

Beyond Western Knowledge in Inter-Cultural Encounters: A Defence of Cultural Knowledge as Alternative

Felix O. Olatunji and Anthony I. Bature*

Abstract: Knowledge is crucial to human survival and flourishing as it is one of the means by which human beings seek to master and control their space. The quest for knowledge gears towards a better understanding of man and his environment as this is strictly part of his inclination and nature to do so in order to promote social change. The essence of knowledge is to liberate and expand the horizons of intelligence of the people, which is aimed at mobilising them towards a patriotic zeal to transforming their society. It is this quest for knowledge that allows human beings from diverse backgrounds to understand one another through inter-cultural communication. An attempt to understand and acquire knowledge in traditional (Western) epistemology demands that three conditions must be met and satisfied. They are: what we claim to know must be true; we must believe that thing we claim to know; and we must have evidence for believing that thing we claim to know. This was the basis for certainty in knowledge until Gettier's *sledge hammer* destroyed the whole edifice of Western epistemology. In inter-cultural debates and analyses, knowledge is sacrosanct but there is the tyranny today of making Western form of knowledge by the interpretative community as the only means by which problems of humanity could be adequately examined and resolved without recourse to knowledge from diverse cultural backgrounds. This paper, therefore, argues for the acceptance of cultural knowledge as alternative to Western hegemonisation in the quest for making humanity a reality in this contemporary age essentially as it affects inter-cultural debates and encounters. Hence, it is expected that this paper will initiate a new trend in making inter-cultural encounters less cumbersome through the acceptance of cultural knowledge from societies of the Global South.

* Felix O. Olatunji (✉)

Department of General Studies (Philosophy Unit), Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho; Visiting Lecturer at the Department of Philosophy, Osun State University, Ikire Campus, Nigeria

Anthony I. Bature (✉)

Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Federal University, Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria

e-mail: felixolatunji28@gmail.com (corresponding author), Abature23@gmail.com

AGATHOS, Volume 10, Issue 2 (19): 79-94

© www.agathos-international-review.com CC BY NC 2019

Keywords: epistemology, Western tradition, cultural knowledge, global South

INTRODUCTION: PROBLEMATISING THE DISCOURSE OF KNOWLEDGE

Man acquires knowledge and becomes aware of opportunities and challenges therein. It is when such form of knowledge matures that man acquires a motivation or inspiration to translate such into actuality as when it has not put into actuality; it is still a potential attribute. No matter how great the opportunity or how dire the necessity without knowledge, there is no adaptive response that might occur. This is because it is essential for creating awareness of opportunities and challenges, a proper evaluation of alternatives, formulating responses, effective planning and organisation of ideas, and practical implementation of those ideas.

Olusegun Oladipo argues that knowledge is a process of inquiry and a systematic investigation, which affects human survival. He notes that, “Knowledge is the means by which human beings master and control their environment, regulate their social interactions, and indeed, distinguish themselves from brutes. But the generation, transmission and application of knowledge require a culture of inquiry” (Oladipo 2009, 24). This culture of inquiry is a necessity towards the achievement of autonomous life for man in order for him to control and stabilise his world. He argues further:

This is a culture of systematic investigations of natural and social phenomena and the use of reason to conceive of possible explanations for what we are. The culture of inquiry involves seeking and attempting to create a better world. Thus, knowledge is both a product and a process. It is a product of inquiry and, at the same time, a process of seeking to understand the conditions of our existence and to improve those conditions . . . knowledge becomes a tool of self-appraisal and self-understanding without which our human search for meaning is impossible (Ibid.).

In this realm, John Bewaji reiterates the significance of the quest for understanding what knowledge is and the roles it plays in human society. He argues that:

Attaining knowledge has always been a serious human desire, and because of this, understanding knowledge as a concept and as an instrument has been a serious pre-occupation of the reflective members

of all civilised societies from time immemorial, becoming a subject of great intellectual, material, cultural and technological investment. This is because knowledge is the crucial element in all domains of life – be it practical or theoretical... Everything, including the process of becoming and extinction, depends on the presence or absence of knowledge. This is a simple fact, which implicates the need for each society to philosophise knowledge in ways suitable to their epistemic and intellectual requirements and agendas, bearing in mind that no epistemology is utilitarianly neutral (Bewaji 2007, 14).

The ultimate quest for knowledge by man led to many fundamental theories as it is the principal intellectual attainment that is being studied by epistemology. Alvin Goldman (1995, 447) explains that, “Virtually all theorists agree that true belief is a necessary condition for knowledge, and it was once thought that justification, when added to true belief, yields a necessary and sufficient condition for knowledge.” The twin-theories of rationalism and empiricism, in connection with idealist position, served as the sources of knowledge in Western philosophy during the modern age. This is due to the determination of man to rebuild human understanding with only what is clear and distinct to one or another dimension of human knowledge.

The concept of knowledge could be used in different ways, that is, man has knowledge by, about, of and among others. There is knowledge by acquaintance and there is also knowledge by description (knowledge how) as examined by Bertrand Russell; and there is knowledge by proposition (knowledge that). Knowledge by acquaintance is obtained through a direct causal interaction between a person and the object that person perceives. Bertrand Russell (1959, 48) unequivocally avers that, “All our knowledge, both knowledge of things and knowledge of truths, rests upon acquaintance as its foundation. It is therefore important to consider what kinds of things there are with which we have acquaintance.” Sense data from such object are the only things that man can ever become acquainted with; he can never truly know the physical object itself. A person can also be acquainted with his own sense of self (René Descartes’ *cogito ergo sum*) and his thoughts and ideas. However, other people could not become acquainted with another person's mind (the problem of other minds). They have no way of directly interacting with it, since a mind is an internal object. They can only perceive that a mind could exist by observing that person’s behaviour (third person account/behaviourist account of consciousness). Knowledge by acquaintance, therefore, is a

direct kind of knowledge; it is a kind of knowledge that does not depend on inference or mediation.

Whereas knowledge by description is a type of knowledge that is indirect, mediated, and inferential; knowledge by description, according to Russell, is dependent on direct acquaintance in at least two ways. First, knowledge by description depends on acquaintance for its propositional content. Russell unequivocally stated, “every proposition which we can understand must be composed wholly of constituents with which we are acquainted” (Russell 1959, 58). Although one’s knowledge by description may concern objects that outstrip the range of one’s immediate acquaintance, the propositional content is composed of concepts with which the subject is directly acquainted. Russell adds that, “The chief importance of knowledge by description is that it enables us to pass beyond the limits of our private experience. In spite of the fact that we can only know truths which are wholly composed of terms which we have experienced in acquaintance-, we can yet have knowledge by description of things which we have never experienced” (Ibid., 59). While knowledge by proposition (knowledge that) is knowledge of facts, knowledge that such and such is the case. Propositional knowledge, obviously, encompasses knowledge about a wide range of matters: scientific knowledge, geographical knowledge, mathematical knowledge, *self-knowledge*, and knowledge about any field of study whatever. Any *truth* might, in principle, be knowable, although there might be unknowable truths. This form (knowledge that) establishes the traditional mode of knowledge in epistemology. That is, that knowledge has three fundamental components (justified true belief).

An attempt to understand and acquire knowledge in traditional Western epistemology demands that three conditions must be met and satisfied. They are: what we claim to know must be true; we must believe that thing we claim to know; and we must have evidence for believing that thing we claim to know. The conditions are stated clearly below: P is true; S believes that P; S is justified in believing that P. This means that P must be true is taken to be the first stage of knowledge, which suggests that man cannot know P if P is not true, that is, a condition for one’s knowledge about something is that that thing is true and therefore, that the statement, ‘I know something but that thing is not true appears to be self-contradiction’. The second stage is that knowing P suggests believing that P is, as it will appear unusual that, ‘I know something is true but I do not believe that thing’.

While the third stage is the evidence or justification stage, that is, one (S) must be justified in believing something (P). In attaining knowledge, it delves into so many sources, namely: reason, experience, authority, intuition, revelation could provide sure and certain knowledge. The interest about these sources of knowledge is to find out their nature and the validity of their claims.

The question about the sources of knowledge raises further questions about human faculty, which we use in acquiring knowledge. Basically, there are two faculties – the senses and reasoning – in the attainment of knowledge, although, other faculties like intuition among others had been included. Man's main sources of knowledge, that is, the senses are full of errors as they depend on the brain to which they are attached because most of man's knowledge is derived from observations of the external world. For instance, a physician could make a patient have a sensory experience of what is not, thereby stimulating a section of the brain. In the same manner, some optical illusions like dreams are many a time internally generated (internal realities) since illusion duplicates realities. Then, can the senses be reliable sources of knowledge? Plato avers that reliable knowledge cannot be received from the senses because they acquaint man with changing aspects of the world while the real world is immutable.

This traditional mode of knowledge in epistemic claims holds sway until Gettier (1963) objects to the proposition that knowledge equals justification, truth and belief. In making a critique of this traditional form of attaining knowledge, he shows convincingly, that it is plausible to have those salient criteria (conditions) of knowledge in place and yet, one would not be able to have knowledge, talk-less of its certainty. His analysis of knowledge makes a great impact on the philosophical tradition as he applies skeptical doubt to all hitherto existing systems of knowledge. In philosophy according to him, there is no position or argument that is immune from criticisms. By this very exercise, epistemology is raised and carried to a higher level, which emphasises the importance and significance of rigorous self-interrogation. And, in this rigorous self-interrogation, the multi-dimensional nature of attaining and ascertaining knowledge should not be down-played. Gettier nullifies the epistemic tradition that prides itself on a critical self-interrogation or the criticism of a history, society or ideology of people from within or its domain. This is on the fact it is even possible to have these criteria without the possibility of attaining definite knowledge.

With regard to the problem of evidence in epistemology, the whole question revolves around the skeptical argument, which can be presented in this way. And in order for us to know something, we require some kinds of such evidence and, for this evidence to be sure, it must have a character of being conclusive or indubitable. That is, the evidence must offer us a reliable foundation for knowledge claim. But there it seems to be a problem of conclusive evidence simply because there is no absolute knowledge; and, more important, because the acquisition of knowledge is a gradual process. Hence, if all we can have is sufficient or reliable evidence, then we face the reality of saying that our knowledge is merely probable. Of course, we know that a probable knowledge cannot give any form of epistemic certitude, which a proper system of knowledge requires. Therefore, we are faced with the skeptical problem that raises question about a certainty or probability of knowledge claim. This is the position of Bewaji (2007, 31) that, “we cannot have a careful account of knowledge unless we accept the multi-dimensional nature of knowledge. It is reiterated that humans know all kinds of things and with varying degrees of assurance or certainty, that some of these items are accessible to other people while some others are not. This is a fact, which does not make claims to know any less to the subjects of such knowledge.” Man often claims to know things but how does he know its certainty. Many times, knowledge-claim turns out to be false.

CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE AS AN ALTERNATIVE IN INTER-CULTURAL MECHANISMS

It is important to state from the outset that there is the problem of semantics in the discourse of cultural knowledge. This is because there are various terminologies, as listed below, that are being used depending on the tradition that each scholar or theorist belongs and that is the main reason the term has been called with different terms such as indigenous, localised, rural and even traditional knowledge among others to establish the position of diverse views and opinions of authors and traditions involved. But we must clearly point out here that those concepts and meanings, used interchangeably, are experiential knowledge, based on a worldview and a culture, which is basically relational as it under-scores the totality of social and human practices. They (terms and concepts) are off-shoot of cultural knowledge, that is, they are based in a particular culture, and so, are experiences of what transpire in such cultural background. Such relational aspect of culture

suggests that it covers the wholeness and the community-structure of all in any given society, which is embedded in cultural values. This is to state that acquisition of knowledge is collective and community-initiated and integrated. Stating unequivocally that cultural knowledge embraces other types of knowledge that could exist.

The significance of knowledge in any human endeavour and its efficacy to the understanding of who the people are, and what they hope to be in the future, can never be under-played, as it is the fulcrum on which the society sits and builds. It is in this realm that Kwasi Wiredu reiterates the importance and significance of knowledge to human survival and endeavour, saying that “Knowledge is necessary for action. That is axiomatic. Action is necessary for survival. That too is axiomatic. Therefore, most certainly, knowledge is necessary for survival” (Wiredu 1998, 17). He argues further that:

The quest for knowledge of any type is a characteristically human endeavour. In the changes and chances of human history some peoples may come to be ahead of others at some particular point of time in some particular area of investigation, but there is nothing to show that such situations must be permanent; and there is also no reason why any form of genuine knowledge should be attributed to any peoples in any proprietary sense (Ibid.).

For the survival of human race and that of any society, knowledge is sacrosanct and it differs from one society to another, as problems of one society also differ in different societies. This ultimately leads to the fact that knowledge of one society will determine how such society lives and earns its living.

Even though scholars of diverse traditions, like Hountondji, have problems with collective knowledge, calling it ethno-philosophy, this does not in any way rule out the possibility and actuality of collective form of knowledge. Leszek Nowak (2005, 117) argues that, “To Western thought one of the most surprising properties of African thought is the idea of ascribing knowledge to certain kinds of collective subjects – such as family lines.” He states unequivocally that, “It is hardly true that epistemological collectivism is the peculiarity of African thought. It first became apparent in the European thought with Hegel, and manifests itself wherever the Hegelian influence is or was discernible” (Ibid.) In order to justify his argument that Hegelian thought essentially is collective in nature, he brings out the fact that, “The belief that the *collective point of view* is inherent in

the epistemic perspective of Marxism is very frequent among Marxists; Marxism then concentrates not on individuals' characteristics, but on larger wholes: classes, strata, entire societies. The epistemic subject then is not this or that individual, but a *collective subject*, equal to the sets of all societies of a given historical era." (Ibid., 119) These claims point to the fact that collective form of knowledge is not place-oriented, that is, it is not about a particular community or culture. Collective knowledge exists in all societies of the world. In this manner, any foreign or alien form of knowledge should not be superimposed on the cultural knowledge, even though such form of knowledge could be useful for the survival of human endeavours as there is no crime in borrowing knowledge from other climes. But such should be to add value to what is and not to discard it entirely.

Cultural knowledge means the skills, experiences and insights of people, applied to maintain or improve their livelihood. It also means a body of knowledge of a people of particular society, which they have survived on for a very long time. This means knowledge of a people who have lived and have common hegemonic structure for a long period of time. This signifies the fact that cultural knowledge inherent in a particular society will not be the same with another cultural background even though they live in the same country at the same time and they come from the same race. This is because problems of particular people living in mangrove region of a country will never be the same with knowledge system of another group of people living and making their lives in the savannah belt of such society. By saying this, we do not mean that people in those cultures cannot communicate with each other, as cross-cultural dialogue is a possibility.

By way of description, cultural knowledge is a distinctive body of knowledge and skills including practices, technologies that have been developed over time, and enables communities in their specific environments to survive. It is generated within cultures that such knowledge is being used. This shows the fact that it is the basis for decision-making and survival strategies in the society as it concerns itself with the critical issues of human life. This denotes the fact that cultural knowledge determines how people in a particular environment solve their own problems by themselves through their means of livelihood as integral part of their existence. It should be noted that cultural knowledge, is location and culture specific, which means that particular knowledge is rooted and founded in place and consciously determined by the culture of the people.

While no one can discountenance the above, concerning what cultural knowledge is, it is also pertinent to note that it is passed by man from one generation to another in order that future generations might benefit from the repository of knowledge accrued from past generations. Here, Hoppers (2004, 2) writes that, “Most of this knowledge and these skills have been passed down from earlier generations, but individual men and women in each new generation adapt and add to this in a constant adjustment to changing circumstances and environmental conditions. They in turn pass on the body of knowledge to the next generation, in an effort to provide survival strategies.” In her analysis, she further reiterates the fact that indigenous knowledge is based on the culture of the society it is found, which means that it is a sub-set or a body of the epistemologies of such community that:

Traditional knowledge is thus the totality of all knowledge and practices, whether explicit or implicit, used in the management of socioeconomic, spiritual and ecological facets of life. In that sense, many aspects of it can be contrasted with ‘cosmopolitan knowledge’ that is culturally anchored in Western cosmology, scientific discoveries, economic preferences and philosophies... The relationship between people, the knowledge and the technologies for its application are under-girded by a cosmology, a world view (Ibid.).

This is to state that people maintain and manipulate forms of knowledge at a particular given time for their survival and livelihood. Survival and livelihood in this sense cover all areas and facets of human existence as could be described and examined by the people. It also projects that there is a level of cosmology that involves the knowledge of the people. This is because there cannot be knowledge without culture, which binds the people together with the tradition that is built on the cultural structure of the community. This informs all aspects be it technology, science, economy, politics, religion among many others of the people. Cultural knowledge is used by the people to make a living in a particular environment.

Another trait of cultural knowledge is the fact that it is developed by the people therein, which could be scientific or non-scientific, practical or purely theoretical (abstract) among others. It is either taught or learnt as it is the case in culture because it is constructed and built on culture with so many diverse factors. Here, Das Gupta has this to say about cultural knowledge:

The entire folk life is constructed on assemblage of the following factors: non-reflective intangible part of culture (cultural values, social norms, folkways, taboo and traditional belief); reflective and tangible part of culture (set of material apparatus); reflective but non-tangible part (information, knowledge and traditional technologies; mode of communication (formal and informal) ... (Gupta 2011, 58-59).

These factors are so important when the discourse of cultural knowledge is being mentioned as it is the information foundation with both open and hidden-ends and also with very much dynamic and functional for the survival of human society. For the survival of man, cultural knowledge has clear-cut relationships with nature, human agency and solidarity. This is so, as knowledge is used, in the understanding of the cosmos by which man associates and relates with it. It is in this understanding of having solidarity that man will be able to subdue his environment and making it habitable for himself.

In every society of the world, there are sub-sets of knowledge that are possessed, which are not held by all in such society. This, so many times, is seen as a challenge in knowledge narratives but it is seen as usual, as members of a society could be said to be having same pattern of ideology at every time. This supposes that there will be individuals that have more knowledge and skills in one aspect of life than others in the society, which suggests how different knowledge sets interact in the society and the larger meaning and contribution of knowledge in the society. By this, cultural knowledge creates and promotes moral economy because it allows for the identification of individual within a cultural frame-work, thus providing decision-making processes to be followed based on relationships within such events as it provides people with a sense of community, stability and sense of belonging. By this, it influences many areas of life; its role in the social and economic well-being of the society and in the management of its resources and the environment is immense as man cannot do away with his environment and all things therein. It empowers communities, contributes to development and increases self-sufficiency. While in its various manifestations mentioned earlier, it also gives cultural pride and motivation to solve cultural problems with local ingenuity and resources.

In furtherance of the above intent, Mariano Grondona proposes and points out that there are two categories of values, which are essential in cultural knowledge narrative – intrinsic and instrumental. On intrinsic

values, he avers, there “are those we uphold regardless of the benefits or costs. Patriotism, as a value, demands sacrifices and is sometimes “disadvantageous” as far as individual well-being is concerned” (Grondona 2000, 45). This stems from the fact that so many times what an individual stands for might not be to such interest but the interest of the community. Here, one talks about altruism as examined by Grondona, which “is the highest and self-denying” – the morality of saints and martyrs - as against the ethical egoism, which is the main ‘value’ inherent in peoples’ lives today among communities (Ibid., 48). This stipulates that when we discuss about cultural knowledge, the onus lies on the moral aspect, which builds the society together as he says that, “The behaviour of someone who acts out of respect for an intrinsic value formerly accepted at will and later incorporated as an inner imperative is called “moral.” A person is moral when answering to intrinsic values” (Ibid., 46). On the part of instrumental value, it is, according to him, “when we support it because it is directly beneficial to us” (Ibid., 45). This is argued, by Amartya Sen, in his analysis of the attention and intention of utmost freedom in any society that:

The instrumental role of freedom concerns the way different kinds of rights, opportunities, and entitlements contribute to the expansion of human freedom in general, and thus to promoting development. This relates not merely to the obvious connection that expansion of freedom of each kind must contribute to development since development itself can be seen as a process of enlargement of human freedom in general (Sen 1999, 37).

This idea was re-echoed by him (Sen) in *Inequality Reexamined* that:

Some well-known approaches to the evaluation of individual advantage and to the assessment of good social orders have been concerned directly with achievement only, treating the importance of the freedom to achieve as being entirely instrumental – as means to actual achievements. Utilitarianism is an obvious example. The utilitarian approach is characterised by confirming inter-personal comparisons for social assessment to achievements only, and identifying achievements with the utilities achieved. The two together yield the utilitarian informational focus on inter-personally compared individual utilities for personal and social assessment (1992, 31-32).

Cultural knowledge begins with the understanding that there are differences among cultures, which includes placing value on forms of diversity concerning ideas inherent in individual cultural backgrounds.

This understanding allows for cultural sensitivity that cultural differences and similarities exist without necessarily assigning values either right or wrong, better or worse to such differences. In this process, cultural knowledge undergoes various forms of awareness, which involves internal changes in terms of attitudes and values, which in one way or the other refers to those fundamental qualities of openness and flexibility, which necessarily exist that people develop in relation to others. In this manner, Amilcar Cabral argues that cultural knowledge is all about the quest for identity and liberation from domination, imperialism, oppression and humiliation. He first understands culture as a form of ability to produce what is inherent in the historical past of the people. To him, “it is in culture that you find the capacity (or responsibility) for the production and the fertilising of the seed, which ensures the continuity of history, ensuring at the same time, the perspectives of the evolution and of the progress of the society in question” (Cabral 1974, 13). This understanding is used to examine the value of those fundamentals residing in culture as a product of history in the quest for emancipation. Here, he avers that:

The value of culture as an element of resistance to foreign rule lies in the fact that, in the ideological or idealistic context, it is the vigorous manifestation of the materialist and historical reality of the society already under domination, or about to be dominated... Culture, whatever may be the ideological or idealistic manifestations of its character, is thus an essential element in the history of a people. It is, perhaps the product of history as the flower is the product of a plant... Culture teaches us what have been the dynamic syntheses, structured and established by the mind of society for the solution of these conflicts, at each stage in the evolution of this same society in the quest for survival and progress (Ibid.).

In this quest for the emancipation of the society from aliens and slave-owners from within, Cabral proffers a better understanding of cultural knowledge in the struggle to achieve this set-objective as without it, the crave for liberation will be fruitless. Here, he writes:

[...] the liberation movement must base its programme on profound knowledge of the culture of the people, and it must be able to appreciate the elements of this culture, giving to each its due weight, and also, appreciate the various levels it has reached in each social category. It must also be able to discern the essential from the secondary, the positive from the negative, the progressive from the retrogressive, and

the strengths from the weaknesses, in the total cultural complex of the peoples. All this, with a view to the various demands of the struggle, and with an aim of being able to concentrate its efforts on the essential without forgetting the secondary, to arouse the development of positive and progressive elements and to resist flexibility but stoutly, negative and retrogressive elements; and finally, with a view to utilising the strengths and eliminating the weaknesses or transforming the latter into strengths (Ibid., 16).

Cabral also suggests, on the other hand, the adaptation of strategic techniques for the survival of the society. It should be pointed out that without the consideration of the local knowledge of the people, moving out of the 'woods' will definitely be impossible. This, he states thus:

The liberation movement must be able to bring about slowly but surely, in the course of political programme, a convergence of the levels of culture of the various social categories, which can be deployed for the struggle, and to transform them into a single national cultural force, which acts as the basis and the foundation of the armed struggle. . . Knowledge of the struggle shows just how utopian and absurd it is to pretend to apply methods adopted by other peoples during their wars of liberation and the solutions, which they found to problems with which they were or are faced, without considering the facts of the locale... (Ibid.).

Developing a culturally competent attitude is an ongoing process. It is important to view all people as unique individuals and realise that their experiences, beliefs, values and language affect their ways of interacting with others and the larger community. Also, one must be aware that differences exist within cultures and which stipulate the emerging differences and divergences in human societies. This shows that cultural knowledge is all about self-identity and self-determination without which man will be stranger to his environment.

In this struggle for self-identification as argued for above, cultural knowledge proposes that it is also about values in cultural traits of a society. These values might be in form of social ethics as *Ubuntu* is devoted to, among the peoples of the Southern part of Africa, which stipulates that society, not a transcendent being, gives human beings their humanity. It is a known fact from this pattern that people with high personal and social identity rely on their stable, internal values as a guide to their social behaviour, which in one way or the other focus on their strong sense of national pride, and family heritage that build

upon their sense of collectiveness and bond in the society. It is a re-affirmation of John Mbiti's *I am, because we are and, since we are, therefore, I am*. This means that there is no human survival without the support of others in the society, that is, an individual is a community being from birth to death. This is an affirmation of one's humanity through the humanity of others because it is what sustains the regeneration of humanity through socialisation processes. Socialisation presupposes a community population with which individuals have vested interests in the collective prosperity of what affects the community. Even though it caters for the community interests, this does not in any way or manner isolate the interests of individuals in the society.

In our quest for the understanding of cultural knowledge and its efficacy in societies of the world either the Global North or the Global South, some factors are of necessity. And here, Grondona examines some factors/values that must be embraced for the survival of such community, which "are ultimately linked to the performance of the cultures involved. The implication is that if people in such cultural backgrounds avail themselves of those salient factors/values like: religion, trust, the moral imperative, the notion of justice, the value of work (dignity of labour), and importance of time among others" (Grondona 2000, 47-53), as listed in his twenty contrasting cultural factors, the better for such society. Those values are to serve, according to him, "as a bridge between short-term and long-term expectations, decisively reinforcing distant goals in their otherwise hopeless struggle against instant gratification" (Ibid., 46). This is the point by which culture and all the embedded traits play significant roles in the moulding of individuals in the society. And it is on this that Byahuhanga (1999, 63) avers that, "*Culture* entails a system of meaning and understanding, implicit and explicit, which underlies the logical unity of human groups, ... Different situations and events are understood from a cultural context." By this, Olusegun Oladipo confirms that, "culture does not only provide a framework for thought and action in a society, it is also a veritable source of identity" (2009, 13).

CONCLUSION

We have argued in this paper that cultural knowledge is a growing field of inquiry, either in its local form or in its cosmopolitan nature, as there are emerging questions, which might defy tangible and clear

answers towards its understanding. This is clearly due to the multifarious nature of what constitutes cultural knowledge, and what it means to different individuals and even societies. Knowledge is determined by the nature of its existence, as it involves diverse experiences of living and observations of a people either in the current form or from its past generations.

It would be a fruitless activity for anyone and/or scholar to deny the fact that cultural knowledge is the agent, which binds society together. This is because of the fact that it constitutes communicative processes through which knowledge is acquired, preserved and transmitted by man in different societies and different stages of life. It is the information base for a society, which facilitates communication and decision-making. This means that the basic composition of any society's knowledge system is its cultural knowledge. These knowledge forms are known by other names, and among them are localised knowledge, traditional knowledge, indigenous technical knowledge, and rural knowledge among others. And in an attempt to understand the veracity of humanity differences, the acceptance of cultural knowledge as an alternative in understanding inter-cultural communications and encounters can never be faulted.

REFERENCES:

- Bewaji, John. 2007. *An Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge: A Pluricultural Approach*. Ibadan: Hope Publications.
- Byaruhanga, Rukooko. 1999. Ethnicity, culture and social reconstruction. Social reconstruction in Africa. *Ugandan Philosophical Studies*, II, 4: 99–118.
- Cabral, Amilcar. 1974. National liberation and culture. *Transition*, 45: 12–17.
- Gettier, Edmund L. 1963. Is Justified True Belief Knowledge? *Analysis*, 23(6): 121–123. doi:10.1093/analys/23.6.121
- Goldman, Alvin. 1995. "Knowledge". *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*. Ted Honderich (Ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 447–448.
- Grondona, Mariano. 2000. "A cultural typology of economic development". In Lawrence Harrison and Samuel Huntington (Eds.), *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*. New York: Basic Books, pp. 44–55.
- Gupta, Das. 2011. Does indigenous knowledge have anything to deal with sustainable development? *Antrocom Online Journal of Anthropology*, 7(1): 57–64.
- Haldane, John. 1995. "Renaissance philosophy". *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, pp. 768–769.
- Hoppers, Catherine. 2004. *Culture, Indigenous Knowledge and Development: The Role of the University*. Johannesburg: Centre for Educational Policy Development (CEPD), Occasional Paper, No. 5.

- Nowak, Leszek. 2005. On the collective subjects in epistemology: the Marxist case and a problem for the African viewpoint. *Knowledge Cultures: Comparative Western and African Epistemology*, 88: 117-128.
- Oladipo, Olusegun. 2009. *Philosophy and Social Reconstruction in Africa*. Ibadan: Hope Publications.
- Russell, Bertrand. 1959. *The Problems of Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sen, Amartya. 1992. *Inequality Reexamined*. New York: Harvard University Press.
- Sen, Amartya. 1999. *Development as Freedom*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wiredu, Kwasi. 1998. "Our problem of knowledge: brief reflections on knowledge and development in Africa". In Olusegun Oladipo (Ed.), *Remaking Africa: Challenges of the Twenty-First Century*. Ibadan: Hope Publications, pp. 17–23.