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CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: INTERNAL BOTTLENECKS AS WELL AS THE RELEVANCE OF COMTE'S LAWS

By

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Abstract

Whatever adjective – poor, undeveloped, underdeveloped, developing, emerging, or transitional – which theorists delight to use to position Africa in the contemporary world, no one can deny the appalling socio-economic indices from Africa since political independence to date. The abundant natural and human resources in the continent have been misused or misapplied while some are dormant. This has placed majority of the citizens at the lower rung of the socio-economic ladder while the minority use few deceitful statistics to paint a false picture or fall back on colonialism as the cause of the problem. The situation is complicated by some unscientific positions which resurrect Auguste Comte's law of three stages which a review shows the law places Africa in the first stage of sociological development. African nations therefore remain in the group with the white-washed phrase, 'transition societies.' This paper uses desk research method to analyse the status quo. Application of Comte's three stages in national development process does not appear to have a parallel in literature to date. The paper recommends a research agenda to determine new concepts of development for policy purposes and indeed development aid; advocacy for new development thought and action in line with Comte's scientific stage; grafting of local practices seen to be development inducing; and emphasis on education for development.

Keywords: Development, Colonialism, Governance, Sociological Stage, Education

Introduction

Apata (2022) submits without equivocation that Africa was poorer in 2022 than in 1972 when Walter Rodney published his famous work, "How Europe underdeveloped Africa." Apata (2022) highlighted Rodney's discomfort with the activities of the internal bourgeoisie in Africa and accused them of complicity with the West made worse by unmitigated internal corruption. While Perelman (2011) describes the situation of Western-induced setbacks in Africa as 'stunting of potential' and Rodney called it 'underdevelopment,' Apata (2022) describes it as 'suffocation' of the continent. Given 2024 indices, African countries operated at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder compared with countries of the West and some countries in Asia. Walter Rodney had blamed Europe for the early activities designed to keep Africa down and more than fifty years after his publication, much of Africa has remained poor.

Modern economic thought can be traced to Adam Smith in his 1776 book, *The Wealth of Nations* but deep and sustained worries about growth and development of societies took new dimensions after the Second World War. Theories along with models were spun which gave birth to a body of knowledge known as development economics. The theories and models were without doubt primarily aimed at societies where development indices fell

below expected levels while some which looked promising were in fact, stagnant. Unfortunately, several countries in Africa and to some extent Asia and Latin America till date lag behind close neighbours. The reasons are many and include resistance to change noticeable in internal structures such as extant systems and cultures; application of one size fits all approaches to the problem of growth and development; deep and widespread corruption; capacity in terms of management; as well as the low level of techniques, technology, and productive resources. Aside from complex economic reasons such as aggregate demand, Spence (2015) mentions “quality of government” which in our opinion includes society-wide endemic and crippling corruption. This is captured by Dang and Pheng (2015) in a detailed review of the concept of economic development as well as development thought:

Development issues are complex and multifaceted. There is no one single pathway for economic development that all countries can pursue. In the long term, the economic development process requires changes in policies to account for new emerging factors and trends. Designing these economic development policies also need to take into consideration the social, cultural, political systems and institutions as well as their changing interaction over time in a country (p.22).

The poor economic indices in many underdeveloped countries should be a source of worry in an interdependent world. The worry deepens on the backdrop of availability of human and natural resources, substantial flow of development assistance and application of tested approaches cum models. The situation calls for new thinking to determine the status of each country or society along with new models to attempt remediation. It is pertinent to note that in some countries some parts grow fast, some are slow, while some remain in all intents and purposes stagnant. Another compelling reason for a new thinking relates to the penchant of post-colonial apologists to attack past colonial powers when independence has given developing countries the capacity to rise above poverty. Some African governments through their public relations personnel, print, and electronic media use colonialism to justify unsatisfactory performance in office. Walter Rodney in his work, “How Europe underdeveloped Africa” published in 1972 can be said to have led this trend. Rodney’s work was an early and central work on reasons for slow development of African countries. Apologists continue to use colonialism as excuse for the near-permanent underdevelopment of most African countries. But Ubong (2013) believes reliance on buck-passing initiated by Rodney (1972) should be discarded. We argue that the first move towards human growth from individual to corporate level lies in acceptance of existence of problems followed by direct, personal effort to solve them rather than a permanent look backward whereas the solutions lie in front.

Above issues informed this paper which reviews the economic situation in Africa from two perspectives. First, should the current backwardness of most African nations be blamed on colonialism and specifically on pre-independence colonialism? Second, can another issue such as the tight hold to non-scientific ways be an important contributor to Africa’s backwardness? An attempt at the first question makes use of economic data as well as the role post-independence managers of African countries have played. The second question uses Auguste Comte’s laws of three stages as basis for analysis. This paper does not conclude that operation at Comte’s first stage explains everything about slow growth of

African countries. It canvasses attention on the issue as one of the reasons for slow growth of African societies witnessed up to the second decade of the 21st century.

African Economic Outlook

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) over the years has provided economic data which allow for international comparisons of national economies. Table 1 presents a summary of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which is the most common index of development of countries and as in the table, continents. In 2024, Asia led the world with 36.8% of World GDP with China dominating on the continent. North America came second with 30.2% but the United States as a country approximated the continent. Europe, Africa's past colonial masters took 3rd position with 24.4%. Thereafter a dramatic fall follows with Africa accounting for 2.7% of World GDP. Oceania which includes the developed countries of Australia and New Zealand accounted for 1.9% of World GDP.

Table 1

Comparative Gross Domestic Product (Nominal) Data Estimates

Rank	Continent	GDP (\$b) 2022	Share (%) 2022
1.	Asia	38,435	36.8
2.	North America	31,603	30.2
3.	Europe	25,440	24.4
4.	South America	4,100	3.9
5.	Africa	2,858	2.7
6.	Oceania	1,979	1.9
7.	Unaccounted	62	0.1
	World	104,476	100

Source: International Monetary Fund, 2024.

Consolidated data are difficult to source on the situation in 1972 when Walter Rodney wrote his path-breaking book but another picture can be seen based on selected countries in the seven continents. Table 2 shows GDP (Nominal) by 2024 as released by International Monetary Fund for 1972, 2024, and projections to 2029 in millions of US dollars.

Table 2

	\$'000		
Country	1972	2024	2029
Algeria	7,193	266,780	3,058,227
United Arab Emirates	2,173	527,796	4,661,465
India	71,735	3,937,011	6,436,653
China	111,589	18,532,633	24,842,337
Australia	59,269	1,790,348	2,208,401
United Kingdom	162,369	3,495,261	4,661,463
United States	1,225,000	28,781,083	34,950,012
Nigeria	16,829	252,738	287,850
South Africa	20,753	373,233	442,857

Source: Compiled from IMF data, 2024

52 years after “How Europe underdeveloped Africa” and 64 years after Nigeria as the “giant of Africa” secured political independence, the country’s GDP trails behind that of United Arab Emirates which had just 12.9% of Nigeria’s GDP by 1972. A dramatic situation can be seen in 2024 data when Nigeria’s GDP trailed that of UAE and in fact became 47.88% of UAE’s. Meanwhile the ruling class in Nigeria without shame head for Dubai to buy property, host birthday parties, and enjoy rest after what they claim to be hard work in their offices. Both countries were colonized (if the term ‘protectorate’ can approximate colonial status) and both countries run on crude petroleum as the dominant source of foreign exchange. Maybe the rush by Nigerian power brokers to buy property in UAE should be blamed on colonialism after all, Europeans taught Nigerians to buy properties at Abu Dhabi and Dubai and host birthday parties at Dubai. UAE’s GDP was 10.5% of South Africa’s in 1972 but by 2024, South Africa trailed behind UAE with the former’s GDP at 70.7% of that of the latter. Nigeria and South Africa lead the continent in development statistics.

The situation generates more worry when projected figures from IMF show countries in Africa going at the speed of snails. While UAE is expected to grow by 966.3% between 2024 and 2029, IMF analysts hope Nigeria will grow by 13.9% and South Africa by 18.8%! Algeria has better prospects but worries are more about sub-Saharan Africa. India, a poor country, is expected to grow by 63.5% between 2024 and 2029. It is worthy to note that India’s GDP grew by 5,388% between 1972 and 2024 while that of Nigeria, at present Africa’s biggest economy, grew by 1,502%. Nigeria’s mass transit system is at present dominated by Bajaj and other tricycles known in the country as Keke. The dominant tricycles imported into and used in Nigeria are from India. As Laker (2024) reports, India has been projected to overtake Japan to become the world’s third largest economy by 2027 ahead of Germany in Europe at present in the fourth position.

In 2023 the Federal Government released ₦160 million (\$215,128.20 as at October 2023) to each federal legislator to buy SUVs for ‘monitoring’ and tour of constituencies. For each of the legislators the payment for purchase of a new car would have met the salaries of about 5,333 people for one month for those on the national minimum wage of ₦30,000 (\$64.57). The bicameral legislature has 109 Senators and 360 members in the House of Representatives. The allocation for the 469 legislators would have met the minimum wage of 1.9 million workers for one month or 159 thousand workers on the national minimum wage for one year. Of considerable importance, the money went to importers of SUVs when Innosin Motors assembles the same category of cars in Nigeria. The Federal Government kept factories in Europe, Asia, and the Americas active while the local equivalent lost out. As a matter of fact, Nwachukwu (2023) reported that a Senator said the legislators do not want locally assembled SUVs. ₦56.7 billion to import cars for people who operate from their homes and act as rubber stamps for the Executive arm in a country where several citizens slid into absolute poverty with the entry of a new Federal Government should be seen as unconscionable. The World Bank (2023) indicated a slide of about 10 million more Nigerians into extreme poverty in 2023.

Should Colonialism continue to bear the Blame?

A 32-year old musician Damini Ogulu known worldwide as “Burna Boy” released a video on part-history of Nigeria. The video blamed colonialism for the near-permanent state of underdevelopment of Nigeria. This kind of activity plays well into the rhetoric of politicians and western powers including China eager for voices from within to give justification for stagnation of Africa and to cover up for contemporary misdeeds. If the uneducated

traditional rulers of the pre-independence days signed off the future of Africa, should the highly literate class of today sustain such scandal? The 'leaders' continue to sign off the present and have gone further to sign off the future probably in the mistaken belief they have stashed up enough to cover their children and their grandchildren. One of the country's long term sources of development funds may witness a major change in approach to its management in the near future as indicated by Kennedy (2024). Crude oil, provider of about 95% of the country's foreign exchange earnings, will be traded in the futures market. New governments take office to find the dominant source of public revenue, a wasting asset, used up by previous administrations!

Another area of waste has been national pension funds. Pension provides long term, stable, predictable, and almost cost-free funds which should be employed in long term development projects. Unlike South America where pension funds play a significant role in development finance, Nigeria's billions in pension funds are managed in a secretive manner. Few African voices have spoken out against the use of colonialism as excuse for Africa's slow growth. Mapuva and Chari (2010) lamented on it while Olagunju (2024) in a piece titled, "Britain is Nigeria's 'bad' teacher" has bemoaned Nigeria's slow growth from the perspective of political system in use in the country at present. While established reasons for stagnation continue to dog the steps of African countries, a not-so obvious reason needs be reviewed for possible inclusion in future development models. One of such reasons is closeness of Africans to the supernatural which they employ to explain events and to operate their lives and systems at individual, corporate, and national levels. This issue is discussed hereunder starting from the conceptual framework.

Conceptual Framework – Comte's Laws

Comte's law of three stages leans on the intellectual and regards thoughts and indeed visions and dreams as harbingers and catalysts of action. Auguste Comte, French sociologist and philosopher identified intellectual stages which societies pass through in their evolution. In societies at the theological or first stage, most things in individual and community life are read from the religious perspective. Concepts and issues are regarded as imbued by magic which implies the interplay of forces associated with the supernatural such as gods, spirits, and ancestors. In the birthplace of modern philosophy – Athens in Greece - this orientation existed given the famous quote by Thales, the earliest pre-Socratic philosopher to the effect that, "All things are full of gods," (Cohen, Curd, & Reeve, 2011). Thales took such transcendental position despite his inclination towards natural philosophy.

The second stage in the series was analysed by Comte in the metaphysical perspective. This stage does not appear to be too different from the first beyond uncoupling to make human thinking separate from ethereal principles as in the case of the occult. Conceptualizations on first causes, ultimate reality, and related issues dominate thinking even when, in Comte's opinion, they do not lead to acceptable explanations of nature and society. Plato's 'forms' which related to essences in the outer realm as original copies of what obtains in the physical plane can be associated with this second stage. In Nigeria this concept reverberates as far as pulpits as explanations for most things which take place in the society from the health of individuals to corporate failures and national malaise.

The third and final level Comte christened the positive stage which we can sum up in the word 'science.' Science has its basis on the scientific method with the characteristics of observation, experimentation, drawing of conclusions, and replication. The modern world with the dramatic developments is the child of the third stage with positivism as the major

operational tool. The American Association for the Advancement of Science (2021) has confirmed the role of science in development. It can be argued by deduction that the obverse holds – the low level of scientific knowledge and use of science in much of Africa has contributed to the slow socio-economic development in the continent.

Between the Theological and Positive Stages

Apart from ancient Greece where Comte's second stage appears to have been more relevant, most countries now regarded as developed skipped the second stage. Science, run on the principles of the scientific method has been the driving force behind the rapid socio-economic developments in countries regarded as developed. The American Association for the Advancement of Science (2021) quotes a statement by Professor Charles Weiss of the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University on October 5, 2001 as follows:

It is science alone that can solve the problem of hunger and poverty, of insanitation and illiteracy, of superstition and deadening customs and traditions, of vast resources running to waste, of a rich country inhabited by starving people. Who indeed can afford to ignore science today? At every turn we have to seek its aid. The future belongs to science and to those who make friends with science.

Developing countries have no need to reinvent the wheel at this point in human history. They need re-engineering of their thinking processes from the theological to the positive. Scientific and entrepreneurial orientation may as well be the big push conceived by Paul Rosenstein-Rodan in 1943. Empiricism in which ultimate reality lies in matter and energy may not be the last word in the societal development process but refusal to let go even the concept of forms which places thinking in the metaphysical level is anti-development. Pragmatism played a significant role in the United States of America (USA) during her transitional stage and provided the platform for landing men on the moon. This must be adopted in Africa to push forward the much-needed development effort.

The Specific African Experience

Admirers of Immanuel Kant, a German philosopher may feel uncomfortable at his view of Africa. Kant, quoted by Smidt (2004) believed the religious feelings of the average African during his time were closer to the profane than the sublime. Africans in the opinion of Kant were more inclined to fetishism and magic than science. But in the light of realism and the operations of many if not most Africans from the ancient to the contemporary, was Immanuel Kant wrong? The word fetish refers to the religious attachment and reverence accorded by persons to material things such as groves, trees, totems, bodies of water, and related things. Magic refers to application of means regarded as possessed of supernatural powers over natural realities. Given these two positions, Immanuel Kant was correct about the orientation of the average African. Which African country even in the 21st century can claim complete rejection of fetish practices among citizens? Who can claim with certainty that juju priests no longer have patrons who believe in the powers ascribed to the supernatural embedded in seen and unseen objects and processes? The practice of animism in every African society into the second decade of the 21st century is counterproductive and as Haynes (2007) notes, anti-development. But Haynes (2007) also

notes that religion can have a salutary effect on health, education, and environmental sustainability.

Influence of traditional religion however continues to affect people across social and intellectual strata and in all aspects of life (Ubong, 2013). The religious orientation sustains African communities in the first stage of intellectual development as conceived by Comte. Socio-economic development presumes structures and processes which improve well-being in the modern economic sense and those structures are available through the instrumentality of science. Traditions inhibit the use of the methods of science and by extension the development of requisite structures, processes, and systems which propel the society to achieve acceptable levels of growth and development. For instance, why should an entrepreneur whose path from home was crossed at the left side of the road by a stray snake think of a bad day ahead? A business day can end or a business idea can be rejected because imprints of the supernatural are suspected by the individual. Some work has been done on the place of religion in Africa such as the one by Kimmerle (2006). Kimmerle (2006) holds the opinion that African traditional religion is animistic and polytheistic. The average African (including the educated ones and 'strong' Christians) subject their thoughts and actions to the dictates of religion. Kimmerle (2006) accepts that the belief in transcendental realities exists in all societies but in the West the hold by religion has considerably reduced. The situation is different in sub-Saharan Africa of which he asserts:

In Sub-Saharan African thought this belief (in spirits) is broadly present and deeply rooted. It is the core of traditional African religions. Also intellectuals, although they may have taken over Christian and Islamic convictions mostly stick to this belief.

Traditional religion with spirits at the core influence thought and action in a disproportionate way as Kimmerle (2006) has noted. Attention to a multiplicity of deities generates a peculiar difficulty in the perspective of allocation and application of scarce resources with attendant impact on social and economic life. The Pew Center (2010) carried out a study of 19 African countries and submitted that among other things Africans have sustained their beliefs in traditional religions. Belief in juju ranged from a high 85% in Senegal to a low 5% in Rwanda. Belief in the 'secret eye,' supernatural healing, consultation of mediums, and related non-scientific attitudes continue to pervade and pervert.

The study though carried out more than two decades ago sustains its relevance even in economics if viewed from recent developments in the two countries mentioned above. By 2021 Rwanda was regarded as a shining growth pole with 10.9% annual growth while Senegal managed to record 6.1% growth in the same year (The World Bank, 2022). If the shackles of tradition are removed, Senegal with a larger population, more natural and human resources, and higher Gross Domestic Product should under normal circumstances grow faster than Rwanda.

Education

Patrinis (2016) summarizes the place of education in development thus: "Education is truly one of the most powerful instruments for reducing poverty and inequality and it sets the foundation for sustained economic growth." This remains true for all countries reason developed countries continue to emphasize education. Mallinson (1975) put the role of education on marble thus, "The reading nations are the leading nations." But education does more than to change formal standard of living indices. It expands the horizon of

individuals and in particular the scope of intellection and performance of those who have benefitted from education. Although many Africans continue to bow to traditions one cannot doubt the impact of education which gives clear explanations to mystical and mythical issues. Several diseases for instance are at present referred to hospitals rather than managed in the parish of tradition.

The refusal of African governments to allocate the recommended percentage of their annual budgets to education will continue to constrain individual and societal development. United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommended that 15%-20% of annual budgets be allocated to education at its 2015 World Education Forum. In Nigeria allocations to education for five years stood at 6.7% in 2016, 7.38% in 2017, 7.04% in 2018, 7.05% in 2019, 6.7% in 2020, and 5.6% in 2021. The 2023 budget provided for 4.30%, the lowest in a decade (Lawal, 2022). The 2024 Federal budget of N27.5 trillion (\$36.7 billion) provided a sad 5.6% or N1.54 trillion to education. However, in a framework of notorious lack of transparency at all levels what should be more worrisome is the amount released and the amount used out of whatever is released rather than amount budgeted. Ushie (2024) notes, "The castration of education is what has contributed to the emergence of all social and political problems of the society."

Way Forward/Research Agenda

Development economists have churned out several theories which appear not to work in the African set up. Many African and Asian nations have depended on aid which generates several unwanted outcomes from clash of goals, approaches, and interests among donors (Scanland, 2020) to outright misapplication as in the case of aid being used to prosecute local wars.

A new research agenda to focus attention on the non-science aspects of underdevelopment has become an imperative. The research questions should focus on the possibility of the African psyche being re-oriented away from the metaphysical to the positive. For instance, can a sick person and his/her family make a hospital and medical laboratory the first rather than the last ports of call? Can Africans develop the habit of checking their blood pressures rather than wait till stroke arrives and then go on to blame witches and wizards for an ailment which science has proven solutions for? Can business failure be analytically determined to stave off reoccurrence as against search for enemies and detractors? Would business training not be better than ad-hoc approaches to operations? In essence, can tradition be made to relax its stranglehold on the Africa's development throat? Eton, the protagonist in Bassey Ubong's play, "Zero Sum Game" (2006) lamented the pervasiveness of tradition in every aspect of life of everyone and as the play ends, loses his life to the unrelenting dictatorship of tradition. In a situation of this nature, Auguste Comte's first stage of societal development continues to be relevant.

Recommendations

John (2014) in his paper on colonialism in Africa makes a solemn and non-rhetorical declaration, "Failure has no excuses." To use colonialism as an excuse for poor management of the human and material resources of the continent must not be accepted any longer. One cannot point to a case in which Europe has told African rulers to exploit and direct the funnel of resources to their personal bank accounts in Europe and the Americas. Nor has any non-African placed a knife on the throat of any African in position of authority to use wrong practices and policies in the development process or continue to lean towards

transcendental approaches to management of life's processes. As African elders hold, no one tells even a child to direct food at the nostril rather than the mouth. Why would a head of government become richer than the country? Africa should adopt appropriate and acceptable processes and eliminate corrupt practices from the system. It should raise eyebrows that the Mo Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership instituted in 2007 has gone to a shocking seven past leaders in its 18-year history! For nine years the Committee did not find any past African leader worth the prize!! With a mouth-watering \$5 million spread over ten years, the prize stands heads and shoulders above the highest prize of \$1.2 million awarded by the Nobel Committee for Peace. African leaders should be less excited about upfront material gains but look forward to long term gains such as offered by the Mo Ibrahim Prize.

In the specific case of stage of intellectual development, Africa should adopt the paradigm of grafting which exists in some developed countries. There is no country in the world where non-scientific practices are non-existent in absolute terms. Useful, pro-development traditions are retained by developed countries and made to run with modern science-based developments once conflict between the two can be avoided or minimized. The festival of Halloween for instance is based on mysteries and the other-worldly but a national (non-official) holiday on it is observed in the USA and Europe. The costumes, fireworks, and related paraphernalia cum processes are generators of business income. Education has a focal role to play which means governments have to provide more funds for education as should businesses and voluntary agencies both national and global. Ghana and South Africa are far ahead in budgetary allocations to education but what should be more important is how much is released and how much is used as approved. The system requires more controls for more transparency at every level from budgeting to auditing. The salary payment system used by Nigeria's Federal Government was expected to introduce simplicity and transparency but it has in fact, introduced greater complexity and less transparency reason the Academic Staff Union of Universities continues to demand a new salary payment system for its members.

Aside from formal education a dire need exists for structured advocacy by way of campaigns against the stranglehold of religion in societies. Knowledge of the ineffectiveness of non-scientific practices can be a turning point. The strangle hold of churches on the psyche of adherents has attracted little if any attention. If advocacy is sustained and people are convinced with scientific arguments to dare, much more will be achieved. With respect to the conceptual framework, can it be modified to reflect societies with two legs in two camps? Many Africans have and display the desire to migrate to the positive stage but they are limited by the environment. Maybe another transition stage can be developed to reflect and ease the complication.

Conclusion

Britain went through over six hundred years of colonial subservience in the hands of many colonial masters and Finland faced about the same thing. Why are they developed countries with high standards of living for the majority of citizens today? Why have underdeveloped countries in Asia such as Singapore and in Middle East been able to climb and join the big league today? The need for theorists to depart from extant paradigms and design new ones given the failure of the old paradigms has become the world's most urgent desideratum. The problems with Africa lie in lack of capacity in leadership as well as corruption but of utmost importance, sustained attachment to religious alignments and orientations by the

people. Positive thinking, positivism in practice, and rationalism should be the new thrusts for research, theory development, and administration of African countries.

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THE MORAL QUANDARY IN NIGERIA'S WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY: HOW NOT TO ENTHRONE AN ETHICS OF RESPONSIBILITY

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Abstract

This paper interrogates the thesis that the whistleblowing policy is a valuable anti-corruption tool that also enthrones an ethics of responsibility. Its major aim is to expose some ethical challenges that trail the act of whistleblowing *vis-a-vis* the intriguing issues of responsibility and reward. Using a combination of content analysis and evaluative methods, This paper posits that rewarding a blower with a certain 'cut' of the recovered loot could encourage ethical egoism. This work contend that ethics of responsibility detests selfish interest, which underlies egoism. Thus, it develop a thesis that, since whistleblowing ought to be done in good faith, supposedly by a responsible and public-spirited agent, it should not attract a reward of financial cut. As a result this paper appeals to a traditional African moral maxim which says: *'a person who eats the stolen food of a thief is a thief,'* to show that such a reward is morally problematic. Indeed, it smacks of moral hypocrisy and runs counter to enthroneing the virtue of responsibility, and of curbing corruption which the policy was originally intended. This paper recommends that a reward of National Honour christened Nigerian Integrity and Patriotism Personified (NIPP) and job employment/promotion could be awarded to relevant whistleblowers.

Keywords: Whistle-blowing; Responsibility and Reward; Corruption; Moral Hypocrisy; Ethical Egoism

Introduction

Pervasive corruption constitutes the bane of development in Africa, particularly Nigeria; and many other developing nations of the world. The word corruption like many sociological words is not amenable to one definition. Transparency International as quoted by Casmir, *et al* (2014) defines corruption as "the misuse of entrusted power for private gains or the use of public office for private gain" (p.218). But it is clear that when it is related to development of a society the term easily leads to the inference on financial misappropriation, bribery, money laundering, extortion, and the like. The fulcrum for which we arrive at such inference is the lack of, or destruction of moral integrity, honesty, loyalty; in short impairment of virtue and moral principles that guide an organization or society. Thus, we can safely say that financial crime in any society is primarily traced to lack of, or dearth of moral integrity and the irresponsible attitude of the people in the society. A society where there is moral bankruptcy, and where public funds are diverted into private and selfish ends cannot develop to the extent expected of it. Neither can a society whose citizens lack a sense of responsibility, financial and social accountability develop economically. The above typifies the kind of corruption that has stultified developments in many African countries and which has particularly warranted the whistleblowing policy in many parts of the world.

To curb the menace of corruption, Nigeria like many African nations have set in machinery some anti-corruption policies, one of which is the whistleblowing policy. Mathewson (2012) correctly avers that this policy is popularly seen as a valuable tool in curbing corruption in many states and organizations that it has been introduced. Michael Akampa (2017) agrees to the fact that the whistleblowing tool in many African states is necessitated by the mass demonstration against corrupt practices, for example, as witnessed in Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Rwanda, Cameroun, Ghana, and many other places, where the people are asking government to be accountable. He makes the important point that “whistle-blowing has a crucial role in fighting corruption and ensuring ethical business behavior.” Makinde (2018) notes that corruption has been identified as the major cause of underdevelopment and the challenge facing socio-economic growth of Nigeria both in the public and private sectors. He agrees that the introduction of whistleblowing is to make every Nigerian a detective of a sort and to be financially responsible and accountable. From this standpoint, it is not out of place to infer that the policy wherever it is introduced is to first and foremost inculcate an ethics of responsibility in the individuals (both the leaders and the led) that make up the society.

There is no doubt that the whistleblowing tool has been very successful in the discovery of looted funds as we have seen in Nigeria; and in instilling fear and enhancing ethical behavior (Akampa 2017; Egbe 2017). It has also helped in projecting good corporate governance in Nigeria as Onyejiana & Bayode-ojo argue (2021). But of major concern to us in this work are the ethical challenges that surround the policy with regard to the system of reward. The specific concern of this work therefore is to examine whether there is any moral justification in rewarding a whistleblower (who is supposed to be a responsible citizen and who is supposed to blow the whistle in good faith) with a certain cut or percentage of the loot which his/her information helped to recover. Our work is a departure from the position of some scholars like Bullison (2017), Egbe (2017), Makinde (2018), who all argue with regard to the issue of reward, that there is nothing wrong in rewarding whistleblowers with financial incentives in so far as their information would lead to actual recovery. I agree with them and the like of Onyejiana & Bayode-ojo (2021), that whistleblowing promotes the concept of good governance in various sectors in the Nigerian society, and that whistleblowers should be celebrated for their bravery, and rewarded for disclosing financial scandals. However, I contend against financial rewards to whistleblowers. Hence, this work rather toes the line of Davis (2012) who argues against financial rewards as inducement. He says such could be seen as an incentive given to expectedly good people who are duty bound to do good.

It is important to note here that the scope of this paper centres on financial corruption and that the context or universe of our discourse is the African situation where references will be made mostly to Nigerian whistleblowing policy. The work is not a statistical analysis of corruption or acts of whistleblowing but is focused on the conceptual analysis and evaluation of the ethical concerns raised by the policy and, of course, the activity of whistleblowing. In this regard, the work looks at the notion and dynamics of whistleblowing as a policy for fighting corruption. I shall give an overview of the whistleblowing policy in Nigeria and then comment on the intrigues involved in the policy and activity of whistleblowing. I shall give an overview of the notion of ethics of responsibility and then explore the thesis that rewarding whistleblowers with certain percentages or cut of the recovered loot could encourage ethical egoism and would as well amount to moral hypocrisy.

The Notion and Dynamics of Whistleblowing as an Anti-corruption Mechanism

The expression ‘whistle-blowing’ is a sort of metaphor that depicts one signaling out or making open information that was initially hidden, or not intended for the public. ‘Whistle-blowing’ has been defined in many ways according to usage, and according to users. For example, sports referees who use whistle to alert the athletes and the public of foul play or violation of rules during games are sometimes referred to as whistle-blowers, and their acts, whistle-blowing. Also, law-enforcement agents or officials and paramilitary groups are known to use whistle-blowing as an act of alerting people of danger or breaking of rules. Generally, when one blows a whistle to alert people or the public on a possible threat to his/her life as in the case of armed robbery, or such related attacks, such a person could loosely be regarded as a whistle-blower.

Technically, it is essentially a device or a tool used in confidentially reporting information that could have been hidden to the public. Hence, it is sometimes called “confidential reporting” (Nottinghamshire county council). Yomchinda, *et al.* (2022) from the organizational optics define whistleblowing “as the disclosure by organization members of illegal, immoral, or illegitimate practices under the control of their employers, to persons, or organizations that may be able to affect actionp” (309). Generally, whistleblowing is an action by an agent (a social agent for that matter) to rip open any purported illegal, hidden and unethical behavior to the attention of other people, especially to people in authority. In our contemporary usage, and in the context of disclosing financial crimes and other related activities, it does not involve the blowing of physical whistle as sports referees do. It rather requires anyone with information about financial misappropriation or looting of public funds, to disclose the information to an authority, for example, the Federal Ministry of Finance or Economic and Financial Crimes Commission as in the case of Nigeria. Such a disclosure is done confidentially and voluntarily by phone calls, e-mail, or a secure online portal, where the status of such report could be ascertained. In Nigeria, the channels for information disclosure are:

Phone: 09098067946;

Email: whistle@finance.gov.ng

Web: <http://whistle.finance.gov.ng> (Bullison, 2017).

Robert Egbe (2017) notes that the crux of such report may include: “mismanagement or misappropriation of public funds and assets (e.g. property, vehicles), financial malpractices or fraud, collection/soliciting for bribes and corruption, diversion of revenue, fraudulent and unapproved payment, splitting of contract and procurement fraud (kick-backs and cover-invoicing, etc)” (thenationonlineng.net/whistle-blowing-loot-recovery-). In this regard, the Federal Ministry of Finance regards a whistle-blower as “a person who voluntarily discloses to the Federal Government of Nigeria, through the Federal Ministry of Finance, a possible misconduct or violation that has occurred, is ongoing, or is about to occur with specific concerns which are in the public interest (<http://lawpodi.com/7-things-know-nigeria-whistle-blower-policy>).

An Overview of the Nigerian Whistleblowing Policy as a Tool for Fighting Corruption

The whistleblowing policy was generally given impetus in the West African sub-region after a workshop organized by the UN office on Drugs and Crime in partnership with the Liberian Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) and the Network of National Anti-Corruption Institutions in West African Nations (NACIWA). The workshop attended by representatives of

West African States, including Nigeria, and hosted in Liberia made some significant resolutions which encouraged all Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) of the need to stem corruption through the whistleblowing policy. In this regard, West African States were encouraged to make adequate legal and procedural provisions for the policy to thrive if corruption must be dealt with in the sub- region (Monrovia Statement, 2016)

With the motivation derived from the above organized workshop, Nigeria's whistleblowing policy was introduced by the Federal Government through the Federal Ministry of Finance, as an anti-corruption tool, and was approved by the Federal Executive Council in December 2016. The salient and main objective of the policy is to help Government recover looted funds that it had no knowledge of, and by so doing raise the cash base of the nation's treasury, while the latent objective is to make government officials and the citizenry to be responsible and accountable. Other objectives are: to improve the level of public confidence in public entities; to enhance transparency and accountability in the management of public funds; to improve Nigeria's open government ranking and ease of doing business indicators (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2016). The policy could be understood and appreciated from its three basic segments as follows:

Motive and the Information Required: Here the policy states that the:

whistleblowing programme is designed to encourage anyone with information about a violation of financial regulations, mismanagement of public funds and assets, financial malpractice, fraud and theft to report same to the Federal Ministry of Finance (onlineportal-whistle@finance.gov.ng; <http://whistle.finance.gov.ng>; or call +2349098067946, *Federal Republic of Nigeria* 2016, p. 3).

In this regard, the Federal Ministry of Finance regards a whistleblower as "a person who voluntarily discloses to the Federal Government of Nigeria, through the Federal Ministry of Finance, a possible misconduct or violation that has occurred, is ongoing, or is about to occur with specific concerns which are in the public interest.

The type of information expected to be submitted by whistleblowers include information on violation of government financial regulations, mismanagement/misappropriation of public funds, stolen funds, concealed public funds, theft, collection/soliciting bribes (kick-backs), splitting of contracts, violation of public procurement procedures, under-reporting of revenues, conversion of public funds for private use, fraudulent and unapproved payment, diversion of revenues, etc. Beyond the above, it should be noted that the information from whistleblowers must be such that government has not already obtained or could not have otherwise had from any other publicly available source. The whistleblower must believe in his/her information and it must be true stating specific facts such as where the crime occurred, the date(s) and those involved. This is to enable the government through its investigating agents to do proper investigation. Any false information could lead to the prosecution of the whistleblower (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2016, p. 3-4)

Protection of Whistleblowers: The policy clearly states that "any stakeholder who whistleblows in public spirit and in good faith shall be protected, regardless of whether or not the issue raised is upheld against any party" (p.3). Any whistleblower whose information has led to genuine discovery but suffered some attacks or adverse treatment

from anybody is however free to file a formal complaint to an independent body of inquiry that shall be set to look at such complaints.

Reward for Whistleblowers: To encourage citizens to key in and help government to succeed in stemming the rate of corruption in public spheres, a potential whistleblower is entitled to a reward of between 2.5% to 5% cut of the looted money that his/her information could help in recovering. To qualify for such reward, the policy emphasizes that the whistleblower must provide government with information it does not already have, and could not otherwise obtain from any other public source available to the government. Also, the recovery must actually be on account of the information leaked by the whistleblower. To assure the blower of his/her safety and protection in addition to the expected financial reward when the loot is recovered, the policy makes provision for covering the identity of the blower to the fullest extent within the limitation of the law. And if the blower wishes to be known, the policy assures full protection of such person as well (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2016, p. 2-4)

Some Critical Comments on Relevant Features of the Whistleblowing Policy

A critical look at the composition and demand of the policy brings to the fore certain fundamental features, namely, voluntariness and good faith; distinctiveness and fruitfulness of information as the determinant of reward; protection of the whistleblower.

Voluntariness and Good Faith: The whistleblower who discloses information leading to recovery of looted money must do so voluntarily and in good faith. This means that he/she undertakes to whistleblow based on his/her freewill; not under compulsion but out of his/her conviction. Also doing it in 'good faith' demands that he/she does it out of honest intention; not out of maliciousness, vindictiveness or vengefulness. Morse (2014) emphasizes that usually whistleblowers act out of a feeling of fairness or ethics. "Blowing the whistle is distinct from a grievance or personal complaint, which is a dispute about an employee's own position" (p.3). The implication is that whistleblowers must show some high moral standard when they undertake to engage in the act of whistleblowing. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, according to Alaribe (2017), many people are suspecting that government and some vengeful people are using this policy to fight their opponents, while corrupt officers and their allies in the society are protected from whistleblowing. It is also pertinent to point out that some whistleblowers might only engage in whistleblowing maliciously or vengefully as pay back against the suspects. In this sense, Daniel Bullison (2017) quoting an anonymous commentator, claims that "whistleblowers are the relatives, staff of the blowee, who did not feel any blow when the blowee was blowing cash around. The implication here is that whistleblowing may after all harbor some moral intrigues and such would curiously raise questions about the genuine intention of some blowers. If this is the case, the essence and the good intention of the policy would seem defeated; and as it were, the masses could be forced to lose faith in the policy as it does not seem to make the stakeholders anymore responsible.

Distinctiveness and Fruitfulness of Information as the Determinant of Reward: The qualification or criteria for reward is that information disclosed must be such that government does not already have and could not otherwise obtain from any other publicly available source to government. In addition, the actual recovery must be on account of that

information. The first part of the condition is, of course, relevant; otherwise smart blowers could easily poke and hack information just to make a case for their reward. But at the same time the condition would not likely motivate many people. However, there are some questions that could be raised on the second part of this condition; that is' the condition that the information must lead to the actual recovery of looted money. The salient question here is, what happens if the suspect refuses to voluntarily hand over, and the government eventually recovers the loot through litigation? What happens to the whistleblower? Ought he/she not be entitled to any reward? It is imperative that genuine effort should be rewarded just as achievement should also be rewarded. It would be wrong not to reward a whistleblower whose effort led to the knowledge that there is a looted fund somewhere. The refusal of the suspect to hand over the loot voluntarily could not be said to be the fault of the whistleblower. So, if government eventually recovers the money through litigation, for example, it should not preclude the whistleblower from being rewarded; for after all, without his/her information, government might not have had an idea about the looted money.

Protection of the Whistleblower: The policy assures the whistleblower of anonymity and confidentiality. This is an interesting aspect of the policy because the identity of a whistleblower, if exposed, could lead to reprisal from the accused. But considering the way this particular conditionality is couched, it seems that government would only step in after the damage would have probably been done or the whistleblower had been attacked. This is why many scholars like Taylor (2015) and Berg (2020) argue that whistleblowing is not an appealing activity and is not for the faint-hearted person as it might lead to the suspect's suffering, just as the blower may also suffer some danger through some kind of reprisal attacks. Government therefore needs to devise a means of protecting the whistleblower who wishes to disclose information right from the first day through the course of the investigation rather than wait till there is any reprisal attack from suspects. This is why the Nigerian Government should live up to the billing of the Monrovia Statement that new legislation should be made and adopted to make the policy work in the sub-region. Makinde (2018), Francis (2019), Onyejiana & Bayode-ojo (2021) all have decried the fact that in Nigeria, the policy lacks proper legal framework, notwithstanding its usefulness in helping the country to save so many billions of Naira since its introduction. It is believed that Nigeria and other African States who have not yet put up strong and adequate legal framework and backing to the policy should toe the line of the US in making legislation that can adequately protect the whistleblower. *The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia* (2013) notes that the US Federal Legislation in 1978 barred any form of reprisals and discriminatory treatment against whistleblowers. This can strengthen the position of well-meaning whistleblowers, if replicated in Nigeria.

Looted Cut to Whistle-blowers: Whither the Ethics of Responsibility in the Reward?

It is important to re-state here that the major focus and paradigm of this work is the Nigerian situation. Here and as in some other African states, whistle-blowing is basically set up as an anti-corruption tool because corruption has become endemic in the society. Fundamentally therefore, the policy is aimed at making the entire citizenry responsible and financially accountable. To encourage people to blow the whistle, financial reward of between 2.5% to 5% cut of the recovered loot is promised to the whistleblower whose information leads directly to the actual recovery of such loot. Actually, this financial

entitlement or reward looks appealing on face value. It is also important to state that naturally a responsible worker deserves a reward. However, a critical look at the operation of this policy and the intent of blowers would reveal some moral challenges, especially considered from the point of view that the Nigerian government is trying to enthrone and encourage an ethics of responsibility: This, ofcourse might also be true of other African government. The reason for this submission is that a background understanding of the policy shows that it latently aims at making the citizenry accountable - socially and individually.

Ethics of responsibility is characterized as that caring attitude or conduct that social agents ought to adopt with respect to the well-being of the other people in the society, as well as the general well-being of the society. In ethics of responsibility, the society's welfare or wellbeing comes first, and the individual's right is secondary. Thus, it is the responsibility of the individual in the society to care for the well-being of others. This does not however preclude the rights of the individual. Gyekye (1996) notes that it is important to give priority to responsibility over individual rights because a person by nature is "a social being oriented toward others in a community of persons" (p.63). The above is encapsulated in the traditional communal idea that 'I am because we are.' Ogude in an interview with Paulson (2020) says that this maxim underlies the philosophy of Ubuntu. Paulson quotes him as stating that Ubuntu is a communitarian ethos which "imposes a sense of moral obligation regarding your responsibility for others before you think of yourself." This means that one's sense of self should be shaped by one's relationship with others in the society. In this sense also, Unah (2006) asserts that the ontological meaning of society is "being with others." The implication of the above narrative is that community or social life is the foundation for the ethics of responsibility. It is therefore very understandable that the reason for which the policy is put in place is to safeguard the public interest; not individual interest as such. Hence, the policy stresses that any information on misconduct or violation or misappropriation that impacts negatively on the citizenry and the common good of the state should be disclosed through whistle-blowing.

The Quandary on the System of Reward for Whistleblowing

The issue here is, if the whistleblowing policy is put in place for public good why then do some people hustle for the sake of the reward they are going to make rather than the public good? One is therefore prompted to wonder if it is not possible that there could be some responsible people who naturally would blow the whistle or in any other way possible, lead to recovery of lost or stolen monies based solely on goodwill: That is without expecting any reward in the form of a cut from the recovered money. Ofcourse, one believes there are many such people. Mikairo & Eteghe (2015) reported of a casual worker; an airport cleaner, Miss Josephine Agwu who returned Twelve Million Naira that was forgotten by a passenger, Mr Obinna Samuel in one of the toilets. It is reported that the lady just returned the money and walked away without asking for a 'cut' or reward from the owner. The management of the unit she worked for honoured her and doubled her salary while the airport management promised her automatic employment. The report has it that, that was the fourth time the lady had picked up and returned huge amount of money forsgotten or lost by passengers. Also, a Nigerian Doctoral student in the University of Tsukuba, Japan, Mr. Ikenna Nweke is also said to have returned a huge sum of money and rejected a reward from the owner of the money when he was given a 'cut' from it. The then President of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari, commended him for such an altruistic act and wished that other citizens should

borrow a leaf from such altruistic behaviour and shun what he called “the microwaved, get-rich-quick tendencies that bring both individual and collective shame” (Ogunmade, 2020)

Arguably, the examples given above might not be considered as cases of whistleblowing on looted money. But I think they are apt enough to show that there are people who can act solely out of goodwill. Now, if this is obtainable, why then would any responsible agent, deserving of the tag, be motivated by financial reward from a certain cut of what his/her information helped to recover? The question is important because if one is said to be a responsible person, having the common good of his/her society at heart, and also given the fact that his/her disclosure is in good faith; that is, based on genuine intention or goodwill - not out of ulterior motive or pecuniary reasons, then it would smack of hypocrisy for such a person to eye or even accept a ‘cut’ from the loot he/she helped to recover through his/her disclosure. As Davis (2012) would put, this would be analogous to a samaritan doing good because he knows he will be paid for his trouble: and if this happens, such a person cannot be said to be a good samaritan.

It is expedient to clearly assert again that we are not totally against reward of whistle-blowers as such. We agree with the like of Jones (2016), a Pennsylvanian district judge who is quoted to have said that, “What gets measured gets done, what gets measured and fed back gets done well, and what gets rewarded gets repeated.” In this vein, rewarding whistle-blowers would certainly motivate citizens to be more responsive and responsible to their environments toward their own good and the common good of the society. But the question begging for answer is, what moral justification could anybody appeal to, for rewarding with or being rewarded from a certain cut or percentage of what one helped to recover? Going by the hustles of self-indulgence, materialistic greed - to use the word of Amin (2019) and intrigues witnessed in Nigeria for example, it would not be out of place to point to ‘ethical egoism’ as the salient answer.

The Problematic in Ethical Egoism as a Justification for Rewarding Whistleblowing with Looted Cuts

Ethical egoism is the theory that an action is right if it maximizes one’s own self-interest. Rachels & Rachels (2012) define ethical egoism as a theory which “holds that our duty is to do what is best for ourselves. Other people matter only in so far as they can benefit us.” In the same vein Deigh (2010) sees ethical egoism as a theory which holds that the highest good for any person is his/her own happiness. Given this egoistic principle, it would mean that the right action consists in watching out for and furthering one’s happiness, while wrong action consists in neglecting what can bring one’s happiness. It is generally and correctly noted that the thought that usually inspires ethical egoism is that “applying intelligence and forethought to the aim of achieving happiness shows that the best way to realize this aim is to live one’s life by such standards” (Deigh, 2010, p.26). But living by such standard, as the theory is grounded, leaves much to be desired when in relation to social existence. After all, intelligence and forethought may not always lead to moral ends. Akpan (2011) argues that armed robbers, oil bunkers, suicide bombers and the like are naturally intelligent people who apply their intelligence and forethought to achieve their aims and indeed, their happiness. But we cannot say that their actions are ethical, though as humans they are morally responsible beings; and as Okeke & Akpan (2012) correctly note, moral consciousness is the fundamental distinguishing factor between humans and other beings. The implication of the egoistic principle in the context of this work; that is, with regard to rewarding whistle-blowers is that the blowers would first and foremost consider what they

would gain; the amount of money that would accrue to them - should they make any disclosure. With this in mind, their duty to the society becomes saturated with self-interest and not based on genuine intention or goodwill. This invariably defeats the requirement of good faith: and one could then infer that the motive for disclosure was, after all, for pecuniary reason.

To buttress this point further, we can reflect on a case where some whistle-blowers agitated for their reward after alleging that they have been surcharged by the Federal Government of Nigeria. According to Ikechukwu Nnochiri (2017), three whistle-blowers namely Abdulmin Musa, Mr. Stephen Sunday and Mr. Bala Usman, claiming to be the genuine whistleblowers that disclosed information which led to the recovery of Thirteen Billion Naira at Ikoyi, Lagos, had dragged the Federal Government to court for attempting to pay the five percent whistleblowing entitlement (reward) to other persons. A critical look at this agitation could reveal that the whistleblowers' intention was self-interest at first; considering the gain of about six hundred and fifty million Naira (₦650,000,000), being 5% of the Thirteen Billion Naira loot! This kind of motive puts to question the ethics of responsibility and reward system that federal and state or regional government seems to be enthrone through the whistleblowing policy. From our understanding of ethics of responsibility, it is pertinent to point out that it is diametrically opposed to ethical egoism which the federal and regional and state governments by their system of reward seems to encourage. An ethics of responsibility does not look at selfish interest: It looks at the common good. Therefore, it goes without saying that promoting self-interest above the common good is not entirely rational no matter how 'rational' the explanation as regards the cause of the action would appear to be" (Akpan 2011, p.8). In view of this, there is need for Government to rethink the system of rewarding whistleblowers if government really wants her citizens to be morally and socially accountable.

One could argue that the Federal Government of Nigeria, for example and as other governments in the world, had good intention for making the provision in the policy to reward whistleblowers with a certain cut of the recovered money. But a more critical look at this will reveal the moral intrigues involved. The question we reiterate here is, how morally right would it be if a certain cut of recovered money that was stolen is shared with the person who gave information for the recovery? At this point, we can draw an analogy from a traditional Efik/Ibibio (a sister tribe in Nigeria) maxim which says: '*adia mkpo ino, edi ino*' (a person who eats a stolen food of a thief is a thief). This is a traditional moral maxim which needs no proof for justification. It is morally debasing for one to share in the food of a thief knowing quite well that it was stolen. In the same vein, one who eyes a cut from recovered loot simply because he/she disclosed information that led to that recovery should see the moral intrigues involved in such reward. Indeed, financial entitlements from looted money to the relevant whistleblower, in my own view, would make the blower a moral hypocrite. We see moral hypocrisy as the act of pretending to do what is seen as good and praiseworthy by others, whereas there is an ulterior motive behind such action. In the words of Davis (2012) who argues against financial rewards for whistle blowers, such reward would be "analogous to promising the Samaritan to help the injured... and in so far as the Samaritan helps, because he will be paid for his trouble, he cannot be a good Samaritan" (p. 270). It is obvious that majority of whistle-blowers, do not blow it with genuine intention for the common good, rather they do it based on their selfish interests which anchor on the expected reward. Indeed, such are bad Samaritans! It is also pertinent to point out that

some whistleblowers might only engage in whistleblowing maliciously or vengefully as pay back against the suspects. In this sense, Bullison (2017) quoting an anonymous commentator, claims that “whistleblowers are the relatives, staff of the blowee, who did not feel any blow when the blowee was blowing cash around.” The implication here is that whistle-blowing may after all harbor some moral intrigues and such curiously raise questions about the genuine intention of some blowers.

Conclusion

The work set out to contend with the system of reward attached to the whistleblowing policy as an anti-corruption tool. I quite agree that whistleblowing is indeed a valuable means of fighting corruption. But I contend here that rewarding whistleblowers with 2.5% to 5% cut of the loot that their information helps to recover amounts to moral hypocrisy: It is tantamount to sharing in the food of a thief that one has just apprehended for stealing the said food. My position is that such a system of reward in an ethics of responsibility that the government seems to be enthroning through the whistle-blowing policy, could encourage ethical egoism. The reason is that would-be whistleblowers would always be motivated by the cut they would get after such recovery are made; not necessarily by the genuine intention for the common good.

I would rather conclude that if the government wants to enthrone an ethics of responsibility through the mechanism of whistleblowing, then they need to re-think the reward system in the policy. I therefore recommend that a National Honour christened **Nigerian Integrity and Patriotism Personified** (NIPP) that would be internationally recognised be awarded to relevant whistleblowers. In addition, government may also consider job promotion or employment to such persons as the case may be. This is important, if a whistleblower has to be recognised nationally and internationally as a responsible social agent who discloses information out of goodwill (genuine intention), and in good faith for the public good. This is why one believes that to be less egoistic and more altruistic is better and just, even when it does not seem to immediately profit a person. Yet arguably, such disposition at a long run is in one's overall good in an extended scale; and as Pojman (2005) asserts, if generally engaged in by others will likely reverberate through the whole gamut of the society and produce the most overall societal wellness, and saliently inculcate ethics of responsibility in the citizenry.

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A LEXICO-GRAPHOLOGICAL STUDY OF SELECTED POEMS IN GBOGI'S *LOCOMOTIFS AND OTHER SONGS*

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Abstract

This paper investigates the stylistic elements present in Tosin Gbogi's poetry collection, *Locomotifs and Other Songs*, specifically focusing on lexico-semantic and graphological features. It studies how the poet utilises unique vocabulary and physical imagery to emboss in the reader's minds resonant themes. Mounted upon the theory of Context of Situation, the paper emphasises the relationship between text and context. Employing the analytical method of critical thinking and Halliday's Context of Situation as its theoretical framework, the paper points out the different features of lexico-semantic and graphological data extracted from the poems. It examines the significance of features such as word blending and compounding, alongside foregrounded graphological features such as emboldening, punctuation, concrete imagery and creative spelling. These features are shown to enhance the aesthetic and communicative power of the poems, enabling them to address critical issues prevalent in Nigeria and Africa. It is the conclusion of the paper that the deviations in which Gbogi's linguistic forms find expression compel a message of the need for genuine anger and action to address social deviations occasioned by corrupt leadership, as well as failed moral, social and democratic ethos.

Introduction/Background to the Study

Stylistics as a Concept: Stylistics is defined as the study of style. It is the study of the different styles that are present in a given utterance or written text. The consistent appearance of certain structures, items and elements in a speech, an utterance or in a given text is one of the major concerns of stylistics. Burke (2014, p. 1) defines stylistics as "the study and analysis of literary texts". Stylistics requires the use of traditional levels of linguistic description such as sound, form, structure and meaning. It then follows that the consistent appearance of certain structures, items and elements in speech or in a given text is one of the major concerns of stylistics. While style may be regarded as a choice of linguistic means, as deviation from the norms of language use, recurrent features of linguistic forms and as comparisons, stylistics deals with a wide range of language varieties and styles that are possible in creating different texts, whether spoken or written, monologue or dialogue, formal or informal, scientific or religious, etc.

Again, stylistics is concerned with the study of the language of literature or the study of the language habits of particular authors and their writing patterns. From the foregoing, stylistics can be said to be the techniques of explication which allow us to define objectively what an author has done, (linguistic or literary), in his use of language. The main aim of stylistics is to enable us to understand the intent of the author in the manner the

information has been passed across by the author or writer. Therefore, stylistics is more interested in the significance of function that the chosen style fulfills. Significantly, Leech and Short (2007, p.30) declare that stylistics is “the study of language as used in literary texts, with the aim of relating it to its artistic functions”. Indeed, stylistics is not only the literary study of language but also the linguistic study of literature. On the one hand, linguistic stylistics investigates the linguistic features in a text. In relation to style, linguistic stylistics, therefore, points out those linguistic choices which a writer or speaker has made as well as the effects of the choices. However, this does not imply that linguistic stylistics ignores the meanings which a poem conveys. In fact, the meaning is the focal point. From the linguistic approach Crystal and Davy (1989, p.10) posit that:

the aim of stylistics is to analyse language habits with the main purpose of identifying, from the general mass of linguistic features common to English as used on every conceivable occasion, those features which are restricted to certain kinds of social context; to explain, where possible, why such features have been used, as opposed to other alternatives; and to classify these features into categories based upon a view of their function in the social context.

On the other hand, literary stylistics is primarily concerned with messages and the interest in codes (language) which lies in the meaning they convey in particular instances of use. The beauty of language and how it is used to capture reality is also the focal concern of literary stylistics. Literary stylistics takes interpretation as its aim. It is interested in finding out what aesthetic experience or perception of reality a poem, for example, is attempting to convey. Literary stylistics observes how the language systems are used as a means to its end and searches for underlying significance, for the essential artistic vision which language is used to express. From the above explanations, we notice that linguistic stylistics and the literary stylistics flow into each other which is in line with Ngara (1982, p.12) who points out that the literary stylistician has a wider domain because in addition to using the analytic tools of the linguist such as grammar, lexis, phonology, prosody, etc., he must also concern himself with the wider issues of deviation from the norm. He must “deal with the relationship between language and character, between author and audience, and inevitably between linguistic features and content value”.

Poetry and Stylistics

In his preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth famously described poetry as “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility”. Poetry is the product of a poet's powerful feelings, imaginative vision, and skilled craftsmanship expressed through the medium of language. This simply means poetry is peculiar to each poet which indicates that “style is the man” and each poet is licensed to use linguistic systems to express their emotions and feelings while highlighting the realities of his immediate society. Leech (1969, p.5) posits that:

The creative writer, and more particularly the poet, enjoys a unique freedom, amongst users of the language, to range over all its communicative resources, without respect to the social or historical contexts to which they belong. This means, amongst other things, that the poet can draw on the language of past ages, or can borrow features belonging to other, non-literary uses of language, as Ezra Pound and T. S.

Eliot, for example, have made use of the English of banal, prosody conversation in some of their poems.

Contemporary African poets project their artistic vision through the pain motif. The African pain motif enables poets to explore the human conditions and the prevalent issues in society as a result of the sociopolitical condition of society. Poets through their individual styles and licence are able to project their emotions of pain and disappointment. While the earlier phase of African poetry was a protest against cultural imperialism and the need to counter the negative image of Africa presented in European works, the contemporary phase of African poetry is preoccupied with the social, economic and political debasement prevailing in African societies. Achebe argues that any writer in Africa:

who ignores the major social issues of their time will end up being irrelevant like the absurd man in the proverb who chases after rats while his house is burning.

Locomtifs and Other Songs presents Gbogi as a committed poet of the people with his unique style which is in line with the opinion of Crystal and Davy (1969, p. 77) when they say:

To talk of studying the 'style' of an author does not usually imply a study of everything in the language he has used, but only an attempt to isolate, define, and discuss those linguistic features which are felt to be peculiarly his, which help to distinguish him from other authors --- a common use in literary criticism and questions of authorship identification, for example.

Gbogi through his creative style presents the state of being of the people and society at large cutting across the strata of politics, religion, love, nationalism, and the sharp pain of a society in search of healing.

Levels of Stylistic Analysis

For a stylistician to successfully study any work of art either at the linguistic level or at the literary level, he/she must take into account the shape of the work (if it is written), the sound (when in speech or in poetry) the sentence form and structure and the contextual use of words. A stylistician is a person who studies any piece of language and is expected to undertake a stylistic study with the goal of asking certain questions like "why" and "how", and provides answers to these questions, which is the interpretation of the text, and gives value judgment. The formal levels at which this is done are phonological, graphological, lexico-semantic and grammatical.

Lexico-semantic features deal with word meanings (at the lexical level) including synonymy, antonymy, polysemy, hyponymy, denotation, and connotation, and longer expressions (at the semantic level) including allegories, parables, and tropes of meaning. Graphological features like spelling, punctuation and images are used for foregrounding in poetry and advertising. Phonological devices like metre, rhyme and alliteration convey meaning in poetry, drama and music. Grammatical features include morphological peculiarities of words and syntactic deviations from conventions to express thoughts. Overall, stylistic analysis examines how language is used to create meaning and effect in a text.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this paper is to reveal the stylistic significance of selected poems in Gbogi's *Locomotifs and Other Songs*. To achieve this aim, the specific objectives of the research are, to:

- i. show how the lexico-semantic features employed by the poet, such as lexical features and tropes of meaning are foregrounded;
- ii. reveal the specific graphological features, including punctuation, line breaks, and spacing, which contribute to the overall meaning and effect of the poetry; and,
- iii. reveal the poet's central preoccupations and the messages these features are communicating through these stylistic choices.

Statement of the Problem

Several scholars have explored the concept of style and its significance in literary and non-literary works. But lexico-graphological study in literary works such as poetry, and in Gbogi's *Locomotifs and Other Songs*, in particular, has been neglected to the best of the knowledge of this researcher. This paper, therefore, examines the selected poems at the level of lexico-semantics and graphology. It also seeks to uncover how the poet weaves words and paints pictures and imagery in the minds of the readers, words and images that are aesthetically pleasing and significant. Furthermore, it establishes the thematic preoccupation of the poet such as corrupt leadership, failed democracy, abuse of power, moral and social decay, and history.

Significance of the Study

This study will be of immense value to those who have particular interests in stylistics, stylistic analysis and poetry. Though diverse researches have been carried out on different levels of stylistic features in poetry, this work is specific in that it focuses on the lexico-graphological features in some of the selected poems. It will serve as a referential source for any scholarly research to be carried out in areas similar to the focus of this paper.

Scope and Methodology

As highlighted earlier, there are four major levels of stylistic features namely, phonology, graphology, grammar and lexico-semantics. Also, *Locomotifs and Other Songs* is a collection of 49 poems, it would be impossible to use all these poems as the primary source for the stylistic study of this paper within the given time and length. To make optimum use of the data, the scope of the study is restricted to selected poems and stanzas which reveal deviations in spellings, visual images, word blending, simile, metaphor, compounding, etc. Using the analytical method of critical thinking, this study focuses on both linguistic and literary effects at two different levels of stylistic analysis, namely, graphology and lexico-semantics.

Bio-data of the Poet

Tosin Gbogi teaches in the Department of English Studies, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Nigeria. He received a master's degree in English Literature from Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, UK and is at present completing a doctoral degree in the Interdisciplinary Program in Linguistics at Tulane University, New Orleans, USA. Formerly a Senior Arts Editor at Kraft Books, Ibadan, Gbogi is the author of the poetry collection *The Tongues of a Shattered s-k-y*.

Theoretical Framework

Context of situation focuses on the immediate linguistic and extralinguistic features of a communicative act. Halliday and Hasan (1985, p. 12) see the context of situation theory as the “environment in which meanings are being exchanged”. The term was first coined by Malinowski in 1922 to refer to the cultural context of use in which an utterance is located; furthermore, ‘the whole way of life’ (cultural context) has to be borne in mind in interpreting an utterance. However, Firth goes on to expand on the theory and emphasizes that meaning is context-dependent. According to Firth quoted in Udofot (1998, p. 69) context of situation is:

the meaning not only in terms of the linguistic element and the sense it makes to the hearer but also seems to see any word or utterance as meaningful in terms of who said it, to whom, where, in whose presence, with what objects around and what effect it has on the hearer/s.

Consequently, in modern studies, Halliday expanded it to mean the extralinguistic circumstances of use that influence the linguistic form of an utterance: not only the social and physical setting, but also such factors as social relationships, the nature of the medium, the task, and the topic. He proposed that there is a systematic relationship between ‘typical’ situations and the types of language employed within them. He goes further to break the theory of context of situation into field, tenor and mode of discourse models. The field of discourse refers to what is happening, to the nature of the social action that is taking place: what is it that the participants are engaged in, in which the language figures as some essential component?

The tenor of discourse refers to who is taking part, to the nature of the participants, their statuses and roles: what kinds of role relationship obtain among the participants, including permanent and temporary relationships of one kind or another, both the types of speech role that they are taking on in the dialogue and the whole cluster of socially significant relationships in which they are involved? The mode of discourse refers to what part the language is playing, what it is that the participants are expecting the language to do for them in that situation: the symbolic organization of the text, the status that it has, and its function in the context, including the channel (is it spoken or written or some combination of the two?) and also the rhetorical mode, what is being achieved by the text in terms of such categories as persuasive, expository, didactic, and the like. From the above, we come to the understanding that text and context are related. Thus for a better understanding of a discourse, the text and the context should be placed side by side. This is based on the fact that text is made up of linguistic items or lexical items arranged to form a discourse and understood based on the context presented. For this reason, Gbogi’s *Locomotifs and Other Songs* will be analysed based on this theory to see how lexical items are arranged and what they mean in relation to the context of the physical environment on which the work is based.

An Overview of Stylistic Features in the Text

Lexico-semantic and Graphological Data in the Text

Text 1 commands the birds to fly home to their free-doom (p.18)

Text 2 that is power's eventual desti-nation (p.33)

Text 3 and frank-incense of licentious sins... (p. 34)

Text 4 my brain fuzzy
my path unpara-ll. (p. 60)

Text 5 i, a pro-di(g)al
g
e
r (p. 65)

Text 6 i am clean
clean like a holy book
i am clean
clean like the inside of the padre's chalice (p.34)

Text 7 some things are like that:
when a naytion stuffs between your legs
a cunning island of pains
gambling, such a naytion gambles with your love (p.17)

Text 8 a naytion plants bitter leaves
waits for sweet potatoes
a naytion plants a full-blown buffon
waits for signs magic and miracle from god
a naytion plants a full-blown comedian
says to him after the deluge: "bring back our girls" (p.18)

Text 9 nelson, neon lights cast upon the night
eons heavy with a cast of memories,
language bares its final soul.
soweto remembers the penal boundaries of up-rising
on a night like this, nelson, a night like this when
neon lights cast upon the world a cast of
memories: a massacre so sharp
and vile: a botha bold to a brainless core
night on his lips, pronounces his race into the hate of
dawn that brings robben island to its knees.
en route, nelson is finally en route to free(dom) town
let him have eternal peace, oh
angels biko and brutus, quicken his pace to heavensgate (p.53)

Text 10 all true love does: not end and not begin (p.17)

Text 11 how
how
they
dare
death
and live...(p.60)

Text 12 i wonder...
with
s

i
l
e
n
c
e...(p.79)

Text 13 is the same who will judge him for his pedofun (p.67)

Text 14 a naytion plants bitter leaves
a naytion plants sanatorium
a naytion plants tyranny (p.18)

Aspects of Lexico-semantic Features in the Text

Lexico-semantic features in stylistics is a compound name derived from two sets of features: lexis and semantics. While lexis refers to the totality of words and their meanings semantics refers to the study and changes of meaning. Indeed, lexico-semantics refers to the way a writer employs individual words and longer expressions in terms of their meanings. Thus a stylistic analysis at the lexico-semantic level studies how words are employed in context. The lexical features examined in this text are specifically concerned with the choice of words in context. They reveal the specific ways in which Gbogi employs words, what these words mean and how they are written, which is in line with the opinion of Thorne (1988, p. 290) that:

We read poems (or should) in a way which is quite different from the way in which we read other texts, because in the case of other texts it is the imposition of one, and only one, meaning that is important. Learning to read a poem . . . is a matter of learning to hear what normally we must be deaf to: the inexhaustible ambiguity of utterances.

Lexical Features

In Text 1, Gbogi uses "free-doom" blending "freedom" and "doom" which creates a powerful and ironic term that suggests a false or deceptive freedom that actually leads to destruction or doom. By using "free-doom", the poet highlights the irony and the oppressive reality masked by the guise of liberty, reinforcing the critic of tyranny and the false promises made by those in power. Text 2 shows the word "destination," splitting it into "desti-nation," which is not only a creative use of language but also serves to emphasise the idea of power ultimately leading to powerlessness. It cleverly combines the concept of power as a destination with the inevitability of its decline or loss of a nation, using the structure of the word itself to convey a deeper meaning.

In Text 3, Gbogi uses "frank-incense" instead of "frankincense" which is often linked with purity, spirituality, and sacred rituals. By altering it to "frank-incense," the poet juxtaposes its sacred connotations with "licentious sins," creating an ironic contrast. Its significance is to highlight the irony and contrast between the expected purity associated with frankincense and the actual corruption and licentiousness present in the poet's environment. This enhances the overall theme of moral and social decay. In Text 4, the traditional meaning of "unparalleled" (without equal) still resonates, suggesting that the speaker's path is unique, without comparison. However, the fragmented presentation "unpara-ll" adds a layer of irony, indicating that this uniqueness might come from confusion

and lack of direction rather than a positive distinction which explains the “fuzzy” state of the brain.

In Text 5, apart from the lexical meaning of "prodigal" this means someone who returns after a period of reckless behavior, placing "g e r" under "di" reinforces the idea of digging or going deeper into oneself. The lexical and graphological significance is that it symbolises a journey downward or inward, aligning with the theme of returning or coming back to a place of origin or to the "queen ido-to."

Semantic Features

The dominant semantic features in the selected poems are tropes of meaning. A trope is a representative or symbol of something else. Tropes of meaning refer to figures of speech in literature and they are commonly employed for the purpose of foregrounding. Some of the common tropes of meaning foregrounded in this text are simile, metaphor, irony, and paradox.

Simile

Simile is an indirect comparison. It is a trope of meaning in which the characteristics of an entity are employed to describe another entity which is completely different but which has at least one quality in common with the first domain employing any of the expressions like: "like", "as", "as...as", "in manner of...", "reminds one of...". In text 6 we see simile in the comparison between their cleanliness to that of a holy book and the inside of a padre's chalice. Here, Gbogi captures the corrupt state of society and how everyone wittingly and unwittingly is guilty of the crime of putrefaction.

Metaphor

Like the simile, metaphor is also an indirect comparison but with the absence of the expressions such as "like", "as", "as...as", "in manner of...", "reminds one of...". Metaphor is the most important trope of meaning as it distinguishes a literary work from other forms of writing. According to Csábi (2014, p. 207), "metaphor is based on a resemblance, a pre-existing similarity between the two entities that are compared and identified; it is a shortened comparison." In text 7, the "cunning island of pains" metaphorically describes something painful and intrusive, suggesting a deep and complex emotional or physical violation. The metaphor extends further with the idea of a nation "gambling with your love," indicating recklessness or disregard for something precious.

Irony

Irony as a trope of meaning enables writers to say the exact opposite of what they mean knowing that their true meaning will be perceived by the reader or hearer. In Text 8, Gbogi presents a situational irony to convey a contrast between what is expected and what actually happens. It emphasises the discrepancy between the nation's actions and the outcomes they hope for, underscoring a critic of misplaced faith or leadership.

Aspects of Graphological Features in the Text

In stylistic analysis, graphological features appeal to the sense of sight and is thus conveyed through the visual medium. In Gbogi's *Locomotifs and Other Songs*, the graphological deviations, unusual applications, distortion or peculiar use of these features are stylistically significant and serve as a means of foregrounding the poet's message. Foregrounding

according to Gregoriou (2014, p. 87) "refers to the property of perceptual prominence that certain things have against the backdrop of other, less noticeable things." Significantly, the collection exudes the concept of "style is the man". The poet consistently makes use of lower case letters throughout the collection including his own name, the cover title, human names like Tayo, Osundare, Nelson, McKay, etc, physical locations like Africa, London, Odiham, etc.

Embolding

Embolding writings is an emphatic device employed in literary works like poetry and in non-literary works like advertising for the purpose of emphasis and foregrounding. In text 9, the poet employs the acrostic style, where the first letters of each new line spell out "Nelson Mandela". This technique ensures that Mandela's presence is felt throughout the poem, even as specific events and emotions are described. It also underscores his central role in the history and memory of the events being described.

Punctuation Deviation

Gbogi unusually employs the colon (:) to indicate deviation from the rules of punctuations. The colon as a punctuation mark is primarily used to separate an introduction from the elements that come with the introduction. However, in text 10, the colon is used to separate the dummy auxiliary (does) and the negator (not) thereby accepting the idea instead of refuting it.

Concrete Image

Poets often manipulate concrete and abstract images and shapes to communicate their messages. Text 11 and 12 show how Gbogi exploits concrete images in which the shape and structure of these stanzas are arranged to depict the subject matter of each poem. In Text 11, the disjointed and staggered layout reflects the disorienting nature of vertigo. It conveys a sense of instability and imbalance, which mirrors the poet's internal state of fearing the heights they have reached and the potential fall. Text 12 depicts a state of silence. The arrangement of "silence" slows down the reading pace and creates a visual pause, which draws attention to the word itself, emphasising the theme of silence, contemplation and wonderment.

Spellings

Spelling is a graphological feature which refers to the combination of letters of the alphabet to compose words and sentences. In recent times, creative writers have become remarkably inventive in spellings and Gbogi is not left out. Indeed, text 13 and 14 show deviations in spellings such that "pedophile" is spelt "pedofun" to highlight the ironic situation of the mullah who teaches Arabic to "teenage girls at unislamic hours of the day". Also the introduction of an additional letter to "naytion" denotes that the nation is in fact not positive but a negative nay-tion.

Conclusion

Tosin Gbogi's *Locomotifs and Other Songs* is a powerful and thought-provoking poetry collection that explores critical issues facing Nigeria and Africa. Through his skillful use of language, Gbogi delivers a compelling message about the need for genuine anger and action to address societal challenges such as corrupt leadership, failed democracy, moral and social

decay and social injustice. The analysis reveals how Gbogi employs various stylistic techniques at the lexico-semantic and graphological levels to foreground his central themes and messages. At the lexico-semantic level, the poet's innovative use of lexical features like blending, compounding, and word splitting creates new meanings that enhance the poems' impact.

Graphologically, Gbogi's unconventional use of punctuation, spelling, and visual imagery contributes significantly to the poems' aesthetic appeal and communicative power. Embodying, acrostic patterns, and concrete imagery engage the reader's senses and provoke deeper reflection on the subject matter. The consistent use of lower case letters, even for proper nouns, underscores the poet's unique style and his commitment to challenging societal norms. The poems' diverse themes, historical references, and tribute to African icons like Nelson Mandela and Kofi Awoonor make it a standout work that deserves recognition. Gbogi's stylistic choices not only captivate the reader but also inspire reflection and a call to action on the pressing issues facing Africa. In conclusion, *Locomotifs and Other Songs* is a remarkable achievement that demonstrates the power of language to effect change and promote social justice.

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**COPING STRATEGIES AND ACADEMIC STRESS OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF
GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING, UNIVERSITY OF
UYO, AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The study investigated the relationship between coping strategies and academic stress of Undergraduate Students of Guidance and Counselling, University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Three research questions and three corresponding null hypotheses guided the study. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 684 undergraduate regular students of Guidance and Counselling Department, University of Uyo, Uyo. A sample of 200 undergraduate students of Guidance and Counselling was selected for the study via stratified random sampling technique. Coping Strategies Questionnaire (CSQ) and Academic Stress Questionnaire for Undergraduate Students (ASQUS) were used for data collection. The instruments were face validated while the reliability coefficients of 0.72 and 0.71 were obtained for CSQ and ASQUS respectively. Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics was used for data analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The results were that; there is a negative and no significant relationship between problem-focused coping strategy and academic stress of students; there is a significant positive relationship between emotion-focused coping strategy and academic stress of students; there is a significant negative relationship between social support-seeking coping strategy and academic stress of undergraduate students of guidance and counselling. Based on the findings of the study, conclusions were drawn and recommendations made among which is that universities and academic institutions in Nigeria should offer regular workshops and training sessions on time management, study skills, and effective problem-solving strategies to empower students in dealing with academic challenges.

Keywords: Coping, Strategies, Academic, Stress, Guidance, Counselling

Introduction

The academic environment in universities is often characterized by high levels of stress, which can significantly affect students' mental health, academic performance, and overall well-being. This is particularly true for students in guidance and counselling programmes, who are expected to develop competencies in managing both their own stress and that of others who approach them for assistance. Guidance and counselling students are expected to navigate coursework and practicum in school and non-school settings while providing emotional support to others. This intense combination of academic and emotional demands, according to Hayat, Shateri, Amini and Shokrpour (2021) often places these students at risk of stress and burnout. Academic stress is defined as the psychological strain associated with the demands and pressures of academic life (Meyer, 2021). Common sources of academic

stress include heavy workloads, deadlines, examinations, and the need to achieve high grades (Baker & Siryk, 2020). For guidance and counselling students, additional factors such as the academic demands of their field of study, the need for self-reflection, and the responsibility of applying theoretical knowledge to practice can intensify stress levels.

Guidance and counselling students face unique challenges that can exacerbate academic stress. The dual requirement of mastering theoretical knowledge while engaging in self-reflection and personal development places significant demands on these students (Deb, Strodl, & Sun., 2014). Furthermore, the expectation to model healthy coping behaviours can lead to additional pressure, creating a paradox where students feel compelled to manage their stress effectively and struggle to do so. Additionally, the emotional labour involved in learning to counsel others can lead to compassion fatigue and burnout, further complicating their stress management. Parker, Martin, Colmar and Liem (2020) opined that academic stress can lead to anxiety, depression, and decreased academic performance, making it a critical area for exploration. As future professionals responsible for assisting others in managing their mental health, it is crucial that guidance and counselling students develop effective coping strategies to mitigate stress and maintain emotional resilience. Understanding the coping strategies employed by guidance and counselling students, in response to academic stress is crucial for improving their training and supporting their future roles as professional guidance counsellors.

Coping strategies are the methods individuals use to manage stress and anxiety. Lazarus and Folkman's transactional model of stress and coping as cited in Iruloh and Ukaegbu (2017) distinguishes between problem-focused coping, which aims at addressing the source of stress and emotion-focused coping, which seeks to manage emotional responses to stressors. For students in guidance and counselling, effective coping strategies are vital not only for their own well-being but also for developing skills to assist future clients. Thus, in the context of this study, problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping and social support-seeking coping strategies are investigated. Problem-focused coping strategy involves actively addressing the source of stress by organizing tasks, seeking information, or developing time-management skills to reduce the academic workload (Iruloh & Ukaegbu, 2017). For guidance and counselling students, this may include breaking down complex assignments into manageable steps or seeking clarification from instructors to alleviate stressor.

Emotion-focused coping refers to strategies aimed at managing emotional responses to stress rather than changing the situation itself. Common emotion-focused coping strategies include relaxation techniques, mindfulness practices, and engaging in hobbies to alleviate negative emotions associated with academic pressure (Watkins & Gold, 2019). For guidance students, managing emotional responses may also involve applying the therapeutic techniques they learn in their coursework, such as cognitive-behavioural strategies or self-reflection.

Social support-seeking is a coping strategy in which individuals seek assistance, comfort, or advice from others to help manage stress or difficult situations. This strategy involves reaching out to friends, family members, peers, or professionals for emotional, informational, or practical support. Social support not only provides emotional reassurance but also facilitates the sharing of strategies for overcoming academic challenges (Thoits, 2015). For guidance and counselling students, support from peers and faculty can provide both practical and emotional assistance, helping them feel more capable and understood in their academic journey. Furthermore, the effectiveness of specific coping strategies in

mitigating academic stress among these undergraduate guidance and counselling students is still underexplored. Identifying the most effective strategies and understanding how they can be taught and reinforced in academic settings is crucial for the development of effective support systems. Hence, this study was investigated to establish the relationship between coping strategies and academic stress of undergraduate students of guidance and counselling, University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Academic stress is a prevalent issue among university students worldwide, and it can have a profound impact on their academic performance, emotional well-being, and overall mental health. Undergraduate students in guidance and counselling programmes, who are being trained to assist others in managing stress, are not immune to these challenges. At the University of Uyo, Uyo, the increasing academic workload, pressure to read and perform well in examination and the balancing of personal and academic responsibilities contribute to heightened stress levels among students pursuing guidance and counselling.

Despite being equipped with knowledge about coping strategies, these students may face unique stressors related to their coursework, practical training, and expectations to model effective counselling practices. This situation raises a critical concern regarding how these students cope with academic stress and whether they utilize effective strategies to manage their stress levels. Therefore, this study sought to investigate the coping strategies employed by undergraduate students of guidance and counselling, University of Uyo in response to academic stress. It will explore the types of stressors they face in their academic journey and assess how well their coping strategies align with their knowledge and training in counselling. This research is vital in understanding the intersection of academic stress and coping mechanisms in future counsellors, providing insights into how institutions can better support students in guidance and counselling programmes to foster their academic success and well-being.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between coping strategies and academic stress of undergraduate students of guidance and counselling, University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. Establish the relationship between problem-focused coping strategy and academic stress of undergraduate students of guidance and counselling.
2. Find out the relationship between emotion-focused coping strategy and academic stress of undergraduate students of guidance and counselling.
3. Ascertain the relationship between social support-seeking coping strategy and academic stress of undergraduate students of guidance and counselling.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between problem-focused coping strategy and academic stress of undergraduate students of guidance and counselling?
2. What is the relationship between emotion-focused coping strategy and academic stress of undergraduate students of guidance and counselling?

3. What is the relationship between social support-seeking coping strategy and academic stress of undergraduate students of guidance and counselling?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between problem-focused coping strategy and academic stress of undergraduate students of guidance and counselling.
2. There is no significant relationship between emotion-focused coping strategy and academic stress of undergraduate students of guidance and counselling.
3. There is no significant relationship between social support-seeking coping strategy and academic stress of undergraduate students of guidance and counselling.

Theoretical Review

Transactional Model of Stress and Coping by Lazarus and Folkman (1984): Transactional Model of Stress and Coping was propounded by Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman in 1984. The Transactional Model expands the traditional view of stress by emphasizing the dynamic relationship between individuals and their environment. Stress is not just an external force or an individual's internal reaction but a process where the person's cognitive and emotional responses shape their experience of a stressful event. This model places a strong emphasis on individual appraisal and coping as transactional processes. Lazarus and Folkman later expanded on their original model to include a broader spectrum of coping mechanisms. The focus is not just on problem- and emotion-focused coping, but also on avoidant coping (avoiding stressful situations) and meaning-focused coping (altering one's perception of the stressor by finding a personal meaning). These additions allow for a more nuanced understanding of coping, particularly for students facing academic stress in complex environments.

This model is particularly useful for understanding how Guidance and Counselling undergraduates respond to academic stress. The model allows for proper explanation on students cognitively assess their academic challenges (primary and secondary appraisal) and how they choose different coping strategies based on their resources, emotional state, and social context. For instance, a student might appraise an upcoming exam as a threat and adopt emotion-focused coping (such as avoidance or denial) or problem-focused coping (such as studying intensively). It also supports interventions that encourage adaptive coping strategies, potentially leading to a more positive academic experience.

Social Support Theory by Cohen and Wills (1985)

Social Support Theory was propounded by Cohen and Wills in 1985. Social Support Theory focuses on the beneficial impact that social relationships and networks can have on an individual's mental and physical well-being. The theory suggests that the presence of supportive relationships buffers individuals from the negative effects of stress, providing emotional, informational, and practical assistance. This support can come from various sources, such as family, friends, colleagues, or even professional support networks. One of the central ideas in this theory is that social support acts as a buffer against the negative effects of stress. The Social Support Theory is invaluable in exploring the role of interpersonal relationships in helping Guidance and Counselling undergraduates cope with academic stress. This theory explained explicitly the relevance of supportive peers, mentors,

family members on reduction of academic stress, improving coping mechanisms and academic outcomes. Furthermore, the theory can be used to assess whether certain types of social support (e.g., emotional or informational) are more effective than others in a university setting. For instance, students may rely more on informational support (advice about exams, study techniques) from peers or department, rather than emotional support, which could be crucial for navigating academic pressures.

Empirical Studies

The impact of coping strategies on stress among medical students was conducted by Smith and Tan (2020). A sample of 150 medical students was selected for the study via convenience sampling technique. Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS) and Medical Students' Stress Inventory (MSSI) were used for data collection. ANOVA and correlation analysis were used for data analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The study found that medical students who utilized problem-focused coping techniques exhibited lower levels of stress compared to those using emotion-focused strategies. A similar study aimed at investigating the relationship between coping strategies and stress among university students was carried out by Kumar and Choudhury (2017). The study utilized a sample of 180 university students selected via purposive sampling procedure. Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced (COPE) Inventory and Stress Coping Questionnaire were used for data collection. Path analysis and chi-square tests were used for data analysis at 0.05 level of significance. Analysis of data revealed that problem-focused coping was directly linked to lower perceived academic stress and better academic adaptation.

Fernandez and Adams (2022) studied the relationship between coping strategies and academic stress in secondary school students using a sample of 400 secondary school students who were randomly selected. Academic Stress Scale (ASS) and Coping Strategies for Adolescents Questionnaire were used for data collection. Factor analysis and hierarchical regression statistics were used for data analysis. Analysis of data showed that students who engaged in problem-focused coping strategies exhibited lower levels of stress, especially under high academic demands. The study of the relationship between emotion-focused coping, academic stress, and academic performance was carried out by Smith and Johnson (2021). A sample of 250 undergraduate students was selected for the study using random sampling method. Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), Emotion-Focused Coping Inventory were used for data collection while descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and regression analysis were used for data analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The study found that students who used emotion-focused coping strategies reported higher levels of stress but lower academic performance. Emotional regulation strategies were negatively correlated with academic performance.

Zhao and Wang (2020) studied coping strategies and their impact on academic stress in high school students using a sample of 300 high school students who were selected via stratified random sampling technique. Coping Strategy Indicator (CSI) and Academic Stress Scale (ASS) were used for data collection while factor analysis and multiple regression statistics were used for data analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that emotion-focused coping (especially avoidance) was significantly associated with higher levels of academic stress. Another study was conducted by Williams and Zhou (2018) on the role of social support in managing academic stress. A sample of 150 graduate students was selected for the study using random sampling procedure. Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) and Social Support Inventory (SSI) were used for data collection. Structural Equation Modeling

(SEM) was used for data analysis. The study revealed that social support significantly moderated the relationship between academic stress and well-being. High social support buffered against stress.

Turner and Carter (2017) studied the impact of coping strategies, specifically social support-seeking, on academic stress using a sample of 300 high school students selected via convenience sampling method. Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS) and Academic Stress Scale were used for data collection. ANOVA and Pearson's correlation were used for data analysis at .05 level of significance. It was revealed among others that students who engaged in seeking social support had lower levels of perceived academic stress compared to those who used avoidance or self-blame. Greene and Brooks (2020) studied social support and its impact on academic stress in undergraduate students. A sample of 200 undergraduates was selected for the study using convenience sampling technique. Social Support Scale (SSS) and Academic Stress Scale were used for data collection. Linear regression analysis and correlation statistics were used for data analysis. The study showed that social support had a direct impact on reducing academic stress among undergraduates. Emotional support was the most effective type of support.

Based on the empirical studies reviewed, the researchers observed that while there is a growing body of research on academic stress and coping strategies, there remains a paucity of studies specifically targeting guidance and counselling students. Most existing research has focused on broader student populations, leaving a gap in understanding the unique experiences and needs of those in the guidance and counselling field of study. Additionally, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, no empirical research has been carried out on the relationship between coping strategies and academic stress of guidance and counselling undergraduate students, University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Thus this present study was carried out to fill the existing gap as observed in the past empirical studies reviewed.

Research Design

Correlational design was adopted for the study. According to Wali (2002), correlation research designs are useful in determining whether two or more variables are related. Thus correlational research design is more suitable for this study because the researcher intended to establish the relationship between coping strategies and academic stress of guidance and counselling undergraduate students of University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of six hundred and eighty four (684) undergraduate regular students of Guidance and Counselling Department, University of Uyo, Uyo in the 2023/2024 academic session. This figure was obtained from the Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Uyo, Uyo, (2025).

Sample and Sampling Technique

Stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample of the study. In the first instance, undergraduate regular students of Guidance and Counselling, University of Uyo, Uyo were divided into strata based on year of study (that is, years one, two, three and four). Thereafter, 29% of the students' population in each year of study was selected for the study. This gave a total sample size of 200 students. Thus, a sample of 200 undergraduate regular students of Guidance and Counselling, University of Uyo, Uyo was used for the study.

Instrumentation

Two researcher-made instruments entitled “Coping Strategies Questionnaire” (CSQ) and Academic Stress Questionnaire for Undergraduate Students” (ASQUS) were used for data collection. CSQ consisted of eighteen items. Six items measured each of problem focused coping, emotion focused coping and social support-seeking coping strategies. The second instrument (ASQUS) consisted of twenty items which measured academic stress of undergraduate students of guidance and counselling, University of Uyo, Uyo. The items contained in the two instruments were responded to on a four-point rating scale namely Strongly (SA) = 4 points, Agree (A) = 3 points, Disagree (D) = 2 points, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point.

Validation of the Instrument

Face validity of the instruments was carried out by three (3) experts. Two experts in Department of Guidance and Counselling and one from the Department of Psychological Foundations of Education, Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, Uyo validated the instruments.

Reliability of the Instrument

To determine the internal consistency reliability of the instruments, the researcher randomly selected 25 undergraduate students of guidance and counselling, University of Uyo, Uyo who were part of the population but not part of the study sample to respond to the instruments. Data generated were subjected to inter-item analysis using Cronbach alpha statistics and reliability coefficients of .72 and .71 were obtained for CSQ and ASQUS respectively.

Method of Data Analysis

Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics was used to answer the research questions and also test the null hypotheses at .05 alpha level of significance. Data were subjected to analysis using Social Science Statistical Package (SPSS) version 22.0.

Results

Table 1: Pearson product moment correlation between problem focused coping strategy and academic stress of undergraduate students of guidance and counselling, University of Uyo, Uyo

Variables	n	r-value	p-value	Remark
Problem focused coping (X)	200	-.71	2.549	Not Sig.
Academic stress (Y)				

p>.05

The result in Table 1 shows a correlation coefficient value of -.71, depicting a negative relationship between problem-focused coping strategy and academic stress of undergraduate students of guidance and counselling. More so, the test of corresponding hypothesis one reveals that the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is not statistically significant at .05 level of significance. Thus, there is no significant

relationship between problem focused coping strategy and academic stress of undergraduate students of guidance and counselling, University of Uyo, Uyo

Table 2: Pearson product moment correlation between emotion focused coping strategy and academic stress of undergraduate students of guidance and counselling, University of Uyo, Uyo

Variables	n	r-value	p-value	Remark
Emotion focused coping (X)	200	.73	.000	Sig.
Academic stress (Y)				

p<.05

The result in Table 2 shows a correlation coefficient value of .73 which depicts a positive relationship between emotion-focused coping strategy and academic stress of undergraduate students of guidance and counselling. More so, the test of corresponding hypothesis two reveals that the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is statistically significant at .05 level of significance. Thus, there is significant relationship between emotion focused coping strategy and academic stress of undergraduate students of guidance and counselling, University of Uyo, Uyo

Table 3: Pearson product moment correlation between social support-seeking coping strategy and academic stress of undergraduate students of guidance and counselling, University of Uyo, Uyo

Variables	n	r-value	p-value	Remark
Social support-seeking coping (X)	200	.77	.000	Sig.
Academic stress (Y)				

p<.05

The result in Table 3 shows a correlation coefficient value of .77, depicting a positive relationship between social support-seeking coping strategy and academic stress of undergraduate students of guidance and counselling. More so, the test of corresponding hypothesis three reveals that the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is statistically significant at .05 level of significance. Thus, there is significant relationship between social support-seeking coping strategy and academic stress of undergraduate students of guidance and counselling, University of Uyo, Uyo

Discussion of Findings

The finding that there is a negative relationship means that as students use problem-focused coping, their academic stress tends to decrease. This might suggest that students who employ problem-focused strategies to manage academic demands are able to alleviate some of the stress associated with those demands. However, since this relationship is not significant, it suggests that, while a negative trend may be observed, the effect is weak or inconsistent across the sample of students. This could be due to the fact that problem-focused coping involves taking direct actions to deal with or resolve a stressful situation. In

academic contexts, this could include strategies such as organizing study schedules, breaking down tasks into manageable steps, focusing on solving problems when faced with an academic challenge and so forth. This present finding lends support to Smith and Tan (2020), Kumar and Choudhury (2017) and Fernandez and Adams (2022) who in their study revealed that students who engaged in problem-focused coping strategies exhibited lower levels of stress, especially under high academic demands. The result that there is a significant positive relationship between emotion-focused coping strategy and academic stress among undergraduate students in guidance and counselling suggests that students who tend to use emotion-focused coping strategies are more likely to experience higher levels of academic stress. Emotion-focused coping strategies involve managing the emotional distress caused by a situation rather than addressing the problem itself. These strategies include behaviours like avoidance, denial, or rumination. The findings could be due to the fact emotion-focused coping strategies help individuals manage their emotional reactions to stressors, but they do not directly address the source of stress itself. For example, when a student faces academic pressures, using emotion-focused strategies like avoidance or denial may temporarily reduce the emotional discomfort, but it does not solve the underlying problem (e.g., incomplete assignments, exam pressure). This present finding agrees with Smith and Johnson (2021), and Zhao and Wang (2020) who in their study reported that emotion-focused coping (especially avoidance) was significantly associated with higher levels of academic stress.

The negative relationship between social support-seeking coping strategies and academic stress means that as students use social support-seeking strategies more (such as seeking help or talking to others when stressed), their level of academic stress tends to decrease. In other words, the more they engage in these coping behaviours, the less academic stress they experience. The relationship between the use of social support-seeking coping strategies and academic stress is described as statistically significant. This suggests that the findings are not likely due to random chance but are instead likely reflective of a true pattern. The statistical significance means that the observed relationship between these two factors is reliable and meaningful, based on the data collected in the study. Seeking support from others can help buffer the impact of stress, reducing its negative effects. This may have also contributed to the present finding which is in agreement with Williams and Zhou (2018), Turner and Carter (2017), and Greene and Brooks (2020) who had earlier reported that social support had a direct impact on reducing academic stress among undergraduates.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that; although problem-focused coping may have a potential influence on reducing academic stress, the effect is not strong enough to be considered meaningful in a statistical context for undergraduate students of guidance and counselling; students who use emotion-focused coping strategies tend to experience higher levels of academic stress; students who actively seek social support tend to experience lower levels of academic stress. It highlights the importance of support systems and the role of social networks in mitigating stress among students.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. Universities and academic institutions in Nigeria should offer regular workshops and training sessions on time management, study skills, and effective problem-solving strategies to empower students in dealing with academic challenges.

2. It is recommended that students be guided towards healthier emotional regulation strategies. Counselling services should help students recognize when their coping mechanisms might be exacerbating stress and offer alternative strategies that promote better emotional resilience, such as mindfulness or cognitive reframing techniques.
3. Universities in Nigeria should foster environments where students feel comfortable seeking support from peers, faculty, and counselling services. Creating a more open and accessible culture of support can help students feel less stressed academically and more connected to their community.

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AN APPRAISAL OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN NIGERIA VIS-À-VIS KANTIAN ETHICS

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Abstract

In this paper, we shall explore the application of Kant's ethics to political leadership in Nigeria, showing its potential to address persistent challenges such as corruption, nepotism, and weak governance structures. Rooted in the principles of duty, the categorical imperative and the inherent dignity of individuals, Kant's ethical framework provides a moral compass for leaders to prioritize the collective good over personal or sectional interests. By examining the principles of universalizability and the moral autonomy of individuals, this study argues that Kantian ethics offers an invaluable tool for fostering accountability, justice and respect for human rights in Nigerian governance. The paper critiques the current state of political leadership in Nigeria characterized by moral lapses and neglect of the citizen welfare, while proposing Kantian moral principles as a foundation for ethical governance. Furthermore, it is argued that adopting these principles can lead to a transformative shift in Nigeria's political landscape, promoting a leadership ethos rooted in fairness, transparency and human dignity.

Keywords: Kant, Corruption, Political Leadership, Categorical Imperative

Introduction

The moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant, rooted in deontology, provides a compelling framework for assessing ethical leadership, particularly in political contexts. Kant's categorical imperative emphasizes universal moral laws and the intrinsic dignity of every individual, mandating leaders to act in ways that respect human worth and promote justice (Kant, 30-32). In Nigeria, where political leadership is often criticized for corruption, inefficiency and disregard for the common good, Kant's ethics offers an evaluative lens to explore whether leaders adhere to moral imperatives that serve the greater societal interest. Scholars like Joseph Omoregbe argue that Kant's principles, particularly the emphasis on duty and moral autonomy, remain relevant for addressing the moral failures evident in Nigerian politics (45). Nigeria's political landscape has been characterized by persistent gap between ethical ideals and practical governance, with leaders frequently accused of prioritizing self-interest over collective welfare. Ajayi asserts that this misalignment can be traced to a deficiency in moral accountability, a core tenet of Kantian philosophy (27). Kantian ethics, with its insistence on the universality of moral actions and the prioritization of duty over expediency, challenges Nigerian political leaders to transcend ethnic, religious and personal biases in their decision-making processes. By examining the intersections of Kant's moral philosophy and Nigeria's political realities, this study seeks to illuminate the ethical deficits in leadership and propose pathways for fostering integrity and justice in governance.

The Foundations of Kantian Ethics

Kant's moral philosophy, grounded in deontology, emphasizes the primacy of duty and the inherent worth of individuals. Unlike consequentialist frameworks, which focus on outcomes, Kantian ethics insists that morality is rooted in the principle guiding an action, irrespective of its consequences. At the heart of Kantian ethics lies the categorical imperative, a universal moral law that binds individuals to act out of duty and not mere inclination (Kant 30). For example, a Kantian approach would advocate for telling the truth even if it leads to negative consequences, as lying would violate the universal principle of honesty. In a workplace setting, this could mean reporting a mistake to a superior even if it risks your reputation. This strict adherence to moral principles can sometimes be seen as inflexible or even impractical, especially in situations where the consequences of an action are significant. However, proponents of Kantian ethics argue that by prioritizing duty and universal moral laws, individuals can maintain their integrity and uphold a sense of moral consistency. Kantian ethics is a potent framework for directing people's choices and actions in a way that puts moral values ahead of convenience or self-interest. Kant's categorical imperative is foundational to his ethical framework and can be summarized in three main formulations.

Universalizability Principle: The first formulation, often called the principle of universalizability, states, "Act only according to that maxim whereby you can, at the same time, will that it should become a universal law" (Kant 31). This principle requires individuals to evaluate whether their actions could be universally applicable without contradiction. For instance, lying would fail this test because, if universalized, it would undermine the very concept of truth-telling. Omoregbe asserts that this formulation promotes consistency and impartiality in moral reasoning, which are essential qualities for leadership (50). For example, a leader facing a decision to manipulate the truth to gain an advantage would need to consider whether they would want everyone to lie in similar situations without consequence. If lying became a universal law, trust and integrity within the organization would break down, ultimately harming the leader's ability to lead effectively. Therefore, Omoregbe's argument underscores the importance of moral integrity and honesty in leadership. By adhering to the principle of universality in truth-telling, leaders can maintain trust and respect within their organization. This not only sets a positive example for others to follow but also allows for more transparent and ethical decision-making processes. Thus, leaders who prioritize truth-telling over personal gain are more likely to inspire loyalty and confidence in their followers, leading to long-term success and sustainability in their leadership roles.

Treating Humanity as an End: The second formulation emphasizes respect for human dignity: "Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means to an end" (Kant 36). This principle underscores the intrinsic worth of every individual and prohibits exploiting others for selfish purposes. Ajayi observes that this ethical mandate is particularly relevant to leadership, as it obliges leaders to prioritize the well-being of their constituents over personal or sectional gains (72). For example, a good leader would ensure that their decisions and actions are made with the best interests of their followers in mind, rather than using them solely for personal gain. This could mean prioritizing fair treatment, providing opportunities for growth and development, and fostering a positive and inclusive work environment. While it may be tempting for leaders to pursue their own agenda at the expense of others, true ethical leadership requires a higher standard of behavior. By putting

the well-being of their constituents first, leaders not only create a more productive and harmonious work environment but also earn the respect and trust of their followers. In the long run, this approach leads to greater success and satisfaction for both the leader and their team. One can rightly argue that ethical leadership is about more than just making the right decisions; it is about embodying a set of values that prioritize the greater good above personal gain.

Autonomy Principle: This principle emphasizes the need for everyone to act as a rational autonomous being by making one's own moral laws and obeying them, rather than being subject to external influences or desires. According to Kant, true moral action stems from a good will, motivated by the moral law itself. This third principle follows (from the first two) as the ultimate condition of their harmony with practical reason: the idea of the will of every rational being as a universally legislating will (Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Moral*, 43). The import of this position is that, it is not enough that the right conduct be followed, but that one also demands that conduct of oneself.

Central to Kantian ethics is the notion of acting out of moral duty rather than self-interest or external compulsion. Leaders guided by duty demonstrate autonomy, adhering to ethical principles regardless of external pressures. Kant posits, "Autonomy of the will is the property of the will by which it is a law to itself" (42). This autonomy ensures that ethical leaders act in ways that reflect universal moral standards, fostering trust and integrity in governance.

Implications for Justice, Fairness, and Accountability

Kantian ethics has profound implications for justice and fairness, particularly in political leadership. The principle of universalizability demands that laws and policies apply equally to all, ensuring fairness and the eradication of favouritism. Similarly, the principle of treating humanity as an end obliges leaders to uphold the rights and dignity of every individual, thereby promoting social justice. Ajayi notes, "A Kantian framework for leadership necessitates accountability, as leaders must justify their actions based on universal moral standards, not personal or political expediency" (85). Tersely, Kantian ethics offers a robust moral foundation for leadership, particularly in contexts requiring justice, fairness, and accountability. By adhering to principles of universalizability, respect for human dignity, and moral autonomy, leaders can build ethical governance structures that inspire trust and uphold the common good.

Challenges for Implementing Kant's Ethics in Nigeria

Kant's ethics or deontological ethics, focuses on the intrinsic morality of actions rather than their consequences. Central to Kant's philosophy is the categorical imperative, which insists that moral actions must be universally applicable, stemming from a sense of duty and respect for all individuals as ends in themselves rather than means to an end (Kant 30). This involves consistently evaluating actions to ensure they align with the essential criteria of the categorical imperative which entails acting on maxims that stem from individual actions but hold the potential to be universally applicable laws (Pokotylo 1). The principle of universalization mandates that every action must align with a maxim that can be universally applied (Eyo & Udofia 164). The categorical imperative of moral action also constitutes the imperative for actions that could be qualified as good. On this note, a leadership that could be qualified as good must necessarily abide by the categorical imperative principle. They are

different versions of the expression of the principle of the categorical imperative derivable from Kant (*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 39 - 52) thus;

1. Act only according to that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.
2. I am never to act otherwise than so that my maxim should become a universal law.
3. Act only so that the will through its maxim could regard itself at the same time as making universal laws.
4. Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never simply as a means.
5. Act so that your will regards itself as making universal law through its maxims.
6. Act as if you were always through your maxims a law-making member in a universal kingdom of ends.

These principles present an appealing framework for political leadership, advocating for impartiality, transparency, and commitment to moral duties, elements essential for effective governance. However, applying Kant's ethics to governance in Nigeria, a nation marked by complex socio-political dynamics is challenging. Nigeria's political culture, socio-economic conditions, ethnic and religious allegiances, weak legal system, and prevalent issues of corruption often counter the universal moral standards Kant espouses.

In theory, Kant's ethics offers a robust framework for governance, especially in promoting justice, transparency, and impartiality. These principles align with ideals of good governance, as they prioritize the common good over individual benefit and prevent the misuse of power. However, implementing these principles in governance requires leaders to act impartially, an expectation often unmet in Nigeria due to various socio-political and economic factors. Nigeria's political and socio-economic landscape presents significant challenges to implementing ethical principles rooted in impartiality and duty. Since gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria has experienced various forms of governance, from military dictatorships to democratic administrations. These shifts have created a political culture where power is often centralized, with many leaders prioritizing their interests and those of their ethnic or religious groups over national concerns. Political favoritism, corruption, and a lack of transparency are recurring issues, making it difficult to adhere to universal ethical standards in public office. A renowned novelist, Chinua Achebe, in *The Trouble with Nigeria*, reveals the root cause of Nigeria's predicament:

The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land, climate, water, air, or anything else. The main problem facing Nigeria is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to their responsibility, to the challenge of personal example, which is the hallmark of true leadership (1).

One may not totally agree with Achebe's sweeping declaration, though he may probably be right in the sense that despite being blessed with vast oil reserves, Nigeria has faced numerous issues relating to corruption and mismanagement in the oil industry. Leaders have failed to prioritize the well-being of the Nigerian people and instead prioritized their gain, contributing to ongoing economic challenges in the country. This lack of ethical leadership has caused immense harm to the government, stifling progress and perpetuating poverty and inequality. Until Nigerian leaders prioritize the needs of their citizens over their interests,

the government will continue to face obstacles in achieving its full potential. Leaders need to lead by example and work towards the common good of all Nigerians to bring about positive change and development. This calls for a critical examination of leadership in Nigeria and emphasizes the urgent need for transformative leaders who prioritize the collective good over personal or sectional interests. Also, Nigeria's socio-economic challenges - such as poverty, unemployment and inadequate public infrastructure - foster an environment where survival often takes precedence over ethical considerations. This reality complicates Kant's mandate for leaders to act out of duty to moral law. In a setting where citizens face severe economic hardship, political loyalty, and patronage often become mechanisms of survival, undermining Kant's call for universal moral principles in governance. This work considers the following as challenges to implementing Kant's ethics in Nigeria:

Corruption and Favoritism: As published in Punch Newspaper, Shaibu opines "Nigeria has ranked 145 out of 180 countries and scored 25 out of 100 points in the recently launched 2023 Corruption Perception Index, published by Transparency International Nigeria." During the launch of the CPI in Abuja, Ibrahim Musa Rafsanjani, Executive Director of the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre, stressed that Nigeria still faces significant challenges in combating corruption. Despite a slight improvement in its 2023 Corruption Perception Index score 25 from 24 in 2022 and ranking 145 from 150, Nigeria remains below the Sub-Saharan African average of 33. Highlighting widespread regional corruption, Rafsanjani noted that 90% of Sub-Saharan countries scored below 50 and criticized rising political corruption in Nigeria, where looters are rewarded with appointments. He called for urgent reforms to promote development, democracy, and transparency. The CPI score reflects the perceived degree of corruption within the public sector, ranging from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (least corrupt). Nigeria recorded its lowest CPI score of 6.9 in 1996, while its highest score of 28 was achieved in 2016 during President Muhammadu Buhari's first year in office. Friday Odeh, Country Director of Accountability Lab Nigeria, identifies judicial, electoral, and security sector corruption as key weaknesses contributing to Nigeria's stagnant progress in combating corruption. The electoral corruption, undermined public trust, particularly after the disappointing 2023 elections that disillusioned many young voters. Second, judicial corruption, marked by conflicting court rulings, has cast doubt on the judiciary's independence and integrity. Third, corruption in the security sector is significant, with defense and security consistently receiving the largest share of the national budget - 13.4% - dwarfing allocations to education (8.2%) and infrastructure (5.7%). Corruption is one of the most significant obstacles to implementing Kant's ethics in Nigeria's political leadership. Kant's ethics advocates for integrity and transparency, but the pervasive culture of corruption contradicts these ideals. Political officials often disregard the moral duty to serve the public, opting instead for actions that serve personal interests, undermining the categorical imperative, which calls for actions to be universally ethical.

Weak Institutions: In Nigeria, it is certain that weak institutions constitute one of the major hindrances to development. Almost every institution in Nigeria is weak and corrupt. Perhaps, it is in this respect that Elijah John submits *inter alia*:

The judiciary, the security agencies like the Police Force, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), the legislature, labour unions, Directorate of State Security (DSS), Independent National

Electoral Commission (INEC), the press, civil society groups, religious, economic, political parties and other trade and professional bodies are highly sentimental, biased, corrupt and, as a result, very weak and incapable of supporting democratic ideals in different African nations (2019: 229).

From the above picture, it is doubtful if Kant's ethics can work in a society without strong institutions. This is the case as strong institutions are the driving force that propel enviable leadership. Strong institutions checkmate the excesses of the leaders and curtail executive rascality as witnessed in Nigeria.

Ethnic and Religious Divisions

Nigeria's ethnic and religious diversity adds another layer of complexity to ethical governance. With over 250 ethnic groups and two major religions - Islam and Christianity - politics is often driven by ethnic and religious affiliations, leading to favoritism and partiality. Kant's deontology bases morality on the universalizability of actions, asserting that actions are only moral if they can be universally applied, including to oneself (Obioha & Adegboyega 28). Kant's ethics requires that decisions be made impartially, without bias toward any group, but in Nigeria, leaders frequently face pressure to prioritize the interests of their ethnic or religious communities. This allegiance often supersedes national concerns, contradicting Kant's imperative for universal moral principles and equal treatment.

Weak Judicial and Legal Systems

The Judiciary, as the branch of government is responsible for interpreting and enforcing the law, and plays a critical role in delivering justice within society. Its primary purpose is to uphold justice, making it the ultimate safeguard and hope in a democratic system. Ogbonna refers to it as "The last bastion of hope for the citizenry" (1) It stands as the boundary between constitutional governance and authoritarian rule, highlighting its crucial importance. The Judiciary also has the authority to hold other branches of government accountable, ensuring the Legislature operates within its constitutional boundaries and the executive adheres to the rule of law. However, the pressing question remains: is the Nigerian judiciary effectively fulfilling this role? The judiciary can hinder the fight against corruption through inefficiencies, delays, and lack of transparency in the judicial process. Issues such as conflicting rulings, judicial corruption, and compromised independence undermine public trust. When the judiciary fails to hold corrupt individuals accountable or allows political interference, it perpetuates impunity and weakens anti-corruption efforts. The effectiveness of Kant's ethics in governance relies heavily on the strength of a nation's legal and judicial systems to enforce moral and legal standards. In a context where the legal system is often compromised, the ideal of enforcing Kant's ethics becomes impractical. For example, cases of political corruption are often either delayed indefinitely or dismissed due to the lack of impartial enforcement. This reality undermines the concept of universal justice and fairness in governance, essential to Kant's ethics.

Applying Kant's Ethics to Political Leadership in Nigeria

Immanuel Kant's ethical framework provides a vital philosophical basis for evaluating and addressing Nigeria's political leadership challenges. Kantian ethics emphasizes universal moral principles, respect for human dignity, and the prioritization of duty over personal

interests. These principles have significant implications for tackling corruption, nepotism, and inequality while fostering accountability and social justice in governance. One important question that could arise here is how Kant's moral principles influence moral duty in Nigerian leadership. In response to this question, one could argue that Kantian principles influence moral duty in Nigerian leadership by emphasizing the importance of duty or obligation as the foundation of rational morality. Kant's concept of unconditional goodwill gives rise to categorical imperatives that serve as the litmus test for all moral actions, including those in leadership. Leadership falls within the realm of practical reason or morality, dealing with the oughtness of human behaviour according to Kant. Kant distinguishes moral actions from non-moral ones based on the motive that occasions the act, with moral actions being guided by duty or obligation rather than contingent factors like utility or inclination. Therefore, for Nigerian leadership to align with Kantian principles, decisions and actions must be deontological in nature and guided by the maxims of the categorical imperative to be considered moral (Udofia, 5). Kant's moral principles emphasize the importance of universal rules that apply to all individuals equally, regardless of their position or power.

Universalizability and Unethical Practices

Kant's principle of universalizability requires that actions conform to maxims that could be willed as universal laws without contradiction. This principle directly critiques unethical practices like nepotism and corruption, which undermine fairness and equity in governance. Nepotism, for instance, violates this principle because a system where favoritism is universally practiced would render merit and justice irrelevant, leading to systemic inefficiency. According to Omoregbe, "Corruption and nepotism thrive on self-interest and disregard for universal moral principles, creating social inequality and eroding public trust" (75). By adopting the universalizability principle, Nigerian leaders can develop impartial policies that benefit all citizens rather than a select few.

Treating Citizens as Ends

The Kantian imperative to treat humanity as an end rather than a means mandates leaders to respect the intrinsic worth of every citizen. In the Nigerian context, this principle demands an active effort to address social and economic inequalities and promote justice. Ajayi observes, "When leaders exploit citizens for political gain or economic advantage, they fail to acknowledge their inherent dignity, perpetuating cycles of poverty and disenfranchisement" (92). Policies grounded in this principle would prioritize education, healthcare, and poverty alleviation to ensure that all citizens have opportunities to thrive.

The Moral Duty to Prioritize Public Welfare

Kantian ethics obliges leaders to act from a sense of duty that aligns with the greater good, rather than personal or sectional interests. This moral duty is critical in Nigeria, where leadership is often characterized by self-interest and ethnic or religious bias. Kant's assertion that "the will is a law to itself" (47) underscores the need for leaders to internalize moral principles and act autonomously in pursuit of public welfare. Ethical leadership in Nigeria would require prioritizing national unity, infrastructure development, and transparent governance over political expediency.

Moral Foundation for Governance

Kant's ethics can serve as a moral compass for Nigerian political leaders, emphasizing the need for integrity and accountability. The prevailing issues of corruption and political deceit in Nigeria highlight a significant gap between ethical obligations and political practice. By adopting Kantian principles, leaders could foster a culture of duty for duty's sake, prioritizing the welfare of citizens over personal gain (Uzoigwe and Chukwuma-offor, 79). For example, instead of embezzling funds for personal enrichment, a political leader could prioritize the allocation of resources towards infrastructure projects that benefit the entire population. This shift in focus towards the greater good could ultimately lead to increased national unity and development in Nigeria.

Strategies for Embedding Kantian Ethics in Nigerian Political Systems

Educational Reforms Focused on Moral Philosophy: Integrating Kantian ethics into the curriculum at all levels of education can foster a culture of ethical reasoning among future leaders. Omoregbe argues that “philosophical education equips individuals with the capacity for critical moral reflection, a prerequisite for ethical leadership” (112). Schools may contribute to the development of a generation of morally upright leaders who give ethical considerations top priority in their activities by educating students to think critically about moral concerns and use ethical principles in their decision-making. Educational institutions must stress the value of moral philosophy in producing people who are competent in their subjects and behave ethically and conscientiously in a world that is changing quickly and where moral quandaries are always changing. In the end, including Kantian ethics in the curriculum can help create a society in which moral leadership is respected and applied in both public and private spheres.

Institutional Mechanisms for Accountability: Strengthening institutions to enforce transparency and combat corruption is essential. Policies requiring leaders to justify decisions in alignment with universal ethical standards can promote accountability. Ajayi suggests establishing independent bodies to monitor government activities and enforce ethical compliance (105). These independent bodies can serve as watchdogs, holding government officials accountable for their actions and ensuring that they act in the public's best interest. Establishing a system of checks and balances can assist institutions prevent corruption and boost public confidence in the government. Finally, putting these institutional accountability systems into place may guarantee that leaders are held accountable for their actions and support good governance.

Encouraging Value-Based Leadership Training: Leadership training programs that emphasize Kantian principles can cultivate a generation of leaders committed to moral duty and public service. Workshops, mentorship programs, and political party reforms can be tailored to instill values of integrity and respect for human dignity.

Conclusion

Kant's ethics, with its emphasis on duty, moral law, and the categorical imperative, provides a robust framework for evaluating political leadership in Nigeria. Kant's insistence that moral actions must stem from duty and be universally applicable challenges Nigerian leaders to prioritize the common good over personal or sectional interests. As Odera Oruka observes,

"A leader's commitment to moral principles often determines the trajectory of societal development" (115). This underscores the need for leaders to adopt ethical principles that transcend ethnic, religious, or political affiliations. Moreover, the application of Kant's principle of humanity, which mandates treating individuals as ends in themselves, offers a transformative lens for governance in Nigeria. Current political practices, characterized by corruption, nepotism, and the neglect of citizens' welfare, starkly contrast with this ideal. Emmanuel Eze, in his critique of African leadership ethics, argues that "a moral reconstruction rooted in universal ethical principles is imperative for sustainable governance in Africa" (87). Kant's philosophy thus provides an ethical template for fostering accountability, justice, and respect for human dignity in Nigerian politics. It is imperative to stipulate that the integration of Kantian ethics into political leadership in Nigeria is not merely an academic exercise but a moral imperative for national development. By adopting leadership practices that align with the categorical imperative, Nigerian leaders can build a society founded on justice and fairness, thereby addressing the challenges of corruption and inequality. As Kwasi Wiredu aptly observes, "Ethical governance is the bedrock of societal progress" (132). Thus, Kant's ethical theory remains a timeless guide for the moral rejuvenation of Nigeria's political leadership.

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SITUATING THE CHALLENGES AND PERFORMANCE OF SMALL BUSINESSES IN BORDER COMMUNITIES OF NIGERIA AND CAMEROON: THE IMPACT OF GOVERNMENT ROLE AND POLICY INCENTIVES

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Abstract

The study investigated the Moderating effect of Government Policy Incentives on the Relationship Between Trade informality and Small Business Performance in Border Communities of Adamawa State and Cameroon. A survey designed was employed and the unit of analysis were the individual owner/managers of small businesses in Nigeria and Cameroon border communities. The study adopted stratified random sampling techniques in data collection with a sample size of 461 drawn from 1840 owner/managers of small businesses in Adamawa State and Cameroon Border communities. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version, 26 was employed for descriptive data analysis. SEM was used with the help of Smart PLS-SEM version 4.0 was used for data analysis. The findings of this study show that entrepreneurial innovation and mutual trust have direct significant positive relationships with small business performance, while border closure was not found to be a predictor of small business performance in border communities of Nigeria and Cameroon. The results of the moderation test show that government policy incentives were found to moderate the relationship between border closure and small business performance and mutual trust but failed to moderate the relationship between entrepreneurial innovation, Infrastructure and business performance. The study expands the literature in informal small business knowledge by incorporating four variables with government policy as a moderator to explain trade Informality and cross border small business performance. The findings offer practical implication for operators of small businesses and regulators of cross border trade in enhancing small business performances in Adamawa State communities with Cameroon. The study recommends the need for Nigeria and Cameroon governments to simplify procedures for small-scale business formalisation and softening tariffs and custom procedures for clearance of goods which will encourage small scale cross border trades to flourish.

Keywords: Border Closure, Infrastructure, Entrepreneurial Innovation, Mutual Trust and Small Business.

Introduction

Globally, small businesses are critical to national economic growth and development. In Africa, small businesses accounted for about 80 percent of firms and employed over 70 Percent of the population while contributing an estimated 45 Percent of the total GDP (Mutoku & Kpunda, 2017). According to Mutiria (2017), Boushnack, Rageb, and Sakr (2018) Small Businesses in Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for over 85 percent of firms and

contributed 66 percent of employment opportunities and global Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In many countries, the value of informal cross border trade exceeds that of formal trade. In West Africa for instance, informal enterprises dealing in staple foods represent about 30 percent of the total regional trade (Bouet, Cisse & Traore, 2020). Informal businesses are important contributor to job creation and economic growth in several African countries (International Monetary Fund, 2021). Informal small business activities provide livelihood to about 43 Percent of Sub-Saharan African (SSA) population, including the vulnerable, especially women (African Women Development Fund, 2017)

Border closure by Nigerian governments as a means of fighting smuggling and criminal activities has also placed another challenge to cross border trade even though some informal SMEs still flourish due to the porous nature of the borders and the interconnectedness of the border communities (Temitop & Francis, 2021, Olakunle, 2021). In general, the border closure has negatively impacted on business performance with millions of residents losing their means of livelihoods (Oguntoye, 2020). Shava and Chinyamurindi, (2019) reported that cross border trade informality relates to mutual trust and positively impact on small business owner/managers performance in border communities. Promoting small businesses requires efforts to provide enabling environment. Cheng, Wang and Wang (2018) found that efficient port infrastructure tends to increase export. Also, Lorz (2020) reported that trust between trading countries in the development of infrastructure affect cost of logistics, cost of import and export and therefore impact on trade. However, Sagagi and Andrew (2019) reported that besides border closure, poor infrastructures, unofficial payments and security concern were critical challenges limiting the trading activities across Nigeria border communities.

Entrepreneurial innovation is needed to grow and overcome business challenges faced by small businesses. In this light, Muhammad, Thomas & Wunnam (2022) found that innovativeness is a crucial factor for small businesses in identifying market opportunities. This is more so in turbulent situations where innovativeness helps SMEs to develop unique Product, achieve market penetration and sales growth (Alam, Uddin, & Yazdifar, 2019). Also, Anwar (2018) demonstrated that an innovative business strategy is critical to achieving competitive advantage for Small Businesses. However, informal business practices of not documenting transactions due to mutual trust often result to partners failing to meet business obligations (Vanessa, Wilson & Samuel, 2018). The bulk of small businesses in border communities tend to be largely small and informal and this limit their capacity to contribute substantially to employments and economic growth (Akin & Peter, 2020; Hanna & Fin, 2022).

Government policy is a contributor to hostile business environment. Evidence shows that indiscriminate tax levies, low accessibility to loans from financial institutions and inability to keep proper financial records are challenges hampering the growth of small business in Nigeria (Yakubu, Umar & Sule (2021). Limited agencies handling technical and professional services and changing government regulations, can make small businesses unsustainable (KPA, 2023). Small businesses which lack government support policies have restricted access to improving performance (Udoh, Inim, Emiesefia & Akyuz (2023). The development of a sound government policy for SMEs growth is an indispensable component of strategy of most economies and holds significance to the growth, development and performance of small businesses (Ifekwem, 2019).

As observed earlier, there is a noticeable reduction in the activities of cross border small businesses in border communities of Nigeria and Cameroon (Omodele, 2021). The

Central Bank of Nigeria (2019) reported that Small Businesses are on the decline mainly, due to the regional and domestic policy uncertainties. In 2020, the contribution of trading to GDP was valued at 2.5 Percent to total trade (CBN, 2020). In particular, the same CBN report indicated that cross border trade in Nigeria was fluctuating at 4.5 Percent 0.2 Percent, 1.1 Percent, 0.6 Percent and 0.4 percent for 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 respectively. It is important to recognize that since independence, Nigeria and Cameroon have been engaging in bilateral agreements to promote business and cooperation, yet little has been achieved in terms of increase in cross border business activities. (Bonchuk, 2014, Denis & Lenora foundation, 2022). Economic activities in Cameroon, including services, manufacturing and agro-industrial sectors and trade have experienced a sharp slow-down due to the persistence of the regional and socio-political crises the country is experiencing (African Development Bank (ADB), 2021). Also, it has been reported that Small and Medium Enterprises in Nigeria and Cameroon are under significant stress due to economic and policy issues of governments (CBN, 2020; Kehinde & Mathew, 2021, ADB, 2021).

The National Bureau of Statistics consumer price index (CPI) report November 21, 2019 shows that the year-on-year food inflation rate increased from 13.2 Percent in August 2019 to 13.51 Percent in September 2019, followed by 13.51 Percent in September 2019 to 14.09 Percent in October 2019 which had adverse effect on small businesses performance. The National Bureau of Statistics (2023) report that in real terms, trades in Nigeria year on Year growth rate drops from 4.54 Percent to 3.15 Percent in 2023. Busari, Kayode, Olawade and Geoge (2024) and Abdullahi and Abdulrazak, (2021) reported that the increase in food prices had caused devastating effects on small business performance. This calls for the need to deeply investigate factors made businesses in border communities to remain informal and largely small, with a view to findings ways of enhancing their performance.

Problem Statement

The relationship between small business performance and livelihood among nations has been an issue of concern (African Women development fund 2017; Muhammad, Thomas & Wunnam 2022; Economic Commission for Africa 2023). In Nigeria, the high rate of unemployment is associated with Poor business Performance, youth restiveness and myriads of socio-economic crises being experienced by the country (African Development Bank, 2021). The slow pace in growth among small businesses in the border communities of Nigeria and Cameroon may be attributed to fragile border governance, infrastructural deficit, and mistrust among business partners when making business agreement (FOA 2020 and Udoh, Inim, Emiesefia & Akyuz 2023). Adamawa and borders with Cameroon has been a gate way for the flow of livestock, cowpea, cotton, and Sesame and others to most parts of Nigeria. However, the flow of trade has been largely impacted by trade informality (Kehinde & Mathew, 2021). Kehinde and Mathew (2021) and Temitope (2021) reported that border closure led to economic hardship, especially for people in border communities. Border closure could potentially induce trade informality such as bypassing the official trade routes and traders not minding to document transactions (Bashir & Deepali, 2022). Overtime, small businesses in border communities are grappled with harsh business environment caused by inadequate infrastructure, finance and unofficial charges (Sagagi & Andrew 2019); Isa, Christiana and Lotsmart, (2021); and Olakunle (2021). Studies have found that those businesses that are entrepreneurial and innovative is positively navigating the cross-border business to perform better (Covin & Miller, 2014, Aliyu, and Mahmood, 2014, Aliyu, Rogo and Mahmood, 2015; Mwaura, 2018; Khan and Lew 2018; Michael Zaheer and Garry, 2020;

Herring and Willie, 2022). However, Shava, (2018) Alrawadieh and Alrawadieh (2018), Shava and Chiyamurdi (2019), Jaiyeola and Adeyeye (2021), and Napwanya, & Chinyamurdi (2021) found negative relationship between the entrepreneurial orientation and SMEs performance. The negative relationship found by these studies did not however explain the peculiar dynamics of small businesses in border communities in Nigeria and Cameroon.

Most prominent government policy incentive for small business that affect performance are tax relief, low interest rate, grant and loans, business advisory training, technical assistance and professional services (Yakubu, Umar & Sule (2021). State and local financial, fiscal and service incentives are needed to fill small business funding gaps and address regional disparity in private equity investments which impact on performance (Darren & Ellen, 2021). Concerted effort was being made by countries of the world to promote SMEs growth by heavily investing in the sub-sector in order to witness more development mostly in the areas of job creation and economic development yet yielded little result. (Olateju & Ibikunle, 2023). Over decades, Nigerian government have spent large resources on business development programs such as capital, training Kits and workshops. However, those resources were not properly tailored to small businesses especially at the border communities which makes the businesses to remain informal and largely small in terms of volume of trading (Udoh, Inim, Emiesefia & Akyuz, 2023). In Nigeria, programs such as Bank of Industry (BOI) and Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) were established to promote small business development with a view to achieve increase in business performance, jobs creation and sustainable peace among citizens, yet little has been achieved in terms of innovations, market and sales growth among small businesses (Ibitomi and Micah, 2021). However, the extent to which governments have been able to overcome challenges of small business is characterized by a lot of controversies as empirical study's findings yet to find a tentative way of promoting small business development particularly in Sub Saharan Africa (Adaga, Egieya, Ewuga, Abdul & Abrahams, 2024). In addition, Ugwu, Njeze and Oluka (2023) reported that majority of firms in Nigeria fails to survive their first two years despite quantum of efforts by successive government and other stake holders.

Hackler and Harpel (2021) reported that there are limited studies documenting the effects of government policy incentives such as fiscal and financial incentives on small business performance in border communities. A number of studies have been conducted in relation to trade informality with variables such as border closure, trust, infrastructure and government policy and small business performance but with mixed results. Among the studies that showed positive and significant relationship between trade informality and small business performance includes: Akin and Peter (2002), Jean-Guy and Gerald (2012), Muhammad, Bukar and Babajidda (2016), Timmis (2017), Tayo and Emmanuel (2017), Ahmodu and Dosunmu, (2020), Isa, Christiana and Lotsmart (2021), Olakunle (2021), Eldrede and Djarloubek (2021), Ewah and Osong (2018) and Nkafo Policy, (2022). However, other studies that could not establish a significant relationship between trade informality and small business performance are found in Bonchuk (2014), Hoffman and Paul (2018), Abdukarim and Yesmin (2021), Omodele (2021) and ADB (2021). The above results indicate inconsistent findings indicating a significant gap in understanding whether or not Trade informality influences small business performance across border communities. Therefore, this study is designed to investigate factors that inhibits small businesses in border communities to remain informal and largely small and using government policy as a basis to

turning the tide around. This is with a view to better understand how small business could be utilized in employment, wealth creation, and sustainable peace in Nigeria and Cameroon.

Material and Methods

The study used cross sectional design, because it is costs effective and saves a lot of time (Sekaran, 2003; Wilson, 2010). The study focused on describing the characteristics of the population that is the small businesses in Adamawa State border areas with Cameroon. The population for this study is 1840 Small business owners/Managers of small businesses operating in border communities of Adamawa State and Cameroon. Specifically, 360 owners/Managers in Mubi, 250 owners/Managers in Sahuda, 250 owners /Managers in Belel, 210 owners/Managers in Garuo, 210 owners/Managers in Buokula, 260 owners/Managers from Guider and 240 from pulka in Borno state. Using stratified sampling method, the study draws 329 samples from the 1,840 Population. For the purpose of this study, a well-structured questionnaire with close ended questions was used to collect data. Partial Least Square (PLS) Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to analyze the data from the questionnaires.

Results and Discussion

Data were collected using questionnaire and analysed by employing SPSS and Smart PLS4. At start, data screening and preliminary analysis was conducted to check the normalcy of the data. This followed by report on result of Measurement model which looked at internal consistency reliability, individual item reliability, convergent reliability. Structural model. Additionally, there follows regression analysis for hypothesis testing to determine the level of significant effects of the study variables.

Factor Loadings

Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Border Closure	0.842	0.852	0.880	0.513
Cross Border Small Business	0.713	0.721	0.819	0.531
Entrepreneurial Innovation	0.738	0.753	0.832	0.555
Government Policy	0.838	0.852	0.876	0.503
Infrastructure	0.712	0.728	0.821	0.535
Mutual Trust	0.726	0.766	0.824	0.541

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2024

However, Bagozzi and Yi (1988) as well as Hair et al (2011), provided rule of thumb for internal consistency reliability using composite reliability coefficient suggesting that the composite reliability coefficient should be at least .70 or more. Giving table 4.8 above the least composite reliability coefficients value for this study is 0.874, demonstrating adequate internal consistency reliability. Similarly, Chin (1998) recommends that the AVE of each latent construct should be .50 or more. Following Chin (1998), the AVE values (see Table 4.8) exhibited high loadings ($\geq .50$) on their respective constructs, indicating adequate convergent validity. Loadings values equal to and greater than 0.4, 0.5 and 0.6 are

acceptable, if the summation of loadings results in high loadings scores, contributing to average variance extracted scores (Hulland, 1999; Byrne, 2016).

Testing Moderating Effect

This study adopted the use of a product indicator approach using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling to detect and estimate the strength of the moderating effect of government policy incentives on the relationships between trade informality and cross border small businesses in border communities of Nigeria and Cameroon.

Result of the Moderation Test

Hyp	Relationship	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Remark
Hyp 1	PI x BDC -> CBSB	0.189	0.184	0.059	3.188	0.001	Rejected
Hyp 2	GPI x EOI -> CBSB	-0.067	-0.077	0.053	1.275	0.202	Accepted
Hyp 3	GPI x INF -> CBSB	0.013	0.011	0.055	0.236	0.813	Accepted
Hyp 4	GPI x MT -> CBSB	-0.180	-0.171	0.073	2.454	0.014	Rejected

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2024

Regarding the moderating role of government policy incentives in the relationship between trade informality and cross border small business in border communities of Nigeria and Cameroon, result (see Table 4.16 below) indicated that government policy incentives had a significant positive moderating relationship with border closure and cross border small business at ($\beta = 0.189$, $t = 3.188$, $p = 0.001$). Hence, Hypothesis 6 was not supported. The possible reason for the non-support to the moderating variable for the hypothesized relationships might be because most of the respondents reported that they used alternative routes to transports their goods across the border during border closure periods.

In addition, government policy incentives had an insignificant negative moderating relationship with entrepreneurial innovation and cross border small business at ($\beta = -0.067$, $t = 1.275$, $p = 0.202$). Hence, Hypothesis 7 was supported. This implies that government policy incentives do not support entrepreneurial innovation that can encourage performance of small businesses in the border communities as reported by the respondents. Furthermore, the result of hypotheses 8 revealed government policy incentives insignificant moderating relationship between infrastructure and Business Performance of cross border small businesses with value ($\beta = 0.013$, $t = 2.236$, $p = 0.813$). The result was supported. This is because small businesses are poorly performing due to inability of government policy to provide adequate infrastructure that can propel business development especially in the border communities of Adamawa State. Lastly, hypothesis 9 which read government policy incentives does not significantly moderate the relationship between mutual trust and Business Performance of cross border small businesses with value ($\beta = -0.180$, $t = 2.454$, $p = 0.014$). This shows that the result of hypothesis 9 was not supported. This is because of loose government policies of not regulating and encouraging small business across the borders is affecting the performances of small business negatively.

Conclusion

Managers of SMEs need to understand that building entrepreneurial trust between national boundaries is a complex process as each nation has its own economic and trade policies. Informal trade between Nigeria and Cameroon has provided livelihoods for thousands of citizens who would have no jobs. Small business gives opportunities wider range of businessmen and women to provide basic goods and commodities, thus generating income. Most traders would prefer to trade informal and enjoy the peace of mind that comes from partial border law enforcement by concern authorities and poor road network in the border communities. The lesson for business policymakers is that informal trading is a complex issue and involves environmental forces that is beyond simple entrepreneurial evasion of law enforcement. Until these are understood better, the eradication of informal trade will be a hopeless task.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research and literature reviewed, the following recommendations are made:

1. Simplified trade regulations and administrative processes will make it easier for small businesses to engage in international trade and comply with standards.
2. There is the need for the two governments to address the border challenges by making policies to cover: training and capacity building for custom officers and other border regulation officers. This will foster understanding between the traders and regulatory bodies.
3. There is need for capacity building and training of small-scale business operators by agencies for small business development. Training and workshops on international trade, export procedures, and quality standards will empower small businesses with the knowledge and skills to compete globally.
4. Given the deficiency level of infrastructure and its implications on informal small business development, there's the need for policy interventions aiming to support informal cross border traders through the formation of organizations that can address the infrastructural deficiencies.
5. The study also recommends a regional conference that will promote rebuilding the regional infrastructure, agricultural productivity and border regulations among African State so as to have sustainable peace and development.
6. There is need for Nigeria and Cameroon to simplify procedure for small-scale business registration and softening tariffs and custom procedures for clearance of goods which will encourage small scale cross border trades to flourish.
7. There is need for economic community of west Africa (ECOWAS) and African Union (AU) to enforce protocol of free trade movement to increase cross border trade in the African regions. This will foster the activities of SMEs and improved livelihood among the people.

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COPING STRATEGIES QUESTIONNAIRE (CSQ)

Instruction: Please, indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the items by ticking (✓) against any of the response options below.

- SA = Strongly Agree
A = Agree
D = Disagree
SD = Strongly Disagree

S/N	Problem Focused Coping	SA	A	D	SD
1.	I focus on solving the problem when faced with an academic challenge.				
2.	I make detailed plans to deal with my academic problems.				
3.	When confronted with academic stress, I try to find practical solutions.				
4.	I break my tasks into smaller, manageable steps to reduce stress.				
5.	I set specific goals to address academic difficulties.				
6.	I try to solve problems directly as they come up.				
7.	I look for ways to improve my academic skills when faced with challenges.				
8.	I adjust my study strategies to fit the requirements of my coursework.				
	Emotion Focused Coping				
9.	I try to relax when I feel overwhelmed by academic stress.				
10.	I take breaks to help clear my mind during stressful academic situations.				
11.	I focus on positive thoughts to calm myself during stressful academic moments.				
12.	I engage in activities that make me feel better when I am stressed about academics.				
13.	I try to distract myself with hobbies when I feel emotionally drained by my coursework.				
14.	I ignore my academic problems temporarily to avoid stress.				
15.	I try to avoid thinking about my academic difficulties when they stress me out.				

16.	I use relaxation techniques to cope with the emotional side of academic stress.				
	Social Support-Seeking Coping				
17.	I talk to friends or family about my academic problems when I am stressed.				
18.	I seek advice from others when I feel overwhelmed by academic tasks.				
19.	I reach out to my lecturers for guidance when I am struggling.				
20.	share my academic worries with people I trust to gain perspective.				
21.	I turn to my peers for emotional support when dealing with academic stress.				
22.	I rely on friends or colleagues to help me solve academic problems.				
23.	I consult with academic advisors or counselors when I feel lost in my studies.				
24.	I seek out group study sessions to help me manage academic stress.				

ACADEMIC STRESS QUESTIONNAIRE FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS (ASQUS)

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1.	I often feel overwhelmed by the amount of work I have in my courses.				
2.	I feel anxious about upcoming exams and assignments.				
3.	The pressure to perform well academically often causes me stress.				
4.	I worry about meeting academic deadlines.				
5.	I struggle to balance academic responsibilities with personal life.				
6.	The demands of my academic program often leave me feeling drained.				
7.	I feel that my academic workload is too heavy to manage at times.				
8.	I often feel nervous about my ability to succeed in my studies.				
9.	I feel stressed when I think about the long-term impact of my academic performance.				
10.	I often feel like I am not doing enough in my studies.				
11.	The amount of reading required for my classes makes me feel stressed.				
12.	I feel overwhelmed by the pressure to get good grades.				
13.	I get anxious when I receive challenging assignments.				
14.	I am frequently worried about my academic future.				
15.	The thought of failing a course stresses me out.				
16.	I often feel emotionally exhausted due to academic demands.				
17.	I feel inadequate when comparing my academic performance to others.				
18.	I find it hard to relax because of my academic worries.				
19.	I have difficulty concentrating on my studies due to stress.				
20.	I often feel overwhelmed by the academic expectations of my program.				

COMMUNALISM AND INDIVIDUALISM: REVIEWING THE SCRAMBLE BETWEEN CAPITALISM AND HUMANISM- PERSPECTIVES ON FUTURE PEACEBUILDING

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Abstract

An increasing struggle between individual national security has persistently subdued common human security: supplanting communalism for individualism; giving capitalism advantage over humanitarianism. This study seeks to investigate the pursuit of destructive individualism; examine the promotion of segregated communalism; inquire into the scramble for exploitation of resources for profit; assess the implication on humanism and peacebuilding. The study adopts Unequal exchange theory to explain the issues under investigation. The inquiry uses qualitative data approach to gather data. It was revealed that, individual human person, and state's national interests had supplanted common humanity's interest; segregated communalism has loosened the strand holding human society together; global search for profit had continue to worsen conflict; cheap extraction of resources has sustained growing inequality and poverty in poor nations; and increasing poverty and illiteracy undermine continuously the foundation for peace. It was suggested that, practice of integrated communalism will promote win-win for common humanity; advanced nations should deploy their technology to process and trade in refined products instead of raw materials. This will create jobs and establish a concrete and sustainable foundation for peacebuilding.

Keywords: Communalism, Individualism, Capitalism, Humanism, Peacebuilding

Introduction

Divergent perspectives between communalism and individualism continue to throw up debates that refresh the destructive conflict between capitalism and the pursuit of common humanity's ideals of freedom from fear and need. Scramble for communal and individual security led to destructive conflict. Woerner, *et al.* (2023) conceptualize communalism as political and economic ideology that supports the shared ownership of resources, properties and wealth. Woods (1972) explains individualism from the viewpoint of promoting individual's goals and desires realization, emphasizing independence and self-reliance, advocating preference of individual interests over group, and oppose government or institutional interference. American Humanist Association (AHA, 2025) explain humanism to mean a life approach based on reason and common humanity, recognizing that moral values

are properly founded on human nature and experience alone. Capitalism is an economic system private ownership of the means of production and distribution of goods and services are directed by individuals but government (Zimbalist et al., 1988).

The individual is first a member of the community, and the latter depends on the former for its sustainability. Same is applicable to individual nation states and the global community. Duchi et al (2024a) stated that symbiotic relationship is established, when communalism encapsulate an individual interests in the context of community's interest. Villagization of global community contradicts communalism by establishing barriers against outsiders (Elizabeth, 2020). Bisong's (2018) idea of communalism expanding barriers among human families, ignored the notion of villagization, which entails an advance form of communalism, whereby nation states become constituent element of the international community. Global homogenization had created a segregated globalization process whereby advanced economies benefit, while low-income nations scramble for survival. Chaotic international system focused on individual nation-states protection of multinational corporations' exploration and exploitation of third world nations resources. They leave behind trails of poverty and conflict (Bell, 2017).

Nigeria continues to face the challenges of arms proliferation produce outside but exacerbates conflicts in Nigeria (Soetan, 2017). Military corporations employ states influence, while the black-market operations exploit weak governance structures in poor countries. Capitalism which promotes individual control of means of production, exploit the global market through their nations states protection. Similarly, individual states promote national economic interests, indicating states capitalism. Alami and Dixon (2020) explain that geographical imaginaries of state capitalism are replete with hostility, danger, competition. Individual states scramble for global opportunities for trade aggravates the already tensed competition between socialism and capitalism. West-east bloc destructive dispute relations pointed to an intellectual fallacy. Socialism and democracy had advanced the cause of humanity from diverse perspectives. Capitalist states denounce communism in its ideological systems. However, they working together to achieve globalization agenda. While they remain principles antagonists, they employ segregated communalism in their scramble for global markets and resources (Alami and Dixon, 2020). Segregated communalism, a form of protectionism is often use by advanced nations to discriminate against others (Bewley & Sophister, 2019).

Advanced nations dominate world resources and markets with the strength of technology. This relegates third-world nations, who lagged behind. Common humanity become threaten when dominant economies create insider-outsider interaction. Kornher and Braun (2020) revealed that, European Union Common Agricultural Policy (EU CAP) pursues direct payments to farmers, accounting 50% total farm income in the EU. However, the EU spend rather small on agro-technological development in Africa. This undermines African farmers refine product's competitiveness in EU market. Common humanity requires coming together to prevent, resolve, manage and transform human problems, to build a prosperous future. To save humanity, global community must collaborate with each other, but operate separately on national power (Kumar, 1992). Bewley and Sophister (2019) state that World Trade Organization's (WTO) meetings resulting in declining trade barriers for third-world countries. However, the declining barriers witness the emergence of non-tariff protective measures that worsen global conflict and threaten peace and security (Bewley & Sophister, 2019; Galtung, 1996). Duchi, *et al.* (2024) asserts that prevalent danger to the subset of the global network of security systems, impinge on international efforts towards

stability. Constructive unity and integrated communalism resonate with subsuming Bavaria, Prussia, and Hannover city states to form Germany for the Aryan race Kumar (1992). Pursuit of individual states national interest had failed to achieve either a confederal or federal system like Germany.

Statement of the Problem

Pursuit of individual states' interests with the high-level propensity for incompatibilities due to the peculiarity of individual nations cultural traditions had continue to put humanity in arms way. Worsening destructive conflict between superpowers employing proxy warfare strategies and tactics for geo-political power balance, endanger human lives. United States (US) and Russia's pursuit of global dominance undermine human securities civilians in Ukraine, Gaza, Lebanon, Sudan and others. While Russia provides military aid to Iran, US and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), armed Ukraine for self-defense. Threat to national security of Russia resulting from Ukraine's intention to join NATO result to the war. Western world's perception of Russian meddling in Ukraine's domestic affairs as infringement on its sovereignty. In a world desirous of dynamic balancing, using the spirit of togetherness that embodies public good, within the context of communalism; nations generally and individuals in particular, continue pursue interests distinct from the notion of common good. The global community is an aggregation of individual citizens forming individual nations states. This is a replica of the human system comprising individual cells forming a community of individual tissues, who in turn constitute individual organs that made the human person (Goncalves et al, 2022; Lipton, 2015).

An individual is a member of family. A family is unit of a community. A community is an element of a society. The connecting factor is the issue of interdependence which is alien to individualism but communalism. The community operates communalism when individual states come together for the common good, within the context of utilitarianism. Biologically humanity is not the victim of its genetic makeup; but the master of its own fate, born with the ability to create lives overflowing with peace, happiness and love (Lipton, 2015). However, the social and political realities, paint a bleak future for humanity, when global political actors focus on pursuit of states interests instead of global peace and security interests. The individual is nothing without his fellow individual in the community, within the context of I am because you are, you are because I am. However, this principle is been challenged globally, when nations invade other nations in the name of individual state's national security. Resulting from the foregoing, the study seeks to investigate the pursuit of destructive individualism; examine the promotion of segregated communalism; inquire into the scramble for exploitation of resources for profit; assess the implication on humanism and peacebuilding; and undergo a theoretical review.

Review of Related Literature

Destructive Individualism: the human person is a combination of 50 billion community of individual cells, coming together to form millions of communities of individual tissues, who in turn formed the individual organs that form an individual person (Lipton, 2015). Liptonian exposition of the human person is akin to the individual homes forming families, communities, states and the global community. Individual state's national interest had supplanted human community's interest destructively. John Lock's perception of state of nature from the perspective of human greed exposed humanity into the understanding of

the foundation for the destructive individualism. The weakness of individualism establishes its foundation in the state of nature either from the Lock's perspective or the Hobbes viewpoint, points to the fact that, an individual cannot secure his own safety unilaterally. The individual in community with other individuals, submitted part of their sovereignty to the State as Sovereign to form a government, for their security and wellbeing. Bisong (2018) state that the main reason deemphasizing the self in favor of the community is for the purpose of preservation of the community which creates a sense of unity and bonding, necessary for the continual existence and sustenance of traditional societies facing imminent dangers from neighboring communities around. An individual and the community live in a symbiotic constructive relationship. The individuals in communities develop ideas that define the ways of life for the people in the community. The global society's interdependence entails communalism. Imminent dangers between communities are function of destructive individualism within such a community, from the individual person, to the individual family and the individual society. When an individual becomes greedy, the notion of self at all cost often result to abuse of others for personal interests (Gregg, 2022).

Gregg (2022) asserts that instances abound when American individualism directly links to giving legitimacy to ideas of greed and the will to utilize and abuse others. The movement of capital in search of profit globally attest to this fact. Globalization, or the international movement of global capital, function on the wheels of individual nation State. The latter provides the platform for individual citizens to operate within the global community. Movement of capital for resources exploration and exploitation, without respect for the environment and the indigenous communities, entails abuse of the ecological lives generally, and violence on the eco-system in particular. Ibrahim (2019) asserts that, loneliness and emptiness being a public health insecurity, and attributed to breakdown of traditional family structures; with 22% and 23% of Americans and Britons respectively, were reported to have experienced loneliness: a phenomenon that is sweeping across the western world. Loneliness operates within the context of individual but the family or community. African societies generally, and Hamland in particular, abhors loneliness, as the individual is always considered central figure to the community (Duchi et al, 2024b). The notion of Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu attests to the fact that, a person depends on a person to be a person (Beight, 2007). An individual personhood is a function of his community with others. The absence of this undermines a person security. Polimedio (2018) state that present day America has run into a paradox with individuals and communities becoming more than ever isolated and atomized, despite unparallel opportunities for connections. In a world of interdependence, human relation and connection is central to bridging the human needs gaps. Polimedio adds that isolation of individuals from among communities has serious implications, the erosion of social capital. Lack of social capital precluded the human connections that build bond.

Segregated Communalism: establishment of in-groups and out-groups had loosen the strands that holds humanity together. Promotion of insider's interests against outsiders had widen the gap needed for bridging common human needs. Earlier, present day Germany was perceived to have represent integrated communalism, with the amalgamation of independent city states (Kumar, 1992). Segregated communalism entails social construction that establish physical and structural barriers or constraints standing against outgroup members, from interacting and or benefiting from given group's communal progress. This negates humanitarian principles of togetherness: I am because you are (Beight, 2007). Kapur

(n.d) conceive communalism from the viewpoint of segregating society into religious communities, with individuals holding divergent views, possessing feelings of antagonism and apathy towards others. Perception of communalism from this given point fits perfectly into the notion of segregated communalism. Today, this social construction has wider application. From individual nations formulating policies to protect themselves, to group of nations going into alliances for their individual national interests, within the alliance. The notion of communality drew inspiration from community, inhabited by humans. Kapur state that:

The individuals, belonging to all communities, categories and socio-economic backgrounds are required to augment their information in terms of various factors, i.e. being well-versed in terms of different types of goals and objectives within personal and professional lives; promoting enhancement of career prospects; being well-informed regarding rights and opportunities; promoting well-being and goodwill of individuals and getting engaged in different tasks and practices, which would be facilitating in leading to progression.

Communalism as an ideology remain a belief system except humanity give practical meaning to it. German city states with unique identities and leadership, gave up their sovereignties for the common good of the Aryan race. Humanity within the context of integrated communalism needs all communities globally, its human and material resources to promote common humanity's principles of Ubuntu that facilitate positive human development. Ubuntu imply the principle of you because I am, which indicates togetherness. Integrated communalism pursues the noble ideals of togetherness. An integration of NATO principles of collective security and United Nations principles of global order, may redefined international peace and security. Putting together individual states interests under the umbrella of common humanity's needs, could have transformed adversarial relations among competing nations for global dominance. The global community has individual differences from the individuals, to communities and its resources; but bonded by common humanity. Integrated communalism captures the core precepts of humanitarianism within the Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu context (Beight, 2017). This puts humanity first before anything else. African communalism advocates for common humanity, by reason of I am human because you too are human, irrespective of social construction of race, creed, belief system and others. Biology had lumped us naturally together as humans.

Woerner et al. (2023) state that, communalism is a political and economic ideology which supports shared ownership of resources, properties, and wealth. They added that, it refers to political unity and power sharing within a small community. These conceptions fall within the segregation context of insider's approach, but the outsiders. Again, NATO and EU CAP protection of members interest, is antagonistic to the principles of humanity. Common humanity is the foundation and justification for the claims of fundamental human right. This conceptualization is premised on the ground that global peace and security, a public good be accessible to all (Hope, 2017). Insecurity from health, politics, economics, law and order, culture among others is a negation to the cherished ideals of human right to freedom from want and fear. Individual national security interests of Russia and US is escalating global security into a nuclear war: therefore, endangering human security (Russell, 2024). Common community also known as globalization, is all gears towards facilitating peaceful coexistence for humankind in a world without socially constructed borders (Kingsley & Osunwokem,

2020). While common community entails movement of goods, services and people across national borders without hindrance; common humanity focuses on common good for humanity across races, religion, beliefs, creed, ideology among others. Globalization promotes the interests of advanced nations with their technology, while common humanity promotes human person's interests anywhere in the world. Conflicting national security interest between Russia and US had endangered human security generally, and global security in particular (Russell, 2024). A superpower always acts first in its national security interest unapologetically (Surnow, 2009).

Exploitation and Profiteering: global movement of capital for exploration and exploitation of natural resources in third world nations by international corporate interests, profits them but these poor countries. Poverty and pandemic, expressed as economic and health insecurities undermined human security. IMF Staff (2001) state that, integration into the world economy has proven a powerful means for countries to promote economic, development, and poverty reduction. Bridge and Wyeth (2020) opine that, natural resources are functional utility that societal dominant social groups-imposed order and control upon the world. The centrality of technological exploration of these resources defines a given nation or groups ability to assert dominance. Advanced nations comparative technical know-how advantage gives them edge over third world nations. The nonhuman world has in its possession weapons to eliminate human insecurities but its total control by nations with the capacity for exploration and exploitation for profit; instead of common humanity. IMF Staff (2001) believe that global trade promotes economic growth and development, and reduced economic insecurity. However, this assertion is at variance with the reality of increasing poverty, pandemic and; global threat to law and order. These insecurities further worsen human conditions. Hickel et al (2022) explain that, Unequal Exchange Theory posited that economic growth in advanced economies of the global north relies on a large net appropriation of resources and labor from global south, extracted through price differentials in international trade. Exploration and exploitation of human and material resources from third world nations to developed economies, represented a structural violence (Galtung, 1996). Sustained destructive global south resources has dislocate their economies, undermine their political and social system. Consequences thereof include poverty and illiteracy resulting to vulnerabilities for manipulation into physical violence. While the global north is swimming in wealth, the global south is wallowing in abject penury.

Unwholesome, unregulated, and unsustainable resources exploitation by the multinational corporations, profits these companies at the expense of the exploited environment (Akanwa & Ikegbunam, 2019). Nigeria in particular and Africa generally, is faced with the problem of both legal and illegal resources exploitation perpetrated by global resource exploiters/explorers: undermined environmental peace and security. Residents of host community's exposure to environmental hazards, made vulnerable to the consequences of degradation. Additionally, capitalist accumulation of wealth consequence witnessed adversarial relations between dominant groups and the oppressed. Human security of these residents had been put under imminent dangers continuously, due to proliferation of arms groups fueling violence (Igwe, 2021). While resources exploitation is central to common humanity's progress, unsustainable exploitation posed significant danger for the future. Imuetinyan and Eghweree (2019) study discover that, excessive natural resource exploitation at the expense of needed environmental health. Unsustainable exploitation put the environment at risk. Moreso, exportation of these raw materials from

exploited environment to technologically advanced nations profit the global north, while the global south suffers the pains of job losses. Angbulu (2024) citing President Tinubu state that extraction of raw materials without processing it locally is keeping the continent underdeveloped. Striking the balance between common humanity and global development, requires the exportation of refined products. This promotes jobs creation, effective poverty elimination, and sustained economic security; and therefore, build peace.

Technologically developed nations' production of machinery for refining of raw materials from resource endowed nations, should be reciprocated with exportation of these refined products to those in need. Raw material ban promotes constructive integrated communalism which encompassed trading in refined products. Reilly (2024) questioned if African raw material ban is either protectionism of self-determination, pointed to misperception of common humanity. Persistent movement of raw materials from Africa and other third world nations had witnessed massive job losses. This had worsened poverty, hunger, disease and insecurity in underdeveloped world. Human self-determination promotes common humanity; but protectionism and self-determination. Exportation of raw materials profits global capitalist. Establishment of industries in resource endowed societies, refining of resources, and exportation of refined products is central to global wealth distribution. Much of Africa's resources are shipped as raw materials for processing to finished products for importation: which more than often deny Africa the economic benefits of these resources (Reilly, 2024). Individual accumulation of wealth through human and material resources exploitation, promotes the scramble for profits advocated by capitalism; but humanism.

Humanism and Capitalism: Robinson (2014) state that imperialism is not about nations; but groups exercising their social power through institutions, to control value production, to appropriate surpluses, and to reproduce these arrangements. Capitalism, an individual profit driven economic system, controlled economic production by capitalist interests for economic, social and political domination. Imperialists riding on the wheels of international governmental institutions, like World Trade Organization, World Bank Group, and International Monetary Fund, exploit cheap resources in terms of labor and materials, refined these and sold at higher prices to poor nations. Capitalist leaning on wealth acquisitions across the globe exploits realist approach in achieving its global corporate interests, against human needs interests. Hayes (2024) asserted that most world economies are organize under the capitalist system; center on private property, private control of factors of production, accumulation of wealth and competition. Wealth appropriation reinforced inequality and aggravate poverty. Transcending implications of these include lack of financial power to promote research, and knowledge accumulation that addressed illiteracy. Functional education entails the aggregate of all the processes by which children and or young adult develop their abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior, that add positive values in human societies (Ogu, 2023 cited Fafunwa, 1974).

Increasing inequality resulting from destructive capitalist insatiable wealth accumulation, most often translate to increasing educational inaccessibility, with attendant increase in huge number of children roaming the streets in third world countries (Duchi, 2024c). Education being the instrument bequeath to each generation for survivability, had become scarce to huge number of future leaders, thanks to poverty aggravated through individual wealth appropriation by the minority; but dominant social groups who controlled production, distribution and profiteering (Hayes, 2024). Poverty occasion by massive

amassing of global resources for profit by the few powerful international elites, continue to deny millions of future leaders generally, and humanity in particular the opportunity to develop capacity that enhanced their ability to add positive values to their societies (Amaele, 2017 cited Fafunwa, 1974). Building the defenses of peace requires enlightening human hearts on the importance of peace, to eliminate the propensity for violence; through education (UNESCO Constitution, 1945). Preventing war and civil strife that plague humanity, drew from structural violence. Conflicting global resource interests among competing capitalist profit seekers, constitutes the fuel for adversarial relation, responsible for crimes against humanity.

Private property dominance by a minority elite against the majority poor negates the principles of common humanity, human rights and humanitarianism. Purcell Jr (2016) pointed out that capitalism defenders believed economic concentration of wealth was necessary to preserve Americas ability to compete in global markets. Scramble for global dominance of markets and politics has push the world into the dangerous precipice of nuclear war. Putin's perception of long-range missiles attacks deep into Russian territory as provocation for the deployment of its nuclear arsenal and testing of new missile systems; in its specialized military operations in Ukraine. United Nations Charter article 51 and Security Council's permanent members veto instead of stabilizing global peace and security, but endangers it. Russian exercise of the right to self-defense clashed Ukrainian right to defend its sovereignty against external aggression. While the military industrial corporations' profits from arms deals, humanity losses precious souls from violence acts of war.

Future Peace Building: chaotic pursuit of individual national security interests at the expense of global humanitarian interests put human security in arms way. Constructing the defenses of peace cannot function in the face of millions of children without education, resulting from poverty and general insecurity in the global arena (UNESCO Constitution, 1945). Preamble to the United Charter aim at preventing the scourge of war for successive generations, face an existential threat due to excruciating inequality and poverty. This result from wealth concentration by minority but dominant few. Expansion of access to wealth creation, engenders opening up the global human and material resources for constructive exploitation and exploration.

Accessibility to global resources act as catalyst for engaging growing young uneducated population in entrepreneurship. Lancey (2023) points out small businesses accounting for 80% of businesses in conflict-poverty scenarios, as conflict zones generally lack strong formalize institutions, and business creation becomes a necessity. Jobs creation takes away susceptibility for manipulation of poor and uneducated persons. However, repatriation of exploited resources from conflict prone societies, takes these jobs away. Building peace requires establishing factories that process raw materials, employ available human resources, then export refine products. Jobs availability constructively convert their destructive energies to productive ventures in the factories. However, multinational corporations focus mineral resources extraction and the increasing brain drain situation, provide evidence of ineffectiveness of private investment on peacebuilding. Sonno and Zufacchi (2022) discovered that on average, private investment in Africa have negative peace impact: in particular, they seem to increase the likelihood of riot events. This study painted a reality in most third world countries that contradict IMF notion of global trade promoting economic growth and development, and reducing economic insecurity. Sonno (2023) points thus:

.....in Mozambique ProSavana project initiated alongside Japan and Brazil, geared towards promoting sustainable and inclusive agricultural development, involving multi-national agribusiness and logging enterprise, covering 10.7 million hectares of land, owned by 692,000 rural families: was understood to have violated their rights with little or no compensation, and often produced violent conflict situations.

While advocates of global business transactions mostly seek to project the advantages of globalizations, they most often hide the reality of sustained violent conflicts, perpetrated by multinational enterprises profiteering activities. They more than often extract both labor and mineral resources, leaving behind challenges of land degradation and brain drain.

Theoretical Framework: Hickel, *et al* (2022), Unequal Exchange Theory point out rich nation's reliance on huge amount of third world nations natural resources appropriated to the northern hemispheres. This is made possible through the cheap extraction of both human and material resources through globalization. While instead of exploration and refining which provides jobs to the host nations, if refined products were exported, they extract and export raw materials. The former promotes peaceful development, while the latter, reinforced conflict and violence. The global north aid inflow due to profits from cheap resources extraction have result to huge losses that their aid can address. Unequal exchange in global trade between technology and resources had drove the threshold of underdevelopment beyond bound. Exploration and refining that could have enhanced equal exchange of trade, is deliberately ignored in favor of unbalanced trade in extraction of raw materials at cheaper prices (Hickel et al, 2022).

Methodology: This study adopts qualitative research approach. The research design was survey of relevant secondary data, for analysis and interpretation. Journal publications, electronic and print media materials, books and other materials pertinent to the research: focused on examining destructive individualism, communalism, resources exploitation and profiteering, and its implication on peacebuilding in the near future.

Discussion of Findings: The study seeks to provide answers to the questions of destructive individualism; examine the promotion of segregated communalism; inquire into the scramble for exploitation of resources for profit; assess the implication on humanism and peacebuilding. Using survey of pertinent secondary data, the research adopted secondary data analysis, to interpret and provide insights into the understanding of the issues of individualism, communalism, humanism, capitalism, and peacebuilding. The study discover that individual human person and state's national interest had supplanted human community's interest; had destroyed the symbiotic constructive relationship for global society's interdependence, which entails communalism. Also, pursuit of profits by multinational corporation witness sustains human and environmental rights abuse: fueling crisis in host communities (Gregg, 2022; Polimedio, 2018). Continuing struggle to amass political and economic power by both states and individuals, witnessed a tremendous increased selfish interest, and destructive competition for relevance. Individualism either as national or individual sphere of interests often result to violent physical and structural conflict. An enemy image ripe for total annihilation had always become the consequence of the scramble between profiteering driven capitalism, and the need for humanitarian good.

The research points out that segregated communalism remains a social construction that establish and promote ingroup and outgroup interests in national and global societies. This has loosened the strand holding human society together; and weakened the need for bridging the gap for common humanity. Therefore, negates common humanity's precept of togetherness (Beight, 2007). Whenever global threats constitute danger to all humanity, developed nations often open up for collaboration. However, at individual national economic, military, and political interests, competition for appropriation of resources often dominates their thinking. This had further aggravated expanding inequality, poverty and illiteracy, which made the victims susceptible to recruitment for nefarious activities. In the process, these national interests become undermined. Pursuit of individual nations or non-state actor's security interests had dragged human security interests into arms way. Ukrainian and Gaza conflicts present stark reality on the ground. The inquiry disclose that poverty and inequality reinforced the argument that, global movement of capital by dominant groups like multinational businesses explore and exploit resources, control and dominate it, thereafter profit at the expense of the host nations. They leave behind trails of violent conflict (Bridge & Wyeth, 2020). Natural resources rich nations keep getting poorer, while the poor resource nations with advance technology keeps getting richer. Exploration of comparative educational advantage, set the stage for the developed nations to determine what happens in international trade. Global treaties have most often been drafted in their own terms and advantage. In the end, when underdeveloped nations are milked dry of their natural and human resources, its people are left alone in the atmosphere of excruciating poverty and high-level inequality. Common humanity, in the process become the perpetual victim when resource-based conflicts are weaponized.

The investigation reveal that cheap human and material resources exploitation resulting to wealth appropriation, in underdeveloped nations within the context of globalization, had not only worsen poverty, insecurity; but aggravate conflicts and disrupt socio-political order (Hayes, 2024; Ogu, 2023). Global capitalist wealth accumulation by the minority rich against the majority poor, had reinforced poverty continuously, which negates the notion common of humanitarian principles (Purcell Jr, 2016). Resulting from control of technology development, few powerful individuals had allocated global resources for personal aggrandizement, while huge number of citizens wallow in abject poverty. Penury is said to have made people susceptible to easy manipulation. While humans create and innovate conceptually, this knowledge is technically functional with available material resources. These combinations informed the transformation of imagination into reality in human societies. The study indicates that in the face of increasing poverty and illiteracy, building peace in the hearts of men and to prevent successive generations from the scourge of war; through the culture of education remained an illusion. multinational corporations focused mineral resources extraction and the increasing brain drain situation, provide evidence of ineffectiveness of private investment on peacebuilding. While proponent of global business transactions mostly seeks to projects the advantages of globalizations, they most often hide the reality of sustained violent conflicts, perpetrated by multinational enterprises profiteering activities. They more than often extract both labor and mineral resources, leaving behind challenges of land degradation and brain drain.

Conclusion

Arising from findings, the study concludes that destructive individualism from either national or personal, will continually bring about negative competition for dominance and control

within the surrounding atmosphere of profiteering; and common humanity will perpetually face the dangers of total annihilation. It also believes that segregated communalism is drifting humanity away from the principle of human right, that provided freedom for the attainment of common humanity. Promoting the interest of developed nations, exacerbate inequality in third world nations, which continue to generate adversarial relations. The investigation asserts that sustained destructive individualism dislocates global south economies, undermine their political and social system, which continuously reinforce the fault lines that fuel violent conflict generationally. The increasing poverty and inequality will further neutralize global preventive efforts towards eliminating structural violence. It points out that peacebuilding operates within the atmosphere of eliminating structural violence like poverty, illiteracy, and inequality. Exportation of human and material resources from global south further expand the problems.

Recommendation

The study suggest the practice of integrated communalism in the context of collaboration which marry contending interests together. This promotes win-win situation and common humanity. A preventive measure to adversarial relations between individuals and nations. Deployment of technologies in host nations, refine these natural resources and export the refine products, will provide more jobs, and facilitate the elimination of structural violence. Employment opportunities reduces the probability of educational inaccessibility, on whose feathers the vision of building the defenses of peace will fly. Foundation of sustainable peace lies in the establishment of strong structural foundation that, eliminate poverty, illiteracy and hunger. This will enhance obviating the transformation of indirect violence into direct violence.

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EVALUATING GOVERNANCE AND LEGITIMACY DEFICIENCIES IN SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Nigeria has had a widespread problem of governance legitimacy, closely linked to corruption, election misconduct, and institutional inefficiencies. This paper examines the various dimensions of governing legitimacy in Nigeria, analysing historical context, contemporary difficulties, and possible avenues for reform. By comprehending a cycle that sustains illegitimacy, we can promote structural reforms that restore public trust and improve governmental accountability. The aim is to underscore the pressing necessity for extensive reforms to disrupt this cycle of governance legitimacy crises. This paper employs a qualitative method to assert that election integrity is fundamental to democracy, underpinning government and societal stability. Findings reveals that Nigeria has traversed turbulent political challenges since gaining independence, regarded the 2023 presidential election as a vital indicator of its democratic vitality. Restoring legitimacy within Nigeria's political system is crucial, not just for the immediate satisfaction of its population but also for the long-term peace and development of the nation. Allegations of anomalies, including voter suppression and vote-buying, depict a troubling scenario of a compromised democratic process. Various watchdog agencies have emphasised that these issues indicate governance deficiencies and intensify a long-standing legitimacy crisis. The paper recommends that the path forward necessitates a comprehensive plan that amalgamates election changes with a robust commitment to effective governance principles. We must harness the collective responsibility of stakeholders, including government officials, civil society, and the public, to cultivate a political environment that fosters the growth of democracy. At this critical juncture, the choices made today will profoundly affect the course of governance, democratic ideals, and societal cohesion in Nigeria.

Keywords: Governance, Legitimacy deficit, Electoral sustainability, Judicial Corruption

Introduction

The Federal Republic of Nigeria, characterized by a rich cultural heritage and abundant natural resources, exhibits a paradox of considerable potential, contrasted with notable governance and legitimacy challenges. Nigeria has faced these challenges since gaining independence from colonial rule in 1960, evident in political instability, corruption, ineffective judicial systems, and the alienation of citizens from governmental processes. An examination of Nigeria's historical landscape is essential for a comprehensive understanding of its current governance. The integration of various ethnic groups by British colonial

administrators in 1914 established a foundation for persistent ethnic tensions and conflicts. Following independence, Nigeria alternated between civilian and military governance, with several coups intensifying the instability of its political structures (Adeleke, 2019). Military regimes frequently governed via violence and repression, which eroded democratic institutions and promoted a culture of impunity (Jega, 2014). The lasting impact of these power struggles has resulted in a precarious political landscape characterized by systemic deficiencies. The country has been facing governance challenges that have resulted in a legitimacy crisis. This crisis jeopardizes political stability, economic development, and social cohesion (Uche, 2022).

The government's inability to fulfill citizens' expectations contributes to distrust and disillusionment. Nigeria's transition to civilian governance in 1999 marked the end of a prolonged period characterized by military rule and unsuccessful democratic attempts. During the political transition, numerous Nigerians articulated expectations for a "democracy dividend" that would enhance political freedoms, elevate government efficacy, promote accountability among leaders, and rejuvenate the struggling economy. After the initial euphoria of the Abacha dictatorship, a significant portion of the public has adopted a more realistic perspective. The expected advantages of democracy have been gradual in their emergence, and the new political framework has not met the expectations of numerous Nigerians. Analysts, commentators, and citizens express significant concerns regarding political violence, corruption, ineffective governance, unresponsive leadership, and economic deprivation. This paper examines the relationship between governance deficits and legitimacy crises, highlighting their impact on national growth and development, (Yahaya, et.al, 2024). The paper contends that addressing the governance legitimacy crisis in Nigeria requires stakeholders to comprehend the fundamental causes, such as corruption, electoral malpractices, and ineffective governance structures.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research methodology to investigate the governance and legitimacy deficiencies in Nigeria. The qualitative design facilitates a comprehensive understanding of intricate governance deficits and legitimacy crises in Nigeria. This design is ideal for our study because it allows us to explore social and political topics that are difficult to quantify, (Obi, et.al, 2024). Consequently, it aligns effectively with our research objectives, which aim to understand the impact of governance concerns on the legitimacy crisis that hinders growth in Nigeria. These elements necessitate interpretive interpretation instead of statistical measurement, rendering a qualitative method most suitable. Numerous essential components enabled the implementation of the concept. Document analysis constitutes the foundation of the data collection technique, encompassing government reports, official declarations, and scholarly journal articles. This strategy facilitated the collection of comprehensive, thorough information regarding Nigeria. We used content analysis as the primary analytical method to conduct a systematic evaluation of the collected papers and case study materials. This method effectively identifies patterns, themes, and trends within extensive textual data, thereby facilitating the establishment of links between the dependent and independent variables, specifically the governance issue and legitimacy crisis in this study. The emphasis on the period from 2015 to 2023 facilitates an analysis of contemporary trends and developments, essential for comprehending the current condition of governance and policy matters and their ongoing ramifications. This modern emphasis will augment the significance and use of the study outcomes. This design boasts numerous

strengths that make it highly suitable for the study. The flexibility facilitates the integration of developing themes and insights as the research evolves, which is crucial due to the dynamic nature of governance in a complex nation such as Nigeria.

Framework of Analysis

Governance Deficits: Nigeria's political structures suffer from a variety of governance deficiencies, (Usman, *et.al*, 2024). One of the most important aspects is the widespread instance of corruption that can be seen at every level of government. The data provided by Transparency International indicates that Nigeria has maintained its position as one of the countries with the highest levels of corruption in the world (Transparency International, 2022). The corruption in question undermines the effectiveness of institutions, diverts public resources, and deprives regular persons of their rights. As an illustration, the theft of oil money amounting to billions of dollars by government personnel exemplifies the severe shortcomings of fiscal governance (Nwankwo, 2021). The substandard quality of public services further demonstrates the inadequacies in governance. Nigeria's educational and healthcare systems suffer from severe underfunding and poor administration, resulting in a range of disappointing outcomes. The World Health Organisation (WHO) conducted research revealing that Nigeria has one of the highest rates of maternal death globally (WHO, 2021). In addition, the education sector is disproportionately affected by bad governance, as evidenced by the fact that millions of children are not attending school, which is a failure to offer fundamental services that are necessary for the advancement of socioeconomic conditions (UNICEF, 2020). In addition, the absence of a dependable judicial system and the rule of law contributes to the severity of these deficiencies. According to Imoize and Coker (2021), many people have the misconception that the legal system is corrupt, slow, and difficult to access. Some people even question whether or not it can bring justice. This pessimism regarding the effectiveness of the judicial system creates a vicious cycle of dissatisfaction and alienation, thereby eroding public trust in governmental institutions.

Corruption Epidemic: The Impediment to Governance Legitimacy

Corruption is frequently characterised as a malignancy that deteriorates the foundational structure of society, diminishing faith in institutions and resulting in socio-economic stagnation. Pervasive corruption in Nigeria severely compromises the judiciary, intended to defend the law and administer justice, and poses a substantial threat to the nation's democratic integrity, economic advancement, and the safeguarding of human rights. This essay contends that corruption in the Nigerian judiciary undermines legal efficacy and maintains a cycle of injustice, thereby requiring extensive judicial changes. Corruption is arguably the most significant element eroding governance legitimacy in Nigeria. Transparency International indicates that Nigeria continuously ranks among the most corrupt nations worldwide (Transparency International, 2021). The widespread prevalence of corruption skews public resource distribution, favours a limited group, and hinders economic progress. Public funds designated for health, education, and infrastructure are frequently misappropriated by corrupt authorities. In 2019, the Nigerian government projected that more than \$400 billion had been lost to corruption since independence (Zainab, 2020).

As a result, the socioeconomic divide expands, resulting in widespread poverty for many residents, while the affluent accumulate wealth to the detriment of the collective

welfare. The populace's dissatisfaction with the government's failure to mitigate corruption exacerbates their disillusionment, resulting in dependence on informal governance and dispute resolution methods. This parallel structure undermines the legitimacy of state institutions, (Thomas and Obi, 2017). When voters view their government as an enabler of corruption instead of a protector of fairness and justice, their allegiance to the state wanes, creating a cycle of illegitimacy, (Usman, *et.al*, 2024) The Nigerian judiciary consists of multiple levels, including the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, and High Courts, among others. Although ostensibly autonomous, the court frequently suffers from corruption at multiple tiers. Multiple reports indicate that judges and court officials may partake in corrupt activities, including receiving bribes to sway judicial results (Uwaifo, 2021). Transparency International's survey indicates that Nigeria is among the most corrupt countries globally, signifying a pervasive moral deterioration. The reliance on financial incentives in judicial decision-making directly undermines the rule of law, rendering the judiciary susceptible to manipulation by influential political and economic entities (Nwosu, 2019). Consequently, public trust in the judiciary diminishes, prompting individuals to pursue alternate, frequently violent, methods of dispute resolution.

The ramifications of judicial corruption transcend individual cases and directly influence societal norms and values. When citizens see that the judiciary functions on the principles of corruption and favouritism, a culture of impunity emerges. This environment not only deters individuals from pursuing justice but also heightens the probability that they would turn to unlawful methods to settle conflicts. Furthermore, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), a substantial 67% of Nigerians perceive judicial corruption as a significant obstacle that erodes their confidence in the legal system (NBS, 2020). This prevalent belief in corruption perpetuates a circle of unfairness, enabling the affluent and influential to exploit legal structures to escape accountability, while the underprivileged disproportionately endure the burdens of an inequitable system. The corruption inside the judiciary exacerbates the overall instability in Nigeria. Economic progress necessitates a dependable legal structure that upholds contracts and safeguards property rights. When the judiciary is viewed as corrupt, it deters both domestic and foreign investment, hindering economic progress (Okeke, 2022). The aggregate impact of these difficulties leads to a society in which the rule of law is undermined, human rights are infringed, and socioeconomic disparity is sustained.

Electoral Irregularities Threat to Democratic Legitimacy: The Role of Governance Deficit in 2023 Election

Electoral integrity is essential for the legitimacy of governance. Free and fair elections serve as essential prerequisites for authentic representation. Nigeria's electoral system faces significant challenges, including violence, voter suppression, and a lack of transparency (Erogugah, 2021). Election cycles have frequently been characterised by violence, resulting in fatalities and displacement, particularly during the 2011, 2019 and 2023 elections (Vanguard, 2019). The political landscape is marked by an absence of party ideologies, with political parties functioning as instruments for personal ambition rather than as platforms for public service. This results in elections being perceived as formalities instead of authentic competitions for leadership (Ibeanu, 2020). Voter apathy has increased as individuals increasingly perceive their votes as inconsequential.

The disconnect between the populace and the political class intensifies feelings of powerlessness, thereby confirming a legitimacy crisis. Addressing electoral malpractices

necessitates a multifaceted strategy, encompassing thorough electoral reforms, increased transparency, and mechanisms to guarantee accountability among political actors. Empowering citizens to actively participate in the electoral process is essential for revitalising civic engagement and restoring trust in democratic systems, (Usman, *et.al*, 2023). The 2023 presidential election exhibited numerous irregularities that have elicited both national and international condemnation. Reports indicated numerous instances of disenfranchisement, wherein eligible voters were prevented from exercising their electoral rights due to bureaucratic inefficiencies or intentional obstructions (International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 2023). These occurrences violate the principles of free and fair elections and reveal underlying governance deficiencies. The United Nations Development Programme emphasises that electoral integrity is crucial, serving not only as a procedural requirement but also as a fundamental aspect of governance that strengthens the social contract between the state and its citizens (UNDP, 2023). Moreover, accusations of vote-buying and result manipulation have significantly undermined the integrity of the electoral process. Reports from multiple civil society organisations indicate occurrences of voters being offered monetary incentives to influence their decisions (Ogunleye, 2023). In a democratic system, this type of corruption diminishes the electorate's intent and weakens the accountability that ought to define the interaction between the government and its citizens. The perception of votes as commodities for purchase leads to disillusionment and diminishes trust in the democratic process.

Understanding the ramifications of the 2023 electoral irregularities requires situating them within the broader context of governance deficits in Nigeria. Governance inherently includes the frameworks, procedures, and customs that define the exercise of power, the means by which citizens express their opinions, and the processes through which decisions regarding public matters are reached (World Bank, 2023). The governance landscape in Nigeria is characterised by insufficient accountability, pervasive corruption, and a deficiency in the rule of law, all of which have consistently impeded the country's development. Corruption has consistently been identified as a significant barrier to effective governance in Nigeria. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index positions Nigeria poorly in a global context, intensifying the distrust that citizens have towards their leaders (Transparency International, 2023). Governance deficits significantly affect electoral outcomes; when citizens observe widespread corruption among leaders, their willingness to participate in the electoral process declines. When leaders believe they can manipulate the electoral process without facing consequences, it fosters a cycle of corruption that infiltrates all aspects of governance. The importance of inclusivity is significant. Governance in Nigeria frequently marginalises certain demographic groups, thereby perpetuating societal inequalities. When elections are biased against specific groups, the political discourse shifts towards divisiveness instead of fostering unity. This exacerbates the legitimacy crisis, as substantial segments of the population experience alienation from the political system, leading to doubts regarding the fundamental nature of their representation.

Deficiencies in Legitimacy

Colonial legacies, military governance, and ethnic divisions have historically undermined the legitimacy of the Nigerian state (Ake, 1996). The British colonial administration imposed arbitrary boundaries that consolidated several ethnic groupings, resulting in enduring problems. Following independence, Nigeria fluctuated between military dictatorship and civilian governance, with each era characterized by corruption and a deficiency in

accountability (Odeyemi, 2019). The military junta's contempt for democratic values undermined popular faith in the political system, fostering skepticism among citizens regarding the efficacy of government institutions in promoting the common good. The shift to civilian control in 1999 signified a new era in Nigeria's administration; however, it failed to address entrenched problems. Anomalies frequently tainted numerous elections, leading to extensive accusations of fraud and manipulation (Human Rights Watch, 2018). Consequently, the electorate's confidence in the political process is tenuous, resulting in an ongoing cycle of disillusionment and discord.

Legitimacy deficits arise directly from government inadequacies. The notion of legitimacy in political theory pertains to the moral and ethical justification of power and governance. The disconnection between the Nigerian government and its citizenry is significant. A significant number of Nigerians perceive their leaders as self-interested, resulting in pervasive apathy and a feeling of alienation from the government (Bello, 2019). The political elite's inability to tackle urgent societal problems exacerbates this sentiment, as demonstrated by the extensive rallies against police brutality in 2020, which were epitomized by the #EndSARS movement. These protests symbolized widespread dissatisfaction with governance and the call for accountability. The widespread violence and insecurity in the country substantially undermine the government's credibility. The Boko Haram insurgency, together with pervasive banditry and kidnappings, highlights the state's failure to uphold its primary responsibility of safeguarding its inhabitants (Akinyemi, 2020). People view the government's failure to adequately address these problems as a substantial violation of the social compact between the state and its citizens, leading to further alienation. The ethnic variety in Nigeria, which should ideally serve as a source of strength, frequently intensifies governance and legitimacy deficiencies, (Obi and Uche, 2018). Conflicting interests among many ethnic groups often lead to political instability and discord (Suberu, 2018). Policies that privilege one ethnic group over others incite anger and exacerbate hostility. People have charged the present administration with favouritism that exacerbates ethnic tensions (Adeleke, 2021). The politicisation of administration based on ethnicity forces citizens to identify with ethnic groups instead of national unity, undermining the collective identity of the Nigerian state. Furthermore, the accumulation of electoral irregularities and governance deficiencies generates a legitimacy crisis, characterized by a widespread belief that political power is wielded legitimately (Mansbridge, 2003).

A deficiency of confidence in the electoral process engenders pervasive cynicism toward the leaders that arise from such defective systems. The ramifications of a legitimacy crisis are extensive; they frequently lead to social upheaval, heightened polarization, and a disenchanted populace. Following the 2023 elections, protests ensued in multiple locations as residents voiced their dissatisfaction with the alleged illegitimacy of the electoral process. Social media served as a catalyst for mobilizing disenchanted young people, who expressed their grievances through online campaigns and public rallies (Ibrahim, 2023). The act of individuals protesting in public indicates a deterioration of confidence in democratic institutions, thereby undermining the nation's social cohesion. Moreover, the ramifications of a legitimacy crisis transcend political dissatisfaction; they jeopardize national security. In areas where local residents experience disenfranchisement, the likelihood of recruitment by extremist organizations increases, further destabilizing the nation (Rohini, 2023). In this scenario, it is clear that the alleged voting irregularities not only disrupt the political landscape but also jeopardize the very essence of national unity.

Governance Structures and Inefficiencies

Another factor that contributes to the legitimacy issue is the inefficiency of the mechanisms of governance. According to Bello (2022), the federal system of Nigeria is defined by bureaucratic inefficiencies, inadequate service delivery, and a lack of responsiveness to the needs of the public. Nepotism and politicisation have plagued the civil service, once a competent body, diminishing its potential to carry out policy efficiently. Moreover, inefficiency and corruption plague local administrations, the supposed intermediaries between the people and the state. They are unable to successfully respond to local concerns because they lack autonomy and are frequently dependent on state administrations (Osaghae, 2018). This hinders their ability to properly respond to local issues. Residents who perceive their opinions as neglected due to this gap are more prone to resentment, which further exacerbates the legitimacy dilemma. It is necessary to make a deliberate effort to decentralize power, empower local governments, and streamline bureaucratic procedures in order to improve the legitimacy of governance. Increasing the level of engagement between citizens and the policymaking process helps enhance the connection between the state and its residents by ensuring that the actions taken by the government are reflective of the needs and aspirations of the populace, (Avidime and Obi, 2018). Nigerian civil society has emerged as a significant player in demanding accountability to address governance and legitimacy deficiencies. Numerous non-governmental organizations actively promote the perspectives of citizens in political discourse (Ribadu, 2021). These organizations push for transparency and good governance. The judicial system and the media play a crucial role as allies in this fight for reform and oversight, advocating for increased autonomy and integrity to ensure accountability of the administration. In addition, the international community has a dual role to play in the process of responding to these deficiencies. International assistance and investment are absolutely necessary for the growth of Nigeria; nevertheless, they must be reliant upon improvements in the country's governance standards. Applying pressure from international actors to respect human rights and encourage better governance could lead to positive outcomes for citizen involvement and institutional reform.

End Bad Governance Protest as Product of Governance Deficit

Bad governance in Nigeria represents a concrete reality with observable manifestations. It is characterized by entrenched corruption, a lack of accountability, ineffective public services, and weak institutions (Charas Madu Tella, 2019). Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) consistently positions Nigeria among the highest in corruption levels, underscoring the widespread nature of the issue (TI, 2020). Numerous unaddressed allegations of embezzlement and mismanagement of public funds further demonstrate the absence of accountability. Moreover, public services, including healthcare, education, and infrastructure, are in a state of disrepair, indicating governmental neglect (Obi-Ani et al., 2020). The escalating situation surrounding the #EndBadGovernance movement culminated in a nationwide protest, resulting in fatalities in several Northern States, including Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, and the Federal Capital Territory. The 10 'Days of Rage' concluded on Saturday, August 10, prompting inquiries into the effectiveness of the protest and whether President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's nationwide broadcast addressed the grievances presented by the protesters. The effects of poor governance are complex and significantly damaging. It inhibits economic growth, deters foreign investment, and worsens poverty levels. Nigeria, while ranking among the largest oil producers worldwide, has over 40% of its population living below the poverty line, as reported by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (NBS,

2020). Bad governance has eroded the social contract, resulting in increased civil unrest and insecurity, as evidenced by the Boko Haram insurgency and widespread kidnapping (Adibe, 2020). The inadequacy of state institutions became evident during the COVID-19 pandemic response, where diminished trust in the government led to widespread skepticism and noncompliance with public health directives (Maclean & Marks, 2020).

The EndSARS movement that emerged in Nigeria in late 2020 represented a pivotal instance of collective opposition to widespread governance failures (Akinwotu, 2020). The protest against poor governance concluded in 2023. Anger towards police brutality sparked this youth-led movement, which quickly expanded into a wider protest addressing issues of ineffective leadership and governmental shortcomings. The EndSARS protests have received substantial support and international attention, reflecting the profound frustration of the Nigerian populace and indicating a collective readiness to pursue and implement change.

Possible Approaches to Reform

Addressing the governance legitimacy crisis in Nigeria requires comprehensive reforms across various sectors. Establishing transparent mechanisms for accountability is essential through constitutional amendments. We should empower anti-corruption agencies and safeguard them from political interference (Olaniyan, 2021). Establishing judicial autonomy is crucial to upholding the law. Secondly, prioritizing electoral reforms is essential to eradicating malpractice. The improvement in BVAS or implementation of technologies like electronic voting and biometric verification can improve the integrity of the electoral process. Restoration of public confidence in elections necessitates that citizens perceive their votes as impactful and that they possess the means to hold elected officials accountable. Addressing socio-economic inequalities can reduce public frustration with the government. Investment in health, education, and infrastructure is essential for cultivating a sense of ownership within the population. Tangible benefits from government actions can facilitate the rebuilding of trust among citizens. Finally, promoting civic engagement is crucial. Public awareness campaigns grounded in data can inform citizens about their rights and responsibilities. Promoting involvement in local governance enhances the democratic process and increases trust in state institutions.

Addressing judicial corruption in Nigeria requires a focus on judicial independence. We should regard the judiciary as an unbiased institution, free from external influences such as economic or political pressures. An independent judiciary serves as a counterbalance to the excesses of other government branches and offers citizens a forum to pursue justice free from retribution or bias. Achieving independence necessitates systemic reforms that target the fundamental causes of corruption. Implementing strict regulations for appointments and promotions in the judicial system can ensure that only qualified individuals occupy judicial roles. Implementing mechanisms for accountability, such as independent oversight bodies with the authority to investigate allegations of judicial misconduct, would enhance the integrity of the judiciary. Initiatives focused on training and capacity-building for judges and court personnel may effectively reduce corruption within the judiciary. The Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) has actively promoted ethical standards, and broader legal education initiatives may transform the existing culture of corruption into one of integrity and professionalism (NBA, 2021).

Examining the relationship between electoral irregularities and governance deficits is essential for improving legitimacy. Concrete reforms are essential to restore public trust and ensure the integrity of the electoral process. Enhancing the Independent National Electoral

Commission (INEC) by augmenting resources, providing training, and implementing oversight mechanisms may substantially reduce occurrences of electoral fraud (African Union, 2023). Engaging civil society organizations in monitoring and advocacy initiatives fosters transparency and accountability in the electoral process. Addressing government deficits necessitates a comprehensive strategy that emphasizes anti-corruption initiatives, improves public sector accountability, and encourages grassroots participation in the political process. Legislative reforms designed to strengthen independent oversight bodies can reduce corruption and foster accountability for misconduct among public officials. These initiatives may restore the electorate's confidence in their political representatives and enhance civic engagement.

Conclusion

Nigeria is at a critical crossroads; the convergence of governance deficiencies and legitimacy issues has created a systemic ailment that obstructs advancement. Addressing these difficulties requires a collaborative effort among governmental entities, civil society organizations, and foreign partners. Reforms must emphasize improvements in openness, accountability, and unwavering commitment to the rule of law. As individuals exercise their agency and engage substantively in governance, Nigeria has the potential to reform its political structure, promoting the development of a more credible and efficient state apparatus. Reconciling the divide between governing entities and the population is crucial for fostering national unity, stability, and progress. Nigeria's legitimacy crisis is a complex issue that stems from a history of injustices, widespread corruption, and ineffective governance. Election misconduct and corruption create a persistent cycle of disappointment that requires a thorough reform approach. By prioritizing accountability, ensuring free and fair elections, decentralizing governance institutions, and investing in socioeconomic programs, stakeholders may incrementally restore legitimacy to the Nigerian state.

The process of building a legitimate administration is fraught with challenges, yet it also offers opportunities for renewed optimism and robust democratic ideals. Nigeria must establish a governance system that engenders public trust, an essential requirement that cannot be disregarded. The 2023 presidential election in Nigeria has distinctly underscored the profound interconnection between electoral irregularities, governance deficiencies, and legitimacy challenges. This article has demonstrated that rectifying electoral systems alone is insufficient without addressing the underlying governance concerns. The path forward necessitates a comprehensive plan that amalgamates election changes with a robust commitment to effective governance principles. Restoring legitimacy within Nigeria's political system is crucial, not just for the immediate satisfaction of its population but also for the long-term peace and development of the nation. We must harness the collective responsibility of stakeholders, including government officials, civil society, and the public, to cultivate a political environment that fosters the growth of democracy. At this critical juncture, the choices made today will profoundly affect the course of governance, democratic ideals, and societal cohesion in Nigeria.

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JOHN LOCKE ON REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY AND THE ART OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN BAYELSA STATE

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Abstract

The study examines John Locke on Representative Democracy and the art of governance in Bayelsa State. It adopted expository and textual analysis. The findings of the study revealed that John Locke's concept of representative Democracy with its principles of Accountability, leaders been servants and responsible to the people is absent in Bayelsa State. Also, that government derives its powers and mandate to carry out their wishes is non-existent. Therefore, it concluded that for there to be proper representative Democracy, its ideals such as public accountability, separation of powers etc as propounded by John Locke, the Bayelsa government must implement to the fullest all the principles of Representative Democratic with a view to strengthening democratic institutions for the common good to obtain a good and stable democratic governance.

Keywords: Accountability, Development Good Governance, Representative Democracy and Separation of powers

Introduction

John Locke was in many ways unlike his predecessors, he was a multifaceted individual at one time a doctor, economist, university teacher and other times a politician and public administrator. Again, unlike those before him, he preferred to be outgoing rather than being contemplative; spending much time reading and mediating on same. For him, true knowledge in life could be found by getting involved in what is going on in one's environment not in reading books and restricting oneself to a particular sphere (Dunn, 1969) As argued, one learns nothing when he is cut off from experience and experience is the only avenue through which one can learn anything (Locke, 1689). John Locke (1632–1704) is among the most influential political philosophers of the modern period. In the *Two Treatises of Government*, he defended the claim that men are by nature free and equal against claims that God had made all people naturally subject to a monarch. He argued that people have rights, such as the right to life, liberty, and property that have a foundation of independent of the laws of any particular society (Colman, 1983; Locke, 1689). Locke used the claim that men are naturally free and equal as part of the justification for understanding legitimate political government as the result of a social contract where people in the state of nature conditionally transfer some of their rights to the government in order to better ensure the stable, comfortable enjoyment of their lives, liberty, and property. Since governments exist by the consent of the people in order to protect the rights of the people and promote the public good, governments that fail to do so can be resisted and replaced with new governments. Locke is thus also important for his defence of the right of revolution. Locke

also defends the principle of majority rule and the separation of legislative and executive powers (Locke, 1689).

In many ways, the principles Locke espoused offer valuable insights into the dynamics of modern governance, especially in regions where political systems are still grappling with issues of corruption, instability, and underdevelopment. One such region is Bayelsa State, located in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Bayelsa, a relatively young state established in 1996, faces a unique set of challenges that range from political instability and governance issues to severe socio-economic hardships (Okeowo, 2022). Despite its wealth of natural resources, particularly oil, the state struggles with poverty, environmental degradation, and a lack of sufficient infrastructure and social services. This paper explores how John Locke's ideas on representative democracy and good governance can be applied to improve the political landscape in Bayelsa State. While Locke's theories were formulated centuries ago, their relevance to contemporary governance remains undeniable, especially in emerging democracies such as Nigeria. The paper will investigate Locke's views on representative democracy - emphasizing the importance of government accountability and the protection of individual rights - and examine how these ideas can inform the governance practices in Bayelsa. Moreover, it will explore the role of the social contract in building trust between the government and the governed, and how Locke's emphasis on the rule of law and transparency can contribute to more effective governance. Through this analysis, the paper seeks to highlight potential reforms that could address Bayelsa's political and socio-economic challenges. By applying Locke's principles, it aims to offer practical solutions for creating a more responsive and accountable government in the state, thus fostering a more just and equitable society. Furthermore, it will examine the obstacles that might hinder the implementation of these reforms and provide recommendations for overcoming them, ensuring that Locke's ideal of good governance can be realized in the unique context of Bayelsa State.

Purpose of the Paper

The purpose of this paper is to analyse John Locke's theory of government, particularly his ideas on representative democracy and good governance, and apply them to the political context of Bayelsa State. By examining historical governance structures in Bayelsa State, current political challenges, and Locke's principles, this paper seeks to provide actionable recommendations for improving governance in the State, promoting representative democracy and ensuring better governance for the people.

Overview of John Locke's Theory of Government

John Locke's theory of government is a cornerstone of modern political thought, emphasizing the fundamental principles of the social contract, natural rights, and the rule of law. At its core, Locke's philosophy envisions a government that exists to serve the people, deriving its legitimacy from their consent (Locke, 1689). He argues that individuals in the state of nature possess certain inalienable rights—life, liberty, and property—but the absence of a formal structure to protect these rights leads to insecurity and conflict. To escape this precarious condition, individuals collectively agree to form a government through a social contract (Laslett, 1988). Locke's emphasis on natural rights places a clear limitation on governmental power. He asserts that the government's primary role is to protect these rights, and any government that fails to do so forfeits its legitimacy. For Locke,

this serves as the basis for the people's right to resist or overthrow a tyrannical regime, reinforcing the accountability of the government to its citizens (Dunn, 1969).

A distinguishing feature of Locke's theory is his advocacy for the separation of powers. He believes that dividing governmental authority into legislative, executive, and judicial branches is crucial for preventing abuse of power. The legislative branch, representing the will of the people, holds the supreme authority to create laws, while the executive enforces these laws. The judiciary ensures that the laws are interpreted fairly and in accordance with natural rights (Ashcraft, 1987). Locke also underscores the importance of periodic elections and representative democracy as mechanisms to ensure that the government remains responsive to the people. In this system, citizens delegate their decision-making power to elected representatives who act on their behalf, fostering a government that is both participatory and accountable. Through these principles, Locke's theory of government establishes a framework that prioritizes individual rights, limits the scope of state power, and emphasizes the responsibility of rulers to their subjects. His ideas continue to serve as a guiding philosophy for modern democratic governance and resonate with contemporary efforts to establish just and equitable political systems worldwide (Akindele, 1987).

Representative Democracy: John Locke's advocacy for representative democracy stems from his belief in the natural equality of all individuals and their inherent right to participate in decisions that affect their lives. While Locke acknowledges that direct democracy - where citizens make decisions collectively - might be ideal in small, homogenous communities, he recognizes its impracticality in larger, more complex societies (Locke, 1689). Consequently, he proposes representative democracy as the most effective means of ensuring that the will of the people is reflected in governance. In Locke's framework, representative democracy operates on the principle of delegation. Citizens, as part of the social contract, entrust their authority to elected representatives who are tasked with making decisions on their behalf. These representatives are expected to act in the interest of their constituents, guided by the principles of justice, equality, and the protection of natural rights. Locke emphasizes that this delegation of power is not absolute; it is conditional upon the representatives' ability to serve the public good (Boeminger, 1992). Should they fail to fulfill their duties or act against the interests of the people, they can be removed through democratic processes. Locke also highlights the importance of regular, free, and fair elections as a cornerstone of representative democracy. Elections provide a mechanism for citizens to express their consent, renew mandates, and hold their leaders accountable. This process ensures that power remains rooted in the people and that governance does not become tyrannical or self-serving. Furthermore, Locke's insistence on majority rule within a representative framework reflects his belief in balancing diverse opinions while safeguarding minority rights.

Another critical aspect of Locke's view on representative democracy is the principle of legislative supremacy. In his model, the legislative body, elected by the people, holds the primary responsibility for creating laws (Butler, 2022). However, Locke insists that these laws must be consistent with the natural rights of individuals and the broader public interest. The executive and judicial branches, while important, are subordinate to the legislative authority in a well-ordered representative democracy. Locke's concept of representative democracy is also rooted in the idea of trust. Elected representatives are trustees of the public will, bound by their duty to act in the best interests of their constituents. This trust creates a reciprocal relationship between the government and the governed, fostering legitimacy and stability within the political system (Butler, 2022). By advocating for a system where power is

delegated, limited, and accountable, Locke presents a vision of representative democracy that not only accommodates the complexities of large societies but also prioritizes the protection of individual rights and the pursuit of the common good. His principles remain foundational to modern democratic governance, offering a model for political systems that value participation, accountability, and equity (Colbert, 1958).

Good Governance: For John Locke, good governance is fundamentally about serving the public good and ensuring the protection of natural rights - life, liberty, and property. A government that fulfills these duties operates legitimately under the social contract, as it aligns with the purposes for which it was established. Locke emphasizes that good governance is not merely about maintaining order but about promoting justice, equality, and the welfare of all citizens (Ingrid, 1996). Transparency and accountability are critical aspects of Locke's concept of good governance. Leaders must govern in accordance with established laws and remain answerable to the people. Arbitrary or self-serving actions by those in power are incompatible with Locke's vision of a just government. The rule of law is paramount, with laws applied equally and consistently to all, ensuring that no individual or institution, including the government itself, is above the law. Locke also associates good governance with limited government. He argues that governmental power should be constrained to prevent overreach and abuse (John, 1969). This limitation is achieved through a system of checks and balances, where power is distributed among different branches to prevent any one entity from becoming too powerful. Another cornerstone of Locke's view on good governance is the promotion of public participation. Locke advocates for a political system that allows citizens to engage actively in decision-making processes, either directly or through their representatives. This participation ensures that governance remains aligned with the needs and aspirations of the people, fostering trust and legitimacy (Erero, 1996). In essence, Locke's idea of good governance revolves around the principles of justice, accountability, inclusivity, and the protection of rights. A government that adheres to these principles not only maintains its legitimacy but also creates the conditions for a peaceful and prosperous society.

Historical Overview of Governance in Bayelsa State

Bayelsa State, located in the heart of Nigeria's Niger Delta region, has a unique political and socio-economic history shaped by its strategic position as one of the country's key oil-producing states. Created in 1996 from the old Rivers State, Bayelsa was established to address the marginalization of the Ijaw ethnic group, the predominant population in the state. However, the region's history of governance reflects broader challenges faced by the Niger Delta, including systemic neglect, political instability, and socio-economic underdevelopment (Ibeanu & Orji, 2014). From its inception, Bayelsa has been heavily dependent on oil revenue, contributing significantly to Nigeria's wealth. Despite this, the state has experienced a paradox of poverty amidst plenty, as the wealth generated from oil has not translated into widespread socio-economic benefits for its citizens. Mismanagement of resources, corruption, and a lack of political accountability have been recurring themes in Bayelsa's governance (Ojakorotu, 2009).

Bayelsa's political history has also been marked by periods of instability and conflict. The late 1990s and early 2000s saw the rise of militancy in the Niger Delta, driven by grievances over environmental degradation, unequal resource distribution, and the neglect of local communities. Armed groups such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the

Niger Delta (MEND) emerged, disrupting governance and creating a climate of insecurity. These conflicts not only destabilized the state but also highlighted the failure of successive governments to address the legitimate concerns of its people (Ojakorotu, 2009). Governance in Bayelsa has also been characterized by the dominance of political elites and patronage networks. The concentration of power among a small group of individuals has often resulted in governance that prioritizes elite interests over the broader population. This has hindered efforts to establish a participatory and inclusive political system. However, there have been notable attempts to address these challenges. Development initiatives, such as the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the Amnesty Program for former militants, were introduced to address some of the socio-economic and security issues in the region (Nweke, 2012). While these programs have had mixed success, they represent efforts to bring stability and development to Bayelsa. In recent years, Bayelsa has made progress in democratic governance, with peaceful transitions of power and an increased focus on infrastructural development. However, challenges remain, including high unemployment rates, inadequate education and healthcare systems, and the environmental impacts of oil exploration. These issues continue to hinder the state's ability to achieve sustainable development and good governance (Nweke, 2012).

Current Political and Socio-Economic Issues

Bayelsa State, despite its abundant natural resources, remains a paradox of wealth and poverty. The state faces a range of political and socio-economic challenges that undermine its development and the well-being of its citizens. These issues are deeply rooted in historical neglect, systemic corruption, and the adverse effects of oil exploration in the Niger Delta.

Political Issues: One of the central political challenges in Bayelsa is the persistence of political instability and factionalism. The state's political landscape is often dominated by intense power struggles among political elites, leading to frequent conflicts and a lack of continuity in governance. These power dynamics are exacerbated by weak internal democracy within political parties, which often prioritize personal and elite interests over the collective good (Omotola, 2010). The influence of money in politics further undermines the integrity of electoral processes, with instances of vote-buying, electoral violence, and manipulation eroding public trust in democratic institutions. Additionally, governance in Bayelsa is frequently characterized by a lack of transparency and accountability. Public resources are often mismanaged or diverted for personal gain, contributing to widespread corruption. This has led to a growing disillusionment among citizens, who feel disconnected from a political system that appears unresponsive to their needs (Omotola, 2010).

Socio-Economic Issues: Socio-economically, Bayelsa faces significant challenges, including high unemployment and poverty rates. Despite being one of Nigeria's leading oil-producing states, many Bayelsans live in poverty, with limited access to basic services such as healthcare, education, and clean water. The state's dependence on oil revenue has created a mono-economy, leaving it vulnerable to fluctuations in global oil prices and hindering economic diversification (Yahaya, 2020). Environmental degradation is another critical issue plaguing Bayelsa. Decades of oil exploration have caused severe ecological damage, including oil spills, gas flaring, and deforestation. This has not only destroyed the natural environment but also disrupted traditional livelihoods such as fishing and farming, leaving many communities impoverished. The lack of adequate environmental remediation efforts has further exacerbated these problems, fuelling discontent and protests among local

populations. Infrastructure in Bayelsa remains underdeveloped, with poor road networks, inadequate power supply, and insufficient public facilities. These infrastructural deficits hinder economic activities and limit opportunities for growth and investment. The state's education and healthcare systems are also underfunded and poorly managed, resulting in low literacy rates and poor health outcomes (Nweke, 2012).

Security and Unemployment Issues: Insecurity is another pressing challenge. While the Niger Delta militancy that characterized the early 2000s has subsided significantly due to the Amnesty Program, sporadic incidents of violence, kidnapping, and communal clashes still occur. These security challenges undermine investor confidence and disrupt the state's development efforts (Jack & Edward, 2021). Bayelsa also faces challenges related to youth and gender inclusion. High unemployment rates among young people have contributed to social unrest and a rise in crime. Women in Bayelsa are often marginalized in political and economic spheres, with limited representation in decision-making processes and unequal access to resources and opportunities (Abisoye, 2020).

Applying John Locke's Ideas to Governance in Bayelsa State

John Locke's political philosophy offers valuable insights for addressing the governance challenges faced by Bayelsa State. His emphasis on the social contract, representative democracy, and good governance aligns closely with the needs of a state seeking to establish a more accountable, transparent, and inclusive political system (Esman, 1997). Applying Locke's ideas in the context of Bayelsa involves rethinking the relationship between the government and the governed, promoting democratic principles, and fostering a governance culture rooted in justice and the public good.

The Social Contract in Bayelsa State: At the heart of Locke's philosophy is the idea of the social contract - a mutual agreement between the government and the people in which the government derives its legitimacy from the consent of the governed. In Bayelsa, this concept can serve as a framework for rebuilding trust between citizens and their leaders. Decades of mismanagement, corruption, and neglect have eroded public confidence in governance. Reaffirming the social contract involves ensuring that government actions reflect the will and interests of the people (Eyinla, 1998). To operationalize the social contract in Bayelsa, the state must prioritize inclusive policymaking processes, where citizens are actively involved in shaping policies that affect their lives. Town hall meetings, community consultations, and participatory budgeting are practical ways to engage citizens and make governance more inclusive. This approach not only strengthens democratic legitimacy but also enhances accountability, as leaders are held responsible for their promises and actions (Olowu, Williams, and Soremekun, 1999). Thus, in view of the above it is pertinent to note that the concept of the social contract is not directly operational in Bayelsa State - or in many other political contexts - because merely holding periodic elections does not automatically translate to a functioning social contract. Elections, while essential in a democracy, do not guarantee that the government will act in the best interest of the people, nor do they ensure active citizen participation beyond the voting process.

Elections serve as a mechanism for selecting leaders, but they do not necessarily guarantee good governance, accountability, or public trust. In many cases, particularly in states like Bayelsa, electoral processes are plagued by irregularities such as vote-buying, electoral violence, and political manipulation. Even when elections are free and fair, the mere act of voting every few years does not equate to continuous citizen engagement in governance (Olowu, Williams, and Soremekun, 1999). To make the social contract truly

operational, governance must be a continuous process of engagement, accountability, and responsiveness. This is where mechanisms like town hall meetings, community consultations, and participatory budgeting become essential. These practices ensure that governance is not just about electing leaders but about maintaining an ongoing dialogue between the government and the governed. They allow citizens to influence policies, demand accountability, and ensure that their interests are genuinely represented. Thus, while periodic elections are a necessary part of democracy, they are insufficient on their own to establish a functional social contract. The real essence of Locke's idea is that governance should be a continuous, participatory process, where the government consistently derives legitimacy from the people - not just on election-day, but through active citizen engagement in decision-making.

Promoting Representative Democracy: Locke's advocacy for representative democracy emphasizes the need for government to function as a true representation of the people's will. In Bayelsa, this requires strengthening democratic institutions to ensure free, fair, and transparent elections. Electoral reforms are essential to eliminate vote-buying, rigging, and other forms of malpractice that undermine the legitimacy of elected officials (Jega, 2009). Moreover, promoting representative democracy involves fostering internal democracy within political parties in Bayelsa. Parties must adopt merit-based systems for candidate selection, ensuring that representatives are chosen for their competence and commitment to public service rather than personal or elite interests. Additionally, empowering women and marginalized groups to participate in politics can make the state's democratic processes more inclusive and reflective of its diverse population (Enemuo, 2019).

Ensuring Good Governance Based on Locke's Principles: Locke's vision of good governance emphasizes the protection of natural rights, accountability, and the rule of law. These principles are particularly relevant for Bayelsa, where governance has often been marred by corruption and inefficiency. Ensuring good governance involves implementing robust anti-corruption measures, such as transparent procurement processes, independent auditing systems, and the enforcement of anti-corruption laws (Tuckness, 2005). Adhering to the rule of law is also critical. Locke's insistence on the supremacy of law over arbitrary power can guide Bayelsa toward a more just society. Establishing an independent and impartial judiciary is essential for safeguarding citizens' rights and ensuring that laws are applied fairly and consistently. Training judicial officers and enhancing access to legal resources can further strengthen the state's legal system.

In addition, Locke's principles call for a government that prioritizes the welfare of its citizens. In Bayelsa, this means investing in critical areas such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and environmental restoration. Addressing environmental degradation caused by oil exploration aligns with Locke's emphasis on protecting property rights, as it ensures that communities can sustain their livelihoods (Enemuo, 2019). **Creating a Culture of Trust and Accountability:** Locke's concept of governance as a trust between rulers and the ruled can inspire Bayelsa to cultivate a governance culture based on accountability and transparency. This involves establishing mechanisms for monitoring government performance, such as citizen oversight committees and while continuously implementing the existing public disclosure of government budgets and expenditures (Mfon, 2023). This will improve the culture of trust and accountability in the political sector.

It is worthy of note that Nigeria to a large extent is a member of treaties establishing certain rights and privileges of individuals as being superior to all other considerations in the

society as elucidated by John Locke. Nigeria has all the tenets of a liberal system in theory; it is also worthy of note that Nigeria operates a democratic system modelled along the American system which scholars are of the view that it owes its origin from Locke's philosophical thoughts. One can therefore assess the Nigerian democracy as being in conformity with the ideas of liberalism emphasized in Locke's philosophical thoughts. However, this is largely in theory as what is obtainable in practice is a sharp contradiction of liberal democracy in Nigeria. The practice of liberal democracy is still at a rudimentary stage or at its lowest ebb in Nigeria when compared with the idea in which Locke emphasizes in his philosophy and when compared to how it is practiced in advanced democracies. Despite Nigeria is a signatory to various human rights treaties, the country do not pay much attention to the decreasing level of human rights or in the dignity and worth of the human person. The processes of electing leaders are grossly flawed when compared to the idea of liberal democracy in its ideal terms. The trust in which Locke opine should rule in the interest of all in the society is viewed in the Nigerian contest as a supreme leader whose style of leadership relegates the interest of the citizenry to the background (Balogun & Zaghmout, 2024). The argument of periodic elections is grossly abused; constitutionalism is not followed in the activities of governance as there is more of impunity in the administration and governance of the system.

By applying Locke's ideas, Bayelsa can lay the foundation for a more equitable and effective governance system. This requires not only structural reforms but also a shift in political culture, where leaders view themselves as servants of the people, committed to justice, equality, and the public good.

Key Reforms for Good Governance in Bayelsa State

Good governance in Bayelsa State requires implementing structural, institutional, and cultural reforms that address the root causes of political, economic, and social challenges. Drawing inspiration from John Locke's principles of justice, accountability, and the social contract, these reforms aim to create a transparent, inclusive, and effective governance system that meets the needs of the people.

Electoral Reforms: A fundamental step toward good governance in Bayelsa is ensuring free, fair, and credible elections. The Federal Government, in partnership with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), should work towards enhancing the transparency and integrity of the electoral process. This can be achieved by strengthening the independence of the Bayelsa State Electoral Commission to prevent external influence and ensure impartiality. Additionally, the adoption of digital voting systems should be considered to minimize vote manipulation, replacing the current ink-on-paper method. Previous elections have demonstrated that information on the BVAS digital platform has been compromised, leading to flawed results. To address this, a digital voting system should be introduced, accompanied by live collation and real-time result recording at each polling unit, rather than relying on manual collation at polling centres and subsequent collation at INEC offices, which creates opportunities for electoral fraud. Election results should be digitally transmitted to collation centres, with live reporting at polling units immediately after voting concludes, ensuring greater transparency and credibility in the process. Also, the federal government in collaboration with relevant institutions across the country should enforcing strict penalties for electoral malpractices, such as vote-buying, ballot stuffing, and voter intimidation; promoting voter education campaigns to increase political awareness and participation, especially among marginalized groups such as women and youth.

Anti-Corruption Measures: Corruption has been a persistent obstacle to development in Bayelsa. To combat this, Bayelsa State Government must adopt stringent anti-corruption measures, including: the establishment of a commission within the State, that ensures transparency in wealth accumulation; instituting open government initiatives, such as publishing budgets, contracts, and spending details online, to allow citizens to monitor government activities (Odinikonigbo, 2024). Restoring trust between the government and citizens is critical for sustainable governance. In this vein, the state government must ensure that the regularly publish performance reports and engage citizens in evaluating government projects, so as to encourage transparency and accountability; strengthening the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in monitoring government activities and advocating for reforms; encouraging whistle-blower protections to expose corruption and misconduct (Choi, Temperton, Allen, & Grootjans, 2008). Also, the rule of law is essential for maintaining justice and equity in governance. Therefore, the executive and legislative arm of the Bayelsa State government in collaboration with the federal government must enhance the capacity and independence of the judiciary to ensure fair adjudication of cases, especially those involving government misconduct; providing adequate funding and training for judicial officers and law enforcement agencies to improve their efficiency and reduce susceptibility to corruption; establishing accessible legal aid services to ensure that all citizens, regardless of economic status, can seek justice.

Economic Diversification and Sustainable Development: Bayelsa's heavy reliance on oil revenues has made its economy vulnerable to price fluctuations and environmental degradation. Therefore the state government should pay more attention to critical sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, and tourism to create alternative income sources and reduce dependence on oil; promoting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through access to credit, training, and infrastructure development; implementing policies that encourage foreign and local investment in non-oil sectors. Decades of oil exploration have caused severe environmental damage in Bayelsa, affecting livelihoods and health. Therefore, the federal government, especially the executive and legislative arms must provide orders in line with the Petroleum Industry Act to enforce environmental regulations to hold oil companies accountable for spills and other ecological damage; partnering with international organizations to fund and implement environmental cleanup and restoration projects; supporting renewable energy initiatives to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and promote sustainable development (Wu, et al., 2023).

Improved Infrastructure and inclusive governance: Bayelsa's development has been hindered by inadequate public services and infrastructure. To address this, the Bayelsa State government should allocate a significant portion of the state budget to building and maintaining roads, schools, hospitals, and utilities; prioritize equitable distribution of resources to ensure rural communities have access to basic services; strengthen the public service sector through training, adequate remuneration, and performance monitoring to enhance efficiency and reduce corruption. Also, the state government must implement an inclusive governance which ensures that all citizens have a voice in decision-making. This could be done through the use of social media and television programmes, and hotlines, where citizens can report views, grievances and receive timely responses.

Security reforms: Improving security is vital for creating an environment conducive to development. Therefore, the state government should strengthen community policing initiatives to address local security concerns, as providing security orders only on the federal level do not seem adequate enough to provide efficient security in the state. Thus, the state

government could also invest in modern equipment and training for security forces to improve their capacity and professionalism, while also addressing the root causes of insecurity, such as unemployment and inequality, to reduce the appeal of criminal activities, through its Ministry of Social Development. By implementing these key reforms, Bayelsa State can move toward a governance system that embodies John Locke's principles of justice, accountability, and the protection of natural rights. These changes will not only address the state's current challenges but also lay the foundation for a stable, prosperous, and inclusive future.

Challenges and Potential Limitations

Efforts to reform governance in Bayelsa State and apply John Locke's principles may face significant challenges and potential limitations. These obstacles stem from entrenched political, socio-economic, and institutional factors that have persisted over decades. Addressing them requires sustained commitment, strategic planning, and the support of multiple stakeholders.

Political Challenges: One of the primary political challenge is resistance from entrenched political elites who benefit from the status quo. The patronage system, which concentrates power and resources in the hands of a few, often undermines attempts at reform. Political elites may resist transparency measures, anti-corruption initiatives, or electoral reforms that threaten their influence. This resistance can slow or derail the implementation of key governance reforms (Stanford, 2023). Corruption remains a deeply ingrained issue in Bayelsa's governance structures. Efforts to combat corruption may face pushback from those who profit from systemic inefficiencies. Additionally, weak institutions and lack of oversight mechanisms create opportunities for continued mismanagement of public resources. Tackling corruption requires not only enforcement but also cultural shifts that promote integrity and accountability (Ojakorotu, 2009). Low levels of political awareness and civic engagement among citizens pose another challenge. Many Bayelsans are disillusioned with the political system due to years of unfulfilled promises and poor governance. This apathy can result in low voter turnout, limited participation in policy discussions, and a general lack of accountability for elected officials. Political leaders often prioritize short-term projects that yield immediate political benefits over long-term reforms that require sustained effort. This misalignment of incentives can lead to a lack of focus on foundational changes necessary for good governance, such as institutional strengthening and capacity building. Bayelsa's governance reforms are also influenced by broader regional and national political dynamics. As part of the Niger Delta, Bayelsa's challenges are interconnected with federal policies, resource allocation, and regional power struggles. These external factors can either support or hinder local reform efforts (Aborisde & Omotosho, 2021).

Institutional Challenges: The institutional capacity of Bayelsa's government to implement and sustain reforms is limited. Many government agencies lack the human and financial resources necessary to carry out their mandates effectively. For example, inadequate training of civil servants, poor funding of public institutions, and limited technical expertise hinder the delivery of public services and the enforcement of laws.

Socio-economic Challenges: High levels of poverty, unemployment, and inequality present another significant limitation. Socio-economic challenges often exacerbate governance

issues by creating an environment of desperation and dependency (Ojakorotu, 2009). Citizens who struggle to meet basic needs may be more susceptible to manipulation by corrupt leaders or less willing to engage in civic activities. These socio-economic conditions can undermine efforts to foster participatory democracy and accountability. Bayelsa's economy is heavily reliant on oil revenue, which creates a mono-economy vulnerable to fluctuations in global oil prices. Furthermore, decades of environmental degradation caused by oil exploration have devastated traditional livelihoods such as fishing and farming. This dual challenge of economic dependency and environmental harm limits the state's ability to diversify its economy and develop sustainable governance practices. Although the Niger Delta militancy has subsided significantly, sporadic incidents of violence, kidnapping, and communal clashes still occur. These security challenges disrupt governance, deter investment, and limit the effectiveness of development initiatives. Without adequate security, implementing reforms becomes increasingly difficult, as resources are diverted to managing crises rather than addressing root causes.

Cultural and social norms can also pose challenges to governance reforms. For instance, the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles is often perpetuated by patriarchal attitudes that limit their participation in politics and decision-making. Similarly, youth involvement in governance may be hindered by generational power dynamics that exclude young people from leadership positions (Aborisade & Omotosho, 2021). Development initiatives in Bayelsa often rely heavily on external funding and interventions, such as federal allocations, international aid, or corporate social responsibility projects from oil companies. This dependency can create a lack of ownership and sustainability in local governance reforms, as initiatives may be poorly integrated into the state's long-term strategies. Implementing comprehensive governance reforms is a time-consuming process that requires significant financial and human resources. In a state like Bayelsa, where immediate needs such as poverty alleviation and infrastructure development demand urgent attention, long-term governance reforms may face competing priorities. While these challenges are significant, they are not insurmountable. Overcoming them requires a multi-pronged approach that combines political will, citizen engagement, and strategic partnerships (Libertarianism, 2015).

Conclusion

Locke's position has laid a path for societies to follow in the bid to attain the greatest happiness for the greatest number. His idea has equally laid the foundation for modern day democratic practice that is predominant in the world today even though irregularities abound in most underdeveloped societies like Bayelsa State, Nigeria. However, one can refer to the American democracy which is the role model of democratic principles and practices as the best story of John Locke's idea. Thus, while American democracy may be one of the strongest examples of Locke's idea in practice, it is not without flaws. The key lesson for societies like Bayelsa State is that democracy requires constant improvement, civic engagement and institutional reforms to ensure that it truly serves the greatest happiness for the greatest number.

John Locke's theories on representative democracy and good governance offer valuable insights for improving governance in Bayelsa State. By emphasizing the social contract, the protection of natural rights, and the need for accountable government, Locke's ideas provide a framework for addressing many of the challenges faced by the state. However, meaningful reform will require political will, strong institutions, and active citizen

participation. The study therefore recommends that the Bayelsa government should provide policies that would ensure the sustenance of peace in the society like displaying fairness, justice and equality in treating various individuals and religious groups in a society like Bayelsa. The government should fight issues of corruption, unemployment, poverty, election malpractice and insecurity in the state. The challenge of corrupt leaders fighting corruption is a paradox seen in many governance systems, including Bayelsa State. However, change is possible through a combination of institutional reforms, public pressure and systemic restructuring. Thus, agencies like the EFCC and the ICPC should have autonomy to investigate and prosecute corruption cases without political interference. Also, there is a need to implement open governance initiatives; reform the electoral process to minimize vote-buying, election rigging and political godfatherism which can help bring in more accountable leaders; ensure an independent judiciary which will allow corruption cases to be tried fairly, preventing political manipulation of the justice system.

Government should always consult the opinion of the people in the process of policy formulation and implementation. Lastly, leadership in our political process must be a calling to serve humanity rather than a venture for self-enrichment and pride. For this to be done, political leaders should be trained in ethics, accountability and public service values; integrity checks should be part of the leadership recruitment process, ensuring that only those with proven records of service and accountability hold public positions. Rewarding ethical leadership and punishing corrupt practices will also set a precedent for future leaders.

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HABERMAS' DISCOURSE ETHICS AND MATTHEW LIPMAN'S CLASSROOM COMMUNITY OF INQUIRY AS A MODEL OF CONFLICT MITIGATION IN THE NIGER-DELTA REGION OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria, the region that plays host to multinational oil companies has been embroiled in protracted conflicts between the people of the Niger Delta region (the host communities) and the multinational oil companies operating in the region. The conflicts are driven by the interplay of factors which include but not limited to oil exploration and revenue allocation, environmental degradation, unemployment and poverty, exclusion from decision making processes related to oil exploration, forced displacement by oil companies, distortion of the ecological livelihood of the people of the Niger Delta region, and resource control. The prevalence of conflicts in the region has highlighted the need for innovative and cultural effective approaches towards peace building and conflict resolution in the region. Several models, kinetic and non-kinetic aimed at mitigating conflicts in the region and changing the trajectory of relationship between the multinational oil companies and the host communities have been suggested and implemented. However, the contending issues are yet to be satisfactorily resolved as pockets of conflicts and agitations in the region still fester. Jurgen Habermas' Discourse Ethics, and Mathew Lipman's Community of Inquiry are models that seek to explore the effectiveness and possibility of addressing perceived societal dissatisfactions that could trigger conflicts through the engagement of stakeholders (multinational oil companies and people of the Niger Delta region) in constructive and collaborative dialogue. Adopting the qualitative design and methods of textual analysis, speculation and hermeneutics, this essay affirms a nexus between Habermas's and Lipman's models, and conflict resolution in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. It argues that insecurity and conflicts in the region can be mitigated if models that prioritizes inclusiveness, dialogue and collaborative inquiry which the two thinkers envisioned are adopted. The essay in conclusion posits that relief interventions and empowerment programmes should be based on the occupational demography of the people of the region where those with similar occupation are stratified and profiled.

Keywords: Discourse Ethics, Community of Inquiry, Niger-Delta region, Multinational Oil Companies, Conflict Resolution.

Introduction

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria, the region that produces about ninety percent of the wealth of the nation, has, overtime, been embroiled in incessant conflicts, restiveness, hostage taking, militancy, pipeline vandalization, kidnaping, and other shades of insurgencies. The reason for these crisis which have, to an extent, bedeviled the socio-economic activities of the region is attributed to tensions between the multinational oil

companies operating in the region and the host communities who suffer environmental degradation, extinction of their ecological livelihood, marginalization, poverty, and under-development. There have been several efforts, kinetic and non-kinetic, aimed at mitigating conflicts in the region to guarantee industrial harmony and sustainable peace and development. This essay, which seeks to apply Jurgen Habermas' Discourse ethics, and Matthew Lipman's Community of Inquiry as models of mitigating conflict in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria is one of such efforts.

To facilitate our discourse, this essay shall proceed in five prongs. It will begin by traversing Habermas Discourse ethics, to ascertain how his notion of valid norms as a product of collaborative dialogue and discussion by concern parties and stakeholders can engender conflict mitigation in the region. It shall also peruse Lipman's Community of Inquiry, a pedagogical space where stakeholders gather under the ambience of tolerance, equality and respect of the views of members and working as a group learn to see themselves as active participants in the discovery, analysis, and justification of claims to knowledge. Also, the essay shall examine conflicts and their causes in the Niger Delta region. Furthermore, attempt shall be made to apply Jurgen Habermas's and Matthew Lipman's models to the mitigation of conflicts in the region; and finally, the evaluation and conclusion.

Jürgen Habermas' Discourse Ethics

Jurgen Habermas is a renowned German philosopher and sociologist best known for his works on communicative action, deliberative democracy, and the public sphere. Habermas like Immanuel Kant, is committed to moral universalism, cognitivism, impartiality and equality. However, in contrast to Kant, Habermas, defends a public and proceduralist model of justification, arguing that the justification for a moral norm requires that the norm be assented to by participants in a moral discourse (Mahoney, 2002, p. 300). Habermas's thought is evidenced by his dogged commitment to the claim that the validity of moral norms is contingent upon the outcome of a real moral discourse that could occur under the right conditions. The claim that moral theory in the modern world must eschew the aim of providing an apriori justification for norms, fallibilism, the need for a post-metaphysical approach to normative theory, and the claim that a norm is valid only if those to whom it applies can agree to its acceptance as a general rule motivates his commitment to discourse ethics. The traditional idea of objectivity in Habermas' view is replaced by commitment to finding objectivity in dialogue and consensus, denying the possibility of achieving moral objectivity through self-reflection on the grounds that justification requires the mutual consent of all affected persons. It is germane to stress that Habermas's thought is influenced by his notion of the human person. He sees humans as reflective beings endowed with the capacity to judge and act morally, when they understand themselves as autonomous persons with equal dignity. As a community of moral beings, humanity creates laws to regulate matters requiring norms and do so in terms of rights and duties. Members of such a community address one another intersubjectively, placing one another under obligation with the expectation of conformity to such norms (Mckenna 2024).

Moral behaviour, in Habermas's view, then, seems to be a constructive response to human being's social environment, in which they are dependent on others for help, care, and respect, and where they are vulnerable in body and as individuals. His discourse ethics is a moral framework that emphasizes the imperative of democratic deliberation and discursive approach to moral norms, the goal being to reach a consensus which can foster cooperation and mutual understanding. The individual subject, according to Habermas, is

“unfinished” at birth, emerging through socialization within the linguistic community. Only when integrated into relations of mutual respect can human beings emerge as individuals and maintain their personal identity. Habermas sees the human person as possessor of rational capabilities amenable to critical thinking and reflection. Humans, though fallible beings, are also communicative beings driven to understand and cooperate with others while language plays a pivotal role in shaping human thoughts, interaction and understanding. As social creatures shaped by interaction, mutual recognition and collective identity, humans have the capacity for cooperative inquiry about issues that bothers them (Mckenna, 2024, p. 13). Habermas considers acting persons as subjects who speak and listen, who are connected by some relationships with the “objective, social or subjective world,” and at the same time put forward encroachments on the significance of what they talk about, think, and what they are sure of. Therefore, the relationship of individual subject to the world is always mediated and relativized by the possibilities of communication with other people, as well as their disputes and the ability to come to an agreement (Tytar, *et al.*, 2002, p. 5). In Habermas’ discourse ethics, there is a paradigm shift from a subject centered to a communicative or discourse centred conception of morality. The conception of moral justification that Habermas defends is supposed to show that agents must consult those with whom they interact before making a moral judgment. He succinctly encapsulates:

In order for a moral consensus to qualify as valid, it must be rationally motivated, where rationally motivated means the agreed upon norms satisfy the discourse principle...a moral consensus is valid only if all affected had the opportunity to participate, and if the outcome of the discourse does not erode any participants standing as an equal member of the community (Mahoney, 2002, 301).

For Habermas, what is stated above implies that agents who defend moral claim are appealing to shared moral point of view, and also that when agents appeal to a shared moral point of view, they cannot but make themselves accountable to others who also adopt this point of view. Amids discourse, the mutual accountability required to justify a norm can be satisfied if a principle of deliberative inclusion is met, that realizes that moral ideals of respect and equality are understood to be substantive rather than procedural norms. To achieve an authentic discourse, Habermas, according to Okshevsky (2004: 178), enumerates the features and conditions of authentic discourse as follows:

- i. Nobody who could make a relevant contribution may be excluded. All competent speakers and actors are permitted to take part in discourse. Practical discourse are public in nature.
- ii. All participants are granted an equal opportunity to make contributions. Everyone is allowed to question any assertion whatever, to introduce any assertion whatever into the discourse and to express his attitudes, desires and needs. The equal communicative rights of all participants ensures that only reasons that give equal weight to the interests and evaluative orientations of everybody can influence the outcome of practical discourse.
- iii. Participants must mean what they say
- iv. Communication must be free from external and internal coercion so that the “yes” or “no” stances that participants adopt on criticizable validity claims are motivated solely by the rational force of the better reason.

Habermas advocated for a deliberative democracy where citizens participate in public debate and decision making process. He also emphasized the importance of a public sphere, a domain of social life where public opinions can be formed, where citizens gather to discuss and debate matters of common concern. By emphasizing the importance of public discourse, Habermas challenged traditional notion of representative democracy and highlights the need for more direct and participatory forms of citizenship (Baxter, 2002). Congruent with his notion of democracy which is rooted in his concept of public sphere and communicative action, he believes that democracy thrives when citizens engage in open, inclusive, rational discourse which should be free from coercion, domination and manipulation, allowing all voices to be heard. He advocates for a domain of social life where public opinions can be formed, where citizens gather to issues that bother them. A view similar to Habermas' thought catalogued above is that of Matthew Lipman's Classroom Community of Inquiry which this work shall examine in the next section.

Matthew Lipman's Classroom Community of Inquiry

Matthew Lipman was an American philosopher and educator who developed Philosophy for Children, which aimed to encourage critical thinking, creativity, inquiry, and reasonableness in children. Lipman maintains that a democratic change can occur in schools if it is committed to a balanced development of all aspects of thinking. Lipman considers philosophy as a playful and communicative activity in which ideas are built on other ideas as an increasing movement. He calls the forum of philosophizing "the Community of Inquiry". By this, he means:

A pedagogical space in which children listen to one another with respect, build on one another's ideas, challenge one another to supply reasons for otherwise unsupported opinions, assist each other in drawing inferences from what has been said, and seek to identify one another's assumptions (2003, p.101-102).

The classroom Community of Inquiry of Lipman is characterized by non-adversarial deliberations, shared cognitions, respect and tolerance of the views of members. The features of Lipman's classroom community of inquiry are:

- i. **Inclusiveness:** The participants may or may not be of one religion, nationality or age level, but within a community, no one is excluded from internal activities without adequate justification.
- ii. **Impartiality:** Matters are investigated in an atmosphere that takes into account all the considerations and points of view of members: the voices of everyone are respected without recourse to gender, religion, race, social status or tribal affiliations.
- iii. **Respect of the Views of Members:** Members' points of view are accommodated and tolerated.
- iv. **Shared Cognition:** In prolonged session of private reflection, all individuals will engage in a series of mental acts aimed at penetrating and analyzing the matter at hand. Thus, one will engage in wondering, questioning, inferring, defining, assuming, supposing, imagining, distinguishing, and so on. In shared cognition, the same acts are engaged in, but by different members of the community. One person raises a question, another objects to an underlying assumption, still another offers a counter instance. The intellectual distance traversed may be the same, but the second illustration demonstrates how they can be a thinking community.

- v. **Deliberation:** This involves a consideration of alternatives through examination of the reasons supporting each alternative. Since the deliberation usually takes place in preparation for the making of a judgment, we speak of the process as a “weighing” of the reasons and the alternatives.
- vi. **Reasonableness:** To be reasonable indicates that one has the capacity to employ rational procedures in a judicious manner, it signifies one’s capacity to listen to or be open to reason. Both senses of the term are fundamental for the community of inquirers.
- v. **Challenge as a Procedure:** When children argue among themselves, it is not uncommon for them to challenge one another, sometimes quite intensely, they demand to know the reason supporting this judgment, or the meaning of this expression. The community of inquiry experience teaches them that challenging is good but it need not be heated. It is just one more cognitive procedure that the participants need to perform in the course of their inquiries.
- vi. **The Discussion:** The discussion often begins by turning to the person who posed the question that the community decides should be discussed first. The student may be asked to say a few words about the sources of the question or concern raised, the reason for raising it, and why it should be up for consideration. With the student’s reply, others join in so as to articulate their agreement or disagreement with the issues under consideration. In all possibility, more than one line of reasoning will open up, as the reading and questioning have stimulated a variety of interests among members of community of inquiry (Lipman, 2003, p.95-98).

Seating Arrangement in the Classroom Community of Inquiry

In Matthew Lipman’s Classroom Community of Inquiry, seats are arranged in semicircular form with students seated in a circle of chairs, face to face with the classmates and the teacher who act as a class captain. The arrangement is designed to breach perceived designated space or reservation for teacher who sits on high table dictating pace of the deliberation and dishing out commands and instructions to be obeyed by students. The semi-circle seating arrangement formation in the classroom is designed to eliminate the front and back set up where the teacher stands at the fronts and students sit in rows facing him, such seating formation eliminates hierarchical structure where one person is at the head of the table thus promoting sense of equality among the participants, promoting inclusivity and active listening. They are also able to work together to explore issues, share perspectives, and find solutions. The circular arrangement encourages dialogue, as students can easily make eye-contact with the teacher and respond to each other as equal. Circular seating arrangement also help reduce dominance, obliterating distinctions which pave way for more egalitarianism, increased empathy and support for diverse perspectives. Suffice it to state that, Lipman’s thought is underpinned by his concept of human nature. Lipman believes that humans are naturally inquisitive and curious beings with the propensity for collaborative inquiry. Humans, he believes, also possess the capacity to think critically and caringly in a group. This informs his model of community of inquiry which highlights the premium laid by him on collaborative discussions in an atmosphere of tolerance empathy and respects of the views and perspectives of other members.

Conflicts in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria

Conflict, according to Wilson (1997, p. 163), connotes a situation which may result in controversy, struggle, strive or contention; and in consequence, brings about an uncertainty within self or bring about a state of incompatibility between human; and then crisis within society. As a social necessity and a normal functional inevitable aspect of a healthy society, Francis (2000), sees conflict as an intrinsic and inevitable part of human existence and defines it as “the pursuit of incompatible interests and goals by different groups”, which could be a state of antagonistic and adversarial relationship. Therefore, dialogue is needed to bridge the gap and bring the parties into a cooperative relationship. Conflict is a basic fact of life and an inevitable feature of organizational and societal life. For Galtung (2022), conflict is parties shocking together. An inner shock that may cause hatred and that may be expressed in violence due to incompatibility of goals. Conflict can be intrapersonal, interpersonal, communal, regional, institutionalized, global, organizational, endogenous and so on. It does not just occur. Certain conditions give rise to conflict, which Wilson (1997) lists to include:

- i. Lack of information and misinformation
- ii. Incompatibility of goals
- iii. Differences in perception, unacceptable or ineffective methods of handling matters or issues, previously mismanaged conflicts, interdependence, scarce resources, lack of opportunity, ability or motivation to communicate effectively. Conflict begets reconciliation and no one can reconcile if there is no conflict or even war.

Nigeria has six geopolitical regions, South East, South West, North East, North West, North Central and South South. All these regions are blessed with abundance of natural resources. Natural resources constitute “any material from nature having potential economic value or providing for the sustenance of life, such as timber, minerals, crude oil, water and wildlife (Onuoha: 2020, p 28-40). Natural resources embedded in the land are at the centre of much of Nigeria’s legal and political landscape. They energize power politics and various form of antagonism which stems from the way and manner of who gets what, when and how. National resources’ conflicts bring tension and instability since they affect social and economic life of the host communities within the affected states.

The Niger Delta Region, which is in the south South Geo-political region of Nigeria, comprises of the States of Ondo, Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Imo, Abia, Akwa Ibom and Cross River and is endowed with abundance of crude oil and other mineral resources. The major cause of conflict in the Niger-Delta region is what Yinka in Ezirigwe (2017) referred to as “resource curse”, a situation referred to by economists as a scenario where a country rich in natural resources is full of very poor people. The Niger Delta region is a densely populated area in Nigeria. Its boundaries, as defined by the Nigerian government, extend over about 70,000km, and it makes up 7.5% of Nigeria’s land mass. It is the area that stretches in an East-West direction and extends from South West Cameroon to the Okitipupa ridge, forming an apex at the South East of the River Niger and Benue confluences (Asaktikpi and Oyelaran 1999; as cited in Amodu 2007). The Niger Deltans have settled in the area for several millennia and consists of mostly agrarian communities before the 15th century and their communities produced commodities such as oil palm, rubber, sugarcane, and fruit like mango, banana, and pawpaw. They also engage in fishing, farming, handicraft, and trading. In 1956, crude oil was discovered in commercial quantity at Oloibiri in Bayelsa State in the Niger; Delta though it did not assume a significant position in Nigeria’s economic index until

the post-colonial period. Following the discovery, multinational oil companies began exploring for oil in the Niger-Delta region, which culminated in the growth of Nigeria's oil production with the country becoming a major oil producer and exporter. Nigeria's oil fortune is not without a price; as Amodu (2007), observes that tapping into oil reserves requires the construction of rigs, industrial facilities, and power plants. It also involves the process of prospecting, exploring and drilling crude oil. He stated that all these culminate in the degradation and destruction of life supporting ecological systems and other natural resources. Apart from the destruction of vegetation during the exploration and production, the flaring of associated gasses in the process of extracting the crude oil poses a threat to human lives. Unburned carbon, according to Amodu (2007, p. 105), is often transported into the homes and working area of the Niger-Delta inhabitants.

Also, whenever it rains, thick sooths are washed off from roofs and other surfaces causing the black-like water, which is believed to contain harmful chemicals, which affect the fertility of the soil. Oil spills and other pollutants have contaminated the region's water sources, leading to the spread of water borne diseases. Respiratory complications experienced by the people of the region is occasioned by toxic chemical emissions released into the air and exposure to such pollutants may cause cancer, birth defects, and other diseases. Oil exploration and production have led to displacement of communities, as their arable land and fishing creeks are taken over by Multinational Oil companies. The destruction of the region's environment have led to loss of livelihood and the extinction of the aquatic lives of the people of the region. Fishermen and farmers can no longer pursue their traditional occupations without strategies in place to assuage their concerns and losses. The above is sufficient to stoke restiveness and conflict by the host communities; as African life, according to Njoku (2002), is therefore neither purely bodily nor purely spiritual, but a life of the whole man, the whole life, the entire being in its totality, which include inheritance, family, land, with all its endowment, water, river, lakes, ocean and forest. Being deprived of their resources in a potential cause of conflicts, Amodu laments that the area which is responsible for Nigeria's oil wealth is one of the most backward, in terms of development. Communities in the region lack basic infrastructures such as good roads, pipe-borne water, hospitals, schools, electricity, etc. Further decrying the situation in the Niger-Delta region, Idemudia and Osaghae, lament that:

around 40 million litres of oil spill annually cause widespread contamination of the air, land, and water. The crucial mangrove swamps have been severely affected, with large areas destroyed or at risk due to pollution from oil spills and gas flaring. The waterways are often contaminated by hydrocarbons, negatively affecting fish populations and water quality. Local farmers are reporting significant decline in crop yields, with yam and cassava harvest shrinking due to soil contamination with crude oil. ...the health implications for residents are dire, life expectancy plummeting to around 45 years with increased incidence of diseases such as cancer, kidney damage, diabetes, and neurological disorders linked to heavy metals polluted environment causing heightened poverty in the region (2001, p. 1006-1015).

The above exposition on the dire situations in the region predispose the host communities to restiveness, militancy, pipeline vandalism, and indiscriminate hostage taking and kidnappings in view of perceived injustice, neglect and marginalization. Incessant conflicts,

restiveness, and the agitation for the development of the Niger-Delta region, the goose that lays the golden eggs, stem from the fact that in spite of the regions resource endowments, with its immense potentials for economic growth and sustainable development, the region has remained increasingly under threat from rapidly deteriorating and compromised environmental conditions as well as social tensions which the past and present governments' policies have not addressed (Sufyan, 2012, p. 40). For Osagie et al. (2010), non deployment of revenues accrued from oil found in the Niger Delta region to the development and empowerment of their communities also accounts for persistent conflicts and restiveness in the region.

The evident violence in the Niger-Delta region is what Onua cited in Amodu (2007) describes as a sort of revenge mission on both the government and multinational oil companies. On one hand, the government is blamed for the neglect of the area while it uses the resources derived from there to develop other regions of the country; and on the other hand, the oil companies are accused of not doing enough to develop the communities from which they make their money. Since oil exploration processes engender degradation of the environment, the indigenes of the Niger-Delta argue that they are entitled to compensation, empowerment and development of their communities; hence, there have emerged several militant groups who probably feel that by fighting for their rights, they can bring succour for their people. Addressing these challenges require a multifaceted approach that involve government, oil companies, and local communities. Some potential remedies include but not limited to kinetic approaches like deployment of state actors to suppress restiveness and insurgencies in the area, and non kinetic measures like symposiums, workshops and seminars aimed at engaging with the stakeholders on the need for peace and conflict resolution. These seem not to abate the agitations as incessant crises that often disrupt the operations of the multinational companies and restiveness in the region still fester. In the section that follows, attempts shall be made to examine Matthew Lipman's model of Community of Inquiry, and Jurgen Habermas's Discourse Ethics as a model of mitigating conflicts in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria.

Applying Jurgen Habermas's Discourse Ethics and Matthew Lipman's Community of Inquiry as a Model for Mitigating Conflicts in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria

The purpose of Jurgen Habermas' Discourse Ethics and Matthew Lipman's Community of Inquiry is to explore the effectiveness and possibility of addressing perceived societal dissatisfaction that may trigger conflict through the engagement of stakeholders in constructive dialogue in an ambience of respect and tolerance of their views. Under such a circumstance, the concerns, grouses and agitations of the host communities are collectively traversed with a view to articulating workable solutions that could address perceived injustices and grievances. Habermas discourse ethics seems a veritable model for mitigating conflicts in the Niger Delta region by envisioning inclusive, democratic, and participatory decision making processes. His discourse ethics attempts a reconstruction of necessary epistemic conditions or presupposition of argumentations with the aim of identifying the common epistemic grounds that all rational speakers and actors must and do accept in performatively engaging in the activity of giving and assessing reasons aim at resolving disagreements or conflicts through dialogical means rather than through aggression (Okshevshy: 2004, p.174). Engaging host communities in constructive dialogue and decision making is imperative for Multinational Companies operating in the Niger-Delta region to seek solutions to prevent conflict, promote sustainable development, and ensure the

wellbeing of the host communities. It can also foster social cohesion, trust and sense of belonging by the host communities. Valid norm, according to Habermas, is a product of consensus by the community of discourse. Consequently, this essay seeks a redifination of conflict mitigation model in addressing the agitations of the region by creating a platform and providing a forum for inclusive, participatory dialogue where the grievances of the host communities are accommodated and examined to ascertain the degree of injustice, environmental degradation, economic marginalization and losses suffered by them as a result of the operations of the Multinational oil companies. Habermas's Discourse Ethics and Matthew Lipman's Community of Inquiry, envisioned such a platform.

Habermas has enumerated pragmatic necessities for discourse, what include non exclusion of persons who are willing to take part in the discourse, according a participant equal opportunity to make contributions, and deliberations free from external coercion. In such context, the representatives of Governments and Multinational Oil Companies in meeting with the host communities, need to act as neutral partners, navigating the countours of grievances and agitations tabled by them. Such concerns and agitations should be attended to, intrinsically, without recourse to any existential consideration of a speaker's socio-economic status, gender, political lineage, religion or occupation. For people to be treated fairly, and in cognizance of the variegated occupations of people of the host communities; fishermen, farmers, artisans, carpenters and so on, this essay suggests occupational demography and profiling to ascertain their different occupational mix. This is germane for ease of capturing of specific challenges and losses suffered by different professional groups. This approach can provide a more nuanced understanding of the impacts of multinational oil companies activities on the various occupational groups. Occupational profiling fosters targeted interventions that may address the specific needs and losses suffered by each professional group, provide accurate data on the impacts of multinational companies' activities, ensure that relief intervention are relevant to specific challenges faced by each occupational groups, and increase participation and buy-in from each trade groups in policy formulations. Though this suggestion seems demanding and tiresome, however, it is worthwhile as such concerns cannot be equated with losses suffered in a rancorous oi exploration climate. If oil wells are shut-down and production interrupted, losses of revenues arising therefrom cannot be quantified.

By so engaging with the host communities according to different trade and occupational groups which this essay suggests, the fishermen who are impacted by oil spillage may, after the discourse, be found to be in immediate need of fishing nets and other fishing gears destroyed by oil spills, in addition to food and beverages, mattresses and blankets which though a laudable relieve intervention may not achieve a long term respite. Farmers would need improved seedlings and fertilizer for improved yields given their compromised soil fertility occasioned by oil exploration in addition to consumables, and mattresses. A carpenter who builds canoes and petty traders who sell wares may be in immediate need of capital to boost their businesses in addition to mattresses and food items as relief materials. Unemployed youths may be in immediate need of employment even as contract staff in the oil companies while some of them may need scholarships to further their education, or interest free facilities to become entrepreneurs. All these may be ascertained during inclusive dialogue which Habermas advocates. Matthew Lipman also developed a model of conflict resolution which can be replicated in the Niger-Delta region to mitigate conflict. Rooted in his Community of Inquiry approach earlier explained, Lipman premised his conflict resolution model in collaborative interrogation of issues or problematic

situations that seem to elicit conflict, in a round table conversation in an atmosphere where the views of discussant are tolerated, respected and prioritized without recourse to sex, race, social status, religious background, or political affiliation. A space where stakeholders can gather to discuss freely with the aim of finding workable solutions to what confronts them. Lipman believes that engaging in critical, caring and creative thinking by both the multinational companies and the host communities could promote reasoned discussion rather than emotional reactions.

If dialogue in the Community of Inquiry is conducted in an atmosphere of justice, fairness and empathy, reasoned solution may be achievable. Consistent with Lipman's Community of Inquiry, the gathering will be that of equality where all variants of distinctions are obliterated. Consequently, fishermen, farmers, artisans, carpenters and welders will freely congregate with the representatives of government and multi natural companies. The next step will be laying bare their grievances whereby each occupational group will table the degree of impacts they suffer and how the activities of oil companies have affected their livelihoods and the nature of intervention needed. Everyone being accorded importance, respect and equal opportunity to speak. The present socio-economic and environmental condition of the host communities could be likened to what John Dewey (1991) refers to as problematic, disturbed or confusing situation, felt difficulty, and an indeterminate situation. To assuage the situation, government and multinational oil conglomerate must explore avenues of confronting the maladies to make the region receptive rather than restive for the host communities and oil conglomerates. Applying Lipman's model of Community of Inquiry when stakeholders (Host Communities and Oil Companies) come together for dialogue, it is not uncommon for them while putting across their grievances to challenge one another, demanding to know the reason for a position taken or what lies behind a certain point of view, such deliberations often involve them in a consideration of certain point of views through examination of the reasons supporting each alternative. Anih (2007), opines that such engagements often culminate in settlements that take into account all the considerations and points of view, as well as interests of everyone. However, this is not to suggest that it is possible to satisfy everyone's interest.

In Lipman's Community of Inquiry model, children and their teacher, sit in a semicircular form to be able to speak face to face with one another. A student reads the assigned episode aloud, when the reading is completed, the teacher recruit questions, asking other class members such questions as "Did anything in the reading puzzled you?" "Did this episode make you wonder?", "Can you put your feelings in the form of questions?". The teacher then writes each child's questions on the board, adding to it that child's name, as well as the page and line number in the text that is at issue (Anih: 2007, p.176). What can be gleaned from Lipman's Community of Inquiry is direct interface with the learners where issues and dilemmas provoked by the text read are collectively engaged with by the stakeholders, teachers and students not by a proxy or representative. Replicating Lipman's model to mitigate Niger-Delta conflict, the locals, members of the host communities, represent the learners and the representatives of Multinational Oil Companies represent the teacher. They are seated in a circle form at a venue mutually agreed upon and accessible to both parties. The reading of the text represents the various groups agitations, and concerns raised by the communities who suffer degradation. The concerns of the locals are to be accommodated and waded into and no one, irrespective of social status, gender or family lineage, is to be excluded or disdained from making contributions and suggestions of possible interventions needed to address their grievances. The multinational company may

present the versions of their interventions as a corporate social responsibility which may be collaboratively discussed by both parties till near compromise reached. These face to face interaction may go a long way in assuaging tensions and inferiority complex by the people of the Niger Delta region, paving way for peaceful resolution of perceived conflict. Also, the sitting arrangement which makes no provision for high table or reservation for a leader is sufficient to elicit meaningful engagement as participants see themselves as equals. Such is in contradiction with foras where designated spaces are reserved for speakers and dignitaries to gather for discussion of Niger-Delta conflict. The sitting arrangement is sufficient to trigger tension, fear and feeling of inferiority as the peasant farmer and local fishermen may feel inferior to air their views. Arising from the forgoing, both Jurgen Habermas and Matthew Lipman envisioned an atmosphere of collaborative dialogue where grievances are address in a manner amendable to equal participation and respect of the views of stakeholders.

Evaluation and Conclusion

Jurgen Habermas' Discourse ethics and Matthew Lipman's Classroom Community of Inquiry offer valuable framework for conflict mitigation in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, a region plagued by socio-economic and environmental tensions arising from oil exploration activities of the Multinational Oil Companies. Habermas' Discourse Ethics envisioned communication, inclusivity and consensus-building through constructive engagement and dialogue. The core idea is that stakeholders engage in fair and open dialogue in an ambience that fosters freedom, tolerance, empathy and respect of views of all without recourse to socio-economic status, religious and tribal affiliation or gender. All stakeholders, government officials, oil conglomerates and host communities participate equally in deliberations about perceived environmental injustices, extinction of aquatic livelihood, environmental degradation, marginalization and historical injustices in a round table model of discussion which obliterate distinction and pave way for equal participation of members. The establishment of such space where the Multinational Oil Companies and host communities regularly interrogate issues, guided by principles of tolerance, mutual respect and shared reasonings, aligns with Habermas' postulates.

Congruent with Habermas' line of thoughts is Matthew Lipman's Community of Inquiry which emphasizes critical thinking, collaborative dialogue and constructive engagements. Creating spaces for dialogue where stakeholders (Multinational oil companies and host Communities) can gather as equals to reflect on their assumptions and biases can help reduce existential tensions, reduce misunderstandings and foster trust among conflicting parties. Through the integration of Habermas' and Lipman's paradigms, aggrieved voices could be heard and engaged in problem solving. The emphasis on consensus and critical reflection can help rebuild trust between the government, multinational companies, and host communities. However, it is our view here engagements by government and multinational companies need to be deepened to take cognizance of different occupations and trades demography of the host communities, in order to address their specific needs and concerns. Such engagements would address specific challenges rather than interventions and programmes which are at variance with the immediate needs of the aggrieved communities, such intervention not being a product of collaborative dialogue which Habermas and Lipman envisions. It is the view here, that government should engage the host communities after profiling of the different trade groups, farmers, fishermen, artisans, traders, youths and women. Ignoring the needs and agitations of the host communities can exacerbate existing tensions and conflicts in the region.

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A CRITIQUE OF THE COLONIAL UNDERPININGS OF NIGERIAN EDUCATION POLICIES

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Abstract

The paper engages in a historico-critical appraisal of Nigerian education policies to show how it has not broken links with its colonial past, even after years of political independence. It divides Nigerian educational policies into the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial. It argues that the colonial education policies were based on the philosophy of cultural exclusion, dehumanization and economic exploitation. It further argues that the Nigerian post-colonial education policies with its over emphasis on basic education without a commensurate emphasis on higher education and research, especially into local contents for self-rediscovery after many years of dehumanizing colonial encounter is a continuation of the colonial policy of education. This policy which is geared towards making the student literate enough to read and write is not enough to form critical thinkers who can develop innovative ideas and technology to propel a genuine development of the Nigerian society. The conclusion is that our education policy should emphasize more on developing of local contents through higher education research and teaching. Our understanding of basic education should be reversed from the imperialist model that inculcates western values as a basic universal value that should be embraced by all, to one that fosters the relevance of local values and indigenous heritage.

Keywords; Education, policy, decolonization, indigenous values, cultural exclusion.

Introduction

Right from the political decolonization of the African continent from the 1950s, there have been increasing calls for the decolonization of the African education system as part of the larger project of decolonization of the African mind. This project calls for addressing the cultural exclusion of Africa occasioned by the western demonization of everything African in their quest to dehumanize Africans for the total domination of the continent. In advancing an argument for decolonization of African education, Mazrui made a critique of the ideological foundations of African education and concludes that the African educational system is based on a neocolonial cultural dependency model which ensures that the African mind is perpetually fashioned to depend on the west.¹ By so doing, the contemporary African not only turn his back on his own cultural heritage by equally demonizing it, but also is hardly able to make any original contribution to human civilization.

A lot of scholars in line with this reflection on African education system have recognized the importance of this critique of colonial modeled education in Africa. D.C. Woolman (2001) did a good job at articulating these different critics in his paper *Educational Reconstruction and Postcolonial Curriculum Development; a Comparative study of Four African countries*. Woolman here acknowledges Ajayi's efforts in tracing the origins of African reactions to colonial education to the late 19th century when both James Johnson in Sierra Leone and Edward Blyden in Liberia criticized the neglect of African culture and history by mission schools. Johnson alleged that these schools caused Africans to lose self-

respect and 'love for our own race.' Both men called for inclusion of African heritage in the curriculum. Blyden urged the study of African languages that were repositories of tradition. As Woolman exposes further, it wasn't just Johnson and Blyden who saw the negative effects of this colonial modeled education on the African mind. Victor Uchendu, as Woolman captures it, "concludes that the purpose of all colonial education was subordination of Africans...What reached African colonies were not metropolitan educational transplants but ... adaptations which served to perpetuate colonial domination".² The modus operandi of this quest for domination is the demonization and undermining of local values, traditional systems and indigenous epistemologies, thereby isolating the students from their communal and immediate existential realities. As Woolman further avers, "Several Africans who experienced colonial education report that it had the effect of undermining traditional societies; on the one hand, by introducing an individualistic Eurocentric value system that was alien to African communal mores and, on the other hand, by isolating students from their local communities".³

This analysis so far does not only indict the African education system, but also shows the increasing relevance of cultural insights as the backbone of any philosophy of education that can shape the development of a worthwhile curriculum. Ofobuike in "The Relevance of Cultural Identity to Philosophy of Education and its Implications for African Development" argue that the colonization occasioned by cultural exclusion in the African educational system only breeds graduates and citizens who turn their eyes against their existential experiences and local environment in searching for solutions to the problems of their society. Cultural and existential insights which should lead way for the discovery of new ideas and opening of new vista of knowledge for understanding the problem of underdevelopment in Africa are neglected for supposed high paying blue-collar jobs.⁴ This paper critically evaluates the development of formal education policies in Nigeria in order to show its poverty as a result of its continuing colonial link, which further perpetuates the exploitation and underdevelopment of the country and its resources.

The Place of Philosophy in the Development of a Nations Education Policy

Education and educational management/administration in every nation is guided by some laid down rules and regulations in order to fully achieve its aims and effectively realize its development potentials. This is the idea behind policies in education. Policies are important because they give form, shape and structure to educational planning, management and administration. Policy is a statement of action or purpose/ goal administrative directives which form the basis and justification for all action and decisions concerning education and any other meaningful endeavor. For Jenkins, policy is a set of inter-related decisions given by political actors in relation to the selection of goals and the means through which they would be achieved in specific situations.⁵ An educational policy then, is a compendium of principles and laws that govern the administration and operation of education systems. As Haddad has it, educational policy making is the first step in any planning cycle; hence, planners must appreciate the dynamics of policy formulation before they can design implementation and evaluation procedures effectively.⁶

Just as education is guided by policy, so is policy aimed at achieving some goals. The goal(s) of a policy is articulated in the philosophy behind such policy. The philosophy behind a policy gives a normative structure and base for such policy. A nation's policy on education is the government's way of realizing that part of the national goals which can be achieved using education as a tool. No policy on education, however, can be formulated without first

identifying the overall philosophy and goals of the nation. This is the reason why the Nigerian educational policy is clearly stated to be based on the philosophy that; Education is an instrument of national development and social change, Education is vital for the promotion of a progressive and united Nigeria, Education maximize the creative potentials and skills of the individuals for self-fulfillment and general development of the society, Education is compulsory and a right of every Nigerian irrespective of gender, social status, religion, color, ethnic background and any peculiar individual challenges and Education is to be qualitative, comprehensive, functional and relevant to the need of the society.⁷

The Development of Education Policy in Nigeria

Education policies in Nigeria can be effectively divided into the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial phases. While the pre-Western phase has to do with all the traditional and Islamic means of inculcating ideas or passing down ideas from one generation to the other, the colonial and postcolonial phases have to do with the kind of education that came with Nigeria's contact with the Western world.

Pre-colonial Education

Prior to Nigeria's contact with the West, the different parts of the country had their distinct and unique educational apparatus. In the North of Nigeria, Islam already held sway for years before the coming of the Westerners, and there was an educational orientation of a uniform Qur'anic education policy. The Southern part on the other hand was made up of different ethnic groups whose education was based on traditional and cultural values and beliefs. Here, each community had its own form of education which was based on the inculcation of traditional values, communal ethos and cultural beliefs. This form of education was functional in nature as it was meant to imbue in each citizen the necessary skills and attitude to participate in community life. The curricula in this phase of education in Nigeria was informal and was designed to groom the recipient in physical skill, character, intellectual skills, the skill of community living while inculcating respect for elders, and giving specific vocational training and the understanding and appreciation of the community's cultural heritage.⁸ This was the state of affairs in education until the arrival of European missionaries in the 1800s. With their mission of converting the natives of Nigeria, they saw the need of introducing a new form of education, in order to effectively communicate with the people and make their mission possible. With this also came the different education policies that have guided the implementation of educational structures and practices to date.

Colonial Educational Policies

The history of formal education policy in Nigeria can be divided into the pre-independence or colonial and post-independence educational policy. While the pre-independence policies were spearheaded and controlled by the British colonial policies, those of post-independence were initiated by the Nigerian government and the need to reposition the educational resources of the country to the needs of the country. Prior to independence, the British Government administered education through the use of certain education ordinances and codes such as the 1882, 1887, 1916, 1926, 1946 education codes. While the 1882, 1887 and the 1908 ordinances are categorized as pre-amalgamation ordinances, those of 1916, 1926 and 1946 are post amalgamation, but pre-independence ordinances. The inability of the missionaries who had earlier been in charge of education to singlehandedly produce the adequate number of clerks and other manpower needed to sustain the colonial project led

to the British government intervention in the form of donations, grants and education ordinances and codes for the colonies. As Daniel-Kalio captures it, "In 1872 the British colonial government started to intervene in the educational system by giving donations to the missionary societies to support education. In 1877, the grant was increased and it remained so until 1882 when the government felt the running of the schools should not be totally left in the hands of the missionary bodies. This decision led to the laying of the conditions for the grant-in-aid and subsequently the ordinances."⁹

The 1882 Education Ordinance was the first set of education policy crafted by the British government for the administration of the entire British West African areas. Also known as the Gold Coast Education Ordinance, it established a General Board of Education which had the prerogative of establishing local Boards of Education to coordinate critical issues like establishing new schools in the villages, certification of teachers, determining the eligibility of schools for government grants-in-aids support, etc.¹⁰ This policy also saw the designing of a formal curriculum content for schools which was centered only on reading, writing, arithmetic, religion, English language and needle work for girls. Schools in this era were either government owned or government assisted mission schools and they were only focused on primary education. Education in this era was generally problematic as there were proliferations of mushroom schools which lacked quality, content, standard and inadequate learning facilities to run the schools. The blackboards, chalks and slates were in shortage while materials for teaching and the primers were largely religious tracts or information unrelated to local background¹¹. It was the attempt to mitigate these failures that gave rise to the 1887 education ordinance. The period from 1889 –1906 saw the gradual transformation of education in which the government and the missionary partner in the provision of education for Nigeria and administrative management of schools. The 1887 education ordinance championed the separation of the Lagos educational management from that of the Gold coast saw the establishment of more schools, provision of scholarships, secondary education and an improved and diversified curriculum which included more subjects like Geography, History, Yoruba Language, Drawing and Sewing for girls. Other subjects include: Latin, Greek, Mathematics, Bookkeeping, Botany, Chemistry, Physics, French, Physiology, National History, Photography etc.¹² Though the 1887 education policy was mainly for the Lagos colony, it had influence on the other areas of southern Nigeria, which were initially a separate colony from Lagos (with separate school managements). However, the merging of Lagos colony (which included Lagos Island, Ebute-meta, Yaba and Badagry) and the Southern colony in 1908 gave rise to the 1908 ordinance for the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, in which the only difference from that of 1887 was the creation of Department of Education which replaced the separate Education Board.¹³

With the amalgamation of the Southern and the Northern Protectorates in 1914 by Lord Fredrick Lugard, the 1916 education code was enacted. The 1916 education code was not much different from the previous one. Its major achievements were that; It was the first education ordinance that took care of the whole Nigeria, there was better co-operation between the government and the missionaries, it was also a major government move to control and take over all schools, and it brought increased form of commitment on the part of the colonial government.¹⁴ Due to complaints and criticisms of the colonial form of education offered the Nigerian people, the Advisory Committee (The African Education Commission and the Phelps-Stokes Fund) charged with studying native education in tropical areas of Africa, recommended that the government had the right to inspect schools and that education should be adapted to local conditions in Nigeria. This led to the formulation of the

1926 education ordinance with emphasis on native education. The report of this committee not only led to the decentralization of education, but also the training, registration and accreditation of indigenous teachers, the expansion of schools to include Secondary, Vocational, Technical and Industrial schools, Adult Education and Universities. The principles outlined in the 1926 Education Ordinance guided educational development and policy of Nigeria between 1926 and 1945.¹⁵ The 1926 education ordinance was the first education policy by the colonial government which attempted to incorporate the cultural and vocational values of the Nigerian people and also made emphasis on girl child education beyond domestic training.

Following the 1926 education act is that of 1948, which was majorly aimed at preparing Nigerians to take over the administration of the colony, as most of the British colonial administrators were being retrenched due to insufficient funds arising from the economic difficulties that came with World War two. It was this education act that prepared for the establishment of higher education institutions in the country with emphasis on research. The education legislation covered the whole of Nigeria and spelt out specifically the administrative methods of running all levels of schools in Nigeria. It equally laid emphasis on training, qualification and classification of teachers and it provided for the health and welfare of school children.¹⁶ The education act from 1952 to 1960 took advantage of the division of Nigeria into three regions to establish regional education acts that guided the education of each region. These regional education plans which were mostly focused on Universal Primary education paved way for the 1959 Ashby Commission set up by the Nigerian government to conduct an investigation into the Nigeria's manpower needs and higher education development over the next twenty years (1960-1980). The Minister of Education, other Nigerian educationists and their counterparts from Britain and America in the field of education were able to review the needs of Nigerian education system and offer practical suggestions. The recommendations of the Ashby Commission paved way for the development of higher education in Nigeria.¹⁷ Also, the recommendations of the commission was one of the catalysts for the National Curriculum Conference in 1969 which birthed the first National Policy on Education in 1977 and its revisions in 1981, 1998, 2004, 2007 and 2014.¹⁸

Post-colonial Education Policies

Nigeria at independence was faced with the challenges of post colonization and nation building and so the government was tasked with the responsibility of placing the nascent nation on a secure foundation for future prosperity. Realizing the obvious importance of education for such task, education as a social service and investment in manpower was given top priority by the government¹⁹. The goal was to use educational policy and schools to develop manpower for economic development and Africanization of the civil service. The education policy on ground was grossly inadequate for this task as it was faced with such criticisms as; being narrow in scope and did not meet the hopes and aspirations of Nigerians, irrelevant curricula, obsolete methods, high drop-out and repetition rates, and the fact that many graduates were dependent, and low on initiative.²⁰

The above considerations led to the convening of the 1969 the National Curriculum Conference which reviewed the educational system and its goals, and identified new national goals for Nigeria which would determine the future and direction of education in the country²¹. In a bid to build on the momentum of this conference, the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1973 instituted a Seminar of distinguished experts to deliberate on

a truly Nigerian national educational policy. The report of the outcomes of the seminar was presented as the draft National Policy on Education after due consideration by the States of the Federation and other interest groups. It was this policy (with a couple of revisions) that has served as Nigerian official statement on education ever since. The latest of this policy which is the 2013 edition listed the specific goals of education in Nigeria as follows; ensure and sustain unfettered access and equality for the total development of the individual; ensure the quality of education delivery at all levels; promote functional education for skill acquisition, job creation and poverty reduction; ensure periodic review, effectiveness and relevance of the curriculum at all levels to meet the needs of the society and the world of work; collaborate with development partners, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and local communities to support and fund education; and promote information technology capability at all levels²². Even though the 2013 policy has the same goals as the previous ones, the few changes in it were made to accommodate changes and reflect the commitment of the Government to implement international protocols like the Education for All (EFA), the United Nation Millennium Goal (MDGs), the Home-Grown Medium-term Development Plan and the National Government Empowerment and development strategy (NEEDS). The achievement of these were mostly anchored on providing universal basic education whose goals are; to provide the child with diverse basic knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship, wealth generation and educational advancement; develop patriotic young people equipped to contribute to social development and in the performance of their civic responsibilities; inculcate values and raise morally upright individuals capable of independent thinking and who appreciate the dignity of labor; Inspire national consciousness and harmonious co-existence, irrespective of differences in endowment, religion, color, ethnic and socio-economic background; and provide opportunities for the child to develop manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capability.

The purpose of the 2014 NPE was to make education an aggregate tool of empowerment for the poor, and the socially marginalized groups, an effective means of developing the full capabilities and potentials of human resources, as well as the development of competent workforce through the acquisition of practical life skills relevant to the world of work as a veritable means of developing sound intelligent learning societies, fit and relevant to the 21st century²³. All these goals are quite admirable, but how do we hope to achieve them? How appropriate are they to the needs of the society? How do these goals effect a change and transformation in a mind that has been so much deformed through years of colonialism, neocolonialism and imperialism? Can these goals be appropriate enough to liberate Nigerians from the shackles of modern slavery and opportunistic money mongers?

Critique of the Colonial Underpinnings of Nigerian Education Policies

The philosophy behind colonial education policies cannot be divorced from the philosophy behind colonialism itself. Even though the colonizers came under the cover of a civilization mission, it is obvious that their real intention was that of the economic exploitation of the African homeland as necessitated by the economic explosion that came with first the industrial revolution. The major aim of these education policies where to prepare the African mind for this colonial task, which required the demonization of African values, history and heritages. David Woolman did a good job documenting the thoughts of different authors on the effect of this; In Woolman's account, some scholars recall that schools and

education provided by the colonial educators drive a wedge between the students and the life and needs of their community, whereas others highlight economic exploitation, economic inequality, social stratification, cultural and intellectual servitude, devaluation of traditional culture, and curricula that were irrelevant to the real needs of society as the devastating effects of this colonial education model.²⁴ While these scholars accounts are from a social and economic point of view, B. S. Kwakwa reported on the social divisiveness of schooling in Ghana as he writes:

The effect of the Western type of education has been to produce ... three nations in one country, each unable to communicate effectively with the others ... the 'educated,' ... many who do not understand the ways of the 'educated,' ... then ... a third group, the 'half educated' who understand neither the ways of their own indigenous society nor those of the 'highly educated'.²⁵

Ali Mazrui expresses similar sentiments as he narrates it from the perspective of how education causes and reinforces the rural-urban divide thus; "Western education in African conditions was a process of psychological de-ruralisation. The educated African became ... a misfit in his own village ... when he graduated ... his parents did not expect him to continue living with them, tending the cattle or cultivating the land."²⁶ This kind of education does not give one insights on how to go back home and apply his education in the rural trade in order to provide better and more useful services to the immediate community through such efforts, but rather to turn ones back at such skills and service which when improved upon, can bring solutions and easier life even for the urban communities, all the while providing services that would ultimately be of more service to the economic exploitation of the indigenous communities. This rural-urban divide in educational provision was interpreted by Moumouni (as captured by Woolman) as an extension of the same economic exploitation practiced under colonialism, a cut-rate education ... for peasant children ... will ... prepare the way for a more profitable exploitation of the peasant masses by the leading classes ... acting in the name of their selfish interests and those of their neo-colonial masters.²⁷ Has this state of affair changed much since the independence of African nations? The answer can hardly be in the affirmative for my country, Nigeria, as all the education policies from independence seem to produce this same effect of graduates who do not know their environment and its values enough to be able to grapple with challenges that face it.

One of the numerous ways by which this situation has been entrenched in Nigerian postcolonial history is through the country's basic education program. Successive educational policies since 1977 have laid so much emphasis on basic education. Each policy has made effort to implement programs that can get more children to school to improve the literacy rate of the country. This on its own is quite admirable; however, the issue with this is on the kind of education or content of basic education provided. The question of what constitutes basic education for a postcolonial nation has never been truly addressed by these education policies. In fact, the content of these education policies has been based on that of the colonial model which does not pay much premium to one's study and understanding of both his indigenous environment and its histories and heritage. This is evidenced by the fact that the curriculum of these policies has nothing much to say about indigenous history, values and experiences of Nigeria. Where anything of such nature is mentioned, it is presented as if the true history of Africa began with our encounter with the West. The West and even colonialism is still being presented as the savior of Africans in our

education system, hence entrenching the colonial consciousness which reinforces hatred for one's own indigenous realities. In some other accounts of traditional and indigenous Africa, much attention is laid on internal conflicts and intercommunity squeamishness that existed within Africa rather than on some of the excellent values and social institutions and organizations that helped sustain African societies before colonialism. Our basic education programs still show high level of inadequate and balanced account of life in indigenous societies to be able to ground the students in the areas that can be improved upon for a better society. The solution it presents the student is that of disregard of this indigenous environment and social life and an embrace of Western life as the civilized life.

The nation's emphasis on basic education has always been predicated on foreign policies which have been shown to serve the West better than the African homeland. From being part of the conditions for obtaining foreign aids, to being a signatory to the millennium development goals, sustainable development goals and for the recent education policy (2013 policy), the education for all policy, the Nigerian education policies and its quest to educate the public has been prompted by these international and modern colonizing policies which have been shown to focus far too narrowly on increasing access to formal education, without attending to the quality of learning actually taking place in schools. In other words, there has been a failure to ensure that schooling actually leads to education.²⁸

Apart from lip service to the quality of education, these international policies are meant to co-opt African nations into striding along with other developed nations in areas they are ill equipped to be. Any gain made by these policies only serves the global capitalist enterprise which has more value to developed nations than underdeveloped ones like Nigeria. This situation serves one purpose only, the continuation of the colonization of African for onward economic exploitation. The Nigerian education policies by paying lip service to an in depth research on indigenous values and knowledge economy, and by paying more attention to basic education which lacks adequate indigenous content, plays into the politics of colonizing the African mind, thereby denying it the true opportunity of being of service to the liberation of the African, economically and otherwise.

Colonial education policies as has been argued earlier were mostly focused on training the student enough to facilitate their usefulness in the economic exploitation of Africa; hence, education was limited to economic utility. There is no doubt that education that cannot help one overcome his economic challenges is an incomplete one. However, an education that emphasizes economic liberation alone is not a complete one either, especially when the economic liberation such education can afford its recipient is limited to that of being a proletarian or exploited worker in the Marxist sense of political economic analysis. Nigerian successive education policies tow this colonial line of education for economy by equating education with economic gain. For instance, in 2014, the International Organization for Migration reported that academic education was still widely preferred to technical or vocational routes. Also, Nigeria's economic transformation blueprint, Vision 2020 states that one of the primary goals of education is to provide adequate and competent manpower for economic transformation. So, the success of post-independence reforms has been hindered by a system that continues to align with the ideals of the colonial regime. Worse still, the Nigerian education system through its policies has failed to facilitate a situation where its recipient can be a true owner or creator of wealth. This is why many years after independence the country still leaves the exploration of its numerous natural resources in the hands of expatriates. These education policies have not prioritized grooming graduates who can truly take charge of Nigerian major economic activities,

thereby entrenching the colonial model of education where the African is not involved in the major and technical aspect of the economic activities which promise more economic reward.

For a nation that had a long history of dehumanization through slavery and colonialism, Nigeria is yet to duly confront its colonial experiences in order to begin a process of healing and rebirth. The curriculum outlined in these policies has not been designed to really address the colonial questions and the question of the African cultural and existential image that was derided by this experience. Rather it has enabled the continued teaching of history and heritage of Africa in the images the west created of Africa. Adequate effort has not been made through these policies to reimagining the African to remake his damaged consciousness and self-esteem in order to redeem himself from the inferiority complex that makes him deride his own heritages. This quest for reimagining Africa and Nigeria in particular can only be made possible through advanced research in our ivory towers. Successive Nigerian education policies have not made adequate arrangement for such. Even though the current education policy indicates that attention be paid to indigenous knowledge creation, no dedicated plans have been made to implement such vision. This is simply because Africa and indeed Nigerian education system is yet to see colonialism and neocolonialism as a problem that requires immediate attention. This underestimation of the African colonial experience has made it difficult, if not impossible to raise troubling questions with regards to issues of curriculum, Pedagogy, and research, especially concerning Western-centric knowledge biases which reinforces colonial notions of culture, power, development and progress. Until these issues are cast in the proper light, education in Nigeria can hardly be at the vanguard of national development and nation building.

Conclusion

The paper, set out to make a critical exploration of Nigerian education policies, its deficiencies and its link to our colonial past. The paper analyzed the philosophical bases of these policies and the different visions and missions the successive policies set out to initiate in the Nigerian society. In doing this, it is revealed that according to the National Policy on Education, the philosophy of Nigerian education is based on the national objectives of the country, which include self-realization, better human relationship, individual and national efficiency, effective citizenship, national consciousness, national unity, social, cultural, economic, political, scientific, and technological progress. However, after over 60 years of political independence and indigenous control of Nigerian education system, little to no effort have been made to truly delink the education system from its colonial past. What this paper has done is to try and reveal some of the ways in which the Nigerian education through its policies unwittingly perpetuates and consolidate the predatory and exploitative colonial project of rubbing its recipients of the sociological awareness necessary to inspire a sociological imagination that can help the country make its education relevant to its problems. With this, it can be seen that there is a huge schism between the national goal of self-realization and national efficiency and the educational apparatus with which such goal can be realized. It is the conclusion of this paper that the whole of Nigerian education system need to be overhauled with the intent to radically expunge all traces of predatory colonial heritage in its philosophical base. This will pave a way for a truly indigenous spirit and ideal that can not only expose students and citizens to not just an awareness of their life world, but also inspire in them a radical sociological imagination required to be problem solvers in their society.

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FAILURE OF GOVERNANCE IN THE NIGERIAN STATE: THE WAY FORWARD

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Abstract

The failure of governance in Nigeria is a significant issue in scholarly discourse. This paper critically examines the nature and character of political leadership in Nigeria and its impact on the well-being of its citizens. It argues that the Nigerian State demonstrates characteristics of a failed State, with widespread insecurity, corruption, poverty, and an absence of social justice and the rule of law. This paper concludes that selfless, people-centred governance is urgently needed to remedy this situation. The article further discusses practical solutions for better governance in Nigeria and offers recommendations for a way forward.

Keywords: Nigeria, Governance, Leadership, Political System

Introduction

According to Waype (1971), "Political thought is thought about the State, its structure, its nature and purpose." In his view, "political philosophy (theory) is a rational inquiry into all that concerns man and his relationship with his fellow men in the state." The reason for the existence of the State and why some persons should wield political power is one of the basic problems of political Philosophy. In the view of Aristotle (as cited by Copleston, 1962, p. 93), man is by nature a social being and is bound to live as a citizen of a state because he is not self-sufficient. The final end of the State according to him is the good life. Plato in his work *The Republic* states that, "the State exists in order to serve the wants of men. Men are not independent of one another, but need the aid and co-operation of the other in the production of the necessities of life." In his view on the necessity for the existence of the state Laski (2008, p. 16) states thus:

Man finds himself, in the modern world living under the authority of government: and obligation to obey their orders arises from the fact of his nature. For he is a community-building animal, driven by inherited instincts, to live with his fellows...

Further elucidating on the purpose of the State, Laski (2008, p. 16) noted that the State is "an organisation for enabling the mass of men to realise social good on the largest possible scale." The gregarious nature of man makes him live as a "being with the others." This social interaction brings in the need for control; and this necessitates the need for leadership, to control the conduct of men living in a civil society. The leadership of a State that is clothed with authority is called government. The performance of the State in every democracy is significant and of interest, as its purpose and operation affects everyone alike. Power on its own is dormant except put into effective use. Its usefulness can only be felt by the impact on

the lives of the people. On the need for inclusivity in the sharing of power and resources of the state Laski (2008, p. 16) again holds thus:

Classes excluded from a share in power have always been classes excluded from a share in benefit. The limitation in the number of those upon whom social good is conferred, whose personality, that is to say, finds satisfaction in the workings of the political institutions, has always meant in the end, assault upon the foundations of the state by those excluded from his direction.

The identity of man's nature makes him need a common minimum of satisfaction. The State then needs to be responsible because it possesses its power with responsibilities and a duty. It has a duty to create the enabling environment for men to realise the best they can be. It is judged not by what it is in theory but what it does in practice. The question then is, has the Nigerian State especially in the 4th Republic performed? Has she met the yearnings and aspirations of the people? This and other questions we shall attempt to answer in the course of this discourse.

There has been an unending debate that the Nigerian State like her counterparts in other parts of Africa has underperformed, despite the huge revenue accruing from the proceeds of the sales of crude oil, due to the ineptitude of her political leadership. Bryant critically examines the underdevelopment of African nations and drew a nexus between States' failure and Africa's historical heritage of weak political leadership, corruption, conflict and wars. This plethora of security challenges and socio-political problems are yet to be solved by the government. The symptoms of State failure are noticeable in almost all States of Africa, but our focus in this research paper is the Nigerian State, with emphasis on the political leadership and some State institutions. Kogbara and Odoche (2024, p.16) succinctly capture the state of affairs in Nigeria in the following words: "My brain is dead because of the general gloom in the country." They noted:

Let us not delude ourselves, we need to terms with the real essence of governance. It encompasses various aspects of laws, policies, processes and management of resources which focused on the people and on development. Development by itself is predicated on value addition, fairly which we either stagnate or retrograde.

The State of Nigeria

Nigeria is in a state of social morass due to the inability of successive leaders to deal with the intractable problems of insecurity and the welfare of her citizens, grand official corruption, social justice and the rule of law. According to Mimiko (2010), Nigeria is now a "killing field" From the prolonged Boko Haram insurgency, to the mass abduction of school children in Chibok in Borno State, Dapchi in Yobe state, Kankara in Kastina State, Jangebe in Zamfara State, the list is endless; there are uncountable incidences of cattle rustling, armed banditry and violent attack of villages, mass killings, kidnappings for ransom and farmers herders clashes. Like in Hobbes' state of nature, life in Nigeria has become "solitary, nasty, brutish and short"

On 26th of June 2018, The American cable TV network CNN, reported that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have crowned Nigeria the poverty capital of the world, just exceeding India with the largest number of people living in abject poverty. Stating that Nigeria has about 86.9 million people living in severe poverty, which is about half of the

entire population. The Chandler Good Governance Index in their inaugural global ranking release on 27th of April 2021, ranked Nigeria as the third least governed nation in the world using, poverty corruption etc as their key performance index (Kogbara and Odoche, 2024). The standard of living of the average Nigeria continues to deteriorate year on year. This is mainly due to poor governance. While her leaders continue to swim in opulence, the vast majority of her population, live below the poverty line. There is hunger in the midst of plenty due to the mismanagement of her resources. Mimiko (2010) opines that The Nigerian State has degenerated to the point where it is unable to provide minimal social security for its vulnerable population. In the view of Sagay (1996), it is notes:

With each succeeding regime, Nigeria has being plunged deeper and deeper into a social political wilderness, or worse still, a jungle, overwhelmed by indiscipline, greed, depravity, inhuman insensitivity and oppression. It is tragic enough that a territory naturally endowed by God with limited resources and wealth should wallow in poverty, destitution and abject misery.

Sobowale (2024, p.11) opines that “...most of the 220 millions Nigerian are alive today are not in any way better than their fore fathers....” This is in response to the hardship cost by the hike in prices of petroleum by the Tinubu regime. Akinola opines that, the “petrol rich” Nigeria State is confronted by social political instability, high degree of corruption, mass hostility to the “public” and poor macroeconomic management continues to exhibit the characteristics of a state in crisis. Ukhun (2004, p. 17) in his own view states that the vicious cycle of poverty and human degradation remains entrenched in The Nigerian body polity. Social and political philosophy is an analysis of government institutions from an ethical point of view. The study of ethics is the study of good and bad of right and wrong, of their differences of duties and of rights and their relationship; of virtues and vices and associated traits of characters. This research paper is an attempt to provide a theoretical frame work for good governance in Nigeria from a moral stand point. “Ideas” they say “rules the world”. Taylor (1932, quoting Socrates), said: “....if knowledge operated in the political sphere, the mistake of politics will no longer occur.” Ugwueye (2004, p. 104) further asserts the nexus between politics and ethics and states thus:

Politics and ethics are not two distinct things. They are parts of one and the same thing, being different integral parts of the same. This follows from fact that man is a moral as well as physical and intellectual being. The state and her citizens are bound to secure the protection of man’s moral nature in even greater degree than it seeks the welfare of his physical and intellectual life, since the moral aspect is the most important of man’s nature.

Again Ugweye (2004, p. 104) states:

Politics is an attribute of man in society that seeks behaviour in relation to the facilities available and common to a group. Ethics or morality as the principle of human conduct is also primarily interested in the regulation of human behaviour in such a way that does not only benefits but prevents one from hurting or injuring others.

Appadorai (1975, pp. 9-10), drawing from Lord Action, explains that the great question for Politics is not to discover what Government prescribes, but what they ought or are supposed

to prescribe¹⁸. He further explained the link between ethics and politics because in every political issue, the question may be asked whether it is right or wrong. In a nutshell, politics cannot be divorced from ethics as ethics is the normative standard of human conduct. The standard with which the conduct of men in a political society is judged to be good or bad, right or wrong, moral or immoral. At this point, we shall attempt to clarify some key concepts used in this researched paper.

Clarification of Concepts

The State: Blackburn (1996, p. 191) defines the State as, “The political organization of a body of people for the maintenance of order within it’s territory by coercion, or more loosely, the body of people so organized or its territories.” Oguguwa (2003) see the State as, “The political aspect of society. It is a way of regulating human conduct, hence provides a framework of the social order. Appadorai (1975, p. 19) describes the state thus:

When a body of people is clearly organized for purpose of government, then, it is said to be politically organized and maybe called a body polity or state. The essence of such a society is that a group of people called the government are clothed with authority to make laws and enforce them.

Okoh (2005, p. 34) states that the “state,” as used in Political theory and Political Science, is “an association of persons permitting and orderly government, some sovereignty as juridistic personality.” Appadorai (1975, p. 45) defines a state as “a territorial society divided into Government and subjects claiming, within its allotted physical area, a supremacy over all institutions”²⁴. On the distinction between the state and Government, Appadorai again emphasized that the state includes both the Government and the governed. Government being the only machinery through which the purpose or end of the state are realized. He further states that Sovereignty is a characteristic of the state, not the government. The state can then be said to be a group of people legitimately entrusted with the care of the community within a definite territory, having the duty and responsibility to organize law and order; and the fulfillment of the general good as its final end.

Governance: *Webster’s Encyclopedia of Dictionaries* (1976) defines Government as: “Act of governing, exercise of authority, the administrative council or body; the executive power, control, rule”. It further explains governance as “giving direction, control and management.” According to Malemi (2007, p. 10), “primarily, a government is the agency, organization, institution, or machinery through which people, locality, state or country exercise political authority. Government is the means in which the sovereign power of the state is expressed and used to cater for the collective good.” it can then be inferred a priori that governance is the activities of government in exercise of its authority. Dhikru and Akinola (2019) opine that the government is accountable to the people. It has on her shoulders the burden of fulfilling its end of the social contract. Political office holders being social servants who serve society and the population, has the responsibility to ensure equality and promote fundamental human rights.

Overview of Governance in Nigeria

Power in itself is neutral and only perceived in its activity. Ogbu (2001). To know the impact of the activities of the state on the lives of the people, we have to discuss specific issues of

security and welfare of the citizens, the fight against corruption, issues of social Justice and the rule of law as our key performance index.

Security and Welfare of Citizens: Security of life and property and welfare of citizens is the cardinal objective and fundamental principle of state policy as enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution. Nnamani (2003, pp. 339-421), while interpreting the enabling law in this regard puts it thus:

The constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria defines the state as a political organization at the level of the federal, state and council the fundamental objective of the state as a cooperate entity are to achieve the fullness of sovereignty, security and welfare, popular participation, orderly composition of Government.

The Nigerian Government seem to have failed in the above regard.

Akinola (p. 46-51) holds that without security, other socio economic goals are unattainable. Shenu argues thus linking security to other key performance indicator:

No nation can enjoy lasting peace if her citizens live in abject poverty particularly if that nation is acknowledged as having the ability and substantial means to provide development and guarantee a good standard of living. Unfortunately, that is the tale of Nigeria. It is a tale of poor governance, insecurity and poverty in the midst of plenty.

Here he has traced insecurity in Nigeria to poverty and mismanagement of the nation's resources by the government a view corroborated by Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC). The then Minister of Defence, Major-Gen. Bashir Magashi (Rtd) (2024), in his state of the nation address states thus:

Make no mistake about it, our nation is bleeding now, it is bleeding because of the self-interest and other primordial considerations underlying decisions, which quite a number of our elite, political, ethnic and religious, make so. Such elites are quick to attribute blames to groups other than theirs. The whole idea is to exploit the social division for their political gains and it is because of this divisiveness that Nigeria lacks a national consensus or common comprehensive understanding and the interpretation of what national security is.

He itemized some of the security challenges threatening the very foundation of The Nigerian State and her cooperate existence as, Boko Haram, farmers/herders clashes, IPOB and other political associations that are springing up with different agenda and concerns. In his view, all these can encourage groups to seek violence as a legitimate alternative. He further opined that there is an emergence of a narrow vision of national identity and vision which threatens our country's prospects of social cohesion and he submits thus:

This is why we are seeing the rise of self-help syndrome, often endorsed by states and local elites seeking violence as a legitimate alternative. They rise in vigilantism and identity based militia, who claim to be working for the political and ethno-religious emancipation of their people, aka results resources control, secession and regional self-determination, define potent threats to national security.

Armed banditry, cattle rustling, mass killings, kidnappings especially mass abduction for ransom, is the order of the day. There is obvious incapacity of the government to protect lives and property of her citizens, which the political leadership swore on oath to guarantee. There may be no silver bullets to stop violent crimes and criminality but the government has a moral duty to protect lives and property of her citizens. The Nigerian State must intervene to put an end to the spate of deadly attacks by Islamist militant groups, separatist movements like IPOB and some other ethnic militia. To those taking arms against the state, dialogue is the best option. And for those killing fellow citizens, kidnapping abduction cattle rustling and other form of crime and criminality; human life is sacred, there is no justification to take the life of any human being; it is evil and morally not permissible. To harm or injure a fellow citizen in a criminal form, is inhuman treatment degrading his/her personhood.

Insecurity in Nigeria may not vanish by the number of boots we have on the ground or how many Apache helicopters or fighter jets we import but how well the political leadership manages the perception of political marginalization and the problem of social justice/inequality, which is the root cause of social political polarization and violent crimes and criminalities. There should be a battle to win the heart and mind of the people; putting in place a supportive social-political system, the best system to ensure the security and welfare of the citizens.

The Leadership Question: We cannot treat the leadership question in Nigeria without discussing the leadership recruitment and electoral process. Democracy is simply defined as the government of the people, for the people and by the people. It is not just that simplistic, it is about the credibility of the electoral process. The pertinent question here is, how free and fair are elections in Nigeria? Are they credible and transparent as commonly claimed? Do the votes of the electorates count? Do the election results reflect the wishes and aspirations of the people? These and other questions need to be answered. Erhagbe (2003, p. 33) clearly points out the relevance of elections in a genuine democracy and stressed the fact that the fundamental assumption of democracy is that the governed should have a say in the selection of those who will govern them. The citizens are called up periodically to choose from amongst themselves who they will entrust their destinies. When the process is compromised as is seen in Nigeria, the election ceases to be free, fair and credible. The essence of democracy which is the right of the people to choose their leaders is abridged by the activities of political godfathers who impose candidates and manipulate the electoral process in favour of their surrogates. Those with capacity to deliver are not elected. This rubs off on the quality of leadership and alienates the people from the government.

Contributing to the flawed electoral process is the huge role of money in Nigerian politics. Dukor (2003, p. 33), quoting Francis Mac Donald Comford in the editorial of *Theory and Politics of Godfatherism* states thus: "so long as power is valued as the means to wealth, the helm of the ship will be grasped by man of business whose Bible is her profit and loss account"³⁵. In Nigeria, politics is seen as business hence the "do or die" syndrome. There is no decency or morality in the political system. The Machiavelli "*Prince*" is now the Bible of Nigerian politics and "the end" to them, "justifies the means". With the huge expenses in the purchase forms for party primaries, election campaigns and "vote buying", politicians tend to dip their hands into the public till to recoup their "investments" after elections have been won and lost. This rubs off on governance and service delivery. When spending of money or vote buying becomes the rule and decency is thrown overboard as in vote manipulation and electoral violence, professionals and men of impeccable character and

good conscience, who don't have the financial muscle, are unable to compete favourably with others. This does not create a level playing field. It is a trait of social inequality.

Corruption

Closely knitted with the flawed electoral process in our analysis of leadership failure in Nigeria is the issue of corruption. Corruption is the unethical/immoral use of power to do dishonest things in return for monetary gains or to get an advantage. Lord Bryce aptly surmised that behaviour likely to be regarded as corruption may be more prominent in developing countries (Nigeria inclusive). He opines that it is the case because of great inequality in the distribution of wealth, conflict between changing moral codes, the weakness of social and governmental enforcement agencies and the absence of a strong sense of national community. Corruption has been institutionalized in Nigeria to the extent that it has become a way of life; it has assumed a monumental dimension especially in the executive and legislative arm of government which is under the control of the political class.

Ogueiofor (2001, p. 30) states that, in Africa Nigeria inclusive, corruption is endemically entrenched. He rightly points out that this is because the common man expects his brother and kinsman who attains a high office to uplift him and the rest of the family with the wealth acquired from the position. Money made from holding a political office is seen as everybody's money and part of the "national cake", a largesse which must go round as "empowerment". He will be a hero if he becomes rich and spreads the largesse; taunted as a weakling, spendthrift or a villain if he comes out poor or not as rich as expected-or is not seen to have doled out the political largesse. Mazrui (2004, p. 89) vividly captures the situation in his coinage of "The quest for Aristocratic effects". In his view, the main reason for endemic corruption in Africa, Nigeria inclusive is the conformity with the principle of reciprocity which impose enormous financial obligation far beyond the reach of the legitimate earning of the typical African official. Ikhuorobe (1996, p. 123) emphasizing the views of Peter Ekeh argues that corruption stems directly from the amorality of the civic public and the legitimization of the desire to seize largesse from the civic public. He further stressed Ekeh's thesis that in this clime, one's citizenship of the civic public is viewed in terms of economic benefits without a corresponding duty to give back.

The Rule of Law

Another parameter through which we can measure the performance of The Nigerian State and The Government is the issue of the rule of law. The term "rule of law is derived from the French phrase "La principe de legality" (the principle of legality) which refers to government based on the principle of legality. In a broader sense, rule of law means, law is supreme above every individual. According to Dicey (p. 202), the doctrine connotes

The absolute supremacy or predominance of regular law as to the influence of arbitrary power, and excludes the existence of arbitrariness or prerogative or even of wide discretional authority on the part of the government, (men) are ruled by law alone. A man may with us be punished for a breach of the law, but can be punished for nothing else.

The second aspect of Dicey's classification of the rule of law is equality before the law, or equal subjection of classes to the ordinary law of the land as administered by the court. This aspect of the rule of law is aptly captured by Melemi (2010, p. 10) (*supra*) in the following

passage of the judgment of Oputa JSC., as he then was in the case of *The Governor of Lagos vs Ojukwu*:

The law is a respecter of no persons, principalities, government or powers and the courts stand between the citizens and the government, or powers and the court stand between the citizens and the government, it is alive to see that the state or government is bound by the law and respects the law.

The third aspect of Dicey's conception of the rule of law is the supremacy of the constitution. It is worthy of note that the scope and meaning of the rule of law has been expanded beyond its original classic meaning. In the views of (Sagay 1996) it covers all the following:

- i. The supremacy of the law over all persons and authorities in a state
- ii. Independence of the judiciary
- iii. Supremacy of the constitution
- iv. The right to personal liberty
- v. Observation of democratic values and practices, including The freedom of speech, thought, association, freedom of press and regular free, fair elections as basis for assuming power.

It is unfortunate that this state of affair is not applicable in Nigeria. The rule of law is only observed in breaches. The government is not tolerant of the views of its opponents and critics. Plurality of voices is the beauty of democracy. The law enforcement agents who are an apparatus of The State, especially the Police do not respect the fundamental human right of individuals as enshrined in the constitution and the African Charter on Human and People's rights (also known as the Banjul Charter) which Nigeria is a signatory. There are uncountable cases of detention without trial, extra judicious killings, torture and harassment of citizens; against the rule of law and fundamental human rights of individuals. This led to The End SARS protest, in 2020. A protest against Police brutality and bad governance.

There is no clear cut separation of powers. With the intension to practice political surrogacy, The executive has continued to meddle into the affairs of the legislature to determine the leadership structure. Same is applicable to the States and Local Governments. This leads to political instability. Another case of executive interference in the affairs of the Legislature is the DSS invasion of the National Assembly on 7th August 2018 at the behest of the Presidency. The executive has continued to infringe on the Independence of the judiciary. A case in point is the unlawful sack of the Chief Justice of Nigeria, Justice Water Onoghen by the President of The Federal Republic of Nigeria on 2nd February 2019, based on unsubstantiated allegations of corruption. There are cases of judges being accused of corrupt practices, bowing to external influences especially from the executive arm of government, cases of frivolous court injunctions, different rulings from courts of co-ordinate jurisdictions especially in political cases. The judiciary cannot be said to have passed the integrity test, going by the normative ethical status of universality or logical consistency. There are cases of judges being accused of corrupt practices. These actions are against the rule of law. Again, elections are not free, fair and credible. These are all symptoms of a failed state

Agbese (2003, p. 1) surmises that poor leadership has stifled the nations enormous economic and political potentials. Buttressing this point, Ukhun (2004) argues, that despite

the abundant human and material resources, an inept and corrupt national leadership has left a legacy of economic profligacy, acute poverty and unemployment, political instability, infrastructural decay, and a sense of despair. Ukhun (2004) further submits that it is not only corruption that is plaguing the Nigerian political leadership. He itemized arrogance, brutality etc which is flagrantly displayed with grandiloquence, as character traits that denigrates the body polity and good governance. He postulated a sanitization and purge of this social malaise for the interest of the common good. Leadership failure is prevalent in every strata of governance of the Nigeria state and not limited to the Federal level.

Recommendations

To arrest this ugly trend, there is an urgent need for a paradigm shift in governance and the management of the resources of the Nigerian State. There is a need to fight corruption, which has become institutionalized, head-on. Anti-corruption agencies and those responsible for fighting crime and criminality should intensify their efforts. The extant laws should be enforced, and where necessary, new legislation should be enacted. Civic education should be encouraged, where moral virtues are taught and extolled. Politics without principles and ethics is a mere façade, and democracy without a democratic culture is pseudo-democracy. The political class and the citizenry should de-emphasize and shun money politics, as the adverse effects far outweigh its benefits.

There should be a reward system for hard work and honesty. Offenders in corruption cases should be swiftly tried, and if found guilty, punished accordingly. Nigerians as a people should change their value system. The worship of money has eroded our core African values of truth and honesty. We should replace self-interest with social progress. Those in government and political leadership should see citizens as subjects to be cared for, rather than objects of exploitation. At all times, we should act to promote the dignity of the human person. If we follow ethical principles of harmony, where each and every one understands their rights and duties and acts accordingly, we will build a just, harmonious, and egalitarian society, in line with the principles and ideology of African communalism.

A governance model that is people-centric, in line with African philosophical and political ideologies embedded in the conceptual frameworks of *Omoluabi*, *Ujama*, and *Ubuntu*, should be adopted. All must be united in pursuit of the common good (*summum bonum*) and the supreme good (*supremum bonum*). Leaders and political office holders in Nigeria should separate public interests from private interests, recognizing that the security and well-being of the citizenry is of supreme importance. As a nation, we should all be united in the pursuit of the common good, which is the supreme good.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the failure of governance in Nigeria has manifested in widespread insecurity, corruption, and poverty. However, with targeted reforms, the country can overcome these challenges. A focus on improving leadership, strengthening institutions, and ensuring accountability will be critical in moving Nigeria forward. Governance must become people-centred, with the welfare of the citizens at the forefront of all governmental decisions. Only through these changes can Nigeria realise its full potential as a prosperous and stable state.

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND KNOWLEDGE: IMPLICATIONS FOR KNOWLEDGE CONDITIONS AND PROCESS FROM AQUINAS'S EPISTEMOLOGY

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI), furnishes knowledge information about what is imputed into the machine so that it becomes a case of garbage in, garbage out. AI is the fruit of the progress of the human tenacious mind that raises epistemological questions about whether the products of AI meet the requirements necessary to equate their function to any theory of knowledge. While the precision of information supplied by AI remains commendable. The principal problem that this paper seeks to address is: What constitutes knowledge from a Thomistic point of view and how can that explain the knowledge-based process of AI? Employing the method of critical analysis, this study examines Aquina's theory of knowledge from its experiential origin, abstract concepts from experience and the use of the intellect to understand and reason about these concepts. This is in direct response to what constitutes knowledge of AI and whether it meets the conditions of knowledge found in sentient beings as espoused by Aquinas in his epistemology.

Keywords: AI, knowledge, Experience, Idea, Mind, Algorithm, Pattern

Introduction

AI and what is now considered "AI Epistemology" have challenged the fundamental traditional theories of knowledge. While the epistemological questions about the certainty of human knowledge remain relevant, the emergence of AI Epistemology or AI linked to robotics has raised pertinent questions concerning the emerging "knowledge industry" and how to describe knowledge formerly. While Kaufmann (2000:203) expresses fear about the radical shift from the important systems (empiricists and rationalists) by which human knowledge is acquired. Younas and Zeng (2024:1) appeal for a broader definition of knowledge that extends beyond human-centric perspectives. The problem is whether or not to affirm an epistemology for AI programmed robots.

What is the best way to qualify the new waves of thinkers/epistemologists that have emerged due to the development of Artificial Intelligence and AI robots? In Kaufmann's (2000) opinion, they should be given a name that is not free from danger because it belongs to the nature of these new waves of thinkers to want to remain riddles at some point. The efforts of these new waves of thinkers may be right or wrong. Contrary to Kaufmann's fear about the danger of AI epistemology, Younas and Zeng (2024:1) "advocate for the establishment of an AI-inclusive epistemology. This concept posits that artificial intelligence may possess its own distinctive epistemological framework, which could fundamentally alter our current understanding of knowledge acquisition and application". The principal question which this paper seeks to examine is "can AI robots know?" Whether Robots can have "knowledge and to attempt to answer this question in a purely *a priori* manner is to enter a blind alley" (Copleston, 1977:49). In other words, it may be difficult to answer this kind of

question. However, the above discussions on emerging new AI epistemology call for recourse to a possible Thomistic response. This work raises pertinent questions that should preoccupy the minds of contemporary Thomists. It is important to note that some of the questions that will be raised were never the preoccupation of Thomas Aquinas but the answers provided in this study indicate how he would have responded to them in his works. This study seems to raise more questions than answers as expressed by Dennett (1996:vii) thus, "I am a philosopher, not a scientist, and we philosophers are better at questions than answers". On the one hand, it is an attempt to draw "inspiration from Aquinas while developing his thought to meet modern intellectual needs. On the other hand, it is the application of the principles of his thought to problems arising in the modern cultural situation to promote a great deal of serious philosophical reflection" (Copleston, 1977:43). This study is an effort to "develop Thomism in the light of modern problems and of modern philosophy" (Copleston, 1977:45).

Conditions of Knowledge

Different philosophical schools of thought have different opinions about the conditions that should be met before there can be knowledge. Many empiricists did extensive work on how the senses perceive the external world, including Henri Bergson in *Matter and Memory*. The condition for knowledge for empiricists would be the optimal functioning of the senses. However, this point of view is opposed to that of rationalists, who insist that knowledge is acquired through reason. The Thomistic view is moderate in its approach because it explains that knowledge is obtained from the senses through abstraction. For Aquinas, the *active intellect* abstracts from the impression received by the senses. This abstraction takes place before the image is interpreted by the intellect (S.T. V1, q. 85, a. 1). Considering the diverse opinions about the condition of knowledge, the major problem of discussing "AI knowledge" consists of demonstrating elements that are required to establish how AI possess knowledge without actual real experiences (sensation/perception, scientific experimentation or even the possession of intellect). What are the prerequisites for "AI knowledge"? If it is admitted that AI cannot gain knowledge through abstraction, then it is not very likely to talk about AI Epistemology.

For empiricists, possessing five external senses (touch, ears, eyes, tongue, nose) is indispensable for human knowledge. It is important to add that the senses should be free from any form of defect. Therefore, when any of the senses come in contact with an object, the sensory nerves (afferent nerves) are adapted to transmit information to the Central Nervous System (brain) while the motor nerves (efferent nerves) bring back such information to enable the subject to make proper decisions. This mechanism suggests possible complementarity between empiricists' and rationalists' positions but raises the question of whether AI have such a mechanism of perceiving/sensation and analysis of data in the brain before a possible response. Do sensors through which AI recognizes and responds to situations the same as the nerves? What is the difference in the degree of error between the human nervous system and the sensor in AI? Just like the human senses, any defect of the sensor affects the possibility of knowledge. The possession of intellect is a prior condition of all knowing beings. Even though some philosophers distinguish between active and passive intellect this study is more preoccupied with establishing that AI robots do not have intellect, not even whether it is active or passive. It will seem that intellectual powers in AI robots are programmed. This is evident from the claims of Searl (1980:417) that in "[strong AI] ... the appropriately programmed computer really is a mind, in the sense that

computers given the right programs can be literally said to *understand* and have other cognitive states". If it is programmed, what is the mode through which AI understands things? Do they understand things through sensation, abstraction, infused power or external help? As Aquinas will say, "the object of knowledge is proportionate to the power of knowledge" (S.T. V. 1. q. 85, a. 1). From the preceding paragraph, it is important to state that while talking about the condition of knowledge in AI, there is a need to recognize that there are three grades of cognitive powers as follows:

Sensitive Power: "the objects of every sensitive power is a form as existing in corporeal matter (...) every form of the sensitive part can only have knowledge of the individual" (S.T. V. 1. q. 85, a. 1). Here, the corporeal organ plays a vital role in knowing particular object. For instance, a goat views or assimilates the form of things as individual; that is, it can perceive a particular individual being of the object.

Angelic Intellect: "Though Angels know material things, yet they do not know them save in something immaterial, namely either in themselves or in God" (S.T. V. 1. q. 85, a. 1). In other words, their knowing power is that which is neither that of corporeal organ nor in any way associated with corporeal matter. The organ of the knowing power of angels subsists apart from matter.

Human Intellect: This occupies a middle position; it is not the act of any organ, yet it is the power of the soul which is the form of the body. It is appropriate for the human intellect to know a form that exists individually in corporeal matter, yet not in the way such form is in such matter. By implication, it is capable of knowing abstract things and metaphysical beings. However, AI do not have any of the above grades of cognitive powers; this raises the question about the possibility of AI epistemology.

Aquinas' argument that there cannot be active and passive intellect in Angels except equivocally (S.T. V.1. q. 54, a. 4) appears to be fundamental in discussing the presence of active and passive intellect in AI. His reason was that "knowledge is not generated in the angels but is present naturally. Hence there is no need for admitting an active and a passive intellect in them" (S.T. V. 1. q. 54, a. 4). Can such be said about AI s which are the results of human creative ability? We know from Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas that human beings have an active and passive intellect. The Stagiarite and Aquinas distinguished the function of the intellect in human beings and angels thus:

It is the function of the active intellect to enlighten, not another intellect, but things which are intelligible importantially, in so far as by abstraction it makes them to be actually intelligible. It belongs to the passive intellect to be in potentiality with regard to things which are naturally capable of being known, and sometimes to apprehend them actually. Hence for one angel to enlighten another does not belong to the notion of active intellect: neither does it belong to the passive intellect for the Angel to be enlightened with regard to supernatural mysteries (S.T. V. 1. q. 54, a. 4).

Moreover, the discussion concerning the condition of knowledge requires an examination of sensitive knowledge or intellective knowledge in a subject which has body and soul. The body is used to feel and the soul is used for abstraction. The body and the soul are important elements in forming material and rational knowledge. The body plays an

important role in what is known as material knowledge and the soul/spirit/mind is indispensable in the formation of ideas. However, philosophers differ on how ideas are formed. Locke underscores the ambiguous use of the term “idea”; sometimes, he speaks of our ideas of sensible qualities and again sensible qualities are spoken of as ideas. He also uses the term “idea” to refer to concepts and universal ideas. Irrespective of the multiple applications of the term “idea”, “Locke is convinced that experience is a fountain of all ideas. The human being’s attention is primarily directed outwards, and sensation is thus the chief source of ideas” (Copleston, 1964:86).

Contrary to Locke’s position, Berkeley emphasized that the mind forms whatever constitutes knowledge. According to him, “besides all that endless variety of Ideas or Objects of Knowledge, there is likewise something which knows or perceives them, and exercises divers operations, as Willing, Imagining, Remembering about them. This perceiving, active Being is what I call Mind, Spirit, Soul or my Self” (Berkeley, 2002:12). In other words, the mind is a necessary condition for knowledge; and if this is true, “sensible things have no absolute existence independent of mind” (Copleston, 1964:51). Concerning this subject matter, Dennett argued in support of “other minds”. According to Dennett (1996:12): “Surely our ability to discuss with others what is going on in our minds is just a peripheral talent, in the sense in which one speaks of a computer’s laser printer as a peripheral device (the computer can go right on computing without a printer attached)”. Dennett’s comparison may be misleading because irrespective of the independent existence of life in peripheral devices a computer and a printer cannot be classified into the same class; their functions are different, and one is dependent on the other. Besides, the difficulty of affirming and attributing intellectual knowledge to AI affects the form of behaviour that should characterize an “intelligent being”. For instance, the “goal-directed” behaviour of every being which possesses a mind should be *intrinsic* (that is, internally generated) rather than *extrinsic* (that is, externally imposed) (Morioka, 2023:37). In other words, AI robots cannot form knowledge. The emphasis on the possession of the mind as a condition of knowledge is further strengthened by Morioka’s (2023:38-39) argument according to which “if metabolism is the necessary condition for the mind, strong AI should be impossible because metabolism can be *modeled* by computers, but not *instantiated* by them”. The ability to *instantiate* AI does not produce knowledge. This implies that thinking is a fundamental condition for talking about knowledge.

Bearing in mind the polemic about the formation of ideas, Aquinas would say that “there are certain powers whose operations are exercised by corporeal organs; such powers are acts of sundry parts of the body, as the sight of the eye, and hearing of the ear. There are some other powers of the soul whose operations are not performed through bodily organs, as intellect and will: these are not acts of any parts of the body” (S.T. V.1, q. 54, a. 5). In other words, it is difficult to disassociate knowledge with mental power or the state of the mind. In fact, “human knowledge must have some connection with mental powers. Knowledge must be a state of mind or a mental disposition of some kind” (Teichman & Evans, 1995). This Thomistic distinction does not satisfy the quest to know how AI robotic knowledge is formed. Nevertheless, if it is admitted that “robotic mind” is a “logical construction” out of psychic events (Copleston, 1964:109), this would mean that such minds are derived from the association of “incomplete symbols” (or algorithmic symbols) to respond to a particular need. This gives room to speculate about “configured knowledge” as a condition for talking about AI knowledge. It is necessary to state that “configured knowledge” cannot be put at the same level as acquired knowledge. Acquired knowledge is properly human and could be

shared by animals. It is characterized by trial and error. The importance of this knowledge in theology reveals not just the limitation of human beings, but also the possibility of being assisted by divine grace for the salvation of mankind. Through grace, human beings can hope to see God and to know God as he truly is; whether “configured knowledge” or “robotic knowledge” can be helped by grace is not within the limits of this study. Christian believers may not consider AI as a breakthrough to the reality that human beings who cannot know God by natural reason (S.T. V.1, q. 13, a. 12), may now know God through AI.

What Constitutes Knowledge?

The question of what constitutes knowledge has been at the core of the arguments since Plato to Kant. Concerning AI knowledge, the debates open diverse questions: Do AI have future knowledge? Is the nature of robotic knowledge acquired (material), infused (immaterial/mixed) or beatific (purely immaterial/spiritual)? To be precise, one can ask what AI knows. Can they know God and angels? The above questions essentially intend to establish “that all abstract ideas are human inventions. Only human beings are aware of abstract ideas as far as we know” (Teichman & Evans, 1995:72). In other words, AI robots do not have the ability for abstraction. The discussions focus on whether knowledge is innate or not. Admitted knowledge is composed of ideas, impressions, and reason, depending on one’s school of thought, such composition permits one to talk about what the knower (subject) knows or the object of knowledge. The empiricists and the rationalists may agree that “ideas” constitute human knowledge but differ concerning their origin. The former (also known as the sensationalists and materialists) hold that ideas are representations coming to the mind through the senses. Hume, one of its advocates thinks that “abstract ideas are individual or particular in themselves if the idea is an image or copy, it must be particular” (Copleston, 1964:77). The latter (also known as the rationalists, idealists and spiritualists) claim that ideas are innate and are imprinted in the human mind by a supreme being (Copleston, 1977:25). Those who defend this position reject the claims of the empiricists.

Contrary to the perspectives of the different schools of thought just mentioned, Saint Augustine described knowledge in terms of immutable ideas (Book 7, chapter 17). This form of knowledge is more spiritual than physical and marks a shift from the Manichean’s definition of knowledge which was based on knowledge of material substance and material truth of this world. The spiritual form of knowledge permits human beings to know God as the only Substance that cannot change and to know other forms of spiritual realities. While the knowledge of oneself is by intuition, that of God is by demonstration. However, it can be said that it is not enough to explain that human beings know or have the idea of the existence of other things by sensation, those things should be capable of operating upon human beings (Copleston, 1964). The ability of other things to operate in human faculties is known as “intelligibility”. But how do things become intelligible in a divine and human mind? Do things differ, or are they the same in the form in which they exist in the mind of God and created minds (human mind)? If for instance, “sensible things, have an ‘archetypal and eternal’ existence in the divine mind and an ‘ectypal or natural’ existence in created minds” (Copleston, 1964), in what form do they exist in AI? There are implications of claiming that AI know things by their very substance or by species. Essentially, this would equate them to angels because “Angels know things according to His own nature, the words ‘according to’ do not determine the medium of such knowledge, since the medium is the similitude of the thing known; but they denote the knowing power, which belongs to the angel of his own nature” (S.T. V.1. q. 55, a. 1). On the one hand, it is good to state that divine and created

minds differ in the forms in which they know things. On the other hand, it is easier to admit that “stored data” is the form of robotic knowledge. But by what medium is the data stored, and in what element is it stored?

Going back to the idea of innate knowledge, Plato thought that human beings were born with certain pre-existing forms of knowledge. Although Locke, Hume, Kant and Chomsky differ in their explanation of innate knowledge/idea their description of God, infinity and substance may be accepted as convergent. But on what basis can innate knowledge or ideas be compared to “stored data?” Can “stored data” know immaterial things and spiritual realities like God and Angels? For Angels to know immaterial things presupposes that they have souls and spirits. Studies are yet to demonstrate that AI have souls and spirits; by implication, they cannot know themselves and spiritual realities. This also means that AI is not capable of reflexive knowledge. The above observations are relevant in establishing that the composition of human beings as body and spirit disposes them to enjoy mystical knowledge, spiritual knowledge and beatific knowledge/experience. The structural composition of AI does not show that they have a mind, spirit or soul. Therefore, the only knowledge of God and other spiritual realities that could be attributed to AI is in the form of “stored data” or written algorithms. From the preceding paragraph, it is possible to say that AI robots do not have real knowledge/consciousness of God and other spiritual realities; they do not have reflexive knowledge and may not possibly know themselves. Consequently, the Socratic dictum “man know they self” cannot be applied to the being or functionality of AI. Even if AI knows spiritual beings, the medium by which they possess such knowledge cannot be natural but artificial. If it is admitted that there can be no error in the way God knows things and that spiritual beings like angels and Saints possess a high degree of perfection lower to God, such cannot be said about human knowledge. Some factors cause human knowledge to fall into error. These factors could be biological and psychological. St Thomas Aquinas subjected the senses and intellect to the test of truth and gave examples of how the senses and intellect could fail. In the case of AI, should falsehood be attributed to the functionality of the sensor / “hard disc”, or to the operation or manufacturer of the AI?

Meanwhile, this study is of the view that what constitutes robotic knowledge should not be understood or interpreted as knowledge in the same way we can talk about divine and human knowledge. The distinction between divine knowledge, human knowledge and angelic knowledge has set precedence on how to distinguish the differences in what constitutes knowledge. Memory is an integral constituent of human knowledge. The content of human knowledge is stored in the memory. For David Hume, “memory preserves not only simple ideas but also their order and position” (Copleston, 1964:73). However, human memory cannot be equated to “stored data” or memory devices in a digital system like a computer. This is because the process of storing data is different. This makes it pertinent to examine the process by which we arrive at knowledge in general and AI knowledge in particular. What is the traditional means of acquiring knowledge? What is the process by which AI acquires knowledge?

Process of Knowledge

An important question concerning the process of the acquisition of knowledge is whether knowledge is gained through reason or the senses. These are two extreme positions concerning the process of knowing a subject or a thing. In any case, the formation of “idea” is central to both rationalists’ and empiricists’ epistemology. For rationalists like Descartes,

Spinoza and Leibniz, ideas are formed through the use of human reason and intellect. They believe that “ideas” are formed by the mind independent of any experience, and that innate ideas and mathematical truths are only discovered and harmonized by human intellect. While empiricists like Locke, Berkley and Hume think that “ideas” are formed through sense experience. The empiricists argue that ideas result from the impression of things in the human mind. “An idea is considered to be the principle of knowledge and action by ideas are understood the forms of things, existing apart from the things themselves” (S.T. V.1. q. 15, a. 1). The question of how ideas are formed raises pertinent questions concerning the ability of AI robots to form ideas. Does AI have minds capable of forming ideas? Is AI capable of retaining the forms of things that are not previously written algorithms? Moreover, the capacity to form ideas (general ideas, complex ideas, abstract ideas) varies in adults and children. Berkeley (2002:2-3) focuses on how the mind forms “ideas” by observing and perceiving in particular extensions by the sense. Contrary to Berkeley’s point of view, a Thomistic attempt to respond to the preoccupation of how ideas are formed would likely reconcile the extreme views of the rationalists and empiricists on the one hand, and also open a discussion on how to understand the process of robotic knowledge on the other hand.

Accordingly, the process of knowledge in Aquinas's theory of knowledge could be properly understood based on the analysis of the relationship between the subject and object. For him, bare-sense knowledge of things cannot give intellectual knowledge. One can arrive at intellectual knowledge when there is the union of the knowing subject with some known object other than itself. Besides the knower and the object known, the mental act of knowing (cognition) plays a significant role in the process of knowledge. When a human being comes in contact with a table, for instance, the active intellect removes the colour, the weight, and the density of gold, from the image received from the senses. Abstraction in this sense involves isolating elements that characterize a table so as to arrive at a knowledge of something hard, that has a flat surface and other essentials that qualify the object to be called a table. This is a means of determination or truly arriving at a proper knowledge of an object. According to Aquinas, “to know what is in individual matter, not as existing in such matter, is to abstract the form from individual matter, which is represented by the phantasm” (S.T. V.1. q. 85, a. 1). This is a form of acquiring immaterial knowledge of things. But how does one know whether the faculty of abstracting ideas can be found in AI? Whether abstraction is considered as “composition and division, as when we understand that one thing does not exist in some other, or that it is separate from it” or “by way of simple and absolute consideration, as when we understand one thing without considering the other” (S.T. V.1. q. 85, a. 1), it is difficult to ascertain the ability of AI robots to gain knowledge by abstraction. Is AI endowed with a “mind”? This question may sound unreasonable because the mind is important in forming ideas. Copleston’s (1964:39) position concerning the role of the mind was very affirmative; according to his point of view, the mind “is a ‘congeries of perceptions’. Take away perceptions and you take away the mind; put the perceptions and you put the mind”. Hume and Berkeley may disagree on how ideas are formed; even Locke’s idea, which appears to be similar to that of Aquinas’ theory of truth, has some limitations, especially when “experiential knowledge” is considered. Experiential knowledge does not stand in any form of relevant relation of agreement or disagreement with other ideas we have (Lowe, 2005:53-54). It is important to understand in what form an idea (image) of a thing/object exists in the knowing subject. This could furnish good information on how to understand robotic knowledge.

Thomistic attempt to respond to this preoccupation would likely affirm that “in some agents, the form of the thing to be made pre-exists according to its natural being, as in those that act by their nature; as a man generates a man, or fire generates fire” (S.T. V.1. q. 15, a. 1). The ability of AI to possess pre-existing form is limited and artificial. This is because it is dependent on how it is programmed. Moreover, can it be admitted that the nature of pre-existing forms of things in AI is in accordance with their nature? Here is an approach that could guide our response to this question: AI technologies like facial recognition systems, voice recognition systems, and fingerprint image acquisition are all categorized as “biometrics”. The effectiveness of biometrics depends on an already existing database. It functions by matching a fingerprint against a database of fingerprints. This pre-existing form is limited and only effective in the “artificial space”. This applies to all “self-checkouts,” or “assisted checkouts,” or even “self-service checkouts” machines in supermarkets. The analysis made about how knowing subjects possess pre-existing forms raises a concern, namely, can AI know God who is infinite? This question is crucial because of the claim that “created intellect knows only existing things” (S.T. V.1. q. 12, a. 1). There is no denying that AI are manufactured by human beings who are imperfect, the being of these technologies which claim to function like human beings is composed of algorithms and cannot know God like normal human beings would know God. Irrespective of the configuration and exaltation of AI, they cannot know the essence of God. But if any scientist insists that “fabricated intellect” like the AI could see God, “it would either never attain to beatitude, or its beatitude would consist in something else besides God; which is opposed to faith” (S.T. V.1. q. 12, a. 1). For Aquinas, knowledge is an important characteristic of human beings, but this does not prevent any discussion concerning how spiritual realities are known. For instance, “God knoweth all things as pure mind or intellect” (Copleston, 1964:53). Speaking about the truth and falsity of things, “the philosopher says that the true and the false reside not in things, but in the intellect” (S.T. V.1. q. 16, a. 1). Surely, this concerns the created intellect and not the divine intellect. But a curious mind would ask where the truth and falsity reside in AI. One may be quick to say that by being programmed, “robotic intellect” (artificial intelligence) is different from human and divine intellect.

Conclusion

Having examined the condition of human knowledge, what constitutes it and the process of human knowledge, this study concluded that the possession of five external senses, the intellect and certain cognitive powers are the conditions of knowledge. The knowing subject should be composed of body and soul and should be capable of forming ideas. The lack or inadequate possession of these qualities in AI systems suggests that they do not meet the requirements necessary to talk about AI epistemology, even though AI epistemology in a loose sense can mean the process by which AI knows. This study recognized that “stored data” or written algorithms constitute AI knowledge. The very composition of AI excludes any possibility of infused knowledge and beatific knowledge. The debate concerning the ability of AI to have immutable ideas or knowledge of immutable realities should be put in parenthesis. Even when scientists attribute “acquired knowledge” to AI, it is not without limitations. Another result of this study shows that the process of knowledge in human beings and AI differs. The concept of *pre-existing* form was fundamental in understanding the process of knowledge in AI. However, it is limited, artificial and seems to depend on automation which does not correspond to the natural processes of knowledge that involve thinking and could be situated under the empiricists' or rationalists' views. This study

established that thinking is an essential part of epistemology. This study does not exhaust all the epistemological problems related to AI and knowledge. It has rather opened the possibility for further epistemological and anthropological research which could be concerned with the following questions: what are the approaches to understanding traditional epistemological questions (traditional philosophy) and formal epistemological questions (formal philosophy)? Can we have super AI in the future that can perform more complex and advanced tasks than humans? Can AI ever take over the world and man's place in it?

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INTERROGATING THE NOTION OF BIOSOCIAL PERSONHOOD IN UKWUANI WORLDVIEW

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Abstract

This paper identifies the ubiquity and increasing rate of social problems in African societies in spite of the attempts at providing solutions to them. Such problems include insecurity, ethno-religious crises, poor governance/leadership at various levels amongst others. As a result of all these social misdemeanors, human relationships are not only strained but humanity is debased as orientations of personhood are not given attention in human actions, the resultant social problems and even the solutions provided to the problems. The objective of this paper is to show the relevance of personhood, through the Ukwuani biosocial perspective with its attendant ethical values, in solving certain social problems confronting African societies and even the world at large. The methods adopted in this paper are ethnophilosophy and philosophical analysis in order to understand the orientation of personhood among the Ukwuani and also to interpret it with the aim of showing their particular and universal relevance, both in African societies and beyond. The paper concludes that a collaborative approach between indigenous ethical values of the Ukwuani biosocial personhood and the humane aspects of the individualist attitude of western liberalism would avert atomic individualism which is a major source of the social problems. The approach must be critically rooted in the indigenous value system of the Ukwuani biosocial personhood for a more participatory outcome in addressing the problems.

Keywords: Africa, Biosocial personhood, Collectivism, Social problem, Social order, Ukwuani anthropology

Introduction

Biosocial personhood is the ethical interrogation of the combination of the ontological and normative views of personhood with certain ethical principles that can be applied in very significant areas of human existence, especially as they affect social order in Africa. The ontological perspective of the human person deals with the biological aspects as espoused by Sapontzis to contain neurological, muscular and mental elements (608) and Sheffler's description of it as constitutive of the body, soul and the combination of both (32). The social aspects are discussed as the normative view of personhood described with social and moral relationships amongst individuals (Menkiti 171; Gyekye 103-4; Wiredu 17). In each of the different areas that constitute the two perspectives of the biosocial personhood (ontological and normative), there are identified deficiencies that make it inconceivable that each perspective adequately constitutes what should be seen as a comprehensive orientation of personhood. For instance, the biological constituents, whether material or immaterial, are not enough (in isolation) to give an adequate understanding of what a person is. There is therefore the need to examine other aspects that define the human

person in combination with the ontological perspective with a view to addressing the deficiencies of this biological perspective. Conversely, when the person is examined from the normative perspective, it is observed that the human person is strictly studied from the socio-centric perspective at the expense of the ontological aspect (Alumona & Odimegwu 34). This equally comes with certain deficiencies when a person is reduced to a simple social phenomenon. It is important therefore to seek for a combination of the socio-centric and the ontological. The combination of these major areas of personhood is important to understanding biosocial view of personhood. But there must be the ethical interrogations of such combinations in order to emphasize the role of ethical values on the issue of personhood. This is why the biosocial personhood is seen as the ethical discourse on such a combination with extension into the political, social, economic and religious activities of human existence, amongst others.

This paper holds that the solution to problems that confront a people cannot be disconnected with the orientations of personhood held by the people. If a people holds individualist orientation of personhood, addressing the problems confronting them will likely prioritize individualist approaches while a society ontologically defined by human interconnectedness will most likely adopt the collectivist approach in solving the challenges that befall it. It is this position that informed the view that the numerous solutions to the various social problems confronting societies in Africa have not yielded the expected results because of the lack of collaboration with the indigenous people who are at the receiving end of the social crises. These indigenous people have their own world-views, social relations, peculiar ethical values and indigenous humanistic approaches to problems that confront them (Molefe 132); some of which are also relevant in addressing general problems confronting humanity. However, to address the problems more effectively and contribute to the improvement of social order in African societies, some important questions have to be answered in the course of this paper. They include: what are the root causes of social disorderliness in Africa? What kinds of solutions have been offered to mitigate the identified problems? Have Africans been pivotal in the existing solutions to the problems? In fact, what is the orientation of personhood and social relations in Africa, specifically among the Ukwuani people of Southern Nigeria? All these and many other attendant questions when properly answered will shore up the arguments on the position taken above.

The two philosophical methods to adopt in this research are philosophical analysis and ethnophilosophy. Philosophical analysis is rightly characterized as an appropriate method of this research because it enables us to examine the different aspects of the ontological perspective of personhood with its various parts as well as the social aspects, also with its various parts. Having broken down the complexities in those concepts into their respective simple components, it becomes less cumbersome to connect them together, synthesize them and see how they can ethically foster social order in Africa. Given the above, it is imperative to know that “analysis is a method of examining a complex concept or thing by identifying its parts and the relations among those parts. A thorough analysis provides a definition or explanation of its object by showing what it is made of (the parts) and its structure (how the parts fit together)” (Dorbolo 2). On the other hand, ethnophilosophy as a qualitative method concerns itself with the philosophical beliefs, values and practices of a people. The method acknowledges that philosophical beliefs and practices are connected to the cultural context in which they are found and promote sensitivity to indigenous cultural systems. It collects research data through participant-observation and interviews of the local communities, and engages interpretative analysis to interpret and understand the meanings

and significance of the beliefs, values and practices of local cultures. Ethnophilosophy as a research method also employs interpretative phenomenology in order to gain an understanding of the lived experiences of the cultures of the people. While this method is significant in unearthing traditional values, beliefs and practices, it may be handicapped in generalization beyond local communities (Ibanga 127), hence the complementary role of philosophical analysis. The Ukwuani biosocial personhood requires insights from a few selected sages whose responses are interpreted in order to bring out the multiple meanings that necessitated the link between it and social order in Africa. The two methods also are meant to establish the fact that the orientation of human person among the Ukwuani people comes with certain indigenous ethical values that can comprehensively and collaboratively address the social problems confronting Africa and even set frameworks for tackling similar situations across the globe.

Understanding Ukwuani Orientation of Personhood

The Ukwuani culture views the human person as a combination of both the ontological and normative perspectives. In other words, the view among the people is biosocial and this widens the kinds of the values that are considered to be very useful in the development of Africa capturing both African communal values as well as very relevant and humanistic aspects of Western liberal value of individualism. Ukwuani is a minority ethnic nationality in Nigeria whose people are found in the present Delta State of Nigeria and they occupy the region of the Niger-Delta that is geographically regarded as the Western-Delta. The region lies within longitude 6° 6' and 6° 42' East and latitude 6° 3' and 5° 25' North (Okolugbo 1). The three local government areas of Ukwuani, Ndokwa West and Ndokwa East in Delta State are inhabited by the Ukwuani people (Ojeh 475). The Ukwuani people are made up of two groups of people, namely the Ndosumili modified from Ndeosumili, meaning those of the riverside. Ndosumili occupies Ndokwa East while Ukwuani occupy Ndokwa West and Ukwuani local government areas. The language of the nationality is also called Ukwuani which in most cases is corrupted to Kwale by non- Ukwuani speaking people.

What appears to be a significant distinction on the biosocial orientation of the person among the Ukwuani people is the claim that the normative concept of the human person is inevitably connected to the cooperation that exists in the ontological constituents of the human person which are found in some expressions like: *Obi n' ishi nnwenę n'elo* (the mind always consults with the head, which is its brother), *ęnya akwá ekwa bų imi amalį* (the eyes cannot be shedding tears while the nose is comfortable) and *iwe eze ewe ile k'eze ata'yaęlų n'eze natagbu ife ile n'enuo* (the tongue cannot be angry with the teeth even if the teeth bite it because the teeth must grind for the tongue to swallow). These expressions for the Ukwuani cultures are indications that social relations take place even among the ontological constituents that define the human person (Maraganedzha 88; Uchegbue 91). In what follows, the two aspects of personhood that explain the Ukwuani biosocial orientation of personhood shall be discussed.

The Ontological Aspect of Personhood among the Ukwuani

Ontologically, the Ukwuani view the human person as constitutive of various features, material and immaterial. Among these constituent elements are: *ęsų* (the physical body) which is also called *anų ęsų*. The physical body is the material aspect of the human person. It is seen as the 'cloth' that covers the 'spirit' as can be seen in the expression: *ęsų bų ukọ kpuchini mmọ mmalų ele ukọ kpuchini anų ęsų*. The literal meaning of this expression is 'the

body is likened to a cloth that covers the human spirit just like it (clothe) covers the body. Although it perishes at death but it houses the spirit (*mmọ*) which is immaterial and imperishable. The interpretation of that expression in order to understand the role of the body further as it relates to personhood is that in it are other components like *obi* (the heart) which is further called *nkpuru obi* (the seed of the heart in literal terms). Again, also covered by the body are *okpukpu* (bone) and *obala/edeke* (blood). All these are the physical or material components of the human person which Kaphagawani describes as fundamental constituents of the human person (334). Interrogating some respondents in order to know the position of the heart yielded the outcome that it is located in the chest, an indication that it is a material stuff of the human person. The chest therefore is like the gadget that houses the heart. According to Chief Achiagba, “the heart is the blood-pumping machine of the body. This machine is functional at all times, otherwise, human life is lost, and personhood also is ultimately lost in the final analysis”. Ancillary to *obi* is the *nkpuru obi* in which the soul or mind is said to be located. It is believed to be the seat of life (*ndu*). The force from which we have life, even if it cannot be seen physically, is found in the *nkpuru obi*. Unah emphasizes the potency of the role of force in this respect in his avowal that “...African metaphysical concept of being is force” (108). Another component that is also seen as very essential to the understanding of the person among the Ukwuani is *obala/edeke* (blood). The place of the blood can be found in the expression: *obala bu mmili mmọ deme ni ndu mmalu* which means that ‘the blood is like the spiritual water which keeps humans alive’. Implied in this understanding is the fact that blood has so much sacredness in its definition of the human person (Machingura & Museka 51; Watts 10). Again, the presence of blood constitutes one of the elements of sentience and sentience in turns contributes to defining an individual as a person. *Onye ife nityulu abụ mmalu* meaning an individual who does not feel pains is not a person. This claim among the Ukwuani does not mean that such an individual is no longer a human being but it does appear that one of the key components that makes personhood of the individual is probably corrupted. Finally but not exhaustively among the material component of the person among the Ukwuani is the *Umi-ishi* (brain) which gives meaning to the head; a constituent that is simply an ‘empty box’ without the brain. The brain is a whitish substance where wisdom, thought or reason and intelligence emanate from. It (the brain) is seen to be in segments but how many it can be segmented into for us to know the exact number is never mentioned among the Ukwuani. We see expressions like *Umi-ishi kenę ezune onu* meaning this one’s brain is incomplete segmentally. When asked whether the segment of the brain can be counted like the ten fingers are counted, High Chief (Dr.) Iwegbue retorted by saying that “it depends on what the user of the expression means. This is because the expression connotatively has two different meanings. One of the meanings signifies that the brain is segmented into different parts but how many of such parts we do not know. The second refers to the malfunctioning of an individual’s brain, thus resulting to a situation in which personhood is perceived to be in degrees”.

So far, only the material components of personhood have been described but there are also the immaterial components, showing that to describe an individual as a person would mean that he/she must have both the material and spiritual components (Kpanake 199). Ontologically, therefore, the person is defined by material, quasi-material and spiritual elements, all cooperating together to define the person. Some of the components discussed above can be in dual capacity in that they could also in different contexts be seen as non-material or invisible components. For example, *obi* which is the heart can also be used to

refer to the mind, soul or spirit in some contexts. When interpreted as the soul or spirit, it is referred to as *mmọ*, an unseen underlying force beneath the physical structure called the heart where life (*ndụ*) is said to be situated. The soul is the spirit that brings life to the individual. The loss of the soul begins the process of the loss of personhood whose initial point is the loss of human life. The soul in this sense is equated with breath (*umele*). When someone is dying but still has breath, it is said that his soul is still alive and such an individual is capable of coming back to life. His soul is said to have wandered far away and could be recalled to his physical body. At other times, it is seen as one's conscience. When for instance we say *obim ebugbunę* which literally means 'my heart cannot carry it', we only mean that my conscience would not allow me to be involved in something that I perceive to be wrong. *Obi* as conscience is a necessary requirement of personhood among the Ukwuani. When an individual is perceived not to be guided by his conscience in any act, he is regarded as not being a person.

The brain as a material component of the person is the seat of wisdom, intelligence and rationality which are all nuances of *akọnuche*, the lack of which puts a great question mark on the personhood of such an individual. Very often, an individual is derided as having requisite bodily features but being an incomplete person as a result of the lack of *akọnuche*. All the ontological constituents are considered as having a social relationship among one another. Such a relationship is encapsulated in the expression: *obi nị ishi bụ ẹsụ bụ ẹsụ bụ ụnọ obi nị ishi* which means that "the heart and the head give life to the body and in reciprocity; the body also houses the heart and the head". High Chief Iwegbue in his response to how an individual can be described ontologically says: *ọsa ẹsụ bụ ofu. Otelì ụkụ otelì ishi nị ẹka ekpe kwọ ẹka nli onwu unwu bụ ẹka nli kwọashị ẹka ekpe onwu ẹshi*. This parable about the social activities of the ontological perspective literally means that "all the body constituents are one". That is indicative of the fact that the biological components of the human person should not be considered in isolation of his social aspects.

Highlighting the Social Aspect of the Person among the Ukwuani

The general word for all human beings among the Ukwuani is *mmalụ*, whether ontologically or socially. But socially, there is a dual connotation of the word referring to both person and non-person, meaning that *mmalụ* as an individual can both be P and not-P where P stands for person. It would appear here that *mmalụ* violates the logical principle of non-contradiction, but a clear understanding of the two senses of usage shows that there is no such violation of the rule. In both senses, *mmalụ* has to do with how humans relate with their community and how much one observes the community rules and regulations. In the first sense, an individual is a person when he observes the community ethos while he ceases to be a person when he does otherwise. This is the sense in which an individual is a non-person, either for the reason that he does not relate with others or has discontinued such relations with other persons; a demonstration of the importance of intersubjective relations among individuals. This is why "...African personhood brings the advantage of providing a secure basis for social duties to others and the community, since being a person hinges on fulfilling these duties..." (Jecker and Atuire 4). This social perspective of personhood among the Ukwuani is explained in Michael Uboko's collection of stories *The Human Palm Tree Analogy*. According to him:

Two children (twins) born of the same parents were separated from each other right from the day of birth. One was kept in an isolated hut in a forest while the other was left to live among his other siblings. The one kept in

solitariness is named *Onyenobie* while the other one is called *Ofuonyebi*. When they were grown into adults, *Onyenobie* was brought to live with his other siblings but it was observed that he was able to do everything alone without needing assistance from anyone, even tackling challenges facing the community on his own. On the contrary, *Ofuonyebi* depended on his peers when necessary to get things done and realize his potentials. When it was time to initiate the two into the community age-grade, *Ofuonyebi* was chosen while *Onyenobie* was told to go for initiation into the community of the proverbial palm trees where self-sufficiency is accepted (34).

The transliteration of *Onyenobie* is “everyone with his independent mind or opinion” and could be interpreted to mean “the lone self”. This emphasizes the individualism of the person such that he does not need the idea of others in anything he does; a mark of extreme individualism. On the other hand, the transliteration of *Ofuonyebi* is “one person does not live alone”. This is emphatic on togetherness and cooperation among persons. No one therefore is self-sufficient even if one possesses such capability for the benefit of the community. Although the human-palm tree analogical situation by Uboko is seen as a fairytale but it is a comparable situation in the Akan maxim: “a person is not a palm tree that he should be self-complete” (Gyekye 37). The advice that the self-sufficient individual should go to the world of palms trees for his incorporation does not in any way imply the holistic loss of personhood. Ontologically, he is still a person but socially, his personhood is questionable. Therefore, an individual should learn and acknowledge that his personhood is not only ontological but also dependent on being with others.

From the foregoing, it could be deciphered that the ontological perspective of the person shows the independence of an individual in any social relationship with other individuals who also on their own are independent. This is what is referred to here as a person’s ontological completeness. On the other hand, it is also seen that socially, there is so much interdependence among individuals; no individual qualifies for personhood in a solitary situation. The social meaning of an individual as a person is therefore largely dependent on the community and this is referred to as the communitarian origin of personhood in its social relations. However, the Ukwuani culture in its orientation of personhood does not treat each of these two perspectives in isolation; rather a person is biosocial and carries with him different ethical principles that are necessary for the advancement of both himself as an individual and the society at large.

Biosocial Personhood as the Fusion of the Ontological Completeness and Social Relations of the Human Person

The communitarian concept of the person in traditional African culture as espoused by most scholars propounds an almost completely communalistic African social order. This is because brotherhood and familyhood became the hallmarks for not only assessing but also for defining the individual as a person. This emphasis on the social aspect of the person therefore mars the claim that the individual’s ontological components make him independent of the community and social relations. The social aspect of personhood makes the idea of individuality unacceptable in the thoughts and practices of the Ukwuani people, as evident in most African cultures. This communitarian and non-individualist view is also emphasized by Menkiti in his exposition that:

On looking at the African conceptualization of the person, one acknowledges, of course, that it is a given fact that every individual has a body apart from the body of every other individual within his or her own community. That sort of given is a brute biological fact. But it need not be read as conveying a message that each stands alone (324).

It does appear that what Menkiti is saying here is that African culture is communitarian and does not permit individualism in whatever guise. This may not be unconnected to the claim that the ontological completeness of the person promotes a severed link between him and his community where social relations between him and others are inevitable. However, the Ukwuani biosocial view of the human person establishes that although one is an ontologically complete and autonomous individual, he also needs to have the attributes of cooperation, solidarity and dependence if he has to attain a more holistic perspective of personhood. This perspective recognizes the fact that humans are no longer confined to their limited cultural cocoons in a world where varieties of human existence are influenced by globalization, especially in the areas of politics, information, religion, economy, culture (Odimegwu 311-14) and so on. It is unimaginable for God to create an ontologically complete individual independent of relating with others just as it is unthinkable for a social individual who has no dealings with his ontological components to exist. An individual appreciates his relational nature with others and also realizes the relevance of his ontological constituents to his social nature (Aghamelu 72). The Ukwuani biosocial view of personhood in its combination of biological components and social relations is further explained by Ashebeta, a respondent, thus:

There was once a handicapped hen with only one leg in the family of so many others that are healthy. One day, the owner decided to get rid of the handicapped hen and sent her into the bush for her assumed worthlessness. Few weeks after, an epidemic broke out and all the hens in the poultry died. When the one-legged hen visited her owner with the whole of her healthy children, the owner wanted her to come back home but she refused and went back to the bush with all her healthy children.

This story explains the indispensability of the individual person with his inalienable dignity as a human being who is a person (ontologically) at all times, whether there is any deformity or not. As long as the human persons combine their biological components with their relational attributes, then a more holistic personhood is attained. There are many practical instances of mentally deranged or physiologically deformed persons giving birth to children who turn out to be notable persons in the community. The Ukwuani view of the person here is that the ontological elements which give worth and dignity to individuals as persons are always present, even if the full expressions of their potentials have not taken place. The expression *omegbame di ni uwa bidoni shini mmegbame dini ime`su* means that the social relationships in human lives have their ontological roots in the social and cooperative activities of the biological components of the human person. For instance, there is cooperation, tolerance and harmony between the teeth and the tongue, blood and other body fluids, the eyes and the nose, and indeed all components of the body. In spite of the individual primary purposes for each biological component, when one undergoes certain kinds of stress, other ones are equally affected. That explains the expression *enya ba kwa ekwa odi nacho imi nnwanne*. This is translated to literally mean that “when the eyes cry, they look out for the nose which

is their sibling to join them". This is why often times, as someone is crying, the face turns red or the nostrils discharge fluids. The import of all these expressions on the biosocial view of personhood among the Ukwuani is that despite one's individuality which emanates from one's biological status, there is an unavoidable need for social relations with other individuals. From this combination of ontology and society in the understanding of the human person, certain ethical principles are extrapolated for the purpose of advancing the collaboration between indigenous knowledge system of the Ukwuani culture and relevant Western liberal values in providing solutions to social problems confronting African societies and by extension, the world at large.

Ethical Principles of Biosocial Personhood and the Promotion of Social Order in Africa

The broad biosocial view of personhood in Ukwuani anthropology is a re-examination of the orientations of personhood from an African cultural perspective in order restore into Africans the consciousness that they are not characteristically violent and irrational to be experiencing the degree of social disorder prevalent in the society today. Such problems include but not limited to: insecurity (terrorism, kidnapping and banditry), ethnic and religious conflicts, poverty, corruption, poor leadership and civil rights abuse among others. The expressions below from the Ukwuani biosocial view of a person highlight certain valuable principles that could aid the entrenchment of social order in Africa:

S/N	Expression	Meaning/Translation	Principle
1.	<i>qbala mmalu luanj qbanj ife nsq</i> (Once a person's blood touches the ground, something forbidden has taken place)	Anyone that spills the blood of another person commits a taboo	(i) Human Dignity (ii) Sanctity of Human Life
2.	<i>Onye obię dīnī ugb'azū abū mmalu</i> (Anyone that has his mind at his back is not a human being)	One who lacks conscience is not a person	(i) Self-Appraisal (ii) Individual Responsibility
3.	<i>Onye ęla n'akqnuचे'ye</i> (Even an insane man has his sense)	Everyone needs to be rational	(i) Rationality (ii) Intelligence
4.	<i>Ofuonye abū anyjabia</i> (One person does not mean "we have come")	No single individual can be described as "we"	(i) Cooperation (ii) Social dependence (iii) Togetherness (iv) Co-existence
5.	<i>Achuwę qsa ęgizhi n'ebeli n'ęsū</i> (It is not every fly that perches on one's body that is driven)	It is not every vituperation that one should respond to	Tolerance
6.	<i>Onyen'ęfa nnala za</i> (Everyone answers his father's name)	Everyone needs to protect the integrity or morals of his family	(i) Honesty (ii) Respect (iii) Truth

Traditional Expressions of Ukwuani Biosocial Personhood and the Attendant Ethical Principles (Source: Authors)

The virtues of human dignity and sacredness of human life as products of the biosocial orientation of personhood emphasize the sacredness of blood among the Ukwuani people

which ensures the abhorrence of the willful killing of a fellow human being. These virtues are described by Lee and George to mean that:

...all human beings have a special type of *dignity* which is the basis for (1) the obligation all of us have not to kill them, (2) the obligation to take their well-being into account when we act, and (3) even the obligation to treat them as we would have them treat us. Indeed, those who hold that all human beings possess a special type of dignity almost always also hold that human beings are *equal* in fundamental dignity. They maintain that there is no class of human beings to which other human beings should be subordinated when considering their interests or their well-being, and when devising laws and social policies (173).

The essentials of these virtues as described above can be relevant in handling the issues around insecurity in our societies. Terrorism, banditry and kidnapping which result in the devaluation of human life are considered as taboos and have dire consequences on the life of the perpetrators of such heinous crimes. Such acts which involve taking the life of another are termed *igbu ẹkọ oji* translated as harvesting premature palm fruits which is an act of wickedness whose price should be paid by the perpetrator who is forced to consume it. Such a consequence discourages people from engaging in such acts. That is the same way that a murderer pays the price for such act as he is condemned to be punished by the community life forces (*anị obodo*). His sanity is affected leading to even losing his own life. The centrality of the human person here is a clear demonstration of the philosophy of humanism in Ukwuani anthropology which sees “the human person at the centre...not defined according to his colour, nation, religion, creed, political leanings, material contribution or any matter” (Kanu 376). While the Western legal perspectives in handling such crimes are appreciated, this paper emphasizes collaborative efforts with the indigenous philosophy of life where emphasis is laid on the sanctity of life at the different ontological levels of human existence ranging from the home through the family to the community. Attention is also paid to the oneness of humanity and the sacredness of life through the web of the life-forces, as this would play a preventive role in tackling the problems.

Tolerance is another principle that is prominent in Ukwuani biosocial view of the human person, and it is a product of the social/normative relations in the ontological/biological components. The expression *iwe eze ewe ile k’eze ata’yaẹlụ n’eze natagbu ife ile n’enuo* (the tongue cannot be angry with the teeth even if the teeth bite it because the teeth must grind for the tongue to swallow) indicates that individuals must accommodate one another in spite of the real act of conflicts that exists among them. If for instance, the tongue separates itself from the teeth because of the bites it constantly receives from them, then it becomes useless to itself because it cannot perform the double function of chewing and swallowing for itself. This is how Ukwuani anthropology sees the human person which should be seen in our social relationships for the ultimate purpose of engendering harmonious existence. There must be something to even benefit from certain individuals that one perceives to be enemies because the nature of the human person is such that persons could have ambivalent attitudes and in the midst of conflict, individuals can potentially be available to aid others. A tolerant person in Ukwuani culture does not attempt to forcefully make a person renounce what is probably a negative attitude of mind. It is rather an accommodation that over time makes such individuals see and acknowledge the wrongness of his actions and possibly change for not only his own good but also the

good of the society. Feldman identifies with this view by acknowledging that tolerance points at “the wrongfulness of trying to coerce people to give up certain beliefs or conduct to which they are deeply committed” (394). Tolerance therefore is a moral virtue that ensures social order for the purpose of development of the society, as it can also be significant in handling security issues such as terrorism and ethno-religious conflicts. Much of the root causes of these social vices have been attributed to differences in perspectives. Differences have been observed as reasons for the necessity of tolerance; an ethical principle that makes for smooth functioning of the society in the midst of ethnic, religious, social, and political differences (Aghamelu, *et al* 31; Drerup and Kuhler 2). Whether the differences are a matter of pluralism or relativism, the fact is that tolerance makes for a harmonious co-existence (Fiala 30-31).

In the various strata of education, there is need to stress the relevance of tolerance as a universal principle (Marksovna 122) of the human person in handling the apparent differences in the numerous areas of human existence. This being so, much of the social vices associated with differences and attendant intolerance, especially in this age of globalization, can be handled. Any individualism that does not tolerate cultural differences must be abhorred. There are also moral virtues of cooperation, social dependence and togetherness which emanate from the social/normative aspects of the human person in Ukwuani anthropology. These virtues indicate the culture of collectivism as against the culture of individualism (Katz *et al* 12). Oladipupo describes collectivism thus:

The spirit of collectivism permeates African community such that they live an inclusive as against exclusive lifestyle apparent in the western world. Thus Africans are known for their philosophy of corporate existence as against the individualistic philosophy of the western world often displayed in their atomistic lifestyle. The Africans are not just called African neither is the westerner called westerner; there is a cultural delineation that separates them (2).

This same spirit is in abundance among the Ukwuani people and it is displayed in the level of cooperation found among the people when any task is set to be accomplished. The philosophy of oneness is significantly shown in social dependence as every individual acknowledges the fact that everyone needs everyone in order to show togetherness as the meaning of existence. All of these moral virtues clearly show the level of love and care among the people. Even when conflicts arise, the fundamentality of collectivism always becomes the basis for managing, resolving such situations and it is also an important tool for the prevention of potential crisis. Among the Ukwuani, an atomistic individual does not exist; everybody is everybody’s keeper. This is not to say that among the Ukwuani people, there is no self-centredness. The fact is that the contraries of the virtues do not override the primacy of the virtues in times of crisis because the community is founded on the basis of these values.

Onyebaghali nwanee n’ogu which means no one should abandon his/her sibling in times of challenges is one reference expression common among the Ukwuani people indicative of the social relations of individuals in the community. With all individuals being bound by these virtues, social disorders such as corruption, abject poverty, poor leadership, ethnic and religious conflicts and the problems of insecurity would be tackled to a greater extent. Cooperation recognizes differences in orientations, compositions and even goals, yet working together entails exploring common denominators rather than differences. This is

already emphasized by Alumona and Alumona on the relevance of cooperation as an ethic of development (90). Finally, though not exhaustively, the moral virtue of individual responsibility less talked about among Africans is very essential and it is applied in the daily life of the people in Ukwuani culture. This virtue has been erroneously viewed as exclusively Western because it grants individuals autonomy and a kind of independence which breeds atomistic individuals in contradistinction to the spirit of communalism which defines Africans. In fact, Machan expressly holds the view on individualism to be:

that human beings are identifiable as a distinct species in the natural world and have as at least one of their central attributes the capacity to be rational individuals. Whatever else, then, is central about being a human being, it includes that each one... has the capacity to govern his or her life by means of the individually initiated process of thought, of conceptual consciousness. Furthermore, excelling as such an individual human being is the primary purpose in each person's life. A just political community, in turn, is one that renders it possible for this purpose to be pursued by all... (xi).

It is this presentation of individualism that Africans abhor as being a part of their ontological and social existence. The ethics of individuality here does not mean the promotion of individual ideals over and above the interest of the community; it is not the assertion of rights over duties and obligations which individual ought to fulfill for the growth of the society. It is rather more of the ethical principle of responsibility for the individual such that he develops himself to the point where he acts rationally for the common good of others and the community in general (Alumona 71; Molefe 11). This is the reason Allik and Realo are supportive of individualist ethics as they avow that "... individualism does not necessarily jeopardize organic unity and solidarity. On the contrary, the growth of individuality, autonomy, and self-sufficiency may be perceived as necessary conditions for the development of interpersonal cooperation, mutual dependence and social solidarity" (31).

The individualist ethics, therefore, which the Ukwuani culture promotes is the type that explains man's capacities and capabilities to make decisions and act in certain circumstances of life in spite of the fact that he places more values in the interest of the community. This is indicative of the fact that while the Ukwuani culture shows the importance and necessity of conforming to the norms and values of the community, one's individual responsibility, personal initiative and creativity is not undermined. There are several fragments among the Ukwuani that explain this presence of the individualist ethical principle. Two of them would suffice here: (i) *Uwa bu ele mmalu demenę* (life is what an individual makes of it); and (ii) *We bu ibu onyeozọ nị nkwoęka* (another person's burden is carried on the shoulder). The capabilities of individuals to freely pursue their goal within the social matrices of the community are built around expressions such as the two above.

Conclusion

Philosophical anthropology has been pre-occupied with the examination of the ontological and social aspects of the human person at the simplistic level without really discussing the attendant practical and consequential applications of such perspectives. This paper has shown that the biosocial orientation of personhood which constitutes the biological and the social aspects of the human person can contribute to addressing the problem of social order bedevilling Africa and even the world at large in man's daily life. This is possible through the engagements of certain attendant ethical principles of the biosocial personhood as

discussed above. To avoid ethnocentrism in approaching the social problems, the biosocial view of personhood promotes a collaborative action between its ethical values and the individualist attitude of the Western liberal approach. This is to avoid what Parsons refers to as the exclusive relationship between collective orientation and self orientation. The former is said to manifest loyalty to the community at the expense of the individual while the latter orients the individual towards personal development for the purpose of creativity, innovation and improving economic situations; all of which would address societal problems (40).

This paper holds that collectivism and individualism are not mutually exclusive. There is always something one can benefit from the other but since the social problems confronting African societies have been on the increase in spite of the numerous Western approaches adopted to confront them, it is important to critically and systematically engage African indigenous value systems in a collaborative manner in addressing the problems. The contention of this paper is that the biosocial orientation of personhood adopts a collaborative approach that is rooted in certain indigenous ethical principles so as to avoid the atomistic individualism in Western liberalism. This orientation is emphasized because it is an important way of addressing issues from a certain worldview, especially as it influences the psyche of the people in their response to conditions that they are faced with. This way efforts towards providing solutions to the social problems faced by African Societies specifically and even the world at large would become participatory and yield more pragmatic outcomes by giving attention and opportunities to African value systems in problem solving.

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METAPHYSICAL FREEDOM FROM THE PRISM OF JEAN-PAUL SARTRE: A REFLECTION

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Abstract

This work on “Metaphysical Freedom from the Prism of J.P Sartre: A Reflection” sets to reflect on Sartre’s notion of metaphysical freedom and authentic existence. Sartre's existentialist philosophy emphasizes the central role of metaphysical freedom in defining human existence. Metaphysical freedom is the inherent condition of human beings as radically free agents, unbound by any predetermined essence or nature. Sartre posits that inanimate objects or animals, unlike humans, are condemned to be free, meaning that they are thrust into the world without a given purpose and must define themselves through their actions and choices. This freedom, however, is both a source of empowerment and a burden, as it carries the responsibility of shaping one's own identity and values without recourse to any absolute, external moral framework. Using the method of critical reflection, it becomes apparent in this paper that there is a big difference in Sartre’s understanding of freedom as an authentic existence. Authentic existence emerges from the acceptance and full acknowledgement of freedom. To live authentically, according to Sartre, is to embrace the absence of any predefined essence and it involves taking full responsibility for one's choices, thereby creating oneself through acts of will. In contrast, inauthentic existence, or "bad faith" occurs when an individual denies or flees from this freedom, conforming to societal expectations or adopting false identities to escape the anxiety that comes with absolute freedom. Using method of critical reflection, this work investigates the philosophy of existentialism, which is a core philosophical tradition, in which Sartre understands his notion of freedom. This includes his notion of the selfsame subject. This work juxtaposes the same with metaphysical freedom and authentic existence and thus challenges individuals to live deliberately and intentionally, recognizing that their essence is not fixed but continually created through their decisions. This existentialist view invites a deep reflection on the nature of human freedom, responsibility, and the potential for living a life that is truly one's own. The tension between the burden of freedom and the pursuit of authenticity underpins much of Sartre's work, making his philosophy a compelling exploration of what it means to exist as a free and self-defining individual in a contingent world.

Keywords: Sartre, Existentialism, Metaphysical freedom, Authenticity, Bad faith, Responsibility.

Introduction

Freedom is a versatile and interesting subject in human history and assumes a significant meaning in different traditions of philosophy. It is always an issue that has generated many controversies in the world of philosophy and beyond. However, many people believe that freedom is a reality, as they assume that they are free when they are not under any kind of hindrance. In philosophy, freedom is a moral, social and existential concept which permeates

every aspect of human condition, because, for Sartre, existence is freedom. Every individual has a choice, and it is this choice that characterizes being. Being's very possibility has been argued against when certain things, like determinism, are brought into focus. Since metaphysical freedom exists we know this because we experience choosing and moral freedom is possible since some moral goals are objectively good, we need a worldview which allows both kinds of freedom. It must accept that human beings can transcend the confines of the material cosmos. It must also grant humans the ability to act concerning objective moral values.

Freedom Defined

The concept of human freedom is linked closely to the ideas of responsibility and autonomy and is of great interest to philosophers, despite the general tendency to gloss over it, as many of them, like Locke, Sartre, and others have delved into ramifications and entailment of freedom. As should be expected, the concept has been viewed within the varied philosophical positions and schools of thought. There are also interpretations and understandings about its treatment. While many individuals belong to the schools of thought that looks at the concepts of freedom generally, it is the wavelength of existentialism that the concept has become quite topical and forms the grounded leitmotif of their engagements. Being a philosophical tradition that takes the issues of concrete human existence seriously, as the existentialists generally maintain that human existence precedes any ontological consideration, man is seen as a being that is generally free and whose essence, if any, is freedom.

One of the most outstanding individuals within the existentialist school, arguably, Jean-Paul Sartre, nudges the idea of freedom to be a supreme pedestal as the essence of man. According to him, man is thrown into the world and confronted with a choice in the exercise of his freedom, to define oneself and one's subsequent essence. There are choices, according to the tenets of existentialism, which states unequivocally that man is free. Sartre's idea of freedom initially tended to be wholly that of the mind or will, which he equated with consciousness, but later extended it to include concrete situations where choice has been made. Sartre also holds that man is the sole author of his destiny, and determinism is non-existent and has no effect on man's self-actualization. For Sartre, authenticity involves the awareness that, because we are always free to transform our lives through our decisions, if we maintain a particular identity through time; this is because we are choosing that identity at each moment. Freedom, for Sartre, is not just the freedom to do something, but the type that confers on someone the unmitigated and inalienable right to always make a choice (Sartre, 1943: 673). This, however, creates anxiety and anguish, individuals flee in self-deception and continue leading in inauthenticity. Existence is the state of being alive or being real.

An authentic life is one where our needs are met, we feel fulfilled, we experience self-actualization, and we flourish in it. Authenticity is a concept of personality, in existentialism, authenticity is the degree to which a person's actions are congruent with their values and desires, despite external pressures to social conformity. Laslie Stevenson explores various philosophical perspectives on human nature, including existentialism, where he discusses the significance of individual freedom in leading an authentic life. "The only authentic and genuine way of life is that which is freely chosen by everyone for himself" (Stevenson, 1974: 8). Authenticity as a philosophical concept denotes the genuine, original and true state of human existence. Put it simply, authenticity means you are true to your

personality, values and spirit, regardless of the pressure that you are under to act otherwise. Authenticity involves the awareness that we are always free to transform our lives through our decisions, if we maintain a particular identity through time, this is because we are choosing that identity at each moment. Authenticity has always been associated with freedom. If we are free to express our true selves and feelings, then we are also initiating an act of emancipation.

Sartre's Metaphysical Freedom

Sartre famously asserts that "humans are condemned to be free", emphasizing that freedom is both an opportunity and a heavy responsibility. Unlike objects designed for a specific function, people must shape their own identities and values without relying on external structures. Sartre's exploration of freedom is prominently displayed in his work, *Being and Nothingness*, where he gives an ontological subtlety of the idea. In his discourse on freedom, Sartre argues that every act is driven by a cause or motive. He asserts that it is impossible to find an act without a motive but clarifies that this does not, in any way, imply that the motive directly causes the act. Rather, the motive is an essential component of the act itself. This viewpoint is expressed in his book, *Being and Nothingness* (1943:465). Clearly, Sartre aims to establish a connection between cause and effect to emphasize that freedom is not caused or determined, as determinists believe. According to him, though the definition of a thing implies making explicit the structures of such a thing's essence, the problem that comes with the definition of freedom, however, is that it has no essence: "Now freedom has no essence. It is not subject to any logical necessity; we must say of it what Heidegger said of *Dasein* in general. In its existence commands essence" (Sartre, 1943: 486).

Walter T. Stace, in his work entitled *The Problem of Free Will*, argues that the confusion stems from a faulty definition of freewill, according to him, freedom should not be defined as the ability to act without any cause or as the ability to have done otherwise in an absolute sense. Instead, free will should be understood as the ability to act according to one's desires. While there is determinism, there is also the reality of free will (Stace, 2012). He (Stace) distinguishes between free and unfree acts, that is, between free acts and those that are determined: free acts are all caused by desires, motives or some sort of internal psychological states of the agent's mind; unfree acts, on the other hand, are all caused by physical forces or physical conditions outside the agent. In Sartre's work, *Existentialism is a Humanism* (1948). Sartre argues that existentialists reject the notion that passion has a significant impact on our acts; instead, they think that individuals are accountable for their passions:

For-itself manifests as the autonomous basis for both its emotions and its volition. I have a sense of liberation via my fear, as it allows me to exercise my freedom. I willingly subject myself to dread and consciously select to be scared in specific situations. In different situations, I will be intentionally and bravely present, and I will have invested all my freedom in my courage (1948: p.22).

In *Existentialism is a Humanism*, Sartre asserts that existentialists hold the belief that individuals are not shaped by inherited, environmental, sociological, biological or psychological circumstances, but rather by their conscious choice to be who they are. According to him, a person is considered a coward only on the basis of their acts of cowardice, and they should be responsible for their actions or lack thereof. In addition, he

states that the individual's cowardice is not attributed to any physical or psychological factors, but rather to their own actions and choices. Consequently, everyone has responsibility for their condition of existence and behavior.

In Sartre's opinion, human beings always try to run away from the reality of their freedom, even though their very existence speaks of the preponderance of it. Thus, some humans believe that they are fated or determined through being. But Sartre maintains that human reality may be defined as a being that in its being its freedom is at stake because human reality perpetually tries to refuse to recognize freedom. Accordingly, he declares that "Man is free because he exists as a presence to himself, rather than being confined to a fixed identity" (Sartre, 1946: 29). Furthermore, Sartre observes that man's freedom comes from his ability to choose and his existence as a conscious being. He emphasizes that man does not have a predetermined nature, as this would support determinism. Instead, man has the potential to become something different from what he currently is. Sartre defines being as the act of consciously choosing to be oneself, without any external influence. This explains why Sartre rejects Descartes' dualism, which posits the coexistence of free choice and determined human desires, a concept previously explored by the ancient stoics. As expected, Sartre argues that this duality is riddled with several difficulties. He maintains that such a division is unimaginable inside the core unity of the psyche. He queries: "How can we conceptualize a being that is both interconnected and dependent on other entities, but exists independently, and is self-revealing?" (Sartre, 1943: 186).

In *Ethics of Authenticity* (1991: 721-2), Charles Taylor illustrates the disparity between choice and freedom. He describes a destitute individual who reluctantly agrees to undertake demeaning, poorly paid work just to fulfill their fundamental needs. According to Taylor, while the person does have the option to either accept the poorly paid job or face starvation, but in this situation, the available choice is lacking in humanity. This demonstrates that choice and freedom are not always interchangeable, but there are situations where they may be. The degree of their synonym would be contingent upon the level of compassion inherent in the alternatives from which decisions are to be made. In this scenario, although freedom pertains to an act of making choices, true freedom does not exist when the available options are not genuine and beneficial.

Authentic Existence Vs Bad Faith

The word "authentic" comes from the Greek *authentikos* meaning "genuine", "original", or "principal". This in turn, derives from the Latin *authentēs*, meaning "one who acts with authority" or "one who does something by his own hand". Sartre contrasts authentic existence with bad faith (*mauvaise foi*), a form of self-deception, where individuals deny their freedom to avoid responsibility. In *Being and Nothingness*, he provides the famous example of a waiter who performs his duties with exaggerated precision, acting as though he is merely a waiter and nothing more (Sartre, 1943:102). This illustrates bad faith: the attempt to reduce oneself to a fixed identity rather than embracing the openness of existence.

Soren Kierkegaard, often regarded as the father of existentialism, profoundly explores the concept of authenticity, emphasizing that living authentically requires individual to confront their inner fears, doubt, and anxieties, making choices based on their true convictions rather than simply conforming to societal expectations. In his book, *The Sickness Unto Death* (1980), Kierkegaard introduces the notion of despair, which he defines as the condition that arises when a person is disconnected from their true self. This misalignment

can take different forms, such as failing to embrace one's real identity or realizing that one's existence lacks true meaning. His idea about authenticity focuses on the struggle individuals face in living in accordance with their true nature, as opposed to succumbing to external pressures. Kierkegaard believes that each person has a unique inner purpose, often called "subjective truth", which can only be discovered through personal reflection, faith, and a deep commitment to one's existence. Although Kierkegaard does not explicitly use the term "bad faith", his analysis of authenticity provides a foundation for later discussions on self-deception and inauthenticity. He argues that by confronting despair and embracing one's genuine self, individuals can achieve a more meaningful and truthful existence. In the novel, *Nausea* (1966), Sartre argues that the existence of man is enigmatic and contradictory and cannot be easily defined or explained by any concise formula. Human beings do not just exist in a state of pure existence, but they have the potential to recognize and understand their existence as such through the phenomenon of nausea. According to Heidegger, in his work, *Being and Time* (1943), with terms like ontology, being, existence and phenomenology are attributed to human beings, but the question arises: what is it to be oneself, at one with oneself, or truly representing oneself? In Heidegger's view, we exist for the sake of ourselves: enacting roles and expressing character traits which contribute to realizing a certain image of what it is to humans in our cases.

Charles Taylor, in his work, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (1991), successfully articulates the sources of the self. Taylor makes a case for retaining the concept of authenticity and the practices associated with it because the original and undistorted idea of authenticity contains an important element of self-transcendence. Unsatisfied with the widespread criticism of authenticity as an adequate ethical orientation, Taylor sets out to prove that authenticity does not necessarily lead to asceticism or self-indulgence, but the justified criticism of self-indulgent form of the idea does not justify the complete condemnation of the idea itself. In Taylor's opinion, restoring an undistorted version, could guard against meaninglessness, which is one of the malaise of modernity which Taylor regards as something tied to trivialized form of the culture of authenticity.

According to Emmanuel I. Archibong in his work entitled: *Beautiful Metaphysics: A Western and African Tapestry*, the problem stems from deep question about the relationship and potential disconnect between the essential properties of an entity and its actual existence. This issue has roots in Platonic forms as well as medieval scholasticism. In the Middle Ages, philosophers and theologians wrestled with whether "essence precedes existence" or vice versa in trying to reconcile faith and reason (Etim and Archibong, 22). Questions arose around contingent versus necessary beings and between actual and possible beings. For Kierkegaard, the subjective thinker is an existing individual, for whom the question of one's existence is most important. Against Hegelian rationalism, Kierkegaard positions lived existence as more fundamental than abstract essences. Sartre further popularizes existentialist themes around the primacy of "existence before essence" (Sartre, 1948: 26). This suggests that for human beings, no predefined essence or design dictates identity, rather radical freedom leaves individuals to determine their essence. For Sartre, subjectivity and contingency take priority over conceptual or divine essence that would limit self-determined existence (Archibong, 2024:64).

Reading through Elijah John's *Man and Knowledge: Issues in Contemporary Philosophy* (2024), it can be discovered that Sartre's observation concerning human freedom and responsibility cannot be overemphasized. Accordingly, John submits that since men are without nature, Sartre maintains that man's essence is nothing without

existence. That is, man is nothingness or that man is in a state of not beingness, or of no beingness. Sahakian understands this concept of nothingness of being when he declares: "Nothingness enters the world through human existence. Nothingness is dependent upon being for its very existence" (1969:345). Furthermore, it is also observed that the character of nothingness is what Sartre refers to as freedom or free consciousness. This implies that man is fundamentally free. Thus, man is condemned to be free, a fate which he cannot escape (John, 2024:73). In Sartre's opinion, man is a being whose existence precedes essence that is, man does not have any essence before existence; rather man exists first of all and then creates his own essence. In his very words, John submits that "man exists and later becomes his essential self by what he is" (John, 2024:49).

Freedom, Choice and Responsibility

Freedom and responsibility are two concepts that are so dear to the heart of Sartre. In fact, freedom is regarded as the very structure of man. In his *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre (1969:444), maintains that freedom is identical with one's existence. Hence, freedom cannot be acquired as Hegel suggested, since it is inseparable from man's basic condition of existence. And it is this freedom that is the permanent capacity for self-determination, self-orientation and self-detachment (John, 2024:51). Closely associated with the concept of freedom is responsibility. In other words, man's freedom is inseparable from responsibility. A person is free to engage himself in any activity of his choice or to make himself what he wants to be, but he must be responsible for whatever comes out of his freely chosen actions. This shows that there is nothing like objective values, for it is man who confers values and meaning on things and into existence by reason of his free choices (John, 2024:52). According to Sartre, freedom is always equivalent to responsibility, and this is not limited to one's own actions and choices but across all humanity. As for the relation between freedom and responsibility, Sartre claims that it is such a relationship that makes human beings fall into bad-faith. The beings that are conscious of their freedom are also conscious of their responsibility; that means, it is man who must struggle for the results and consequences of his conscious and free actions. The idea of abandonment is a prominent element within the existentialist school of thinking.

In *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Albert Camus (2013), examines the absurd clash between humanity's search for the meaning and the universe's silence. Rather than leading to despair, this awareness provides a deeper understanding of personal freedom, decision making, and accountability. Accepting that life has no inherent purpose frees individuals from societal expectations and imposed meaning. This recognition enables true autonomy, allowing one to live authentically without seeking external approval or conforming to predefined roles. In an absurd world, individuals must determine their own path rather than relying on external guidance or divine intervention. Personal values and decision-making, reinforcing the necessity of activity shaping one's life. In support of Sartre, Camus states that freedom comes with accountability. Since there is no predetermined fate or higher power dictating life's events, individuals must take full responsibility for their actions and their consequences, fully embracing the weight of their choices. These ideas are conveyed through the figure of Sisyphus, depicting him as the ultimate absurd who finds fulfillment in consciously accepting his endless struggle. In essence, someone who lives with the absurd in full view wins for themselves a kind of freedom that is, freedom from false hope and beliefs. Skepticism stems back to previous rationalist philosophy but is distinguished by maintaining that there is only one truth: the absurd (Camus, 2013:192)

If one chooses freedom with its responsibility, then that becomes the virtuous side of freedom and consciousness because it is an affirmation of life and realization of individual consciousness. However, if one escapes from such a struggle for responsibility, this means one does not choose to be free and falls in bad faith. What if one accepts bad faith as something good? As Sartre pointed out, on choice for freedom, such a question can be raised to challenge the existentialist conception of freedom. However, this question is irrelevant and a product of a misunderstanding of Sartre because he conceives freedom as a value. Sartre thinks that bad faith is the opposite of freedom, an act of consciousness. But even at that, it cannot be claimed that a man who is in bad faith is not free. For Sartre, man is condemned to freedom; therefore, anyone in bad faith is also free in principle. However, when a man lie to oneself and does not choose to act in the way of freedom, that means he does not realize or perform his freedom that he is conscious of. In that sense, the issue is not goodness or badness.

Sartre values freedom and theorizes about its existence and the possibility of its realization and the way to live by it. A man only escapes the realization or actualization of freedom by escaping the action to realize freedom and existence. Since the action for freedom is always related to responsibility, bad faith entails escaping from responsibility but also staying in the first-degree consciousness and always lying to oneself. In addition, Sartre states that first-degree consciousness does not give us pride of being human because it differentiates us from animals and thus, the being-in-itself arises only in second-degree consciousness. Bad faith refers to acceptance of living in self-deception in that he is free and he is responsible for the world and himself as a way of being. If one's life is composed of one's choices or actions that are freely projected by oneself, then freedom refers to the fact that man is the author of his own life, and he is responsible for the consequences or situations of freedom. It must be stated that Sartre's concept of responsibility is closely linked to his philosophy of freedom. In Sartre's view, human beings possess radical freedom and the power to shape their existence through their choices and actions – total freedom brings total responsibility. However, individuals often engage in 'bad faith' as a means of escaping the anxiety and responsibility that accompany this freedom. With no higher tribunal for evaluating reasons for acting, we are entirely responsible for what we do: we have no excuses behind us nor justifications before us.

It requires us to be honest with ourselves. We must live in accordance with our values and beliefs. This means, acknowledging desires, ambitions and taking action to fulfill them. Sartre believes that acting in good faith is a way of embracing one's freedom and taking control of one's own life, rather than simply allowing life to happen to us. Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself. This provides a powerful framework for understanding the human condition and offers a compelling argument for the importance of embracing one's freedom and responsibility. Whether one is a student, a worker, an artist, or a parent, the principles of good faith can be applied to every aspect of life and can help individuals to live a more meaningful, fulfilling, and authentic life. Sartre's ideas about good faith are closely linked to his views on the creation of values.

Conclusion

Throughout the discussions, the notion of freedom encompasses more than meets the eye. A deeper examination reveals that it includes the potential for its absence, particularly when considered against the backdrop of determinism. While existentialists, notably, Sartre, may amplify the extent of human freedom, they correctly assert that individuals are a collection

of possibilities capable of navigating their paths within the constraints imposed by external factors. But on a serious note, human freedom is inherently limited rather than absolute. We are influenced by various elements, including our inherent nature, which shape how we exercise our will. Nonetheless, we retain the ability to shape our lives and surroundings within the parameters of our freedom. Absolute freedom is not a prerequisite for experiencing freedom, as we are inherently complete beings. Hence, Sartre's concept of metaphysical freedom urges us to embrace authenticity by acknowledging the full implications of our freedom. Living authentically involves not adhering to a preordained route but rather continuously shaping and reshaping our essence through our choices. The challenge posed by Sartre's philosophy is to live without justification, fully cognizant of our freedom, and to construct a life that embodies our genuine values, even amidst the inherent meaninglessness of existence. In examining Sartre's concepts of metaphysical freedom and authentic existence, analyzing their implications and critiques, this work reflects on the tension between freedom and determinism, the burden of responsibility, and the practicality of living authentically. This reflection highlighted the relevance of Sartre's philosophy to contemporary issues in our societies, particularly in the African context of emphasizing the importance of agency, identity and responsibility in navigating social and existential challenges.

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