However, it is a reminder that African countries, like others elsewhere, are artificial creations who members often gravitate towards sectional interests. This sociological phenomenon develops partly because, as Kadhafi (1977) has observed, "the degree of warmth involved diminishes as the relationship (among the people) moves from the smaller (family, tribal) level to the larger (national) one" (p. 14).

The success of governments in nation-building will always depend on the extent to which their people accept and identify with their national institutions, especially the political system.

This institutional identification can only develop from a common national bond and a sense of peoplehood. The leaders of the new nations all over the world have long realized that their national socio-economic development efforts would fail as long as their people remain divided.

In 1977, Moammar El Kadhafi, the Libyan leader, published his political philosophy in The Green Book. Part Three of The Green Book contains his notion of national integration, the subject of this essay. He advocates nationalism as the integrative political ideology that would ensure the survival of mosaic states like his. To a large extent, his perspective is akin to that of the mid-nineteenth century European thinkers in Germany and Italy who defined the nation as the ultimate human value and saw in it the source of all good things (Roskin et al, 1994). Like other proponents, Kadhafi sees nationalism as a means to free the national community and to build and maintain its integration as an effort to strengthen it so that it might better maintain internal order, solve problems, and protect itself from outside threats(Rubin and Weinstein, 1977).

This essay attempts a scholarly review of Kadhafi's thesis on nationalism and national integration. Recent internal political developments in countries all over the world, specifically the civil wars in Somalia, Rwanda, Nigeria, Haiti, Bosnia, Russia and others, make it relevant to revisit Kadhafi's notion of nationalism and national integration.

## MOAMMAR EL KADHAFI'S VIEWS ON NATIONAL INTEGRATION

### On National Integration as the Driving Force of Human History

Part Three of the Green Book opens with the statement:

> The social, i.e. national, factor is the driving force of human history...
> The re-lationship between an individual and a group is a social rela-
> tionship, i.e., the relationship between the members of a nation. For
> nations are founded on nationalism. Those national relationship is the
> social relationship... For the group is a nation and the nation is a group
> even if they differ in number ... the group which is permanent by virtue
> of its own national relations.

The preceding passage apparently describes an evolutionary process in which individuals team up to form groups, such as families and tribes, and these smaller groups subsequently align themselves to form societies or nations. The individual, the group, the society, and the nation have, therefore, been conceptualized as inseparable entities which develop in that national sequence. This is one meaning of that formulation, which speaks to the ultimacy and supremacy of the nation as a unit of human social aggregation.[3]

On the other hand, the observation that "the group is a nation and the nation is a group" introduces another meaning. Here the position has probably been taken that since the nation is made up of groups, an individual's relationship with any of those groups is still within the confines of the nation and should, therefore, be considered "national". Family, tribal and even "regional" relations are all national relations, according to this line of thinking.

While the two levels of meaning are evident, Kadhafi places emphasis on the evolution and maintenance of the nation. He has advanced the theory that groups come together to constitute a nation through "nationalism", and that the coming together of groups to form a nation is to

ensure their survival. Nationalism, the social bond, is said to be a natural development which "works automatically to impel the nation toward survival". In other words, the nation possesses a "natural innate momentum for survival". Kadhafi has written of nationalism that:

> It is an established law of nature. To disregard it or to collide with it
> is damaging to life. Thus man's life is damaged when he begins to
> disregard nationalism ... the secret of survival. (pp. 8 - 9).

As has been noted previously, Kadhafi has taken the position of some mid-nineteenth century European thinkers that personal freedom is nothing, and that one achieves true freedom by subordinating oneself to the nation (Roskin et al., 1994). This is the usually exaggerated belief in the greatness and unity of the nation that the nationalist ideology connotes (Roskin et al, 1994). While few human groupings around the world have escaped the driving force that transforms tribes, villages, provinces, clans, ethnic and language groups into peoples with a developed national consciousness (Susser, 1995), it is doubtful if existence in a group other than the nation does necessarily lead to the destruction of "man's life". Historically, the greater part of man's existence on earth has been spent in smaller groups - - bands, hordes, tribes, chiefdoms, and kingdoms. Kadhafi's thesis overlooks that important historical fact, although he concedes that the nation comes into existence after other prior existence in bands, hordes, tribes, etc.

The description of nationalism as a "natural automatic" occurrence also presents another empirical problem. Social bond or integration is a social psychological process which comes into existence through a process of "social mixing", empathy, and symbolic identification by members of a group. It is the same process that brings strength and vitality to the family and the tribe. Kadhafi appeared to be aware of this when he wrote that the "family ... grows into a nation only after passing through the stages of the tribe and its ramifications, as well as through the stage of affiliation which comes about as a result of various types of a social mixture." Liebenew (1986) has noted that the affiliation and social mixture in the process of nation-building result from self-conscious acts on the part of a committed elite to produce new bonds of solidarity between itself and some or all the masses included in its territorial jurisdiction. The notion of a natural or inevitable evolutionary force in nation-building is, therefore, questionable indeed.

One of the foremost theorists on group cohesion, the Frenchman Emile Durkheim (1956), intimated that a major element in social integration is the extent to which various members of a group interact with one another. Durkheim demonstrated in various ways how this can be achieved. He showed that participation in rituals, for example, is likely to draw members of religious groups into common activities that would bind them together. Also, work activities that depend on differentiated, yet complementary tasks, tend to bind workers to the work group. Related to the frequency of patterned interaction, Durheim again emphasized the importance of value integration. Value integration is when group members share common values and beliefs.[4]

Homans has also noted that integration depends on the process of elaboration in which new patterns of organsization among activities, interaction, and sentiment are constantly emerging by virtue of their interrelatedness with each other and with their external system.[5] According to Homans, "a group elaborates itself, complicates itself, beyond the demands of the original situation, and in so doing it brings about new types of activities, forms of interaction, and types of sentiments."[6]

The above observations support the notion that there is a tendency toward human social aggregation and association. However, it is apparent that certain conditions must be present for the association to occur among rational goal-seeking beings.

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Another problem with Kadhafi's theory on nationalism is the claim to the permanence of the group (nation) that it brings into being, relative to other groups. He has noted that "... the group is a nation and the nation is the group, ... the group which is permanent by virtue of its national relations." In this view, Kadhafi has taken the position that other groups (such as the tribe) are only temporary entities which eventually would be swept away in the tide of nationalism. In other words, sectionalism (e.g., tribalism) would be overridden by nationalism. This, according to Kadhafi, is in keeping with a natural "innate" tendency in the system, a historical fact.

The problem with the latter position has already been discussed above. But equally problematic is the former position. Is sectionalism transitory phenomenon that withers and disappears with time? In reality, no nation has been able to completely do away with sectionalism. At best, sectionalism has been mitigated in some instances. This observation further belies the argument about the ultimacy of nationalism. Kadhafi ironically acknowledged that fact when he stated that "tribalism damages nationalism because tribal allegiance weakens national loyalty and flourish at its expense." (p. 18). This is an admission that tribalism does not necessary disappear after nationalism, supposing that nationalism has even arrived. The claim that "the nation is a large family which has passed through the stage of the tribe..." (p. 19), therefore, is not accurate. While that can happen, it is not always the case, as we have seen from the African situation and contemporary eastern European political developments.[7]

Kadhafi, of course, is aware of the strength and influence of the tribe. He has noted that "the tribe is a natural social umbrella for social security ... (which) provides for its members' collective payment of ransom, collective fines, collective revenge and collective defence, i.e., social protection." (p. 17). From a sociological standpoint, tribal affiliation is intrinsically rewarding. The collective payment of ransom and fines, and the collective revenge and defence by tribesmen are specific benefits that individuals derive from social relations because their associates deliberately go to some trouble to provide these benefits for them, to paraphrase Blau (1964).[8] Blau indicates that individuals go to the trouble of providing benefits for others because of the expectation that doing so will bring social rewards - social approval. Blau cautions that selfish disregard for others makes it impossible to obtain this important reward.

For the nation to supersede the tribe and exert itself as the ultimate unit of association, people must experience a high degree of cohesiveness or reinforcement in the activities of the larger group (i.e., the nation). Social approval, one of the reinforcers, may be defined as a symbolic behaviour charged with sentiments. Festinger and associates (1950) have again identified another reinforcer as any activity considered valuable in other ways, such as doing something interesting.[9] As Homans (1958) has indicated, the more valuable the sentiments or activity the members exchange with one another, the greater the average frequency of interaction of the members, and also the more valuable the activities that members get the more valuable these that they must give.

The shift from multi-tribal allegiance and identification to the nation implies a systemic change. Eisenstadt (1968) observed that the process involves the "creation and continuity of organizational pattern directed toward upholding certain collective goals or patterns of behaviour and dealing with some of the perennial and universal problems of social life." Eisenstadt called this an institutionalization process which is undertaken by people placed in strategic positions in the social structure to aspire to crystalize new types of institutional and symbolic orders. According to Eisenstadt, the institutionalization processes and the relations therein involve:

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the creation and definition of norms that regulate the major units of social behaviorand organization of the criteria that control the flow of resources between the different individuals and social units that interact in any such situation, and of the sanctions that insure that the appropriate norms are upheld.[10]

We note that the common goals and norms may never be fully accepted by all the members of society, with some sub-groups exhibiting some autonomy in their attitudes towards these norms. This undergirds our previous position that sectionalism is inevitable in any heterogeneous social environment.

Writing about potent ideologies in the development process, Wriggins has stated that those that are successful in answering the need among the leaders and peoples will amalgamate elements of ritual, traditional wisdom, and evoke familiarity and trust with ideas from abroad better adapted to the practical tasks facing a modernizing society. He has noted that without indigenous roots, there can be no sound ideological growth and that:

> (an) ideal society, part future, part nostalgia, will be evoked, suggesting a future of social harmony and happiness. In this way,m common goals responsive to the aspirations of many groups in society maybe defined. (p. 206)

Successful ideologies are, therefore, characterized by the practicality and pragmatism of their proponents. Binder (1966) has also observed that the successful leaders of new nations have appealed to broadly similar group of instrumental organizational and administrative values and symbols. He mentioned national solidarity, the one-party system, state control over parts of the economy, popular mobilization, and the eradication of individualism as the intermediates between the ultimates of rationality and nationality.[11] According to Binder, the purpose in the choice of these intermediates is to seek to change behavior directly through organizational instrumentalities.

The successful modernizing elites have attempted to legitimize their positions in part by providing various immediate benefits to different social groups. That has been done in the hope of nurturing the nation into maturity, after which the new political system would ultimately accrue benefits to the entire population.

The importance of the availability of opportunities and rewards as variables in nation building has been alluded to by Blau,Homans, Festinger and others, as previously discussed. Wriggins (1966) has observed that economic growth and diversification provide a way in which opportunity can rapidly expand. He has aptly pointed out that if men see opportunities open to them beyond the confines of their narrow neighbourhood or their limited traditional group, the old divisions appear irrelevant. Rather, economic stagnation sharpens conflict and intensifies competition and social antagonism.

Recent occurrences in certain African, Latin American, and southeast Asian countries provide the empirical bases of most of our discussions so far. Wriggins (1966) has noted that although common organizational centers have been present, certain crucial human elements have contributed to the subversion of these as integrative and developmental forces. The arrogance of some politicians and their desire to preserve personal privileges, nepotism and favoritism in the allocation of scarce resources, corruption, lack of accountability of people in high positions, and gross disregard and disrespect for the needs and aspiration of various groups in society have contributed to the alienation and disenfranchisement of most people.

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# Conclusion

From the standpoint of empirical scholarly analysis, Kadhafi's theory of national integration or "the national (social) factor", which he has used interchangeably for nationalism, is inadequate. The logical and empirical bases of most of the positions are either faulty or non-existent. As propaganda and ideological tools for political mobilization, however, the short-comings may be overlooked. Like the leaders of several emerging nations, Kadhafi is concerned with the problem of mobilization of the populace in artificially created mosaic societies. But caution should be exercised in accepting the notion of the "naturalness" and inevitability of nationalism. Members of diverse ethnic groups neither automatically transfer their political loyalties to one group (i.e., the nation), develop a new communal allegiance, nor make the group (the nation) the object of reverence. Certain important intervening social-psychological and instrumental variables have to be present to make integration possible. Sterling (1974) has admonished that:

> As historical phenomenon, the nation and nationalism share history's quality of transience. For most of the past they did not exist, and it is a safe assumption that at some point in the future they will cease to exist. Thus the perspective of history confirms what empirical analysis of the contemporary world will also make evident: the nation is only one of many ways to organize the political loyalties of men. (p. 180)

Binder's (1966) observation is equally insightful. He has argued that probably national integration can be attained by diverse paths, each suited to the conditions and traditions of the people in question. We have also intimated that national integration is not an automatic natural process; it must be cultivated and nurtured into fruition through deliberate human efforts. There are certain important intermediate factors that make the fruition possible. These intermediates include organization, efficiency, instrumental-rationality, the availability of opportunities and benefits for participation, and ideological savvy. These factors are essential to the success of the political leaders of the new nations.

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# NOTES

1) An earlier version of this ("A Sociological Appraisal of Moammar El Kadhafi's Theory of National Integration") was presented at, and included in the proceedings of, the International Symposium on the Socio-Political Thought of Moammar El Kadhafi in Accra, Ghana, December 27- 30, 1982.

2) Howard Wriggins "National Integration," in Myron Weiner    (1966)

3) With the spontaneous occurrence of state-formation in Africa  or  elsewhere  in  the world, it has become common for some    observers to hail nationalism as a persuasive political    force through which modern individuals view the world(Liebenow, 1986; Susser, 1995)

4) Reviews and commentaries on Durkheim can be found in Lewis Coser (1977); Timasheff (1976), among others.

5) Homans' views have been presented in various writings,  including **The Human Group** (1950) and "Social Behavior as    Exchange" (1958). Reviews and commentaries can be found in    Turner (1978), Mulkay (1971) and Coser (1976).

6) Turner (1978), p. 226.

7) The breakup of the former Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and  other Eastern Block nations, and the subsequent civil wars and internal conflicts within some of the independent states created thereafter, provide empirical support to this point of view.

8) Reprinted in Coser and Rosenberg (1982), pp. 72 - 76.

9) Also cited in Homans (1958)

10) Eisenstadt (1958), pp. xvi - xviii.

11) It has been assumed that formal organizations, because of their emphasis on rationality, impersonality and competence  in the assignment of positions and rewards could help to mitigate the drive toward sectionalism and consequently induce performance transcendental to this. Wriggins (1968),  for example, has discussed the roles of the national bureaucracies, the army, the school system, political   parties, legislative organs, and organized sports in national integration.

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