

HEIDEGGARIAN INTERSUBJECTIVITY AS A FRAMEWORK FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN THE NIGER DELTA

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Abstract

Prompting this work is the crisis in the Niger Delta part of Nigeria which is seemingly unabated and unnecessarily prolonged. It is on this basis that the work embarks on the analysis of the theory of intersubjectivity in Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology as a remedial foundation for addressing the Niger Delta crisis. The study argues that Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology which is intersubjectivity oriented offers an alternative orientation of live and let live and a win-win mentality that can be harnessed to comprehensively resolve the crisis in the Niger Delta. The essential problem tackled in this study is the rigid and absolutist, top-down governance models that have typified Nigeria's handling of the crisis which has not only heightened the problem but has likewise made the crisis in the Niger Delta persistent. Therefore, the basic objective of this work is to explore how the theory of intersubjectivity in Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology which propagates human interconnectedness and promotes the themes of care, cooperation, and empathy can serve as a comprehensive instrument for ameliorating the Niger Delta crisis. To carry through this phenomenological analysis, the work uses Jim Unah's multiculturalism as a theoretical framework; which serves as an anchor for Chiedozi Okoro's Afa hermeneutic phenomenology that has been adopted as the methodology of the study. The significance of the theory of multiculturalism and the methodology of Afa phenomenology is that both are intersubjective in approach attained through the principles of duality, symbiosis, and complementarity. Both propagate the recognition of 'differences' in cultural identities which are meant to encourage an inclusive ontology that discourages rigidity, and absolutism and encourages interdependence. In essence, Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology, Unah's multiculturalism, and Okoro's phenomenology of life-for promote the orientations of intersubjectivity, inclusivity, and complementarity, which in turn encourage the temperament of live and let live. The findings of the study show that the continuous use of the rigid and absolutist system of top-down governance models that have typified Nigeria's handling of the crisis will perpetually polarize the Nigerian State, the Nigerian State actors, and the people of Niger Delta. The study introduced an Afrocentric approach to the theory of intersubjectivity as an indigenous platform for resolving the Niger Delta crisis. Hence, the conclusion that the domestication of the theory of intersubjectivity would enable symbiotic and empathic understanding among the stakeholders in the Niger Delta. The study recommends the incorporation of inter-subjectivity into Nigeria's educational curricula and administrative training programs. This could be done through the introduction of African intersubjectivity ethics which focuses on the relational nature of human existence, the interconnectedness of individuals within a community, and the ethical obligations that arise from these relationships, into the educational curriculum at all levels so that the attitude of humaneness and broad-mindedness would be properly inculcated. It would also help in fostering an understanding of relational ontology and the ethical imperative of inclusivity, as

these initiatives can help in transforming the national ethos, promoting a culture of empathy and symbiotic coexistence.

Keywords: Heidegger, resource control, Niger Delta, Afa hermeneutic phenomenology

Introduction

The Niger Delta conflict is a multifaceted mix of social, political, and environmental problems that pose one of the toughest challenges to Nigeria's stability. This skirmish revolves around disagreements over resource control, the environmental degradation caused by oil extraction, and the marginalization of the region's indigenous communities. There have been several efforts by government and non-government units to address the crisis. Still, the area continues to face the challenges of privation, impoverishment, and a growing sense of hostility, largely due to the rigid, top-down governance styles of authority that have characterized Nigeria's response to the Niger Delta issue. The issue with this style of governance method is that it overlooks the complex cultural, historical, and environmental factors that shape the daily lives of the people in the Niger Delta (Ogunlesi, 2012; Obi, 2010). This study suggests a new philosophical perspective to address the crisis, inspired by Martin Heidegger's theory of inter-subjectivity, especially his hermeneutic phenomenology. Heidegger's analysis of rigid top-down methodological frameworks, which finds expression in the subject-object dichotomy in human interactions and its corresponding critique, offers a transformative modification away from absolutist views of human relations that have failed to capture the complexities of regional human relationships and context-specific existential realities (Unah, J. (2008). The concept of Being-in-the-world is a fundamental idea in Heidegger's philosophy and shows how interrelated human existence is with the environment they live in and other people around them (Heidegger, 1962). This ontological perception viewpoint re-evaluates the Niger Delta crisis not just as a battle over material resources but as a fundamental issue of relational understanding, rooted in disaffection, manipulation, and a lack of mutual recognition (Critchley, S. 2001).

The paper contends that considering the tenets of Heidegger's concept of inter-subjectivity which finds expression in care, empathy, and a collective commitment to understanding one another, it can be visualized as a new pathway for conflict resolution. Heidegger's focus on the relational nature of human existence challenges the rigid, top-down models of governance that have subjugated the Niger Delta discourse. Heidegger's theory allows for a more inclusive approach to conflict resolution by acknowledging the lived experiences and cultural identities of the indigenous peoples of the Niger Delta. In addition to Heidegger's philosophy, the study incorporates Chiedozi Okoro's Afa hermeneutic phenomenology, which emphasizes the importance of cultural context and empathic engagement in understanding conflict dynamics, (Okoro, 2008, Kymlicka, 1995), and Jim Unah's theory of multiculturalism, which highlights the significance of recognizing and including diverse cultural identities in conflict resolution (Unah, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

The Niger Delta crisis epitomizes one of the most protracted and complex socio-political and environmental conflicts in Nigeria, rooted in clashes over resource control, environmental degradation, exploitation, and the marginalization of indigenous communities. Notwithstanding the region's vast oil wealth, which contributes meaningfully to Nigeria's economy, the local populace continues to suffer from abject poverty, underdevelopment, and systemic hostility. Due to its disregard for historical, cultural, and environmental realities,

Nigeria's top-down leadership approach to the Niger Delta crisis has failed, resulting in continued violence and environmental degradation. To address the Niger Delta problem, this paper highlights the shortcomings of the oppressor paradigms and suggests a different philosophical outline based on the shared tenets of Jim Unah's multiculturalism, Martin Heidegger's inter-subjectivity, and Chiedozie Okoro's Afa hermeneutic phenomenology. Therefore, the main issue is that current top-down governance outlines are insufficient to promote inclusivity, understanding, and a long-term approach to conflict resolution in the context of the Niger Delta crisis.

Research Questions: The Primary Research Question finds expression in the exploration of how Martin Heidegger's theory of inter-subjectivity, can provide a philosophical and ethical framework for addressing the Niger Delta crisis?

Secondary Research Questions:

- i. What are the limitations of traditional Western metaphysical frameworks in resolving the Niger Delta crisis, and how does Heidegger's critique of Cartesian dualism offer an alternative approach?
- ii. How do the tenets of Okoro's Afa hermeneutic phenomenology and Unah's multiculturalism concepts enrich Heidegger's inter-subjectivity theory to advance relevant context frameworks for conflict resolution and resource governance?
- iii. What are the possible implications of implementing an Afrocentric reinterpretation of inter-subjectivity for policy-making, education, and supportable development in the Niger Delta?
- iv. How can the values of care, empathy, and mutual recognition rooted in Heideggerian inter-subjectivity encourage negotiation and collaboration among Niger Delta stakeholders?

Significance of the Study: Alongside its potential policy implications for addressing the Niger Delta crisis, this research holds both theoretical and practical significance, and it can enhance broader ethical and philosophical conversations surrounding resource management conflicts, environmental justice, and methods of conflict resolution.

Theoretical Significance: By merging Heideggerian inter-subjectivity with African philosophical concepts like Unah's multiculturalism and Okoro's Afa hermeneutic phenomenology this study enriches philosophical debates. This blend challenges the dominant Western individualistic and absolutist approaches often used to tackle African issues, which have shown to be less effective. We can not overlook the vital role of indigenous knowledge systems in addressing the unique realities of Africa. This study advocates for the creation of an inclusive, interactive ontology that is rooted in African perspectives, and capable of addressing the existential challenges faced on the continent. It plays a crucial role in the decolonization of knowledge by connecting local insights with global philosophical frameworks.

Practical Significance: The suggested framework presents a groundbreaking method for addressing the Niger Delta crisis, focusing on dialogue, empathy, and mutual acknowledgment among stakeholders, all rooted in African humanistic principles. It equips participants with practical tools to foster collaboration among local communities, the Nigerian government, and multinational corporations, thereby transcending the adversarial

relationships that have defined the conflict. Furthermore, the research underscores the necessity of integrating inter-subjectivity into educational curricula and administrative training initiatives to promote a culture of inclusivity and responsible resource management.

Policy Implications: The results of this research hold important implications for policy development in Nigeria and other resource-abundant areas facing comparable issues. By promoting an Afrocentric perspective on inter-subjectivity, the study emphasizes the necessity for strategies that focus on enhancing the welfare of local populations, preserving cultural diversity, and ensuring the sustainability of natural ecosystems. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of engaging all stakeholders in resource governance decision-making processes, ensuring that the perspectives of marginalized communities are acknowledged and valued.

Global Relevance: The emphasis of this study on relational ontology, cultural diversity, and indigenous knowledge systems carries significant implications for international discussions surrounding environmental justice and sustainable development. It presents a model for resolving resource-related conflicts in various areas, including the Amazon rainforest and the Arctic, where challenges of exploitation, marginalization, and environmental harm are prevalent. By promoting a redefined approach to resource management that prioritizes ethical collaboration, the study plays a vital role in the continuous pursuit of a fairer, more equitable, and sustainable global society.

Literature Review on Integration

To strengthen the theoretical basis of this paper, it is essential to conduct a brief examination of significant literature on Heidegger's philosophy, the Niger Delta crisis, and various alternative approaches to conflict resolution.

Heidegger's Hermeneutic Phenomenology and Inter-subjectivity: This paper focuses on Heidegger's critique of rigid and absolutist metaphysical orientation, particularly his opposition to the Cartesian distinction between subject and object. His notion of Being-in-the-world, which emphasizes an ontological state of interconnectedness, presents a significant alternative to the alienating and exclusionary frameworks that have intensified the crisis in the Niger Delta (Heidegger, 1962). Scholars like Dreyfus (1991) and Carman (2006) have further developed Heidegger's ideas of care and cooperation, demonstrating their relevance to modern ethical challenges, including those related to environmental and resource exploitation conflicts.

Resource Management and Governance in the Niger Delta: The Niger Delta is marked by significant contradictions; it is a region abundant in oil resources yet remains one of the poorest areas in Nigeria (Obi, 2010). The environmental damage resulting from oil extraction, along with the socio-political exclusion of local populations, has led to growing resentment and conflict (Ogunlesi, 2012). Traditional governance models, which rely on centralized state control over oil resources, have faced criticism for neglecting the historical and cultural contexts of the indigenous communities in the Niger Delta (Ikein, 1990; Watts, 2008).

Multiculturalism and Conflict Resolution: Jim Unah's theory of multiculturalism holds significant relevance in the context of conflict resolution, as it promotes the acknowledgment of cultural diversity in addressing social disputes (Unah, 2002). His focus on inter-subjectivity aligns with Heidegger's concepts of mutual recognition and care,

providing a comprehensive framework for analyzing the conflict dynamics in the Niger Delta that transcends the simplistic dichotomy of "oppressor" and "victim."

Afa Hermeneutic Phenomenology: Afa Hermeneutic Phenomenology: Chiedozie Okoro's Afa hermeneutic phenomenology presents a methodological approach for exploring African philosophical traditions, especially with socio-political challenges like the Niger Delta crisis (Okoro, 2008). This approach prioritizes cultural context and empathetic comprehension, which aligns with Heidegger's concept of inter-subjectivity, thereby providing a means to anchor Heidegger's philosophy in the real-life experiences of the communities in the Niger Delta (Okoro, C. 2020).

Philosophical Foundations of Heideggerian Inter-subjectivity and the Ethics of Resource Control

This exploration centers on Martin Heidegger's critique of conventional ontological frameworks that reinforce binary oppositions, such as self-versus other, being versus non-being, and subject versus object. Heidegger (1962) contends that the rigid constructs of Western metaphysics, rooted in Cartesian dualism, foster alienation, and marginalization by establishing artificial divides between individuals and their environments, as well as among individuals themselves. His concept of Being-in-the-world (Dasein) challenges these dichotomies by advocating for a relational ontology that emphasizes the interconnectedness of human existence within a shared world, characterized by mutual influence and interdependence. This foundational idea is essential for comprehending the Niger Delta crisis, where the neglect of this interconnectedness has resulted in the exploitation of the region's resources and the systemic alienation of its inhabitants (Unah, J. (2018). Heidegger's relational ontology is further enhanced by Jim Unah's perspective on multiculturalism, which highlights the ethical necessity of acknowledging the Other, encompassing the diverse ethnic, cultural, and historical identities that make up the Niger Delta. Unah (1998) critiques the absolutist inclinations of Western ontology, promoting a pluralistic approach that emphasizes inclusivity and empathy. This aligns with Heidegger's advocacy for a more nuanced and empathetic interaction with others, which is vital in a region characterized by ethnic diversity, cultural pluralism, and historical grievances. By merging Unah's multiculturalism with Heidegger's inter-subjectivity, this study formulates a framework that addresses both the ontological and ethical aspects of the Niger Delta crisis. The concept of inter-subjectivity, as defined by Heidegger, is critically analyzed in relation to Edmund Husserl's original phenomenological interpretation of the term. While Husserl concentrated on the mutual recognition between subjects, Heidegger expanded this notion to encompass the broader relational dynamics that shape human existence.

Theoretical Framework

This research is anchored in a threefold theoretical framework that integrates Martin Heidegger's concept of inter-subjectivity, Jim Unah's principles of multiculturalism, and Chiedozie Okoro's Afa hermeneutic phenomenology. Collectively, these philosophical viewpoints establish a strong basis for examining the Niger Delta crisis, providing a critique of existing ontological frameworks while also suggesting avenues for ethical resource management and conflict resolution. This framework not only tackles the pressing socio-political and environmental issues faced in the Niger Delta but also enriches wider philosophical discussions surrounding inter-subjectivity, cultural diversity, and indigenous knowledge systems.

Heidegger's Inter-subjectivity: Toward a Relational Ontology

Martin Heidegger's approach to hermeneutic phenomenology, especially his notion of Dasein (Being-in-the-world), provides a profound perspective for comprehending human existence as inherently relational and contextually situated. Heidegger (1962) critiques the prevalent Cartesian dualisms in Western metaphysics, such as the distinctions between subject and object, self and other, and being and non-being, arguing that these binary frameworks foster alienation and marginalization. He asserts that human existence is intrinsically linked to a shared world, where individuals are mutually shaped through their interactions with one another and their surroundings. This relational ontology emphasizes the interconnectedness of human beings, challenging the individualistic perspectives that are often central to Western philosophy. Heidegger's concept of inter-subjectivity is particularly pertinent to the crisis in the Niger Delta, where the exploitation of natural resources has been facilitated by a lack of recognition of the interdependence between human and ecological systems. By situating resource management within the framework of Being-in-the-world, this analysis underscores the ethical necessity of promoting dialogue, collaboration, and empathy to resolve conflicts. Heidegger's focus on the mutual constitution of self and others offers a philosophical foundation for rethinking resource governance as a cooperative and inclusive endeavor, rather than one characterized by extraction and domination.

Unah's Multiculturalism: Pluralism and the Ethics of Recognition

Jim Unah's philosophy of multiculturalism, articulated in (1998), enhances Heidegger's concept of inter-subjectivity by highlighting the ethical and epistemological importance of cultural diversity. Unah critiques the absolutist inclinations prevalent in Western ontology, frequently marginalizing non-Western viewpoints and sustaining cultural dominance. He proposes a pluralistic framework that acknowledges and appreciates the various identities and perspectives that form a multicultural society. This viewpoint resonates with the principles of duality, symbiosis, and complementarity fundamental to numerous African philosophical traditions, as noted by Kymlicka (1995). In the light of the Niger Delta, Unah's multiculturalism serves as a crucial counterbalance to the homogenizing tendencies of global capitalism, which has historically neglected the region's ethnic and cultural diversity. By advocating for mutual respect and inclusivity, Unah's approach paves the way for peaceful coexistence and effective resource management. This analysis combines Unah's multiculturalism with Heidegger's inter-subjectivity to assert that ethical control over resources must be rooted in the acknowledgment of diverse cultural identities and the cultivation of empathetic relationships among all involved parties.

Okoro's Afa Hermeneutic Phenomenology: Indigenous Epistemologies and Conflict Resolution

Chiedozie Okoro's Afa hermeneutic phenomenology presents an indigenous approach to conflict understanding and resolution, rooted in the metaphysical tenets of African cosmology. The Afa framework, which originates from Igbo philosophy, highlights the interdependence of all entities and underscores the significance of symbiotic relationships in fostering harmony within both the community and the natural environment (Okoro, 2010). This viewpoint challenges the anthropocentric and dualistic perspectives prevalent in Western metaphysics, advocating for a more holistic and relational comprehension of existence. By merging Afa hermeneutics with Heidegger's concept of inter-subjectivity, this

research establishes a culturally pertinent framework for tackling the Niger Delta crisis. The Afa system's focus on interconnectedness and symbiosis aligns with Heidegger's relational ontology, while its foundation in African metaphysics serves as a counterbalance to the Eurocentric tendencies of conventional philosophical methodologies. This integration not only enhances the theoretical structure but also ensures that the proposed solutions resonate with the cultural contexts of the Niger Delta. Consequently, Okoro's Afa hermeneutic phenomenology effectively connects global philosophical discussions with local epistemologies, paving the way for sustainable and inclusive conflict resolution.

Synthesis and Broader Implications

The amalgamation of Heidegger's concept of inter-subjectivity, Unah's multicultural perspective, and Okoro's Afa hermeneutic phenomenology establish a robust theoretical framework for examining the crisis in the Niger Delta. This framework interrogates the ontological and ethical foundations of prevailing resource control paradigms, promoting a relational, pluralistic, and culturally informed approach instead. By highlighting the interdependence of human and ecological systems, the significance of cultural diversity, and the value of indigenous knowledge systems, this research enriches both philosophical and practical discussions surrounding environmental justice, resource management, and conflict resolution. The ramifications of this framework reach far beyond the Niger Delta, resonating in global scenarios where resource exploitation, cultural marginalization, and environmental degradation converge. It advocates for a redefinition of human interactions with the environment and with each other, rooted in the principles of care, empathy, and inclusivity. This redefinition transcends mere theoretical contemplation; it represents an urgent ethical necessity, particularly in light of worsening environmental crises and social disparities. By integrating these philosophical viewpoints, this study presents a transformative vision for tackling the intricate challenges of the 21st century.

The Niger Delta Crisis: A Philosophical Analysis

The crisis in the Niger Delta, characterized by environmental destruction, socio-economic exclusion, and violent confrontations, extends beyond a simple political or economic concern. It embodies a significant ontological and ethical challenge. This section provides a philosophical evaluation of the crisis, questioning the Western metaphysical frameworks that facilitate resource exploitation, and introducing alternative perspectives rooted in Heideggerian inter-subjectivity, Unah's multiculturalism, and Okoro's Afa hermeneutic phenomenology. Together, these perspectives advocate for a more ethical approach to resource management, conflict resolution, and sustainable development in the Niger Delta, while also enriching global discussions on environmental justice and inter-subjective ethics.

Critique of Western Metaphysics: Dualism and Resource Exploitation

Heidegger's examination of the rigid, top-down absolutist governance model serves as a compelling framework for analyzing the ontological roots of the Niger Delta crisis. His critique of the dualistic beliefs that distinguish humans from nature and the self from others reveals how these dichotomies foster alienation, conflict, and environmental degradation. The notion of Being-in-the-world (Dasein) that Heidegger presents emphasizes the relational and contextual aspects of human existence, highlighting that individuals are inherently situated within a shared environment characterized by mutual influence and interdependence. This relational ontology reinforces the ethical imperative to recognize the humanity of all parties involved and the interconnectedness of human and ecological

systems, thereby providing an alternative perspective to the exploitative tendencies inherent in Western metaphysics.

The Role of Inter-subjectivity in Conflict Resolution: Toward Dialogue and Empathy

Heidegger's concept of inter-subjectivity serves as a crucial framework for addressing the Niger Delta crisis, facilitating dialogue, empathy, and mutual understanding among various stakeholders. This concept fundamentally challenges the rigid, absolutist viewpoints that frequently define conflicts over resource management, advocating for a more inclusive and empathetic perspective on human interactions. By acknowledging the interconnectedness of all individuals, Heidegger's framework encourages stakeholders to transcend adversarial positions and adopt a "live and let live" philosophy that emphasizes coexistence and collaboration. In the context of the Niger Delta, inter-subjectivity presents a viable pathway to resolving the deep-seated conflicts among local communities, multinational corporations, and government entities. The environmental damage resulting from oil spills and gas flaring has not only devastated local livelihoods but has also significantly undermined trust among the involved parties. Heidegger's focus on the co-constitution of self and other provides a philosophical foundation for rebuilding this trust through open dialogue and mutual recognition. By cultivating an awareness of shared vulnerability and interdependence, inter-subjectivity can help move beyond narrow self-interests, allowing stakeholders to pursue sustainable solutions that are advantageous for all involved.

This perspective resonates with Jim Unah's multiculturalism, which emphasizes the importance of acknowledging and appreciating diverse cultural identities and viewpoints (Unah, 1998). In a region as ethnically and culturally rich as the Niger Delta, Unah's multiculturalism serves as a necessary counterbalance to the homogenizing effects of global capitalism, advocating for an inclusive and pluralistic approach to resource governance. Similarly, Chiedozie Okoro's Afa hermeneutic phenomenology, grounded in African metaphysics, highlights the importance of symbiotic relationships and communal harmony in conflict resolution (Okoro, 2010). By synthesizing various perspectives with Heidegger's concept of inter-subjectivity, this examination establishes a culturally pertinent and philosophically sound framework for tackling the crisis in the Niger Delta. This analysis merges various perspectives with Heidegger's concept of inter-subjectivity to establish a culturally pertinent and philosophically sound framework for tackling the crisis in the Niger Delta. The philosophical examination of this crisis carries profound implications for international conversations surrounding environmental justice, resource management, and inter-subjective ethics. By critiquing Western metaphysical assumptions and emphasizing relational ontology, multiculturalism, and indigenous knowledge systems, it challenges dominant paradigms of resource extraction and presents a transformative vision for sustainable development. This vision transcends the Niger Delta, applying to other regions grappling with similar issues, including the Amazon rainforest, the Arctic, and the Appalachian coalfields.

Highlighting the interdependence of human and ecological systems, this analysis advocates for a redefinition of resource management as an ethical and cooperative endeavor rather than a competitive struggle. It promotes policies and practices that prioritize the welfare of local communities, the safeguarding of cultural diversity, and the sustainability of natural ecosystems. This redefinition is not merely theoretical; it represents an urgent ethical necessity, especially in the context of rising environmental crises and social disparities. Additionally, the incorporation of Heideggerian inter-subjectivity, Unah's

multiculturalism, and Okoro's Afa hermeneutic phenomenology enhances broader philosophical dialogues regarding the ethics of recognition, the significance of indigenous knowledge, and the possibilities for intercultural communication. By connecting global and local viewpoints, this study provides a framework for addressing intricate socio-environmental challenges in ways that are both philosophically rigorous and practically applicable.

An Afrocentric Approach to Resource Control: Toward Ethical and Inclusive Governance

The crisis in the Niger Delta highlights the shortcomings of Western-centric models of resource management, which frequently emphasize economic benefits at the expense of ethical values and cultural significance. This section advocates for an Afrocentric perspective on resource management, rooted in the adaptation of Heidegger's inter-subjectivity and enhanced by indigenous African philosophies, including Jim Unah's multiculturalism and Chiedozie Okoro's Afa hermeneutic phenomenology. This perspective not only offers a culturally relevant framework for addressing the Niger Delta crisis but also enriches global discussions on ethical resource governance, intercultural dialogue, and sustainable development.

Domestication of Heidegger's Inter-subjectivity: An Afrocentric Reinterpretation

This research proposes an Afrocentric reinterpretation of Heidegger's inter-subjectivity as a means to tackle the crisis in the Niger Delta, merging it with indigenous African philosophies to establish a culturally pertinent framework for conflict resolution and resource management. Heidegger's notion of Being-in-the-world (Dasein), which highlights the interdependence of individuals and their surroundings, aligns closely with African ontological principles that emphasize relationality, community, and symbiosis. By situating Heidegger's inter-subjectivity within an Afrocentric context, this study connects global philosophical discussions with local knowledge systems, presenting a transformative strategy for resource governance. The work of Jim Unah on multiculturalism serves as a vital basis for this reinterpretation. Unah (1998) critiques the absolutist inclinations of Western ontology, promoting a pluralistic perspective that acknowledges and appreciates diverse cultural identities. In the Niger Delta, characterized by its ethnic and cultural diversity, Unah's multiculturalism underscores the necessity of mutual respect and inclusivity as essential components for achieving sustainable peace. This viewpoint resonates with Heidegger's advocacy for a more empathetic and relational interaction with others, countering the exploitative practices of resource extraction that have historically marginalized local populations.

Chiedozie Okoro's Afa hermeneutic phenomenology further enhances this framework by anchoring it in African metaphysical thought. The Afa system, which is rooted in Igbo philosophy, underscores the interconnectedness of all entities and the significance of symbiotic relationships in sustaining communal harmony (Okoro, 2010). The research introduces a culturally attuned framework for resource management by combining Afa hermeneutics with Heidegger's notion of inter-subjectivity. This integration emphasizes the importance of the well-being of both human and ecological systems, effectively addressing the intricate issues surrounding resource management while enhancing the comprehension of interconnectedness within African philosophical traditions. This methodology not only confronts the urgent challenges faced in the Niger Delta but also plays a vital role in the

decolonization of philosophical discussions, highlighting the value of indigenous knowledge systems in global dialogues concerning ethics and governance.

Policy Implications: Cultivating a Culture of Empathy and Inclusivity

The Afrocentric approach to resource control proposed in this study has significant policy implications for Nigeria and beyond. At the national level, the study recommends the incorporation of inter-subjectivity and multiculturalism into Nigeria's educational curricula and administrative training programs. By fostering an understanding of relational ontology and the ethical imperative of inclusivity, these initiatives can transform the national ethos, promoting a culture of empathy and symbiotic coexistence. Educational programs could include modules on indigenous philosophies like the Afa system, as well as global perspectives like Heidegger's inter-subjectivity, to equip future leaders with the tools needed for ethical resource governance. At the institutional level, the study advocates for the adoption of inter-subjectivity as a guiding principle in policy-making processes. This would ensure that the needs and perspectives of all stakeholders including local communities, environmental activists, and industry representatives are considered in decisions related to resource control. For example, participatory decision-making models, such as community-based resource management committees, could be established to facilitate dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders. These models would not only enhance the legitimacy of resource governance but also foster a sense of shared responsibility for the well-being of the Niger Delta. Moreover, the study highlights the potential for this Afrocentric approach to inform global policies on environmental justice and sustainable development. By demonstrating the relevance of indigenous philosophies and relational ontologies to contemporary challenges, this framework offers a model for other regions grappling with similar issues, such as the Amazon rainforest and the Arctic. It calls for a reimagining of resource control as an ethical and collaborative process, grounded in principles of care, empathy, and inclusivity.

The Afrocentric approach to resource control proposed in this study has far-reaching implications for global discourses on ethics, governance, and sustainability. By challenging the dominant paradigms of resource extraction and offering an alternative grounded in relational ontology and indigenous epistemologies, this study contributes to the decolonization of both philosophical and policy discourses. It affirms the value of African philosophies in addressing global challenges, pushing back against the marginalization of non-Western perspectives in academic and policy arenas. Furthermore, this study underscores the importance of intercultural dialogue in fostering sustainable development. By integrating Heideggerian inter-subjectivity with African philosophies, it demonstrates the potential for cross-cultural collaboration in addressing complex socio-environmental challenges. This approach not only enriches philosophical discourses but also offers practical solutions for achieving environmental justice and social equity in a globalized world.

Critical Evaluation and Future Directions

This study proposes a novel approach by combining Heideggerian phenomenology with African philosophical traditions to address the resource control crisis in the Niger Delta. One key strength of this framework lies in its potential to foster dialogue between conflicting parties by cultivating empathy, care, and mutual respect thus moving away from violent contestation over resources. However, further exploration is needed into the pragmatic aspects of applying Heidegger's inter-subjectivity theory within the current political and

economic realities of Nigeria. For instance, how can this framework be operationalized in policy-making processes, educational curricula, and grassroots activism to foster long-term peace and sustainable development? A critical future direction for this research is integrating environmental pragmatism and sustainable resource management into the Heideggerian-Afrocentric framework. The environmental degradation caused by oil spills, gas flaring, and deforestation in the Niger Delta is a significant driver of conflict. Addressing these issues requires a holistic approach that balances ecological sustainability with social justice. Future studies should also explore how indigenous knowledge systems, such as Okoro's Afa hermeneutics, can inform global discourses on environmental ethics and resource governance.

Conclusion

This study highlights the significant importance of Heideggerian inter-subjectivity, enhanced by Jim Unah's multicultural perspective and Chiedozie Okoro's Afa hermeneutic phenomenology, in tackling the ethical and ontological aspects of resource management in the Niger Delta. By emphasizing the interdependence of human and ecological systems, valuing cultural diversity, and incorporating indigenous knowledge, this research proposes a transformative framework aimed at resolving the persistent challenges faced by the region. The integration of inter-subjectivity not only facilitates a pathway toward sustainable peace and development in the Niger Delta but also contributes to broader philosophical and practical discussions surrounding justice, environmental ethics, and intercultural dialogue.

The adaptation of Heidegger's notion of inter-subjectivity through the perspectives of Unah's multiculturalism, and Okoro's Afa hermeneutic phenomenology establishes a comprehensive framework for addressing the resource control dilemma. This methodology underscores the significance of interconnectedness, communal welfare, and reflective complementarity, thereby challenging the dualistic and individualistic frameworks that have intensified the crisis. In contrast to these divisive models, it presents an Afrocentric viewpoint that resonates with the cultural and philosophical heritage of the Niger Delta populace, laying the groundwork for sustainable and equitable solutions. Heidegger's critique of Western metaphysical dualisms, particularly his notion of Being-in-the-world (Dasein), addresses the exclusionary and exploitative paradigms that have contributed to the Niger Delta crisis. His emphasis on relationality, care, and mutual recognition provides a philosophical basis for rethinking resource governance as a collaborative and inclusive endeavor. This relational ontology is significantly enhanced by Unah's emphasis on multiculturalism, which highlights the ethical obligation to acknowledge various cultural identities, alongside Okoro's Afa hermeneutic phenomenology that anchors the framework in the lived experiences and indigenous knowledge of the Niger Delta communities. Collectively, these viewpoints provide a culturally pertinent and philosophically sound method for addressing the crisis.

The practical ramifications of this framework are profound. By promoting the incorporation of inter-subjectivity into educational programs, administrative training, and policy development, this study suggests practical strategies aimed at nurturing empathy, inclusivity, and ethical resource management. Such initiatives are crucial for tackling the systemic alienation and environmental degradation that have historically plagued the Niger Delta crisis. Furthermore, the study's focus on dialogue and mutual recognition presents a model for conflict resolution applicable to other resource-abundant regions facing analogous issues, such as the Amazon and the Arctic. Ultimately, this research advocates for

a redefinition of resource control as an ethical and collaborative endeavor rooted in care, empathy, and inclusivity. It urges scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to move beyond the confines of traditional Western metaphysics and embrace a relational, pluralistic governance approach. In doing so, this work aids in the decolonization of philosophical discourse, affirms the significance of indigenous knowledge systems, and paves new avenues for tackling contemporary global issues. The Niger Delta crisis serves as a compelling reminder of the pressing need for transformative frameworks that prioritize the interconnectedness of human and ecological systems while upholding the ethical necessity of mutual recognition. This study ultimately presents a philosophical foundation for addressing the Niger Delta crisis while also enriching wider discussions surrounding environmental justice, intercultural communication, and sustainable development. It underscores the necessity of redefining human connections with the environment and with each other, rooted in the principles of inclusivity and interdependence, which are essential ethical considerations for the 21st century. By merging Heideggerian inter-subjectivity with African philosophical insights, this research offers an Afrocentric and progressive approach to tackling the intricate issues we face today.

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