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A STUDY OF COHESION AND COHERENCE IN FACEBOOK DISCOURSE

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&
Victoria Ime Japhet
Department of English
University of Uyo, Nigeria

Abstract
This research is a study of cohesion and coherence in social media discourse assembling its primary data from Facebook. The advent of ICT has become an integral part of everyday discourse in the modern world. Therefore, the ability of a single village of users from all over the world to communicate and understand one another without saying much lies in discourse analysis, particularly through cohesion and coherence. The data for this research is drawn from a random selection of five Facebook posts, two from a Facebook group known as 'Tales of a Nigerian' and three from personal Facebook accounts. This study reveals that Facebook users employ various cohesive devices and features of coherence to create meaningful and connected online discourse. The findings show the pattern in which reference and repetition as well as inference and logical ordering are used to connect what a user says in a sentence with what has already been said in previous sentences, and how comments are the referents of the entire post. This research, therefore, contributes to the understanding of cohesive links, shared experiences and the Nigerian situation, as tools for the creation and interpretation of online discourse.

Introduction/Background to the Study
Developments in digitisation have dramatically changed how people communicate with each other as well as the discourse practices they engage in as they do this. Digital technologies in the words of Jones *et al*.(2015, p.1), have 'given rise to a host of new ways for people to communicate, manage social relationships, and get things done'. The ways in which people 'get things done' in the digital world is through their use of language, images, voice, etc. The possibilities of digital communication, thus, create new forms of social interactions, new types of texts, as well as new ways in which people use language in their everyday lives as they become competent in using new digital practices. For example, Herring (2013), examines computer-mediated discourse, focusing on online language as a social behaviour Therefore, social media platforms such as Facebook, X(Twiitter), YouTube, and Instagram are examples of digitally mediated discourse. Paltridge (2006, p.24) observes that 'a key notion in the area of discourse analysis is the concept of discourse community.' Swales (2016), more recently, has added two further features to his definition of discourse communities. A discourse community, he argues, develops a sense of 'silential relation' (Becker 1995), in that there are things that do not need to be said or spelt out between members of the group. Discourse communities may consist of close-knit networks of members such as writers of poetry, and their readers, or loose-knit groups of members such as advertising producers and consumers, as well as contributors to online discussion boards. In social media discourse, conversations are debates in society or within social groups that a large number of people recognise, in terms of what sides there are to take in such debates and what sorts of people

tend to be on each side.

A further kind of community is what Gee (2004) terms 'affinity spaces'. An affinity space is a place where people come together because of a strong and shared interest in a common activity and where informal learning is a common outcome. In these spaces, people connect with each other based primarily 'on shared activities, interests and goals, not shared race, class, culture, ethnicity or gender' (Gee 2004, p.67). These spaces often occur online such as is the case with fan fiction groups, music, personal accounts, or other areas of interest. Consequently, discourse analysis has evolved to include, not only the relationship between language, and the social and cultural context in which it is used, but also the dynamic changes of 'talk or conversations' used in online communities. This research explores the semantic relationships that exist between Facebook posts, comments and comments' replies which are a connection of strings of ideas, thoughts and opinions in a discourse community.

The Meaning of Discourse and Discourse Analysis

The term 'discourse analysis' was first used by the sentence linguist, Zellig Harris, in his 1952 article entitled 'Discourse Analysis'. According to him, discourse analysis is a method for the analysis of connected speech or writing, for continuing descriptive linguistics beyond the limit of a simple sentence at a time (Harris, 1952). Indeed, scholars have attested to the difficulty in coming up with a comprehensive and acceptable definition for discourse analysis. However, a way to simplify the attempt to define discourse analysis is to say that discourse analysis is the analysis of discourse. The next question, therefore, would be 'what is discourse?' Discourse can simply be seen as language in use (Brown and Yule,1983; Cook, 1989). It therefore follows that discourse analysis is the analysis of language in use. By 'language in use', we mean the set of norms, preferences and expectations which relate language to context. Discourse analysis can also be seen as the organisation of language above the sentence level. The term 'text' is, sometimes, used in place of 'discourse'. Kamalu and Osisanwo (2015) notes that 'the concern of discourse analysis is not restricted to the study of formal properties of language; it also takes into consideration what language is used for in social and cultural context.' Discourse analysis, therefore, studies the relationship between language (written, spoken – conversation, institutionalized forms of talk) and the contexts in which it is used. What matters is that the text is felt to be coherent.

Cook (1989, pp. 6-7) describes discourse as language in use or language used to communicate something felt to be coherent which may, or may not correspond to a correct sentence or series of correct sentences. Discourse analysis, therefore, according to him, is the search for what gives discourse coherence. He posits that discourse does not have to be grammatically correct, can be anything from a grunt or simple expletive, through short conversations and scribbled notes, a novel or a lengthy legal case. What matters is not its conformity to rules, but the fact that it communicates and is recognised by its receivers as coherent. Similarly, Stubbs (1983, p.1) perceives discourse analysis as 'a conglomeration of attempts to study the organisation of language and therefore to study larger linguistic units such as conversational exchanges or written text.' Again, we affirm that what matters in the study of discourse, whether as language in use or as language beyond the clause, is that language is organised in a coherent manner such that it communicates something to its receivers. Apart from these definitions, other scholars such as Candlin and McCarthy, have contributed to the definition of discourse and discourse analysis. Candlin (1997, p.IX) posits that 'discourse refers to language in use, as a process which is socially situated. However we

may go on to discuss the constructive and dynamic role of either spoken or written discourse in structuring areas of knowledge, and the social and institutional practices, which are associated with them. In this sense, discourse is a means of talking and writing about, and acting upon worlds, a means which both constructs and is constructed by a set of social practices within these worlds'. In defining discourse analysis, McCarthy (1991,p.5) says:

> Discourse analysis is concerned with the study of the relationship between language and the context in which it is used. It grew out of work in different disciplines in the 1960s and early 1970s, including linguistics, semiotics, psychology, and anthropology and sociology. Discourse analysts study language in use: written text of all kinds and spoken data from conversation to highly institutionalised forms of talk.

The Meaning of Cohesion and Coherence

Cohesion and coherence are two distinguished linguistic terms in discourse analysis. Though they share the same morpheme 'cohere', they are different. Scholars define and classify them from various aspects. Cohesion and coherence were first studied by Halliday and Hasan (1976). They take the view that the primary determinant of whether sets of sentences do or do not constitute a text depends on cohesive relationships within and between the sentences, which create texture. 'A text has texture and this is what distinguishes it from something that is not a text. It derives this texture from the fact that it functions as a unity with respect to its environment' (Halliday and Hasan, 1976, p.2). According to them, 'The concept of cohesion is a semantic one; it refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text and that define it as a text.' They go on to say that cohesion can hold segments of a text together, making it a semantic edifice. Cohesion helps to create text and expresses the continuity that exists between one part of the discourse and another. Meanwhile, the key to the concept of coherence is not something that exists in the language, but something that exists in people. As to the definition of coherence, different linguists have different insights. Crystal defines coherence as 'the main principle of organisation (which is) assumed to account for the underlying functional connectedness' of a piece of spoken or written language (Crystal, 1985, p.53). It can be drawn that coherence involves the study of such factors as the language users' knowledge of the world, the inferences they make, and the assumptions they hold, and in particular, involves the study of the way in which communication is mediated through the use of speech acts.

Another definition of coherence held by Reinhart (1980) is that coherence is composed of the semantic and grammatical connectedness between discourse and context. According to him, coherence comprises three elements: connectedness, consistency and relevance. By connectedness, he means the sentences in a text are interconnected with each other in semantics and grammar. Consistency refers to the fact that there is no contradiction between the propositions expressed by these sentences and that they are true to an extent. However, De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) view cohesion and coherence as two entirely separate concepts. They propose cohesion to be the the structural relations on the text surface, while coherence the structural relations beneath the text surface. Ultimately, coherence is achieved not by using superficial markers, such as linguistic, grammatical devices, etc., but by psychological, cognitive, pragmatic devices, etc. Based on this sense, the addressee needs bridges (inferences, background knowledge and imagination etc.) to guide the comprehension of a discourse. Therefore, a coherent discourse should first contain a

semantically united framework and must be consistent with the context of situation, which is a consequence of interactions between linguistic factors and non-linguistic factors.

Aims and Objectives to the Study: The aim of this research is to identify the significance of the cohesive links in Facebook discourse, i.e. how these links form or do not form a semantic structure in the text. In achieving this aim, the objectives of this research are to:

i. show how connectivity operates in selected Facebook posts and comments;
ii. reveal the interpretations of these texts as expressed by individuals in the comment section; and,
iii. unearth the effects of these devices in conversations in the digital space.

Statement of the Problem: Several scholars have done an extensive studies on cohesion alone or the study of coherence as a distinct concept of its own on social media discourse, but none, to the best of the knowledge of this researcher, has explored both concepts as key elements in social media discourse, most especially in Facebook discourse. Therefore, this research examines the harmonious relationship between grammatical devices and the background knowledge exercised by the reader in interpreting conversations in Facebook.

Significance of the Study: As an area which has not been focused or explored on, the result of this research will contribute significantly to English language teachers, other researchers in discourse analysis and to students of English. Significantly, it will show the importance of coherence and cohesion in interpreting conversations, remarks or general statements from the surface level to the deep level of meaning. Also, this research will provide a landscape on which other researchers and English language teachers can build on in analyzing semantic relationships in social media threads and online learning environment.

Scope and Methodology: Discourse analysis is a broad field that encompasses various approaches and subfields, including critical discourse analysis, conversation analysis, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics, among others. Given the vast scope of discourse analysis, this study focuses specifically on cohesion and coherence in Facebook posts, excluding other important areas such as presupposition, conversational analysis, and turn-taking, which are beyond the purview of this research. Therefore, this research will investigate the use of cohesive devices such as reference and repetition as well as features of coherence like logical connections, inference, and cohesive links, rather than exploring the broader conceptual frameworks of cohesion and coherence. Facebook, as a social media platform, boasts of millions of users who generate an immense amount of data through their posts, comments, and interactions. It is impracticable to attempt to analyse all Facebook posts. Therefore, this study adopts a random sampling method to select a total of five posts collected over a period of one month. The selected posts will include two from a Facebook group, "Tales of the Nigerian" and three individual posts with comments. This sampling strategy will enable an in-depth analysis of cohesion and coherence in a manageable and representative dataset. By focusing on this specific subset of Facebook posts, this study aims to gain insights into the linguistic features that contribute to cohesion and coherence in online discourse.

Theoretical Framework: Cooperative Principle

In his paper, 'Logic and Conversation', Grice (1975) argues that in order for a person to interpret what someone else says, some kind of cooperative principle must be assumed to

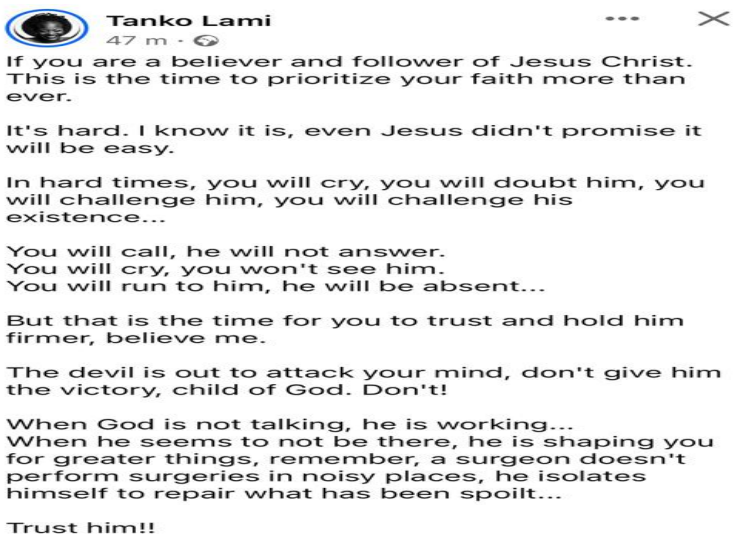
be in operation. The cooperative principle says we should aim to make our conversational contribution 'such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction' (Grice, 1975, p.45) of the exchange in which we are engaged. Grice based his cooperative principle on four sub-principles, or maxims. There are maxims of quality, quantity, relation and manner. The maxim of quality says people should only say what they believe to be true and what they have evidence for. Grice's maxim of quantity says we should make our contribution as informative as is required for the particular purpose and not make it more informative than is required. The maxim of relation says we should make our contribution relevant to the interaction. In maxim of manner, Grice posits that we should be clear in what we say, we should avoid ambiguity or obscurity and we should be brief and orderly in our contribution to the interaction. If someone is unsure of what he or she wants to say, or wants to prevent someone else from inferring that he or she has evidence for what he or she says, people often use meta-discourse (Hyland 2005b) to comment on what they are about to say or have just said. This use of meta-discourse is central to the interpretation of texts as it shows both their attitude to what they are saying as well as their attitude to the audience of the text. A speaker may, for example say 'I may be mistaken, but …' or end a sentence with 'maybe …' to show that he or she is aware of and is following the maxim of quality. Equally, a speaker may say 'I won't bore you with all the details' to show that he or she is aware of the maxim of quantity.

Also, a speaker may indicate a change of topic using a device such as 'by the way' or use a marker such as 'anyway' to show that he or she is aware of the maxim of relation. He or she may say something such as 'this may be a bit confused, but…' to show that he or she is aware of the maxim of manner. Grice argues that we assume a speaker is following these maxims and combine this with our knowledge of the world to work out what they mean by what they say. In the same vein, Thomas (1995) and Cutting (2002) discuss differences between flouting and violating maxims. A speaker is flouting a maxim if he or she does not observe a maxim but has no intention of deceiving or misleading the listener. A person is violating a maxim if he or she is likely to mislead the listener.

An Overview of Discourse Analysis in Social Media Discourse: Facebook

Textual Features / Data Presentation

Text 1



Tanko Lami
47 m ·

If you are a believer and follower of Jesus Christ. This is the time to prioritize your faith more than ever.

It's hard. I know it is, even Jesus didn't promise it will be easy.

In hard times, you will cry, you will doubt him, you will challenge him, you will challenge his existence...

You will call, he will not answer.
You will cry, you won't see him.
You will run to him, he will be absent...

But that is the time for you to trust and hold him firmer, believe me.

The devil is out to attack your mind, don't give him the victory, child of God. Don't!

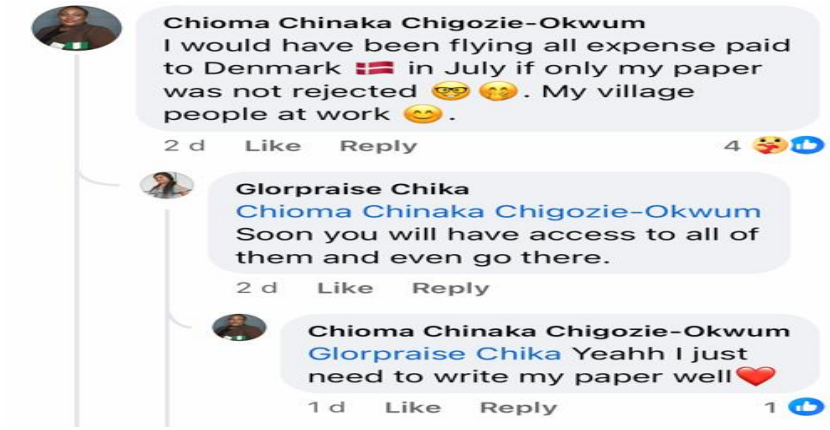
When God is not talking, he is working...
When he seems to not be there, he is shaping you for greater things, remember, a surgeon doesn't perform surgeries in noisy places, he isolates himself to repair what has been spoilt...

Trust him!!

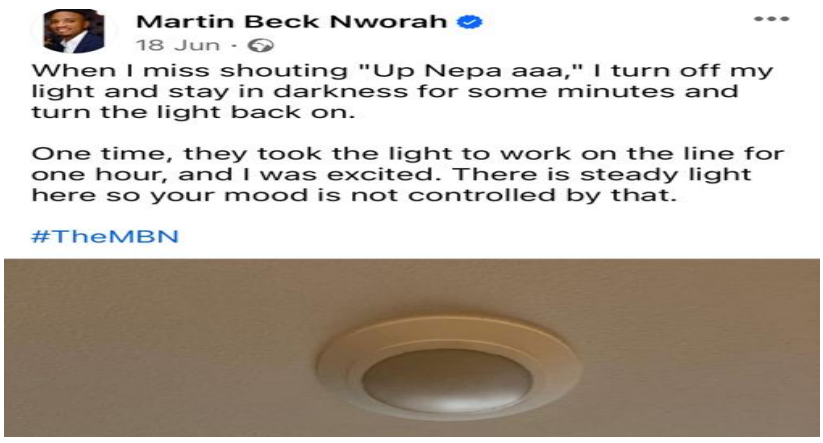
Chisom John
Again,lord I will wait...thank U ma'am,U don't know how much I wanted this reminder
7 m Like Reply

Text 2

Chioma Chinaka Chigozie-Okwum · Follow
2 d ·
In my almost 40 years on earth I have never been to Europe
I want to break that personal record
I hear Switzerland is the most beautiful place to be in Europe???
Is that true because I want to start saving for that Europe trip and I want to start with Swiz.
What are your tips on a fulfilling European experience


Chioma Chinaka Chigozie-Okwum
I would have been flying all expense paid to Denmark in July if only my paper was not rejected . My village people at work .
2 d Like Reply 4
Glorpraise Chika
Chioma Chinaka Chigozie-Okwum
Soon you will have access to all of them and even go there.
2 d Like Reply
Chioma Chinaka Chigozie-Okwum
Glorpraise Chika Yeahh I just need to write my paper well
1 d Like Reply 1

Text 3


Martin Beck Nworah
18 Jun ·
When I miss shouting "Up Nepa aaa," I turn off my light and stay in darkness for some minutes and turn the light back on.
One time, they took the light to work on the line for one hour, and I was excited. There is steady light here so your mood is not controlled by that.
#TheMBN

Top fan
Eze MaryJane Chidera
I pray my children doesn't shout up nepa all the time 😂
22 h Like Reply

Author
Martin Beck Nworah
Amen ooo
10 h Like Reply

Write a reply...

Top fan
Ekonyohe Jane Daniels · Follow
For my neighbors to have light and I don't have is the worst thing ever 😭
22 h Like Reply 16

Text 4

Martin Beck Nworah
22 Jun ·

The first time I drank water from this pot as a child, I was told it was a magic trick. I believed only a refrigerator could make water cold because that is what I've seen and believed.

However, one day, as I looked at this pot, water was filled in a cup directly from it, and it was chilled. I was so excited and confused at the same time.

Before fridge, we had this fantastic coolant called Udu. What do you call it in your language?

#TheMBN

Martin Beck Nworah

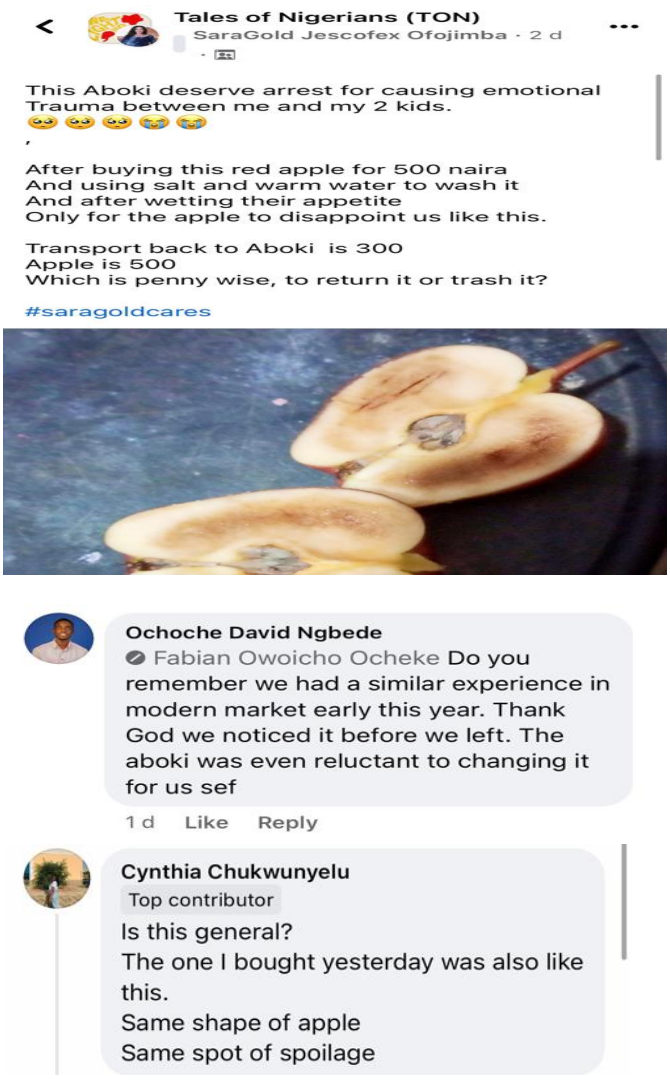
Top fan
Eronmosele Gift Goodluck
I first drank from this native fridge during my youth service in the North..

It was chilled
1 w Like Reply 1

Author
Martin Beck Nworah
Yea used to be really chilled.

Top fan
Jstar King
And the wonderful thing about it is that, whether it was well covered or not...it will still be cold...
1 w Like Reply 3
Author
Martin Beck Nworah
True
Jane Jessica · Follow
Udu(clay pot) is an ancient pot used for water storage, with the sole aim of making water chilled.
It severed our fore-fathers well and can still serve anyone that's interested in using it, cos I don't understand the economy anymore
Thank you
1 w Like Reply 8

Text 5


Tales of Nigerians (TON)
SaraGold Jescofex Ofojimba · 2 d
This Aboki deserve arrest for causing emotional Trauma between me and my 2 kids.
After buying this red apple for 500 naira
And using salt and warm water to wash it
And after wetting their appetite
Only for the apple to disappoint us like this.
Transport back to Aboki is 300
Apple is 500
Which is penny wise, to return it or trash it?
#saragoldcares
Ochoche David Ngbede
Fabian Owoicho Ocheke Do you remember we had a similar experience in modern market early this year. Thank God we noticed it before we left. The aboki was even reluctant to changing it for us sef
1 d Like Reply
Cynthia Chukwunyelu
Top contributor
Is this general?
The one I bought yesterday was also like this.
Same shape of apple
Same spot of spoilage

Elements of Cohesion in Facebook Posts

The term cohesion refers to the grammatical and lexical elements on the surface of a text which can form connections (relations) between parts of the text. The common elements of cohesion in the illustrated Facebook posts above include:

Reference: Cohesion lies in the continuity of reference, whereby the same thing enters into a discourse the second time. Types of references expressed in the above Facebook discourse are:

i. **Personal Reference:** The items we use for personal reference are personal and possessive pronouns which include *'I, you, he, she, it, they, me, you, her, him, it, us, them, mine, yours, my,* etc. In text 1, pronouns such as '*he* and *him'* are used to indicate what has already been said, referring back to 'Jesus Christ, Devil, God and surgeon'. Through the use of these cohesive links in text 1, the writer intends to give 'Jesus Christ, Devil and God' human-like qualities and create a religious subject matter. Also, the writer uses '*he* and *him'* to refer to 'Jesus Christ, Devil, God' and 'surgeon' in order to create a comparison between supernatural and human realms. Also in the sentence 'it's hard, I know it is', the pronoun '*it'* connects with what has already been said in the first sentence which is "this is the time to prioritise your faith in God'. This indicates that the writer acknowledges the reader's struggle in prioritising his or her faith in God, creating a sense of shared knowledge. In text 4, the writer uses '*it'* in the sentence 'it was a magic trick' to connect to what has already been said in the first sentence, 'the first time I drank water from this pot as a child'. This creates a sense of connection between the past and the present. Secondly, '*it'*, is used as reference to a childhood experience which evokes a feeling of nostalgia in the writer's mind. In text 5, '*it'*, is used to refer the reader back to what has already been said in the previous sentence which is 'apple'. This enables the reader to focus on the most important part of the text known as the apple. The possessive pronoun '*their'* is also used as a personal referent to connect *'their'* to 'my 2 kids'. This highlights the special relationship between the writer and her kids.

ii. **Deitic Reference:** Deitic reference or deixis is exophoric (outside or external to the discourse) and it refers to entities in the physical context, requiring physical identification for the discourse to be meaningful. The items we use for deictic reference are determiners and adverbs which include *the, this, that, these, those, here, there, then, now*, etc. In the comment section of text 1, the commentator uses the deictic '*this'* to refer back to the entire post by saying 'you don't know how much I wanted this reminder'. The deictic 'this' in the comment section of text 1, indicates that the entire post is of great significance to the reader. It shows that the entire text has impacted the life of the reader. Secondly, in text 3, '*there* and *here'* points to the writer's location which is the United Kingdom. In text 4, the deixis '*this'*, is used to capture the reader's attention towards the location of the object known as the 'clay pot' portrayed in the picture. It is used to create a connection between the text and the visual element in the picture. In text 5 the writer uses the deixis '*this'* in the sentence,'this red apple' and 'the apple to disappoint us like this', to serve as a pointer to the picture of the apple, showing how rotten the fruit is. Finally in the comment section of text 2, the commentator says 'soon you will have access to all of them and even go there. *'Them* and *there'* are deictics used as referent to the entire post. The deictic elements '*them* and *there'*, enables the commentator to show his or her support in a concise manner,

such that '*them'* refers to 'Europe and Switzerland' while '*there'* points to the physical environment of the place.

iii. **Repetition:** The repetition of key words and phrases is an important part of cohesion. Repetition ties the sections of a text together. In text 1, the repetition of 'you will' connects the sentences together and unifies the entire text. This highlights the emotional state of the reader, showing the futility of his or her actions. Also in text 5, the repetition of 'aboki' is used to foreground the most important word in the entire text. This enables the reader to see that the 'aboki' is responsible for the rotten fruit.

Features of Coherence in Facebook Posts

Whereas cohesion is a property of individual words and phrases and their syntactic connectedness, expressed in words, phrases and sentences, coherence is a property of the entire text, and its connections do not exist in words and structures, but in people. Features of coherence in the Facebook posts are as follows:

i. **Logical Ordering:** If a text is structured in an order that makes sense and flows well, it is easier to read and more coherent. This is a description of a text that allows ideas to develop in a way that is understood and easy to follow. For example in text 2, the text is structured in a descending order, such that the writer begins by stating her desires/reasons to visit Europe, commenting on the beauty of Switzerland in Europe, before finalizing her discourse by requesting for travel tips. Every sentence in the entire text is written in a logical form such that each sentence reflects the same subject matter, Europe. Again, the writer in the comment section says 'I would have been flying an all expense paid (SIC) to Denmark in July if only my paper was not rejected', and the reply to this comment follows a logical order. The reply is done within the subject matter discussed and not outside the topic, as someone replies by saying 'yeah I need to write my paper well'.

ii. **Inferences:** An inference is defined as the information that is not expressed explicitly by the text but is derived on the basis of the background knowledge of the reader and is encoded in the mental representation of the text. In text 3, the comment to the post is made based on the background knowledge of the reader which is not provided in the text. The expression 'up Nepa aaa' is understood by the reader based on the Nigerian situation of inadequate power supply. Apparently, text 3 Facebook posts will not be coherent to a person who is not of a Nigerian descent. This is because the experience tied to the expression of joy each time power supply is restored, cannot be understood by anyone that is not living in Nigeria. Secondly, in text 4, people in the comment section can relate to the sight of the 'pot' as someone calls it 'native fridge' while another person refers to it as 'udu' clay pot, making the entire post coherent to the Nigerian audience. Apart from the Nigerian situation, inferences are made on a particular text based on shared experiences. In text 5, individuals in the comment section are able to make meaning out of the post through their own experience of the same issue. This is clearly seen in Ochoche David Ngbede's comment where he says he had a similar experience in modern market and another person attests to the meaning of the Facebook post through her experience of buying the same thing, 'same shape of apple, same spot of spoilage'.

iii. **Cohesive Links:** Cohesive links result in purely grammatically connected sentences but for there to be a meaningful discourse, cohesion must always be accompanied by

coherence. In text 1, the cohesive links such as personal references like '*he* and *him'* to refer back to what has already been said of 'God, Jesus Christ, devil and surgeon' , and the repetition of 'you will', makes the entire text meaningful and easier to interpret as an embodiment of a specific subject matter running through the entire discourse. Similarly, in text 2, 'I have never been to Europe' is replaced with 'I want to break that personal record' to show the continuity of an idea, which is the desire to travel, throughout the text, making it easier for its audience to understand.

Conclusion

Prior to the advancement of technology, the study of cohesion and coherence was conducted on articles, inaugural lectures, news, journals, novels, etc. However, social media has taken its pride of place in discourse and as such, the 21st century discourse is mostly done on online platforms, because of the renewed interest of individuals in Internet stories, articles, and day-to-day journaling of activities. This research has explored features of cohesion and coherence in Facebook posts, focusing on reference, repetition, logical ordering, inferences, and cohesive links. For instance, '*he* and *him'* are used as personal pronouns to personify 'Jesus Christ, God and Devil' in order to rope the entire sentences together in a religious subject matter. Also each comment is a bearer of cohesive links and shared background knowledge. This can be seen in text 4 where there are comments like 'I first drank from this native fridge during my youth service in the north', to show that the comment is a continuation of the post's subject matter. In the same vein, for any discourse to be coherent or meaningful, shared knowledge is required through the Nigerian situation and personal experiences. For example, the expression 'up Nepa aaa' is easily understood by fellow Nigerians on account of the experience of unstable power supply. Additionally, pictures are used with deictic references in Facebook posts which indicate that sometimes, a discourse can only be meaningful through physical identification. In text 5, the picture of the rotten apple makes the entire discourse meaningful through the deictic 'this' which serves as a pointer. All these devices employed by writers in the five selected Facebook posts, help to provide a meaningful, engaging and informative online discourse.

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE CONCEPT OF PERSONHOOD IN YORUBA CULTURE: EXPLORING THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL ROLES IN YORUBA SOCIETY

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Abstract
This paper examines the concept of personhood within the Yoruba cultural milieu and its philosophical implications for understanding artificial intelligence (AI). In Yoruba culture, personhood is a dynamic process, deeply tied to moral responsibility, social roles and communal participation, rather than merely being a function of rationality or individual autonomy. The paper observes that in Yoruba culture, personhood is not merely biological or an inherent status but encompasses a moral and social paradigm defined by one's roles, responsibilities and relationships within the community. This stands in contrast to Western philosophical paradigms, which often emphasize rationality, consciousness, or individual autonomy as the defining traits of personhood. As AI continues to evolve, increasingly simulating human autonomy and decision-making, questions about its probable status as a "person" arise. This paper adopts a critical method to query whether Yoruba cultural paradigms, which stress moral worth and communal relationships, can offer new insights into the evolving definition of personhood in the age of AI. The paper therefore concludes that the integration of AI into Yoruba society will require careful deliberation of how these AI technologies will either align with or disrupt their long established cultural standard and perspective on personhood.

Keywords: Yoruba Culture, AI, Personhood, Identity, Communal ethics.

Introduction

The increasing growth of artificial intelligence (AI) has generated extensive debate regarding the boundaries of personhood and identity, particularly when it comes to understanding what it means to be a "person" within a world gradually influenced by autonomous machines. While much of the debates around AI and personhood are centered on Western philosophical contexts, which emphasize cognitive abilities such as consciousness and rationality, non-Western perspectives offer valuable insights that can broaden our understanding of identity and personhood. One such perspective is found within Yoruba culture, where personhood is goes beyond its biological association to involve a dynamic process shaped by moral conduct, social roles, and community participation (Akinyemi, 2010). In the Yoruba worldview, personhood is closely tied to an individual's moral standing within the community and their ability to fulfill social obligations. This contrasts with Western paradigms, which often root personhood in the intrinsic and natural features of the individual, such as self-awareness, autonomy, and rationality (Wheeler, 2008). For instance, according to John Locke's classical notion of personhood, it is one's rationality and consciousness that defines their status as a person (Locke, 1690/1975). Similarly, more recent AI debates, such as those by Bryson (2018), follow this line of thought by arguing that cognitive capacities should determine how we ethically treat AI. However, Yoruba notion

challenges this individualistic and cognitive-centered view of personhood by introducing a relational concept, where one's identity is affirmed through relationships with others and through adherence to social and moral codes (Gyekye, 1997). As Gyekye explains (Gyekye, 1997:106), "In the African view, to be is to belong to a community; and separation from the community represents a complete loss of identity for the individual." Consequently, in the Yoruba perspective, personhood is seen as something achieved through communal recognition and moral uprightness rather than innate capacities. The intersection of AI and Yoruba views of personhood raises thought-provoking philosophical questions on whether AI can ever achieve personhood if viewed through a Yoruba cultural lens, given that AI lacks social responsibility and moral agency or whether AI's growing autonomy in decision-making systems can challenge the community-based framework of personhood in Yoruba philosophy. According to Okere (2020), the increasing capability of AI to perform tasks once deemed exclusive to humans invites a rethinking of what it means to be a moral agent within a moral community. This paper, therefore, aims to explore how Yoruba cultural paradigms can provide a fresh perspective on the concept of personhood, particularly in the context of AI.

Personhood within the Yoruba Cultural Context

The concept of personhood is central to the Yoruba worldview, representing a dynamic and multidimensional understanding of what it means to be a person within a community. Unlike several Western philosophical frameworks that emphasize individualism, autonomy, and cognitive abilities such as consciousness and rationality, Yoruba notions of personhood are deeply rooted in moral responsibility, communal relationships, and social roles. In Yoruba thought, becoming a person, or *eniyan*, is a *process* rather than an inherent biological state, with moral and social dimensions taking precedence over biological traits. Thus, central to Yoruba idea personhood is the notion of *Omoluabi*, a term used to describe a person of good character and moral integrity. *Omoluabi* is a model of ethical conduct that emphasizes virtues such as honesty, humility, respect, and responsibility (Gbadegesin, 1991). The concept suggests that to be recognized as a full person in Yoruba society, one must adhere to certain moral standards and behave in ways that promote harmony and well-being within the community. Akinyemi (2010:33) explains that "personhood in Yoruba thought is not simply about being biologically human; it is about fulfilling one's moral obligations and contributing to the collective good". The emphasis on moral responsibility means that personhood in Yoruba cultural thought is not automatically granted by birth. Rather, it is something that must be achieved and maintained through moral action and social engagement. Reflecting on this Abimbola (1975:78) says, "the Yoruba believe that to become a person, one must cultivate good character, and without this, one cannot fully participate in the community or be considered a complete human being." This understanding of personhood as a *process* supports the Aristotelian virtue ethics, where the development of good character and moral virtues is seen as central to the attainment of a good life (Aristotle, 1998).

In addition to moral responsibility, personhood in Yoruba belief is essentially tied to communal relations and the fulfillment of social roles within the community. The Yoruba worldview is strongly communal, with the individual seen as inseparable from the community in which they live. Mbiti (1969:108) famously stated, "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am." This African communalistic perspective contrasts with the Western notion of the autonomous, self-sufficient individual, emphasizing instead the interconnectedness of individuals within a social and moral framework. Thus, for the Yoruba,

personhood is conferred by the community. One becomes a person by fulfilling social obligations, participating in communal life, and contributing to the collective welfare. Gyekye (1997:55) notes that "in African thought, the individual is part and parcel of the community, and it is within this context that one's identity and personhood are fully realized." This communal approach highlights the idea that personhood is relational—individuals are defined by their relationships with others and their ability to engage in mutually beneficial interactions. In this sense, personhood is contingent upon active participation in social life. Those who fail to uphold their social responsibilities or violate communal norms may be seen as lacking in personhood, regardless of their inherent biological status. As Olajubu (2002:41) argues, “to be an individual in Yoruba society is to be enmeshed in a web of social obligations, and failure to honor these obligations can lead to a loss of personhood.” This conditional nature of personhood suggests that individuals must continually earn their status as persons through their actions and relationships with others.

Artificial Intelligence and the Criteria of Personhood

As pointed out earlier, the advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) has sparked philosophical debates regarding whether AI entities can or should be considered persons or whether our moral community should be expanded to accommodate and recognize AI as persons. Fundamentally, personhood is understood through criteria such as consciousness, rationality, moral agency, and social participation. These criteria, historically applied to humans, are now being reconsidered in light of AI’s increasing autonomy and cognitive abilities. Historically, consciousness and rationality have been central to Western philosophical conceptions of personhood. Both Immanuel Kant and John Locke argued respectively that personhood is tied to the possession of rationality, autonomy, consciousness and self-awareness, with memory playing a crucial role in personal identity. In Locke’s view for instance, a person is “thinking, intelligent being that has reason and reflection" (Locke, 1975: 335). In Kant’s view, “rational beings alone have the capacity to act according to the representation of laws that is according to principles, and thereby have a will. Since the derivation of actions from laws requires reason, the will is nothing other than practical reason." (Kant, 1785). This quotation underscores Kant's belief that rationality is central to personhood because it enables individuals to act autonomously, follow moral laws, and make decisions grounded in reason, distinguishing persons from other beings that lack this capacity. This emphasis on cognitive abilities continues to shape contemporary discussions of personhood, particularly when considering AI. However, while AI can exhibit forms of rationality, particularly in problem-solving or pattern recognition, it lacks consciousness, the subjective awareness that many consider central to human experience and personhood. According to Searle (1980), AI systems, no matter how advanced, are merely executing programs and cannot achieve consciousness and intentionality. Searle’s Chinese Room argument contends that while AI can simulate understanding, it does not genuinely possess it, as it follows pre-programmed instructions without comprehension (Searle, 1980). From this perspective, AI’s lack of consciousness fundamentally disqualifies it from being considered a person, despite its apparent cognitive abilities.

Another key criterion for personhood is moral agency, the ability to make ethical decisions and be held responsible for one’s actions. Moral agency requires not only the capacity for rational thought but also an understanding of right and wrong, along with the ability to act on moral principles (Korsgaard, 1996). In this respect, AI still falls short. While AI can be programmed to follow ethical guidelines, it does not possess the moral awareness

or intentionality required to be considered a moral agent. AI's decisions are based on algorithms and data inputs rather than a moral framework that it can autonomously understand and engage with (Floridi & Sanders, 2004). In addition to moral agency, social participation and relationships with others are often seen as vital components of personhood. Philosophers like Gyekye (1997) and Wiredu (1992) emphasize that personhood, particularly in African thought, is relational and communal, emerging from an individual's participation in social life. For the Yoruba, personhood is not granted at birth but must be earned through moral responsibility and communal engagement (Gbadegesin, 1991). AI, while capable of interacting with humans, does not engage in the kinds of meaningful social relationships that are essential to this view of personhood. While AI exhibits some traits associated with personhood, such as rationality and problem-solving abilities, it lacks others that are essential, particularly consciousness, moral agency, and social participation. AI's capabilities are rooted in algorithms and data, which allow for sophisticated decision-making but do not equate to the subjective experience or moral responsibility that defines personhood in both Western and non-Western philosophical traditions (Bryson, 2018; Okere, 2020). From these perspectives, AI, though advanced, cannot fulfill the full criteria for personhood.

AI, Personhood and the Future of Social Roles in Yoruba Society

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into modern Yoruba society raises fundamental questions about how emerging technologies could redefine traditional roles, particularly in cultures with deeply entrenched social values. In Yoruba society as noted earlier, personhood is not an inherent status conferred by birth but rather a dynamic communal process shaped by moral responsibility and social participation (Gyekye, 1997). As AI technologies advance and take on roles traditionally held by humans, such as caregiving, teaching and decision-making, the implications for personhood and social roles in Yoruba society are profound. In this context, AI's potential to assume certain human roles raises philosophical questions. While AI can be programmed to perform tasks with efficiency and even mimic certain human interactions, it still lacks the moral agency and communal participation that are critical to personhood in Yoruba culture. As Okere (2020:91) explains, "AI may enhance social functions, but it cannot engage in the kinds of moral decisions or social relationships that define a true person in Yoruba thought." Therefore, AI may not be recognized as a person in the Yoruba sense, since it does not embody the moral and social dimensions required for personhood.

Regardless of AI's inability to meet Yoruba criteria for personhood, its increasing role in society may still significantly impact traditional social structures. In Yoruba society, roles such as caregiving, education and leadership are deeply rooted in communal values, often requiring moral judgment and interpersonal relationships (Olajubu, 2002). The idea of AI taking on these roles challenges the traditional view that human interactions are essential for maintaining the moral and social fabric of the community. For instance, AI systems in healthcare or caregiving roles might provide valuable services to individuals, but they also lack the emotional responsiveness and moral engagement that is typically expected of caregivers. The caregiver's role is not just to provide physical care but also to nurture relationships, display empathy and act with moral consideration qualities that AI, as it currently exists, cannot authentically replicate (Bryson, 2018). As these AI technologies become more incorporated into such roles, there may be a shift in societal expectations about what it means to fulfill these duties, potentially diminishing the importance of moral

agency in these roles. In the same way, AI in education for instance may alter the role of teachers and mentors in Yoruba society. Traditionally as understood, teachers and elders play critical roles in transmitting not just knowledge but also values and cultural norms to the younger generation. The introduction of AI as a learning tool may further raise the question of whether it can accomplish these social roles efficiently. According to Gyekye (1997:61), "education in African cultures is not only about intellectual development but also about moral and social formation." AI, nonetheless, lacks the capacity to instill moral values or engage pupils in the kind of meaningful social relationships that are vital to Yoruba educational structure.

As these AI technologies continue to advance and take on more prominent roles in society, Yoruba culture may either face challenges in maintaining its traditional ideas of personhood and social roles or fail to integrate these technologies into their structure. While AI can undeniably enhance efficiency and productivity in certain domains, its limitations in moral agency and communal engagement mean that it cannot substitute the deeply relational and moral aspects of these roles in Yoruba society. Moreover, the increased reliance on AI may also lead to an alteration in how these roles are perceived and valued. For instance, if caregiving, education and other essential roles become more automated, there is a risk that the moral and social dimensions of these tasks may be de-emphasized, leading to a more functional, less relational understanding of these roles. This shift could erode the communal bonds that are central to Yoruba identity and the concept of personhood in general.

Summary and Conclusion

The Yoruba concept of personhood highlights moral responsibility, communal relationships and the fulfillment of social roles. Unlike Western notions of personhood, which often center on individual autonomy and cognitive abilities, Yoruba thought system views personhood as a process that is achieved through moral action and social engagement. This dynamic and relational approach to personhood offers a valuable perspective for understanding identity in both traditional and contemporary contexts, including debates on AI. By critically looking at the Yoruba concept of personhood, we gain a deeper appreciation of the cultural dimensions of what it means to be a person and how these ideas can inform broader philosophical discussions on identity and morality from this cultural viewpoint.

AI, in spite of its growing autonomy and cognitive capabilities, does not meet the traditional criteria for personhood, particularly in terms of consciousness, moral agency and social participation as impressively reflected in Yoruba cultural milieu. While it can perform tasks that resemble rational thought, AI lacks the subjective awareness and moral responsibility that are central to being a person. As AI technology continues to advance, the philosophical and ethical questions surrounding its status will become increasingly relevant, challenging both Western and non-Western conceptions of personhood. In Yoruba society, personhood and social roles are deeply intertwined with moral responsibility and communal participation. AI, although capable of performing some tasks traditionally associated with human roles, lacks the moral agency and social engagement necessary for personhood in the Yoruba logic. As AI takes on greater responsibilities, the challenge will be to balance technological advancement with the preservation of the moral and communal values that define social roles in Yoruba culture. Eventually, the integration of AI into Yoruba society will require careful consideration of how these technologies will align with or disrupt their long-standing cultural norms.

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THE IMPACT OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT ON PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT IN ADAMAWA STATE, NORTH-EAST NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study explores the impact of forced displacement on peace and development in Adamawa State, North-East Nigeria. Forced displacement, driven by conflict and environmental factors, disrupts livelihoods and exacerbates social and economic instability. The study examines its socio-economic effects, contributing factors, and strategies employed to mitigate its consequences. Adopting a survey design, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used, including questionnaires, focus group discussions, and secondary data analysis. A sample of 400 respondents was selected using purposive and stratified random sampling, with 293 valid responses. Findings reveal that displacement leads to loss of livelihoods, limited access to education and healthcare, inadequate housing, and social integration challenges. Key drivers include violent conflicts, insecurity, land disputes, climate change, weak governance, and ethnic tensions. Efforts to address displacement involve government agencies, humanitarian organisations, traditional leaders, and security forces. The study concludes that forced displacement significantly undermines peace and development, contributing to insecurity issues such as banditry, insurgency, and farmer-herder conflicts. It recommends that the Adamawa State Government collaborate with the Nigeria Meteorological Agency to implement an early warning system for disaster preparedness. Additionally, the state should strengthen governance, promote inclusive policies, and prioritise local peacebuilding initiatives to foster coexistence between displaced persons and host communities.

Keywords: Forced Displacement, Peace, Development Impact, Adamawa State, Conflict and Disasters.

Introduction

Forced displacement has become a pressing global issue, particularly in the aftermath of the Cold War. It refers to the involuntary movement of individuals from their homes due to persecution, violent conflict, human rights violations, economic hardship, or natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes (Salleh, Ahmad & Jamil, 2018). These factors have displaced millions worldwide, disrupting peace and development (George & Adelaja, 2022). The United Nations (UN) reported that in May 2024, 120 million people were living in conditions of forced displacement, highlighting the severity of the crisis. Similarly, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) noted that many who arrived in Europe between 2023 and 2024 were fleeing conflicts in Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Eritrea, Somalia, Darfur and Nigeria. In 2023 alone, 27.2 million people were forcibly displaced, largely due to conflicts in Sudan, Myanmar, and Gaza, worsening global instability (Smart, Amaratunga & Haigh, 2023).

Africa has been significantly affected, with the Democratic Republic of Congo experiencing one of the world's largest displacement crises, with 3.8 million people forced from their homes (UNHCR, 2023). Forced displacement often fuels further violence and

prolonged conflicts, as seen in Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Myanmar, Nigeria, and Afghanistan (Salleh, et al. 2018). In Nigeria, force displacement is driven by insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, farmer-herder conflicts, and inter-communal clashes whereas in 2021 such conflict has displaced 360,000 people (Onuegbu & Lebari, 2022). Thus, George and Adelaja (2022) argued that the above mentioned displace population was has a result Nigeria hosts approximately 90,000 refugees fleeing conflicts in the Lake Chad Basin, exacerbating the displacement crisis. Since 2009, Boko Haram's insurgency and natural disasters have made Northeast Nigeria a conflict zone, displacing over two million people, with many seeking refuge in neighbouring countries (Onuegbu & Lebari, 2022). Additionally, farmer-herder conflicts have destroyed farmland, homes, and livelihoods, contributing to food insecurity and deepening poverty (Fadare, Srinivasan & Zanello, 2024). However, Jones (2024) studies examined the links between violent conflicts, displacement, and food security in Nigeria, yet there remains a gap in understanding how forced displacement affects peace and development in Adamawa State which informed this study to address this gap by assessing the impact of forced displacement and propose measures such as early warning mechanisms and community participation to mitigate conflict and prevent disasters, ultimately promoting peace and development.

Research Questions

i. What is the socio-economic impact of force displacement on the affected population in Adamawa State?
ii. What are the factors that contribute to force displacement and its impact on peace and National Development in Adamawa State?
iii. Who are the stakeholders and strategies employ to mitigate force displacement in Adamawa State?

Objectives of the Study

i. To analyze the socio-economic impacts of force displacement on the affected population.
ii. Explore the factors that contribute to force displacement and its impact on peace and national development in Adamawa State.
iii. Ascertain strategies stakeholders, employ to mitigating force displacement in Adamawa state.

Statement of the Problem

Force displacement has force thousand to flee their home as result of conflict such as banditry, kidnapping, insurgency, farmer-herder conflict among other conflict as well as natural disaster such as flood, drought, desertification among other environmental factors. As a result, Fadare, Srinivasan, and Zanello (2024) stated that lives and property are being destroyed, exacerbating poverty and loss of livelihood that disrupts income-generating activities, leaving individuals without stable employment or access to resources for economic survival, and limiting access to education, which led many displaced individuals, especially children, to face difficulties in continuing their education due to financial constraints, lack of schools, or instability in host communities. Thus, .Jones (2024) added that forced displacement has strained healthcare services and overcrowded host communities, as well as poor living conditions, leading to increased health challenges and limited access to medical care. Additionally, many displaced individuals struggle with inadequate housing, leading to poor sanitation, overcrowding, and increased vulnerability to

diseases, as well as exacerbated tensions between displaced persons and host communities, affecting social cohesion and hindering peace and development.

Significance of the Study

The study will assist stakeholders such as government officials, security personnel, academicians, politicians, traditional and religious leaders, and community leaders to highlight the impact of forced displacement on peace and development and to understand the socio-economic impacts of forced displacement on the affected population. The study will also unravel additional factors or variables that are caused by forced displacement that impact peace and development as well as the strategies employed to mitigate forced displacement.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study focusses on Yola south local government areas (LGA) of Adamawa State. The reason behind chosen the scope of the study is because most of the force displaced population settled in this LGA.

Conceptual Clarification

Forced Displacement: Forced displacement refers to the involuntary removal of individuals from their homes due to conflict, violence, persecution, or human rights violations. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2021) defined it as coerced movement resulting from such factors like conflict and natural disaster with displaced persons classified as refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs) based on their status. According to Adesola and Peters (2024), forced displacement may be displaced within their country or beyond its borders, depending on legal recognition and protection. Similarly, UNESCO (2022) highlights armed conflict as a leading cause of displacement, often forcing individuals to abandon their homes and livelihoods.

Peace: Peace, derived from the Latin "pax," signifies harmony and the absence of conflict (Johnson, Olosanye & Lawal, 2024). It involves justice, equity, and balance, fostering stability within societies (Kurtenbach, 2024). Toussaint and Rosino (2024) argued that peace is both an internal and external condition, encompassing individual serenity and broader societal stability. Rinehart (1995) further asserted that peace requires active participation in peacebuilding initiatives to sustain harmony and prevent violence.

Development: Development entails economic growth, social well-being, and infrastructural progress (Aeran Chung, Draudt & Tian, 2024). Jamil, Aslam, and Ali (2024) describe it as a multidimensional process involving sustainable policies, governance, and equitable resource distribution. A developed society is marked by strong institutions, security, and prosperity, requiring strategic planning and active civic participation (Aeran, *et al*., 2024).

Causes of Forced Displacement in Nigeria

Nigeria faces multiple displacement drivers, including armed conflicts, natural disasters, economic challenges, and governance failures (Olakpe, 2024). Key factors include:

i. **Armed Conflict and Insurgency:** Attacks by Boko Haram and ISWAP have caused mass killings, destruction, and widespread insecurity, particularly in the North-East.
ii. **Farmers-Herders Conflict:** Competition over land and water has led to violence, forcing many into displacement.

iii. **Ethno-Religious Clashes:** Tensions in states like Kaduna, Plateau, and Taraba have resulted in forced migration due to communal violence.
iv. **Political Crises and Election-Related Violence:** Power struggles often escalate into violent conflicts, displacing populations.
v. **Environmental Factors:** Floods, droughts, and desertification have driven rural populations to migrate in search of habitable conditions.
vi. **Urban Expansion and Evictions:** Government policies and infrastructural projects have displaced low-income communities in cities like Lagos and Abuja.
vii. **Economic Hardships:** Unemployment and lack of basic services force migration to urban areas or across borders

Socio-Economic Impact of Forced Displacement: Force displacement disrupts livelihoods, leading to poverty and dependence on aid (Anikwudike & Agabi, 2024). Abimbola (2024) highlights its effect on education, limiting future opportunities and exacerbating poverty cycles as well as poor living conditions that increase disease risks, while loss of skilled professionals reduces productivity.

Impact of Force Displacement on Peace and Development: Forced displacement fosters tension in both origin and host communities. Bakkour (2024) noted that competition over resources often leads to conflict that forcibly displace people whereby militant groups exploit for recruitment. Thus, Gabriel and Paul (2024) stressed that force displacement strains public services, disrupts local economies, and hampers development by reducing economic output and stability which call for comprehensive policies to mitigate its adverse effects and promote long-term peace and development.

Research Methodology: This section outlines the research design, area of the study, population of the study, sampling method, sample size, data collection techniques, research instruments, and methods of data analysis.

Research Design: This research employs a survey design to collect data from both qualitative and quantitative sources. The quantitative data were obtained through a set of self-structured questionnaires administered to respondents. While the qualitative data is obtained from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), journal, book and internet.

Area of the Study: The study focuses on Yola South, which is positioned at 9°13’48"N latitude and 12° 27’ 36"E longitude.

Population of the Study: Yola South, Local Government Area under investigation, has a projected population of 185,313 (NPC 2023). This population consists of forcibly displaced people, internally displaced persons (IDPs), farmers, pastoralists, teachers, traders, religious and traditional leaders, community leaders, local government officials, and officers of Nigeria's security agencies.

Sample Population

The study employed the Taro Yamen Formula, given by n = N / (1 + N(e)^2), to determine the sample size for the questionnaire administration from the total population 400 within the study area. In this formula, 'n' represents the required sample size from the population under study, 'N' denotes the entire population being investigated, and 'e' stands for the precision or sampling error, typically set at 0.05. To clarify, the following provides a detailed

explanation of the formula and a step-by-step calculation for determining the study's sample population.

N = the sample size
N = the population of Study
E = the margin error in calculation

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N\,(e)^{2}}$$

$$n = \frac{185{,}313}{1 + 185{,}313\ (0.05)^{2}}$$

$$n = \frac{185{,}313}{1 + 185{,}313\ (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{185{,}313}{1 + 463.2825}$$

$$n = \frac{185{,}313}{463.2825.}$$

n = 399. 1
n = 399.2
Approximated 400 is the sample size.

Below is the table of sample population;

Table1: Distribution of the Sample Population to Questionnaire Administration Based on Population Figures of the Selected Town in the LGA

S/N	Study Areas	Sample Size
1	Mbamba	100
2	Maalkohi	90
3	Yolde Pate	100
4	Ngorore	110
5	**Total**	**400**

Sampling Techniques
The study used purposive and stratified random sampling techniques to explore the factors contributing to force displacement assess its impact on the socio-economic conditions, identify the stakeholders and methods involved in resolving force displacement, examine the effectiveness of the strategies used, and suggest possible ways to mitigate force displacement.

Sources of Data Collection
The source of data collection was through primary sources, which include questionnaires and FGDs, while the secondary sources include books, articles, and journals. However, 400 questionnaires were administered, and 293 were retrieved. This is because 80 copies that were distributed at the Malkohi IDP camp of Yola South could not be retrieved as a result of

security reasons, which caused the disparity. However, remaining data obtained were analysed using SPSS.

Section A

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents according to Gender

S/N	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
1	**Male**	195	66.6
2	**Female**	98	33.4
3	**Total**	293	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From Table 1 above, the majority of respondents (66.6%) are male, with a total of 195, followed by females, who make up (33.4%) with a total of 98 respondents. This indicates that males are more active participants in the study.

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Respondents according to Age

S/N	Age	Frequency	Percentage
1	20-30yrs	33	11.3
2	30-40yrs	66	22.5
3	41-50	130	44.4
4	51-60	64	21.8
5	**Total**	293	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the above Table 2, the majority of the age bracket respondents are 41-50, with 130 respondents representing (44.4%), followed by 30-40, with 66 people representing (22.5%), then followed by 51-60, with 60 people representing (21.8%), and the minority age bracket is 20-30 years, with a respondent of 33 represents (11.3%).

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Respondents according to Educational Background

S/N	Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
1	SSCE	33	11.3
2	NCE/OND/Diploma	65	22.2
3	First Degree	65	22.2
4	M.A/M.Ed/M.Sc	130	44.4
5	**Total**	293	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the above Table 3, the majority of respondents have master's degree qualifications with a population of 130 that represents (44.4%), while those with first degrees and diplomas have an equal population of 65, which represents (22%).

Table 4: Percentage Distribution of Respondents according to Marital Status

S/N	Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
1	Widow	65	22.2
2	Married	163	55.6
3	Divorced	65	22.2
4	Total	293	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the above Table 4, the majority of the respondents are married, with a population of 163, which represents (55.6%), followed by widows with a population of 65 represents (22.2%), followed by divorced participants with a population of 65, which represents (22.2%).

Table 5: Percentage Distribution of Respondents according to Occupation

S/N	Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
1	Security Personnel	33	11.3
2	Civil Servant	163	55.6
3	Private Business	65	22.2
4	Clergy	32	10.9
5	Total	293	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the above Table 5, the majority of the respondents are civil servants, with a population of 163 representing (55.6 %), followed by private business with a population of 65, which represents (22.2%), then security personnel are 33, which represent (11.3%), and clergy population is 32, which represents (10.9%).

Table 6: Percentage Distribution of Respondents according to Ethnic Group

S/N	Ethnic Group	Frequency	Percentage
1	Mbula	32	10.9
2	Bachama	33	11.3
3	Fulani	98	33.4
4	Bille	66	22.5
5	Bali	32	10.9
6	Others	32	10.9
5	Total	293	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the above Table 6, the majority ethnic group respondents are Fulani with 98, which represents (33.4%), followed by Bille with 66, which represents (22.5%), then Bachama with 33, which represents (11.3%), and then Mbula Bali and other ethnic groups with a population of 32 each, which represents (10.9%).

Table 7: Percentage Distribution of Respondents according Religion

S/N	Religion	Frequency	Percentage
1	Christianity	195	66.6
2	Islam	98	33.4
3	Total	293	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the above Table 7, the majority of the respondents are Christian, with a population of 195, which represents (66.6%), followed by Islam, with a population of 98, which represents (33.4%).

Table 8: Research Question One: What is the socio-economic impact of force displacement on the affected population in Adamawa State?

The following above purported question is to describe the socio-economic impacts of force displacement. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the statement:

SA=Strongly Agree. A= Agree. U=Undecide. D= Disagree. SD= Strongly Disagree

S/N	Items	Strongly Agree (SA)		Agree (A)		Undecide (U)		Disagree (D)		Strongly Disagree (SD)		Mean	Std Deviation
		N	%	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	M	Std.D
1	**Loss of Livelihoods**	162	55.3	131	44.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.55	.49804
2	**Limited access to education**	65	**22.2**	195	**66.6**	-	-	-	-	33	11.3	3.88	1.10735
3	**Strain on Healthcare Services**	162	**55.3**	131	**44.7**	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.55	.49804
4	**Housing and Living Conditions**	97	**33.1**	98	33.4	65	**22.2**	-	-	**33**	**11.3**	3.11	1.29018
5	**Social Integration and Community Relations**	98	33.4	130	**44.4**	32	**10.9**	-	-	33	**11.3**	3.88	1.20399

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 8 item 1 shows that 162 (55.3%) respondents strongly agreed and 131 (44.7%) agreed that forced displacement leads to loss of livelihoods, with no disagreement. A high mean score of 4.55 and a standard deviation of .49804 confirm strong consensus, aligning from the FGDs civil servant state:

> Force Displacement often disrupts income-generating activities, leaving individuals without stable employment or access to resources for economic survival

Table 8 item 2 shows that 62 (22.2%) respondents strongly agreed and 195 (66.6%) agreed that forced displacement limits access to education, while 33 (11.3%) strongly disagreed. A high mean score of 3.88 and a high standard deviation of 1.10735 indicate strong consensus, aligning from the FGDs community leader state:

> many displaced individuals, especially children, face difficulties in continuing their education due to financial constraints, lack of schools, or instability in host.

Table 8 item 3 shows that 162 (55.3%) respondents strongly agreed and 131 (44.7%) agreed that forced displacement strains healthcare services, with no disagreement. A high mean score of 4.55 and a standard deviation of 0.63186 indicate strong consensus, collaborate from the FGDs state:

> overcrowding in host communities and poor living conditions among displaced persons lead to increased health challenges and limited access to medical care

Table 8 item 4 shows that 195 (66.5%) respondents agreed that forced displacement impacts housing and living conditions, while 65 (22.2%) were undecided and 33 (11.3%) strongly disagreed. A mean score of 3.11 and a standard deviation of 1.29018 indicate broad agreement, aligning from the FGDs state that "many displaced individuals struggle with inadequate housing, leading to poor sanitation, overcrowding, and increased vulnerability to diseases".

Table 8 item 5 indicates that 228 (77.8%) respondents agreed that forced displacement impacts social integration and community relations, while 32 (10.9%) were undecided and 33 (11.3%) strongly disagreed. A mean score of 3.88 and a standard deviation of 1.20399 suggest broad agreement, correlate with findings from the FGDs conducted state:

> displacement has led to tensions between displaced persons and host communities, affecting social cohesion and access to support systems. Before there is this level of trust shared relationship but since this people migrated to this community, we have been facing challenges of theft, and attack with weapon to collecting our belonging.

Table 10: Research Question Two: What are the factors that contribute to force displacement and its impact on peace and National Development in Adamawa State?

The following above purported question state factor contributes to force displacement. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the statement:

SA=Strongly Agree. A= Agree. U=Undecide. D= Disagree. SD= Strongly Disagree

S/N	Items	Strongly Agree (SA)		Agree (A)		Undecide (UD		Disagree (D)		Strongly Disagree (SD)		Mean	Std Deviation
		N	%	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	M	Std.D
1	**Violent Conflicts and Insecurity**	98	33.4	163	55.6	-	-	-	-	32	**10.9**	4.0068	1.14973
2	**Land Disputes and Resource Competition**	130	44.4	98	33.4	32	10.9	33	11.3	33	11.3	4.10	.99744
3	**Weak Law Enforcement and Governance**	98	33.4	162	55.3	33	**11.3**	-	-	-	-	4.22	.63186
4	**Climate Change and Environmental Factors**	65	**22.2**	196	66.9	-	-	-	-	32	10.9	3.11	1.09438
5	**Political Manipulation and Ethnic Tensions**	131	44.7	130	**44.4**	-	-	-	-	32	**10.9**	4.11	1.19189

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 10 item 1 shows that 261 (90%) respondents agreed that forced displacement contributes to land disputes and resource competition, while 32 (10.9%) strongly disagreed. A mean score of 3.88 and a standard deviation of 1.20399 indicate broad agreement that land disputes and resource competition contribute to forced displacement. These findings corroborate from the FGDs conducted with community leaders, state:

> ethnic clashes, farmer-herder conflicts, insurgency, and banditry force people to flee their homes, leading to instability and disrupting national development.

Table 10 item 2 shows that 228 (77.8%) respondents agreed that land disputes and resource competition contribute to forced displacement, whromile 66 (22.6%) disagreed or were undecided. A mean score of 4.10 and a standard deviation of .99744 indicate varied responses, reinforcing that land disputes and resource competition contribute to forced displacement. These findings, collaborate from the FGDs state:

> struggles over land ownership, water resources, and grazing areas often lead to violence, forcing communities to relocate and undermining agricultural and economic productivity.

Table 10 item 3 shows that 260 86.8% respondents agreed that weak law enforcement and governance contribute to forced displacement, while 33 11.3% were undecided. A mean score of 3.11 and a standard deviation of .63186 indicate minimal variation, reinforcing findings that weak law enforcement and governance contribute to forced displacement.

These findings corroborate from the FGDs state: the inability of authorities to prevent or respond effectively to conflicts contributes to displacement and weakens trust in government institutions, affecting peace and development.

Table 10, item 4, shows that 65 respondents 22.2% strongly agreed, while 196 69.9%agreed that forced displacement results from climate change and environmental factors. Only 32 10.9% strongly disagreed. The high mean score 3.11 and low standard deviation 1.09438 indicate strong consensus. This finding correlates from the FGD conducted with a private business owner who state:

> floods, droughts, and desertification reduce arable land and force communities to migrate in search of better living conditions, increasing pressure on host communities and national resources.

Table 10, item 5, shows that 131 respondents 44.7% strongly agreed, while 130 44.4% agreed that forced displacement contributes to political manipulation and ethnic tensions. Only 32 10.9% strongly disagreed. The high mean score 4.11 and low standard deviation 1.19189 indicate strong consensus, confirming minimal variation in responses. This finding correlates from the FGD conducted with a civil servant state:

> politicians and interest groups sometimes exploit ethnic or religious divisions for personal or political gain, escalating tensions and contributing to forced displacement.

Table 11: Research Question Three: Who are the stakeholders employ to mitigate force displacement in Adamawa State?

The following above purported question states the stakeholders employ to mitigate factor force displacement in Adamawa State. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the statement:

SA=Strongly Agree. A= Agree. U=Undecide. D= Disagree. SD= Strongly Disagree

S/N	Items	Strongly Agree (SA)		Agree (A)		Undecide (UD		Disagree (D)		Strongly Disagree (SD)		Mean	Std Deviation
		N	%	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	M	Std.D
1	(Adamawa state emergency management agency ADSMA)	162	55.3	131	44.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.55	.49804
2	NGOs and International Agencies	130	44.4	163	55.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.10	.99744
3	Traditional and Religious Leaders	130	44.4	98	33.4	-	-	-	-	65	**22.2**	3.7782	1.54895
4	Community-Based Organisations (CBOs	98	33.4	195	66.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.33	.47261

5	**Security personnel such as Police, military and NSCDC**	132	45.1	161	54.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.45	.49840

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 11, item 1, shows that 162 respondents (55.3%) strongly agreed, while 131 (44.7%) agreed that the Adamawa State Emergency Management Agency (ADSMA) mitigates forced displacement. No respondents disagreed. The high mean score (4.55) and standard deviation (.49804) indicate strong consensus, reinforcing ADSMA's key role in addressing displacement. his finding correlates from the FGDs conducted with a civil servant state:

> ADSMA, Government Agencies Federal, State, and Local Governments provide relief materials such as shelter, drugs, food and other social amenities to force displace person even though some of this relief material dont reach them in time.

Table 11, item 2, shows that 130 respondents (44.4%) strongly agreed, while 163 (55.6%) agreed that NGOs and international agencies mitigate forced displacement. No respondents disagreed. The high mean score (4.10) and standard deviation (.99744) indicate strong consensus, confirming that these organisations play a key role in addressing displacement. This finding correlates from the FGDs conducted with a community leader state that "provide emergency relief, including food, shelter, and medical aid to displaced persons".

Table 11, item 3, shows that 130 respondents (44.4%) strongly agreed, while 98 (33.4%) agreed that traditional and religious leaders help mitigate forced displacement. Only 65 (22.2%) strongly disagreed. The high mean score (3.77) and low standard deviation (1.54895) indicate strong consensus on their role in addressing displacement. This finding correlates from the FGDs conducted with a religion leader state that:

> mediate conflicts and promote peaceful coexistence between conflicting groups and accommodate the force displaced people into their community.

Table 11, item 4, shows that 98 respondents (33.4%) strongly agreed, while 195 (66.6%) agreed that community-based organisations (CBOs) help mitigate forced displacement. No respondents disagreed. The high mean score (4.33) and standard deviation (.47261) indicate strong consensus, confirming the crucial role of CBOs in addressing displacement. This finding correlates from the FGDs conducted with some of the members of the community member who state that "CBOs engage in local peacebuilding initiatives and dialogue among communities to enhance peace and development".

Table 11, item 5, shows that 132 respondents (45.1%) strongly agreed, while 161 (54.9%) agreed that security personnel—police, military, and NSCDC—are key stakeholders in mitigating forced displacement. No respondents disagreed. The high mean score (44.45) and standard deviation (.49840) indicate strong consensus. This finding correlate with FGD conducted with some of the members of community who state:

> security personnel are often deployed at the force displace community and camp for protection of lives and property and orderliness

Discussion of Findings

The study's findings reveal key demographic trends among respondents. Table 1 indicates that male respondents form the majority at 66.6%, while females make up 33.4%. Table 2 shows that most respondents (44.4%) fall within the 41-50 age group, followed by 30-40 years (22.5%), 51-60 years (21.8%), and 20-30 years (11.3%). Table 3 highlights educational qualifications, with 44.4% holding a master's degree, while those with first degrees and diplomas each account for 22%.

Table 4 presents marital status, showing that 55.6% are married, 22.2% are widowed, and 22.2% are divorced. Table 5 indicates that 55.6% are civil servants, followed by private business owners (22.2%), security personnel (11.3%), and clergy (10.9%). Table 6 shows that the dominant ethnic group is Fulani (33.4%), followed by Bille (22.5%), Bachama (11.3%), and Mbula, Bali, and others (10.9% each). Table 7 reveals that Christians constitute 66.6% of respondents, while Muslims account for 33.4%.

Table 9 shows that forced displacement has severely impacted livelihoods, leading to loss of income, extreme poverty, and destitution. This aligns with George and Adelaja (2022), who found that displacement exacerbates poverty. The study also highlights limited access to education, as financial constraints and instability hinder schooling, corroborating Jones (2024). Healthcare services are strained due to overcrowding, poor sanitation, and disease outbreaks, consistent with Olakpe (2024). Housing conditions are also affected, with inadequate accommodation and sanitation challenges increasing vulnerability.

Table 10 indicates that forced displacement has contributed to violent conflicts and insecurity, worsening ethnic clashes, farmer-herder conflicts, and insurgency. This supports findings by Odalonu and Obani (2018), who linked displacement to rising violence. Land disputes and resource competition further escalate tensions, undermining peace and development, as noted by Olakpe (2024). Weak law enforcement and governance also contribute, with authorities struggling to prevent or respond to conflicts effectively, leading to a loss of public trust. Aeran Chung, Draudt, and Tian (2024) found that weak governance allows communities to take the law into their hands, escalating conflicts.

Environmental factors such as floods, droughts, and desertification also drive displacement by reducing arable land, forcing migration, and increasing pressure on host communities. Political actors and interest groups exploit ethnic and religious divisions for personal gain, fuelling conflicts and displacement, as highlighted by Anikwudike and Agabi (2024).

Table 11 outlines measures taken to mitigate forced displacement. Agencies such as the Adamawa State Emergency Management Agency (ADSMA), the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), and local authorities provide essential relief, aligning with Jamil, Aslam, and Ali (2024). Humanitarian organisations, including NGOs and international agencies, support these efforts by distributing necessities to displaced persons. Traditional and religious leaders play a key role in conflict mediation and fostering peaceful coexistence, a view supported by Abimbola (2024). Community-based organisations engage in peacebuilding initiatives, while security forces, including the police, military, and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, work to prevent conflicts and protect lives and property.

Summary

Examining force displacement and its impact on peace and development in Adamawa State North East Nigeria. 400 structure questionnaires were developed and distributed in Yola South LGA 293 were retrieved. The Biodata of the respondents indicate that majority of the

respondent are male represent 66.6 % while the age bracket of the majority respondent 41-50 representing 44.4 %, the majority of respondents has qualification of master degree representing 44.4 % and majority respondents are married with 55.6% also majority are civil servant with 55.6%, while majority of the ethnic group are Fulani represent 33.4% and the majority religion respondents that participated are Christian with 66. 6%. Majority of the respondents indicate that force displacement as result to loss of livelihood, limit access to education, strain to healthcare service, housing and living conditions as well as social integration and community relations furthermore, the findings revealed that factors contributing to force displacement that impact peace and development are violent conflicts and insecurity , land disputes and resource competition, weak law enforcement and governance, climate change and environmental factors and political manipulation and ethnic tensions, while stakeholders employ to mitigate force displacement are Adamawa state emergency management agency and other government agencies, humanitarian organisations, traditional and religion leaders, community base organisation and security personnel.

Conclusion

From the results of this study that examining the impact of force displacement on of peace and development in Adamawa state north east Nigeria. Force displacement as led to loss of livelihood, limit access to education, strain to healthcare service, housing and living conditions as well as social integration and community relations furthermore, the findings revealed that factors contributing to force displacement that impact peace and development are violent conflicts and insecurity , land disputes and resource competition, weak law enforcement and governance, climate change and environmental factors and political manipulation and ethnic tensions, while stakeholders employ to mitigate force displacement are Adamawa state emergency management agency and other government agencies, humanitarian organisations, traditional and religion leaders, community base organisation and security personnel. Thus, force displacement has exacerbated insecurity like insurgency, banditry, kidnapping sexual assault as other form of criminality in the host community which has hindered peace and development with the study area and the state at large.

Recommendation

i. The Adamawa State Government should work in synergy with the Nigeria Meteorological Agency to create an early warning mechanism system to provide weather and climate change services for foreseen natural disasters and educate people on activities that can cause environmental disasters.
ii. The state executive council should strengthen governance and inclusive policies to address conflicts arising from force displaced people and host communities
iii. The Adamawa state government should partner with the Ministry of Humanitarian and Disaster Management for robust resettlement programs that prioritise social integration, community engagement, and economic opportunities for displaced persons.
iv. The Adamawa state governor should prioritise local peacebuilding initiatives that involve both displaced and host communities to significantly reduce tensions, and promote coexistence.

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PAULO FREIRE'S CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AND THE ROLE OF NUMBERS IN ADULT EDUCATION

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Abstract
Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy is premised on the liberation of oppressed individuals through education with learning being an inherently political act. Adult numeracy education on the other hand holds that numbers transcend mere mathematical computation embodying tools for critical consciousness and empowerment. Since there remains a conspicuous research gap concerning how numbers specifically function within critical pedagogical practices aimed at adult learners, this study addresses this lacuna. The study seeks to unearth fundamental questions such as: How can numbers be leveraged to bringing about critical thinking and social justice among adult learners? What are the barriers and facilitators in implementing numeracy education through a Freirean perspective? The study employs the qualitative method of research by critically analyzing the nexus between the importance of numeracy in fostering critical awareness even as the traditional approaches to teaching mathematics often fail to resonate with adult learners' lived-experiences, thereby inhibiting their ability to critically engage with numerical concepts in relation to the world. The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the evolving discourse on critical pedagogy and adult education since the Freirean principles offers valuable insights for educators seeking to enhance their teaching from theory to practice. As a finding, Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy provides a robust foundation for reimagining adult numeracy education especially from its emphasis on praxis and dialogical interactions engendering positive actions.

Keywords: Pedagogy, Critical, Numeracy, Adult, Education, Oppression, Dialogic, Freedom

Introduction

Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy is a response to oppressive educational systems that perpetuated social inequities with its root in his experiences with marginalized communities in Brazil. Freire's seminal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000) introduced a paradigm shift, by advocating for education as a means of liberation and empowerment. His theory posits that learners must develop critical consciousness which will enable them to recognize and challenge systemic injustices. This historical backdrop is necessary for understanding how Freire's principles can be applied to various domains of education, including adult numeracy. Adult numeracy education remains a significant yet underexplored area which is characterized by diverse learner needs and varying levels of mathematical proficiency. The current state of adult numeracy education reflects both advancements and persistent challenges. For instance, (Baker & Street, 1994) notes that, while technological innovations

have facilitated new methods of teaching mathematics, many adult learners continue to face barriers relating to socioeconomic status, prior educational experiences, and cultural backgrounds. These factors underscore the need for an inclusive approach that aligns with Freirean ideals.

Traditionally, mathematics has been perceived as a neutral discipline devoid of political or social implications. However, scholars such as Skovsmose (2020) argue that mathematics education inherently involves power dynamics and social justice issues. While numerous studies have explored critical approaches to literacy and general education, few have specifically examined how Freire's principles can inform the teaching of numbers. This study aims to fill this lacuna by investigating the role of critical consciousness in numerical literacy while highlighting the necessity for a more holistic understanding of mathematical education. Traditional methods often prioritize rote learning and procedural fluency at the expense of deeper conceptual understanding and social relevance of mathematics. Gutierrez (2018:25) contends that, "Mathematics education should equip students with the tools to critically analyze and transform their realities". This position aligns with Freire's assertion that education must empower individuals to become active agents of change. Furthermore, the social justice implications of numerical literacy cannot be overstated. Numerical skills are essential for navigating everyday life, from managing personal finances to participating in democratic processes. However, disparities in mathematical proficiency increases existing social inequalities, particularly among marginalized groups.

This study will therefore examine how Paulo Freire's principles apply to teaching numbers within the context of adult education. It will investigate the mechanisms through which critical pedagogy can enhance numerical literacy and promote empowerment. To achieve this, the following research questions shall guide the inquiry such as: How do adult learners perceive the relationship between numerical literacy and social justice? What strategies can educators employ to integrate critical consciousness into numeracy instruction? What are the outcomes of implementing a Freirean approach to adult numeracy education? The attempt to answer these questions will set the study on the track of contributing new ideas and knowledge within the broad framework of the subject matter bringing about more clarity in these aspects.

Conceptual Clarifications

The Concept of Critical Pedagogy: According to Freire (1970) Critical Pedagogy is an educational approach that emphasizes the importance of critical thinking, dialogue, and social justice in the learning process. Freire maintained that traditional education deliberately maintains social inequality by supporting social constructs and reinforcing cultural traditions. Freire's concept of critical pedagogy is focus on the idea of 'conscientization' which refers to the process of becoming aware of one's social and political reality and taking action to transform it (Freire, 1970). Principles of note in critical pedagogy according to Freire (1970) include dialogue which has to do with encouraging open and critical dialogue between students (adult learner) and teachers to promote critical thinking and problem-solving. The second is conscientization which has to do with raising awareness of social and political realities and encouraging students (adult learners) to take action to transform them. Another is problem-based learning which has to do with encouraging students (adult learners) to question and challenge dominant ideologies, rather than simply accepting them. The last is empowerment where students (adult learners) are empowered

to take control of their own learning and become active participants in the educational process. Critical pedagogy is an approach to learning that says, you are not just a receiver of information; you are an intellectual, an interrogator, and a change maker. It is about inspiring critical thinking, fostering dialogue, an empowering the students to challenge the traditional way of doing and seeing the world. In a critical pedagogy classroom, students/adult learners will be motivated to ask challenging questions like why are things the way they are? Why is there something and not nothing? And how can we make the world a better place for all? In critical pedagogy, students/adult learners will learn to think critically about the world around them, and to examine information and seek out different perspectives. Critical pedagogy is about taking action to create a more just and equitable world. It is about recognizing that education is not just an individual pursuit but a collective one that can form the world we live in.

The Concept of Numbers: Numbers are mathematical objects used to count, measure, and label quantities (Katz, 2013). Numbers can be natural, whole, integers, rational, irrational, real and complex. Natural numbers refer to the set of positive integers beginning from 1and are used primarily for counting and ordering; whole numbers include natural numbers along with zero and are used in basic arithmetic operations and counting. Integers comprise both positive and negative numbers as well as zero and they are used for representing both directions on a number line; rational numbers are numbers that can be expressed as the quotient or fraction of two integers and are useful for measurements and comparisons. Irrational numbers on the other hand are numbers that cannot be expressed as a fraction of two integers and they have non-repeating and non-terminating decimal expansions. Real numbers comprise the set of both rational and irrational numbers; complex numbers involve the square root of negative numbers and are expressed in the form of a+bi, where ‘a’ and ‘b’ are real numbers and ‘i’ is the imaginary unit. Numbers have the following properties: commutativity- the order of numbers does not change the result of addition or multiplication; associativity- the order in which numbers are grouped does not change the result of addition or multiplication; distributivity- multiplication distributes over addition (Katz, 2013).

The Concept of Adult Education: The concept of adult education has undergone various interpretation by scholars across different periods. However, a landmark definition emerged from the International Conference on Adult Education held in Paris, France in 1976, and this gained widespread acceptance and has since served as a foundational reference point. Adult education is the entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content, level, or method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they provide or replace initial education in schools or colleges, and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications, or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour in the two-fold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced independent, social, economic, and cultural development (UNESCO, 1976). The above definition of adult education provided in 1976 by UNESCO is all encompassing as it comprises formal, non-formal, and self-directed learning (informal learning). Nevertheless, as specialization and professionalization continue to evolve, certain aspects like apprenticeship training have become more closely linked with technical and vocational education rather than being exclusively categorized under adult education. A more recent and significant definition of adult education emerged from the

Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V), held in Hamburg, Germany, in 1997 which has since gained considerable importance and recognition. The 1997 definition of adult education has gained widespread acceptance due to its emphasis on the critical role of adult education in enhancing human well-being. Given the current global challenges, including environmental degradation, poverty, inequality, and rising insecurity, the need for adult education as a catalyst for peace, tolerance, and dialogue has become increasingly pressing. Furthermore, the growing diversity and complexity of modern societies underscores the importance of adult education in fostering intercultural and multicultural understanding thereby promoting social cohesion and global citizenship.

Literature Review

The historical development of critical pedagogy traces its roots back to the mid-twentieth century when Paulo Freire began formulating his revolutionary educational theories in response to the oppressive conditions faced by marginalized communities in Brazil. Freire's seminal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000), laid the groundwork for a transformative approach to education as it emphasized the role of dialogue, reflection, and action in fostering critical consciousness among learners. His concept of *conscientização* challenged traditional models of education that reinforced passive learning and social hierarchies. According to Freire (2000), true education must empower individuals to recognize and challenge systemic injustices, thereby transforming their realities. This paradigm shift was further elaborated upon by subsequent scholars who expanded on Freire's ideas. For instance, Shor (1987) emphasized the importance of problem-posing education, where learners actively engage with real-world issues rather than passively receiving information. This approach fosters a deeper understanding of societal structures and encourages learners to become agents of change. Similarly, McLaren (2009) explored the intersection of critical pedagogy with broader socio-political contexts, highlighting the need for educators to address issues of race, class, and gender in their teaching practices.

The evolution of critical pedagogy also reflects a shift in educational philosophy and practice. Giroux (2010) noted that the rise of neoliberal policies and market-driven approaches to education has posed significant challenges to the implementation of critical pedagogical principles. In this context, critical pedagogy serves as a counter-narrative, while advocating for an education system that prioritizes equity, justice, and human dignity over profit and efficiency. The application of critical pedagogy extends beyond formal educational settings to various domains of adult learning. Scholars as Brookfield (2005) have examined how critical pedagogy can be adapted to adult learning environments, emphasizing the importance of creating inclusive spaces that value diverse perspectives and lived-experiences. Paralleling the development of critical pedagogy, the field of adult numeracy education has also undergone significant transformations. Historically, adult numeracy education has been shaped by competing ideologies and pedagogical approaches. On one hand, traditional methods have focused on skill acquisition and functional literacy with the aim to equip learners with practical mathematical skills for everyday life. On the other hand, more recent approaches have sought to integrate numeracy with broader educational goals while recognizing the social and cultural dimensions of mathematical knowledge. As argued by Baker and Street (1994), numeracy is not merely a technical skill but a socially constructed practice embedded within specific cultural contexts. This perspective aligns with Freire's notion of praxis, suggesting that numerical literacy should be understood from a broader societal implication.

Furthermore, scholars as Skovsmose (2020) have explored the political dimensions of mathematics education, referencing how mathematical knowledge is replicated in power relations and social inequalities. Critical pedagogical approach within educational framework can help learners develop a critical awareness of these dynamics, enabling them to challenge and transform unjust systems. This connection between critical pedagogy and numeracy underscores the potential for creating more equitable and empowering educational experiences for adult learners. As the field of critical pedagogy continues to evolve, it is essential to examine its applicability to diverse educational contexts, including adult numeracy education which is what this study is currently doing. The social context of numerical literacy also plays a pivotal role in shaping adult learners' experiences and outcomes in numeracy education. It is important to note that numeracy is not merely a technical skill but a socially constructed practice embedded within specific cultural and historical contexts. Understanding the social dimensions of numeracy requires examining how mathematical knowledge is produced, transmitted, and utilized within different societal structures and power relations. From this perspective, numeracy education becomes an arena for addressing broader issues of equity, justice, and empowerment.

One key aspect of the social context of numerical literacy is its relationship to economic inequality. Numerical skills are increasingly recognized as essential for economic participation and mobility in the modern workforce. However, disparities in numeracy proficiency extends existing social inequalities, particularly among marginalized groups such as low-income individuals, ethnic minorities, and immigrants (OECD, 2019). These disparities reflect systemic barriers that limit access to quality numeracy education and perpetuate cycles of poverty and exclusion. For instance, financial literacy initiatives that focus on budgeting, saving, and investing can empower learners to make informed decisions and improve their economic well-being (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014). Moreover, the social context of numerical literacy extends beyond economic domains to civic and democratic participation. Numeracy is a critical skill for engaging in public discourse, analyzing data, and making informed decisions about societal issues. In democratic societies, citizens must be able to interpret statistical information, evaluate policy proposals, and hold elected officials accountable. However, many adults lack the necessary numerical skills to doing these. This deficit undermines their capacity to participate fully in civic life and contribute to the common good. The social context of numerical literacy also encompasses the role of community and collective action in promoting numeracy education. Numeracy is not solely an individual pursuit but a shared endeavour that benefits from collective support and collaboration such as participatory action research projects that involve learners in identifying and addressing local numeracy challenges (Freire, 2000) while Ole Skovsmose (1994:57) notes that, "Mathematics can be seen as a technology of power".

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach to explore the role of numeracy in adult education within the framework of Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy. The research primarily relies on a review of existing literature, focusing on scholarly articles, books, and case studies related to Freire's pedagogical theories and the integration of numeracy in adult education programs. The research design for this study adopts a qualitative approach with critical analysis as the method. This is particularly apt for exploring the intricate experiences of adult learners in numeracy education. This method allows for an in-depth exploration of how adult learners perceive and engage with numerical literacy within the context of critical

pedagogy. By adopting the critical method, concepts can be thoroughly assessed along a logical line of thought bringing clarity and a deeper understanding of how they connect to other aspects of truth and reality within the broad framework of the issues under consideration.

Theoretical Framework

The framework draws on the work of Paulo Freire and other scholars who advocate for education as a means of liberation and empowerment. Since for Freire, education must be a practice of freedom, not a practice of domination. This point underscores the need for educators to challenge oppressive structures and promote critical consciousness among learners. Within the context of adult numeracy education, the theoretical framework emphasizes the importance of recognizing the socio-political dimensions of mathematical knowledge and its role in shaping power relations and social inequalities. Another key aspect of the theoretical framework is its focus on praxis, the integration of theory and practice aimed at transforming reality. Mathematics education has the potential to equip adult students with the tools to critically analyze and transform their realities.

The Role of Numbers in Adult Education

Numbers are not merely abstract entities but essential tools for problem-solving, decision-making, and resolving complex social and economic challenges. In adult education, integrating numerical concepts plays a critical role in bringing about cognitive development while enhancing workplace competencies, and promoting social equity. Gal (2018) underscores the importance of numeracy skills in enabling adults to engage meaningfully with their surroundings underpinning essential life skills that extend beyond basic arithmetic. For instance, financial literacy, which involves understanding budgets, interest rates, and investment strategies, relies heavily on numerical reasoning. According to a report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2019), adults with strong numeracy skills are better equipped to manage personal finances and make informed healthcare decisions while participating actively in civic activities. The acquisition of numeracy skills among adults is fraught with challenges. Many adult learners encounter barriers stemming from prior educational experiences, cultural perceptions of mathematics, and socio-economic constraints. Coben (2003) notes that negative attitudes toward mathematics, often rooted in childhood experiences, can persist into adulthood, creating psychological barriers to learning. These attitudes manifest as math anxiety, which affects both motivation and performance. To address such challenges, educators must adopt pedagogical approaches that emphasize relevance, accessibility, and learner empowerment. Contextualized learning, where numerical concepts are embedded within familiar scenarios, has shown promise in reducing anxiety and enhancing engagement. A study by Evans (2014) found that when adult learners see direct connections between mathematical concepts and their daily lives, they are more likely to develop confidence in their abilities.

Numeracy contributes to workforce readiness by equipping with the analytical skills necessary for modern professions. As industries increasingly rely on data-driven decision-making, employees must possess the ability to interpret and manipulate numerical information effectively. Hoyles *et al*. (2010) avers that organizations investing in numeracy training for adult workers experienced improved productivity, reduced errors, and enhanced innovation. Moreover, enhanced numeracy skills contribute to social equity by bridging gaps between different demographic groups. Historically marginalized populations, including women, ethnic minorities, and low-income individuals, often face disparities in access to

quality education. Despite its importance, the teaching of numeracy in adult education remains under-theorized and under-resourced compared to other subjects. Gal (2018:23) argues that "adult numeracy education should focus on developing flexible thinking rather than adhering rigidly to conventional algorithms". Numeracy it must be noted does not exist in isolation but complements other forms of knowledge. Thus, the role of numbers in adult education should be viewed as part of a broader educational framework rather than a standalone objective. Research indicates that adults rely on both procedural and conceptual knowledge when engaging with numbers, suggesting that instructional methods should incorporate both types of learning. Conceptual understanding involves grasping the underlying principles of mathematical operations, while procedural knowledge focuses on executing steps correctly. Combining these approaches enhances the retention and transferability of skills. Furthermore, studies reveal that metacognitive strategies—such as self-reflection and error analysis—play a crucial role in improving numeracy outcomes among adults.

International frameworks, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emphasize the need for universal access to quality education, including numeracy. Countries implementing successful numeracy programs often share common characteristics, such as strong institutional support, teacher training, and community involvement. The integration of numbers into adult education is further complicated by the diverse backgrounds and motivations of learners. Adults returning to education after extended absences may face unique challenges, such as balancing work, family responsibilities, and academic pursuits. Numeracy serves as a gateway to opportunities, yet disparities in access to quality education perpetuate cycles of disadvantages. The evolving nature of work and society further underscores the importance of numeracy in adult education. Automation, artificial intelligence, and globalization are reshaping the labour market, creating new demands for quantitative literacy. The role of numbers in adult education therefore, must be considered within the broader context of lifelong learning. Numeracy is not a static skill but a dynamic capability that evolves. As individuals encounter new challenges and opportunities throughout their lives, their need for numerical competence grows. Lifelong learning frameworks, such as those proposed by the OECD (2019), emphasize the importance of ongoing education and training to support personal and professional development. The role of numbers in adult education is profound and multifaceted and influences individual capabilities, organizational effectiveness, and societal progress.

Analyzing Freire's Critical Pedagogy and Numeracy in Adult Education

Paulo Freire’s critical pedagogy has profoundly influenced educational theory and practice, leading to an understanding of the relationship between education, power, and social transformation. While Freire’s work primarily addresses literacy, its principles can be extended to numeracy education, particularly in contexts where adults engage with numbers as tools for empowerment and liberation. Freire’s critical pedagogy basically emphasizes that education is not a neutral process but rather a means of either maintaining or challenging existing power structures. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), Freire critiques the "banking model" of education, where knowledge is deposited into passive students by authoritative teachers. Instead, he advocates for a dialogical approach, where both teacher and learner actively participate in constructing meaning through critical reflection and action. For Freire, education becomes a tool for emancipation when it enables individuals to critically analyze their reality, identify oppressive systems, and take steps

toward liberation. Although Freire's original focus was on literacy, his emphasis on critical consciousness and problem-posing education aligns very well with the challenges and opportunities of numeracy education. Numeracy, like literacy, involves more than acquiring technical skills as it encompasses the ability to interpret, question, and act upon quantitative information in meaningful ways. In adult education, numeracy often serves as a gateway to economic stability, civic participation, and personal empowerment. However, traditional approaches to teaching numeracy frequently mirror the banking model criticized by Freire. These methods prioritize rote memorization of procedures over conceptual understanding, reducing mathematics to a set of abstract rules disconnected from real-world applications.

Such an approach can alienate adult learners, particularly those who have experienced trauma or failure in previous educational settings. By contrast, applying Freirean principles to numeracy education shifts the focus from mechanical computation to critical engagement with numerical concepts, bringing deeper learning and greater relevance. One of the core tenets of Freire's critical pedagogy is the importance of context. For Freire, learning must begin with the lived-experiences of learners, drawing on their unique histories, cultures, and environments. This principle aligns closely with contemporary research on contextualized learning in numeracy education. According to Gal (2000), numeracy is inherently situated as it cannot be fully understood or applied outside of specific cultural, social, and practical contexts. When adult learners encounter mathematical concepts embedded within familiar scenarios, they are better able to make sense of them and see their value. For example, a program that teaches budgeting skills using examples drawn from participants' own financial situations allows learners to connect abstract numerical principles to tangible aspects of their lives. This connection not only enhances comprehension but also empowers learners to use their newfound skills to address real-world problems. Moreover, Freire's emphasis on dialogue underscores the importance of collaborative learning in numeracy education. Dialogue, in Freirean terms, is not merely conversation but a process of mutual exploration and co-construction of knowledge.

In a numeracy classroom informed by critical pedagogy, teachers function as facilitators rather than authorities, encouraging learners to share their perspectives, ask questions, and challenge assumptions. This fosters a sense of community and collective responsibility, countering the isolation many adult learners feel in traditional educational settings. Another key aspect of Freire's critical pedagogy is its focus on praxis which is the cycle of reflection and action. For Freire, true learning occurs when individuals critically reflect on their experiences and then act upon their insights to transform their realities. Applied to numeracy education, this concept encourages learners to move beyond passive consumption of information to active engagement with numerical data. Take for instance the situation where adult learners analyze local unemployment statistics; this could prompt discussions about systemic inequities and inspire collective efforts to advocate for policy changes. Similarly, a course on environmental sustainability might task learners with calculating carbon footprints and proposing solutions to reduce emissions in their communities. Through such activities, numeracy becomes a vehicle for critical consciousness and social activism, aligning with Freire's vision of education as a force for liberation. Mathematics, after all, is often perceived as objective and universal, free from the biases inherent in language and literature. Gutstein (2006:15) argues that, "mathematics is not neutral; it carries values, assumptions, and power relations".

Consequently, integrating Freire's ideas into numeracy education requires rethinking the role of error and uncertainty. Traditional approaches to mathematics often stigmatize

mistakes, viewing them as failures rather than opportunities for growth. In contrast, Freirean pedagogy embraces error as an integral part of the learning process, recognizing that genuine understanding emerges through experimentation and reflection. This perspective is particularly important in adult numeracy education, where fear of making mistakes can increase math anxiety and hinder progress. Framing errors as stepping stones rather than obstacles, can aid in creating a more supportive and empowering learning environment. The application of Freire's critical pedagogy to numeracy education also raises important questions about assessment and evaluation. Standardized tests, which dominate much of the current reality in mathematics, often fail to capture the full range of skills and competencies developed through critical numeracy instruction. For example, a portfolio that documents a learner's journey from initial struggles with percentages to successful application of those concepts in managing household budgets provides a richer picture of progress than a single test score ever could. Such approaches align with Freire's belief that assessment should serve as a tool for reflection and improvement rather than judgment and ranking. Again, the intersection of Freire's critical pedagogy with numeracy education brings about the need for culturally responsive teaching practices. Just as literacy instruction must account for the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of learners, so too must numeracy education recognize and value the varied experiences and identities of adult learners. Culturally relevant pedagogy, as advocated by Ladson-Billings (1995), emphasizes the importance of connecting curriculum content to learners' cultural references and lived realities. In the context of numeracy, this might involve incorporating indigenous counting systems, exploring the mathematics of traditional crafts, or analyzing statistical data related to social justice issues affecting specific communities. In so doing, educators can enhance relevance, promote inclusivity, and foster equitable outcomes in numeracy.

Conclusion

Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy brings about valuable insights by emphasizing context, dialogue, praxis, and cultural responsiveness, Freirean principles provide a pathway for developing numeracy programs that empower learners to critically engage with numerical information and act upon their insights to effect social change. While challenges remain such as overcoming entrenched perceptions of mathematics as neutral or objective, the potential benefits of integrating critical pedagogy into numeracy education are significant and far reaching. Through a sustained commitment to these principles, educators can help adult learners harness the power of numbers not just as tools for survival but as instruments of liberation and transformation. By engaging with these principles, learners develop not only numerical proficiency but also a critical awareness of the structural factors shaping their lives just as "problem-posing education allows learners to see mathematics as a tool for social change rather than just a set of abstract rules" (Frankenstein, 1989:45). Nasir and Cobb (2007:123) also makes the point that "creating inclusive classroom cultures is essential for fostering equity in mathematics education". For Skovsmose (1994:57), "Mathematics education is never politically neutral; it always serves particular interests and reproduces certain power dynamics". Understanding these power relationships is crucial for addressing the inequities and injustices that pervade mathematical learning environments.

Furthermore, Valero (2004:89) opines that, "the language of mathematics operates as a gatekeeper, determining who has access to mathematical knowledge and who is excluded". Hence, "Recognizing and valuing multiple mathematical identities is essential for fostering equity and inclusion in mathematics education" (Martin, 2009:102). In line with

Freire's position, "numeracy education should empower learners to critically analyze and challenge unjust systems" (Skovsmose, 2020:15). Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy offers a transformative approach to adult education, emphasizing dialogue, critical thinking, and the development of learners' awareness of their social realities. With regards to numeracy, this pedagogical framework goes beyond rote learning of numbers and mathematical procedures as it fosters an understanding of how numeracy can be used as a tool for social empowerment and critical engagement. Integrating numeracy within the context of Freire's pedagogy, adult learners can be encouraged not just to learn numbers but to reflect critically on the societal systems in which these numbers operate. The role of numeracy, therefore, extends beyond basic skills acquisition and becomes a means of understanding and challenging oppressive structures in society.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis of this study, Adult education programs should incorporate Paulo Freire's principles of critical pedagogy into their numeracy curricula. This can be achieved by designing numeracy lessons that focus on the context and application of numbers in real-life situations, encouraging learners to question and reflect on the socio-political dimensions of the mathematical concepts they learn. Educators in adult learning programs should be properly trained on the integration of critical pedagogy with numeracy education. Teachers should be equipped with the skills to foster a dialogic and participatory classroom environment where adult learners can critically engage with numeracy content. Furthermore, numeracy programs should emphasize practical and contextual applications of numbers that are relevant to the everyday lives of adult learners. By relating numerical concepts to the lived-experiences of learners, educators can make learning more meaningful and empower students to use numeracy as a tool for social change. This will go a long way in bridging concepts such as realism and idealism with everyday reality that needs explication for social action and change.

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WIDAL TEST: THE LABORATORIAN'S ALBATROSS

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Abstract
Widal Test: The Laboratorian's Albatross is a research that was conducted at Lifelink Specialist Laboratories, Uyo, Nigeria. The dataset consists of 520 respondents who were randomly selected from patients who visited the facility for Laboratory diagnosis over a period of six months. Nine categories of questions were deployed with a total of 24 varieties of questions under them. The results from the study suggest that Medical Doctors' attitudes and referrals may influence the public's perception of Widal test.63.5% of the respondents were self referred; for reason of ill health (90%). Most of them(92.3%) had already taken treatment for typhoid with no improvement in the symptoms (82.1%).The Chi square test results indicate statistical significance ($p<0.05$). There is a higher likelihood of choosing the test to confirm typhoid diagnosis without proper guidance by professionals.

Keywords: Widal test, health care, diagnostic tests, medical referrals,medical doctors

Introduction

The use of the word Laboratorian is not by any means, intended to insult the Medical Laboratory Scientists who have worked hard to ensure that patients identify, and interact only with the qualified personel in the laboratory; and are, by so doing protected from impostors/quacks. Laboratorian is rather used here to ensure that, the target audience relates seamlessly with the content of this paper. Widal test, developed in 1896 and named after its inventor, Georges-Fernand Widal, is an indirect agglutination test for enteric fever or undulant fever whereby bacteria causing typhoid/ paratyphoid fe fever are mixed with a serum containing specific antibodies obtained from an infected individual.

In cases of Salmonella infection, the test assesses for host antibodies to the O soma antigen and the H flagellar antigen of the bacteria.(Khanna et al, 2015) As with all serological tests, the rise in antibody levels needed to perform the diagnosis takes 7–14 days, which limits its applicability in early diagnosis. This therefore makes accuracy in the interpretation of Widal test results critical. The Widal test is positive if the O antigen titre is more than 1:160 in an active infection, or if H antigen titer is more than 1:160 in past infection or in immunized persons.

A single Widal test is of little clinical relevance especially in endemic areas such as Indian subcontinent, Africa and South-east Asia. This is due to recurrent exposure to the typhoid causing bacteria, immunization and high chances of cross-reaction from infections,

such as malaria and non typhoidal salmonella. (Know treatnent.com 2020) The agent in the Widal antigen suspension; 2-mercaptoethanol easily denatures the IgM class of antibodies, so if a decrease in the titer is seen after using this agent, it means the contribution of IgM has been removed leaving only IgG component. The differentiation of antibody classes is important as it allows for the distinction of a recent (IgM) from an old infection (IgG).

Other means of diagnosing Salmonella typhi and paratyphi include cultures of blood, urine and faeces. These organisms produce H^2S from thiosulfate and can be identified easily on differential media such as bismuth sulfite agar (Omlopenia and Lateef 2000; Chesbrough, 2006; CDC 2020). If no other tests (either bacteriologic culture or more specific serology) are available, a fourfold increase in the titre (e.g. from 1:40 to 1:640) in the course of the infection, or a conversion from an IgM reaction to an IgG reaction of at least the same titre, would be consistent with a typhoid infection. The normal widal ranges are between 1:20 and 1:80.

This study seeks to investigate the controversies surrounding the relevance of the Widal test to patient diagnosis, specifically exploring whether ignorance or medical doctors' attitudes influence the general perception of the public.

Methodology

A total of five hundred and twenty (520) participants were randomly selected for this study, irrespective of gender,age,or educational status as communications Were done using interpreter were necessary. The study was conducted within a period of six (6) months; February to July 2024. These were clients presenting voluntarily for laboratory investigations at Lifelink Specialist Laboratories, a privately owned Medical Laboratory in Uyo, Nigeria.

Each respondent was only assigned a unique identification number which sufficed for this study. All responses were tallied under respective subheadings for subsequent statistical analysis. Chi-Square Test was used to investigate whether ignorance or medical doctors' attitudes influenced the general perception of the public.

Results

S/N	Category of Questions	Varieties of Questions	Answer	Score	Percentage
1.	Referral	Who referred you for the lab test	Medical Doctor	37	7.1%
			Relation (including friends)	153	29.4%
			Self-Referral	330	63.5%
2.	Reason for Coming for Widal Test	Which of the following reasons made you consider doing Widal test?	Ill health	468	90%
			Routine check	52	10%
3.	Histotry of Previous Treatment	Have you recently treated this ailment?	YES	380	73.1%
			NO	120	23.1%
			CAN'T RECALL	20	3.8
4.	Treatment Target	Were you Treated for malaria?	YES	480	92.3%
			NO	40	7.7%
5.	Typhoid	Were you Treated For Typhoid?	YES	350	67.3%
			NO	170	32.7%
6.	Malaria & Typhoid	Were you Treated for both malaria and	YES	320	61.5%
			No	200	38.5%

		typhoid ?			
7.	Response to Treatment	Illness symptoms after medication	Resolved	5	1%
			Improved	88	16.9%
			No response	427	82.1%
8.	Lab Test after Previous Treatment	Test required	MP	16	3.1%
			WIDAL	293	56.3%
			MP and Widal	211	40.6%
9.	Knowledge of Widal Test	Why the choice of Widal test?	The malaria is too Much and must Have turned to Typhoid	33	6.3%
			Widal is a wider test that picks any sickness in my body It will show drugs to take	150	28.8%
			To know if I have typhoid	337	64.8%

Most respondents (63.5%) referred themselves, followed by relations/friends (29.4%), and medical doctors (7.1%). The primary reason for seeking medical attention was ill health (90%). 73.1% of respondents had taken medication for their ailments before showing up for Widal test. 92.3% of the 520 had taken malaria treatment while 67.3% on the other hand had taken treatment for typhoid. Symptoms of illness were the reason 82.1% of the respondents visited the laboratory, presenting report of no response to medication as earlier symptoms persisted.

The majority of respondents in this category (56.3%) required a Widal test. The primary reason for choosing the Widal test was to confirm typhoid diagnosis (64.8%). Chi square test results on the variables under consideration were as follows: Referral (medical Doctor vs. self- referral) vs. Why Widal (to confirm typhoid diagnosis vs. other reasons) $x^2(1) =10.23$, $p=0.0014$. Sickness vs. routine check vs. Test Required (Widal vs. other tests) $x^2=5.13$, $p=0.0235$

Discussion

A combination of apathy - on the part of the Medical Doctor, and ignorance on the part of the patients played a pivotal role in the controversies which have followed the Widal test for over a century after its discovery. A paultry 7 .1% of the sample population were referred by Medical Doctors. The chi-square test results indicate statistical significance ($p < 0.05$) for both analyses, suggesting that the observed associations are unlikely to occur by chance.

Medical Doctors' dispassion towards exploring possibilities of strategically positioning Widal test as a guide for the diagnosis of Salmonella infections. This therefore leaves over 90% of the request for Widal test in the hands of the ignorant public who neither know what the test is about nor how to interpret the results. The classification of the respondents' ignorance was demonstrated in question category nine (9) clearly speak to the level of ignorance prevalent among the population of individuals currently visiting laboratories for Widal test. This ranges from the notion that Widal test is the same thing as "wider test" which would offer them opportunity to undergo a kind of comprehensive test with capacity to pick any form of infection; from viral, bacterial to fungal.

Other misconceptions about Widal test in the study were that it deals with higher levels of malaria which had become typhoid and so needed "wider" test to help know what drug the agent is sensitive to. The high proportion of patients with requests for Widal test (96.9%) is a confirmation that the test is still in high demand among the patients. Before Widal test could be jettisoned, the healthcare system must provide an effective and affordable alternative.

Tubex is a new serological test in that direction, to help in ascertaining the diagnosis of typhoid fever. However, Tubex test has been discovered neither to be superior nor better performing than the Widal test. Therefore, Tubex test is not recommended over Widal test. (Bakr et al 2020). Culture test has its own limitations: first, the long time (4-5days) required (Chesbrough, 2006) to produce a conclusive test result makes it unsuitable for emergency cases.

Additionally, as observed among our respondents, a good number of patients (67.3%) before showing up for Laboratory diagnosis had already taken antibiotics for other conditions. This act may inhibit Salmonella and make its isolation in the Laboratory difficult-even when the patient has typhoid. Finally, the cost implication of running blood, urine, and faeces cultures at the same time is not within the reach of the poor patients.

Opponents of the use of Widal test for the diagnosis of typhoid fever argue that, most symptoms presented by patients who demand Widal test are malaria symptoms. But our study showed that 92.3% of patients in this category had already treated malaria without resolution of the ill health in 82.1% of them. This may suggest that there is a need for more studies by healthcare providers on a more dynamic interpretation of Widal test for the patients' benefits.

Conclusion

The result from the study suggests that: medical doctors' attitudes and referrals may influence the public's perception of the Widal test. Only 7.1% of the study population was referred by medical doctors, while 92.9% were either self referred or referred by any other persons beside the medical doctors. Widal test enjoyed preference despite the medical doctors' dispassion towards it, with the attendant misapplication of results by the ignorance patients. There is a higher likelihood of choosing the test to confirm typhoid diagnosis without proper guidance by professionals.

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A PHILOSOPHICAL EVALUATION OF SOPHIE OLUWOLE'S CONCEPT OF MORALITY AND KANTIAN ETHICS AS IMPERATIVE FOR AN IDYLLIC SOCIETY IN AFRICA

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Abstract
The question of the basis of morality remains one of the perennial problems in human society, while diverse thought system have come up with different arguments for diverse factors, such as religion, humanity, rationality, and consequentialism, among others. This paper explores the compatibility between the Yoruba concept of morality as presented by Sophie Oluwole and Kant's moral principle as bases for an idyllic society in Africa. To achieve the aim of this study, the methodologies employed include conceptual and critical analysis. A combination of these methods will help to analyze and critically consider other various arguments that are concerned in an attempt to arrive at a reconciliatory state. Using this method, it is gathered that the importation of Kant's ethics as a moral succour is a mere formality because we can find all the ingredients of Kant's ethical principle in Yoruba concept of morality. Also, a relationship is established between the concept of humanity, religion, and society. This relationship is argued to be interwoven and impossible to ignore.

Keywords: Morality, Sophie Oluwole, Kant, Idyllic Society, Africa

Introduction

Morality has been a significant issue of debate and a serious matter of concern all over the world in general and in the field of philosophy in particular. It has come under critical reflection and other working tools of philosophy. Ethics as a branch of philosophy has been described as the systematic study of the fundamental principles underlying morality. It also serves as the rationale behind the moral and ethical propositions usually made and used in our social interactions. Thus, determination of the moral principle is a central and painstaking task in moral philosophy and an attempt at identifying the justification of our conducts over many times push us in the uncertainties of the source, the basis, limitations and the rationale behind our moral conduct. The problem of justification of human conducts is coupled with the polarization of western philosophy with that of the Africans. This therefore serves as the basis of the question of philosophy in Africa. Although, morality is a global social issue, it does not however look down on the fact of ethical relativism which is the view that opposes the universality of morality and the universal application of moral principles. This is because ethical relativism delimits the moral values of a given society to another. Nevertheless, there are universal moral rules and judgments that are not culture bound, and as such, they extend beyond traditional and cultural norms and values. For instance, it is an indisputable fact that no culture or traditions accept stealing as a morally right action. Consequently, there are some universal moral standards that determine the rightness or wrongness of human conducts. The level of moral decadence in the society is alarming and threatening to a stable world order. This paper will build on the moral philosophies of Sophie Oluwole and Immanuel Kant as a paradigm to foster and engender good moral behaviours and idyllic society where human interest and welfare are prized above self-aggrandizement and self-centeredness.

An Examination of Immanuel Kant's Basis of Moral Principles

Philosophy encompasses the principles underlying human ways of life. As such, Kwame Gyekye (2004) is rights when he maintains that "philosophy is essentially a critical and systematic inquiry into the fundamental ideas or principles underlying human thought, conduct, and experience. The ways of life is embedded in culture. Hence, culture is described as the aggregation of human experience and ideals as put into practices. Very inevitable among the components of people's culture is morality. Morality is a social issue which causes man's wonder and this is why it enters the realm of philosophy. Frankena and John (1974) assert that morality existed in the world long before Socrates and the advent of ethical theory is an attestation to the pre-existence of moral principle in the society. The unreflective and hardly separable from things like religion and myth lead philosophers to activities on morality through ethical theorisation. One and prominent among ethical theories is Kant's ethics. However, several philosophers among which include Plato, Aristotle St Augustine have given various moral principles according to their philosophy. Plato's moral philosophy, for instance, holds that morally virtuous man is one who is in rational, biological, and emotional balance, or in platonic terms, one who is wise, temperate, courageous and just. In the truly virtuous man, desires and passions functions harmoniously under the governance of reason (Ethel,Theodore &Sheldon 1980). It can be deduced that Plato asserts reason as the supreme determinant of virtuous man which is moral.

Aristotle in his *Nichomachean ethics* recognized the aim of morality as happiness through reasonable choice. For Aristotle moral virtues concern the habitual choice of actions in accordance with rational principles. This is said to be enhanced by the possession of some distinct characters which aids moral agent to wisely choose between extremes of one's conduct. Augustine gives a religious perspectives toward the solution of moral decadence in our society. He wrote in his book titled,*Enchiridion that*the will of God is always good and its manifestation is what is needed for our moral uprightness. According to Augustine those who dwell in the city know that peace is not achieved by war, but by love, hence, all men should obey and teach the precepts of god, love God and love thy neighbor as thyself (Ethel,Theodore &Sheldon 1980). St Augustine's position reveals that the concerns of religion about morality is such that both have something to render to each other. However, various ethical postulations by some of these philosophers are not acceptable to Kant. Kant rejected and supplanted his rule-deontological ethics. Rule-deontological ethics is a kind of ethical theory which holds that what makes an action right or wrong is not to be found in the balance of its goodness over the evil produced but that there are other factors that determine its ethical statue. For instance, an action is right because it follows some certain rules and it respects human dignity and prizes human autonomy.

Dominant Factor of Immanuel Kant's Ethical Principle

Kant's rejection of old ethical theories is sourced from his reconciliation exercise between the rationalist and the empiricist which has been defalcating the realm of reason and experience as means of knowledge and its consequential invention of synthetic a priori experience alongside reason as the thrust of knowledge. It can therefore be affirmed that synthetic a priori method was used by Kant to carry out the task which the philosophers of enlightenment failed to accomplish. In his work on *Critique of Pure Reason* and the culture of practical reason, Kant restricted the capacity of transcendental analytic and

transcendental aesthetic to the knowledge from understanding and sensibility respectively. The consequence of this is the exoneration of metaphysics from certain illusions, among which include the concept of morality. The issue is although suggested by pure reason; it could not be answered appropriately by pure reason but by practical reason. While on the other hand, the practicability of pure reason is of much concern for Kant. Meanwhile, Sprigge (1988) affirmed in his work on *Rational foundation of Ethics,* that for Kant, there is an objective moral order. This implies that for Kant, moral law must be grounded ultimately on practical reason. This consequently implies that human conditions and situations do not change or alter the standard of morality following Kant's moral principles. Reason, and not emotions nor maximization of benefits for affected moral agents, is the basis of good moral conduct. Immanuel Kant, a deontological moral philosopher started his moral philosophy by critical examination of what the philosophers before him commonly regarded as "good things" and from such critical exercise, he came out with the postulation of the "goodwill" which he holds as the only good without qualification. Goodwill according to Kant consists of actions that are intrinsically right. The goodness of those actions is known not by the intentions, circumstances and the consequences of them. It is this concept of goodwill that forms one of the basis of Kant's supreme principle of morality called "categorical imperative" which is opposed to hypothetical imperative that supports actions done out of conditional and consequential priorities.

Rationality as the Basis of Morality in African Thought System: Sophie Oluwole in Perspective

In understanding the basis of morality in Yoruba, Oluwole's started by recognizing the ascertained divergence between philosophy and religion. For Oluwole, if reason, experience and religion could not give a sound foundation for morality despite the daily call for moral values to guide our affairs, then a culture like that of the Yoruba which separated the secular from religion in their moral thinking, but upholds a value-system is relevance in solving today's global problems (Oluwole 1992:56). Although the Yoruba have no written moral laws, their culture contains norms and values which dictate the rightness or wrongness of their actions. This resonates with the submission of Gyekye (2011), as noted by Kemi Ogunyemi (2022:2), that "African societies are organized and functioning human communities that… evolved ethical systems, ethical values, principles, and rules which are intended to guide social and moral behavior."This is a critic toWestern scholars' demeaning and unreflective assertion that Africa has no clear moral codes and principles as it is in Western ethical philosophy.

The foundation of African morality is characterized by the ability of man to reason. This can be drawn from the meaning of rationality, which is defined as a state or quality of being reasonable. Oluwole (1985) argues for rationality as the basis of African morality. This argument was mainly based on the proverbs, folklore, and norms of the Yorubas. To Oluwole, the acceptance and worship of gods are not enough to conclude that Yoruba morality has a religious basis. She tries to differentiate between accepting religion as the basis of African morality and accepting that religionmaybe a form of influence on African moral ideas. An action is good not because they possess divine attributes or nature but because they are inherently right or wrong in themselves. Morality in Yoruba society is considered a social institution that focuses on setting and formulating ideals and moral concepts men are to live by. The rationality of these ideals can be seen in proverbs, myths, folklores, and norms. This suggests that the idea of Yoruba norms being referred to as

divinely originated ideas is questionable. To further understand this perspective, some quotes/proverbs in the Yoruba social institution will be considered:

· "*Ika ko ye omo eniyan*"
Wickedness is abominable to man.

· "*K'a s'otito ka ku, o san ju ka s'ebi ka was laa ye*"
It is more honourable to die for the truth than to live for fraud.

· "*Aja esin o mode*"
A dog born a year ago does not know how to hunt, which means, one learns from maturity and experience.

The above proverbs suggest that the moral norms of the Africans are formulated by their rational ability and we can ascertain that a wicked person is without good character (*iwa*), while a good person has honest and good character. Using the proverb, *bi a ba begi ni igbo, a fi oran to ara eni wo*, which means '*whenever one acts, one must imagine oneself in the position of the receiver of that action*', we can affirm that even without the god factor, the people are rational to justify their actions. The above relates to the norm, referred to as the golden rule "do unto others as you wish to be done unto you." The important distinction is between proving the existence of gods and rationally justifying the assumption of an empirically non-provable existence made to play a theoretical role at a point when all relevant facts provide no demonstrable direct solution. This, according to Oluwole (1985), is the all-important distinction that most authors fail to draw when they describe African morality as religious. Once we draw clear distinctions between the different rules of behaivour in societies, we will discover that the moral system of the Yoruba is a secular one. From her argument, it is drawn that Yoruba morality is a philosophical system and not a religious system. Morality is hereby a system of evaluating human actions and behaivour and has to do with the reasoning capacity of man.

The Compatibility of Kant's Ethics and Yoruba Concept of Morality

There is need to make a reconciliation between Yoruba scholars' position on morality provided a reasonable comparison is to be undertaken between Yoruba ethics and Kant's ethics. Such reconciliation will show that there is so much difference between Kant and Yoruba ethics. As the basis of explaining the Yoruba concept of morality, the Yoruba scholars, Sophie Oluwole and Bolaji Idowu, used Yoruba cultural heritage to intellectualize the Yoruba culture as far as morality is concerned. Elements of these are proverbs, folklores, norms, etc., which entail moral teachings in Yoruba society. In the same way, the acknowledgement of individual roles in the moral uprightness of a society is given the recognition. Morality is seen as something dependent on personal traits. The trait is referred to as character "*iwa"* which imbibe "honesty, hospitality, kindness, sympathy, charity, justice etc. These concepts are virtues used in describing man's behaviour in Yoruba society. But despite the personal stature, which is from one person to another, there is no room for relativism. An action is honest or otherwise when it is judged in relation to fellowmen and its social implication at large. Thus, there is interpersonal relationship between persons as it affects societal peace. However, very important point concerning the position on Yoruba ethics is the identification and recognition of Kant's golden rule which is expressed in the Yoruba proverbs that says *"bi a ba begi ni gbo, a fi oro ro ara eni wo"* meaning, whenever we cut a tree in the bush, we must try to consider

the agony to be experienced by us. This golden rule is the basis for the public enactment.

The purpose of golden rule is to grant and maintain packages which utilitarianism promises. This is because the highest good as we have in utilitarianism will be the consequence of the golden rule as our moral yardstick. However, reconciling Yoruba with Kant's ethical postulation is not to show the ignorance of Oluwole's position on the issue which says: "the Yoruba ethical system is a social institution, which incorporates formulated ideals men are meant to live by, such moral norms, for the Yoruba can't be like Kant's categorical imperative which has no room for exception (Oluwole1992:69)." Kantian's ethics is not totally unknown to Yoruba culture, and this will make it to be in harmony with Yoruba concept of morality. It is true that Kant canvasses universality in his ethics, but that is not to say that necessary exceptions are not allowable. What is demanded is that such exceptions must pass the universalisation test and be free from self-contradiction using the maxim of a moral agent to legislate for the entire moral public. In addition, Yoruba ethics is truly a social practice but the ideals which it incorporates are never impositions from any special body but rather the aggregation of norms, say proverbs, which are summed up in the golden rule. Kant in his ethics emphasized virtue, according to which is stressed that virtue is the strength of man's maxims in fulfilling his duty (Gregor, 1991:197). This virtue manifests when it overcomes obstacles in the way to moral uprightness of an individual and society at large. It is through virtue that Kant discusses the features of human personality in morality. For example, arrogance, defamation and ridicule as vices which are opposed to people's general respect. This is equivalent not only in principle but also in practice to the attributes of *Iwa* character which are embedded in Yoruba moral concept of O*moluwabi.* Honesty, hospitality and many more are recognized as the components of a moral ethics so that man would be able to build up to societal moral standard. Take for instance, an honest man is able to perform his duties for the duty sake and jettison all natural and sensuous inclinations which might carry him away from the morality through disposition of honesty. In the same manner, it is in the virtues of Kant and *Iwa* character of the Yoruba that the legislation of using man as end in himself and never as means to an end is much enclosed. For the Yoruba, a dishonest man makes opportunity of others to exploit his or her fellow men.

Kant's ethics is also at ease which Yoruba concept of morality in view of Kant's concept of goodwill as the only thing which is good in itself and without qualification. Although Yoruba has no term equivalent to goodwill as we have in Kant's ethics, a thorough analysis of the act of reporting as being used in folklore, enlightened us that reporting is in itself not a moral activity and that it cannot be used as our moral angel because of its ambivalent stature which subjects it to the manipulative capability of human beings. This is the very reason why we found ourselves in dilemma searching for the motives of the reporter which qualifies as good or bad. When Kant reprobates the idea and practice of using another person as means to an end, he substitutes it by canvassing for humanity and its necessary qualities for good relations among the peoples that constitute the society. This is found in the Yoruba ethical perspective when it opposed to the act of selfishness because it is only the self-centered man that will prefer using his fellow man to achieve his own personal ends. Furthermore, both Kant and Yoruba concept of morality are orthodoxical in nature and practice. Kant's ethics is an ethical theory which dines with people's intuitive and basic beliefs on morality. This is seen in his categorical imperative which states that "can you accept it if you were to be the one". This expression is the basic tenet of Kant's categorical imperative which is an intellectual concept that describe

people's basic knowledge about morality in the society. The same orthodoxical tenet obtains in Yoruba moral conception. It is a general belief among Yoruba people that intuitively people should judge their actions through subjecting themselves to the receiver's position because for the Yoruba, morality is a communal and social phenomenon. The orthodoxical nature of Yoruba ethics are in terms of proverbs, norms, taboos, folklores, etc., which are the moral guardians from the time immemorial.

Another convergence between Yoruba morality and that of Kant is in line with Idowu's position that religion sets its stamp on valuable attitudes which are enforced by public enactment. The idea that 'Public enactment rendered religion as a second issue in Yoruba ethics' is equivalent to the concept of legislation discussed by Kant. Legislation in Kant's ethics qualifies every moral agent to be a bonafide member of universal law-making body of a society. Here lies a vivid similarity because the products of the legislative house in Kant's ethics are tantamount to Yoruba public enactment which is nothing but the general will of the people. In addition, every obvious congruous points between Kant's ethics and Yoruba concept of morality is objective moral law and golden rule respectively. The objective moral law is distinguished from the subjective imperative test which recommends that "act in accordance with the maxim of ends that it can be a universal law for everyone to have (Gregor 1991:21). This means that an action is only morally right when the moral agent is willing such action to apply to him and everybody in the society. In Yoruba, morality as recognized by the African scholars, the same thing is obtained when the golden rule is displayed and recommend as the moral yardstick which suppressed egoistic tendencies in our moral disposition.Thus, if there is nothing relevant in Kant's categorical imperative but the universalisation test, and that such a test is replaced fully by the golden rule in Yoruba ethics, then Kant's ethics and Yoruba concept of morality is not only compatible but also equal to each other in progress labouring towards the attainment of moral orderliness in our society. This is because as Kant canvassed for the imagination of oneself in the position of the receiver of an action, so does the Yoruba in their moral conception.

Closely related to the above is the encouragement given to individuals to participate in moral issues in their society. Through the recognition of the maxim that subjective moral formula is to become objective moral law through the universalisation test of Kant's categorized test, individuals are made moral agents. The same occurs when the Yoruba allows every individual in the society to cut tree in the forest only to be morally justified if the moral agents have considered himself in the position of the tree being cut. Hence, individual general contributions to morally sound society are valued by both ethical conceptions and as such hold many responsible for the moral lapses in the society. Another element in Yoruba ethics which gives room for affinity with that of Kant is its utilitarian principle. The utilitarian principle in Yoruba concept of morality is not of the same type found in the ethics of Mill: it is a utilitarianism of kind. This kind of utilitarianism is the aggregation of the overall purposes of Yoruba ethical endeavour and comes about in the secularity of Yoruba moral conception. This is resulted when society at large is given a substantial consideration on moral issues. It is the enjoyment that would be reaped from such a system that is being referred to as utilitarianism. This principle of utilitarianism as emphasized by Oluwole is also congruent to the consequential nature of Kant ethics. Besides, Kant's and Yoruba ethical postulation is brought together by religious issue in morality. Yoruba ethics shows rational basis at the expense of religion. In relation to Kant's ethics there is obvious religious postulation to Kant's ethics which was used to give

adequate conclusion for his ethical postulation. In fact, it is one of the aims of Kant to establish the existence of God through proper articulation of ethical principle as discussed in his deontological ethics. This is witnessed in the moral proofs which he used to argue in favour of the existence of God. What Kant does was to substitute morality which he termed practical reason for speculative metaphysics and theology to prove the existence of God. One can infer that for Kant, all morally upright men willy-nilly believe in god's existence and his concern for orderliness. Apart from using moral proof to defend the existence of God, his ethics is not without objectives, among which is, the realization of the highest good; which is our duty in accordance with the practical law. Thus, Kant and Yoruba ethics make use of religion through the acceptance of God as the final arbiter in their moral conception.

Conclusion

One might be tempted to agree with religio-humanistic idea of Omatseye and Emeriewen (2006), that African Morality is both humanistic and religiously based. Religion, as earlier argued, plays a supportive role in morality achieving the goal of protecting humanity. Supernatural beings and deities are instruments used to compel people into abiding by these moral laws and principles. It has been made clear to us that Africans are a religious set of people, who are willing to do whatever the gods ask. And with the fear that has been created in the people, they become willing to obey these rules especially to avoid doing things that are displeasing to the gods.In the realm of philosophy, religion enters ethics; such entrance comes as a product of people's desperation, since morality is a necessity for humanity. All these make sense in Kant's ethical perception but in a paradoxical approach. Kant holds that we must not seek for moral apostles in the empirical vicinity but this is not to start from the spiritual, it was in order to be consistent with this belief that he merged reason with experience only to delimit their capacity as the source of moral philosophy for a wanting society.

Africans hold a unique manner of the conception of the human person as an inherently communal being. In the African thought system, the fact that a person is born into an existing community suggests a conception of the person as a communitarian being by nature: although it is not agreed upon by everyone, it is a major feature of the African belief. Therefore, Africans do not think of themselves as discrete individuals, but rather as part of the community. There is a unified identity that is given to humanity, which makes every action about the existence of humanity in society. The synopsis can be pointed out that having considered Kant's universalisation test and Yoruba golden rule, it is cleared that while Kant's ethics is a moral philosophy in theory, Yoruba conception of morality is rather a moral philosophy in practice, but still they both remain compatible and helpful to foster a stable world order. The dichotomy between the two concepts is basically on the methodology

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EXPLORING THE COMPLEXITY OF DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA: A STUDY OF THE TENSIONS BETWEEN GOVERNANCE, IDENTITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
Nigeria's democratic journey offers valuable insights for African democracies. Effective governance, requires strong institutions and inclusive political culture. Using qualitative and content analytic approaches, on a Nigerian democratic space, the paper critically examines the complexities, challenges, prospect of democracy and good governance in Nigeria. The tension between the identity and development have been there since her independence in 1960. Nigeria has experienced democratic rule, military interventions and fragile transitions that has resulted to Biafra civil war (1967 and 1970). The paper highlights in Nigeria, weak institutions, patronage networks, etc. The research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing democratic consolidation in Nigeria. The findings suggest that the politicization of identities has contributed to the erosion of democratic norms and the exacerbation of socio-economic inequalities in Nigerian societies. However, this study also recognizes the agency and resilience of Nigerian citizens, who are navigating the complexities of democracy and development in innovative and context-specific ways. The paper concludes by arguing that a more nuanced understanding of the intersection between identity, development and democracy is essential for promoting more inclusive and sustainable democratic futures in Nigeria and beyond. The paper therefore, recommends civics activism in form of electoral reforms and judicial assertiveness as a panacea to increase democratic practice in Nigeria and Africa at large. Ultimately, the work will provoke scholarly debates on democracy and good governance in Africa, in order to entrench civic education and inclusive political participation.

Keywords: Africa, Democracy, Development, Good Governance, Identity

Introduction

Democracy, which began in ancient Greek city state, has been adopted by almost every country in the world. The Greek city state adopted this the political system to govern themselves by incorporating all the freeborn male citizens in the city, to deliberate and take crucial decisions pertaining to the city when they converged at the city hall. Over the years, the idea of democracy has passed through different evolution and many thinkers have contributed to what it is presently. Incidentally, the great Greek thinkers rated democracy low as a form of government. Both Plato and Aristotle thought very little of it. According to Bloom (1991), Plato referred to democracy as the worst of all lawful governments and the best of all lawless governments. Today, the rating of democracy has changed. Democracy is being rated as the best form of government for the whole world. Something drastically must have happened that has caused this change in the way we look at democracy. Credit must be given to the philosophers like John Locke, J.J Rousseau, Burke and Montesquieu. These philosophers through their works, have done yeoman's job on democracy and it has made it

to play crucial roles in the life of the citizens of the countries that have adopted it. Democracy today is operated with political parties. Political party is a platform for a group of people with the same ideology to meet in order to achieve their purpose of winning election and rule the state. In Europe, Australia, Japan, Canada and United State of America, democracy has contributed to development (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2023). Democracy in Africa is a complex and multifaceted topic, although the continent has made significant progress in its democratic odyssey, challenges still persist. There is still unstable democratic affairs in many of its countries. There are problems as far as representation, particularly in election administration is concerned. These problems have resulted to leadership deficit. The wave of coups are gradually crawling back. Presently military administration is in Sudan, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger Republic and Guinea. We have shrinking civic space because of decline in civil liberties, including freedom of expression, association and assembly (www.idea.int).

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa. Democracy in Nigeria has index score of 4.42 (www.quora.com) . Nigeria government is a hybrid. Hybrid in the sense that its political system oscillates between democracy and authoritarianism. Despite the presence of institutional organization of a democracy, i.e. the three branches with a bicameral legislature at central government level, the country is bedeviled by extensive corruption and tribal sentiment that is obstructing democratic government. These and more are challenges facing democracy in Nigeria. Many African countries also have similar experience. This is extensively discussed in section three of this paper. Strengthening democracy in Nigeria and Africa as a whole will require a multifaceted approach, which will demand an institutional reforms because, presently, the institution of legislature and judiciary are very weak to serve as checks on executive. Likewise, there is a need for leadership accountability, citizenship engagement, constitutional reviews, anti-corruption measures, media freedom, civic education and traditional leadership engagement. More importantly, solving identity problem, especially, a serious dichotomy between citizenship and indigeneity. All these will be discussed in section four of the paper.

The thrust of this paper therefore, is to explore the intricate relationships between governance, identity and development. We try to analyze the interplay between governance, identity and development in Nigeria. Through historical contextualization and conceptual analysis, we provide the answers to the following questions; what are the key institutional challenges facing democratic governance in Nigeria? How are Nigerians fairing concerning free and fair elections? What role do constitutional courts play in promoting democratic governance in Nigeria? How do ethnic and the linguistic diversity impact democratic governance in Nigeria? How does nationalism influence democratic transition in Nigeria? In providing answers to these questions, we have the aim of reducing tension in Nigeria and the African continent at large. The paper is subtitled into Governance and Democracy in Africa, Identity and Nationalism in Africa, Development and Economic Growth in Africa, Interplay between Governance, Identity and Development: Nigeria As A Case Study.

Governance and Democracy in Africa

Today the term democracy is use d by both friends and enemies to refer to widely different social and constitutional practices. Thus, democracy today, can be referred to as ‘guide’, ‘basic’, ‘controlled’, ‘direct’, ‘’popular’, ’totalitarian’, depending on who is defining it. There are still many other things, all running against the grain of the ordinary meaning of western democracy as representative or constitutional government of the people by the people and

for the people. According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, democracy is a system of government in which power is vested in the people. Democracy started in Athens city. The earliest available defense of democracy among the Greek was recorded by Herodotus in *The Histories* in the 5th century B.C. in the funeral oration he delivered during burial of the soldiers that died in Peloponnesian war he says, our constitution is called democracy because power is not the hands of few but the whole people. When it is a question of putting one person before another in positions of public responsibility, what counts is not memberships of a particular class, but the actual ability which the man possesses. (Conali 2023, p. 5) Governance is the process of decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented) (UNDP, 2020). Governance encompasses the mechanism, processes and institutions through which citizens, groups articulate their interest, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences (World Bank, 2022). Governance is the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a county's affairs at all levels (African Development Bank, 2023). The recurrent decimal in the definition is that governance means government exercising powers to solve social problems.

Governance is democratic if it allows the citizens to participate in decision making process, through election and representation. It is authoritarian if it is the central authority that solely makes decision without participation of the citizens. There is hybrid anyway that combines elements of the democratic and authoritarian systems. Hybrid has problem with the principle of Rule of Law. This is contrary to democratic government government, which is consonance with the Rule of Law. This democratic governance, according to the United Nations Program (2020), ought to engage the attention of any forward thinking government of any nation. Issues of climate action and sustainable development, Convid 19 response and recovery, digital transformation and data governance, social justice and inequality and economic stability should be paramount in their agenda. Looking deeply into Africa as a continent, it can easily be forgotten or be taken for ridicule that the same continent that was vital to the origin and development of mankind and a great deal of civilization such as Egypt, Kush, Napata and Meroe, Nubia and Axum has now become shadow of herself. The story of Africa as a continent of wealth has changed totally. Africa now excel in the mutilation and desolation of man. The cradle of human civilization is now referred to by its looters (white men) as a continent of impoverishment. Africa has become a burden and no more an asset to other continents. It has become a continent in need of aids and loans to sustain its ever grown population. Africa, the richest of all continents in the past, is wallowing in man-made poverty, desperation and shame. (Cheeseman 2013, p. 144). A lot of reasons have been adduced for the quagmire it has found itself. Standing out of these reasons is colonization or imperialism it was subjected to by the white men. Even before colonization, slave trade has inflicted deep wound on it. Colonization only aggravated the injury to the peak of agony. According to Irele (1999), the Europeans intrusion into Africa affected all spheres of the continent's life. The precolonial societies were distorted and major transformation were wrought which affected every corner of Africa. Dipo Irele is not saying that before this incursion, there was no contradiction within African societies. What he is saying is, the coming of Europeans aggravated the problem. The Europeans gave the continent an entirely new complexion.

Ujomu (2010), in his paper, "The Crisis of Identity In Africa: A Call for Subjectivity", corroborated the posits of Irele by saying that colonization signified the extensive domination, exploitation, subjugation and denigration of Africans by the Western power

during the 1800s to the 1900s. The enormous task before the democracy as a system of government will be to wipe tears away from the faces of traumatic people of the continent. I encapsulated this task that democracy ought to play in Africa in this acronym of 3Rs; that is. Rediscovering, Reconstructing and Repositioning. There is an urgent need to ***rediscover*** the assets and values that can be used to ***reconstruct*** a conducive land which Africans can be proud of. This will now go a long way in *repositioning* her back as a force to be reckoned with among the league of continents. For the realization of these 3Rs, there are many factors that need to come into play. The kind of democracy Africans need for her governance is the one that will guarantee the liberty that is more than the absence of coercion. There should be creation of the condition for the enhancement of human capacities for independence, self-actualization and capacity for morality. This had been denied during colonial period and continues through neo-colonialism in Nigeria and other African states. It has significantly contributed to the loss of identity of Africa as a continent, because, African leaders cannot manage the crisis of existence, which the maximization of democracy would have guaranteed us. Until restoration of our identity, according to Ujomu, Africans will be unable to fully comprehend their place within the global scheme of things. That is the major role we want democracy to play in Africa.

Constitution plays major role in realizing what we discussed above. A constitution is a foundational document that outlines the principles, structures and powers of a government, ensuring the rule of law and protecting the individual rights. (Elster 2020, p.76). According to Garuba (2007), democracy had correlation on the countries where it is being used, because it is seen as government by consent of the people, which is gotten through persuasion that is guaranteed by free discussion in the midst of divergent opinions. He opines that any regime that is not predicated on the consent of the people does not qualify for being called a 'democracy'. There must be public accountability, that the government must be answerable to the people who created it. Majority must be ruling before democracy can be a true democracy. It means all the decisions of the government must be resolved by voting. At the same time, there must be a recognition of minority rights. That majority rule by no means does not imply the suppression of minority rights. The government of democracy is predicated on the constitution of the state. This requires infinitely complex machinery of procedures or processes and institutions that must be translated into actions. There is also periodic election for the purpose of leadership recruitment through political parties or independent candidacy. Judiciary are also independent.

Democracy is not an end itself but a means to an end. Democracy is a tool used in rearranging social political space, so that it can be of benefit to the individuals in the society by leading to their development. Democracy can contribute to Africa's socio-economic transformation, political stability and more global influence, if it can guarantee accountability, foster economic development, protect human rights, ensure political stability, empower citizens, combat corruption, advance social justice, foster regional integration, support sustainable development and enhance international cooperation, there is no way democracy cannot be maximized in Nigeria and Africa at large. The constitution should be able to guarantee separation of powers among legislative, executive and judicial branches, the constitution should provide platforms for checks and balances by preventing one branch from dominating, and finally, it should be able to protect individual freedom and human rights. This democracy must give Africans the right to participate in decision making by reversing political alienation. Political participation is a crucial aspect of democracy. It is still a big challenge in Nigerian democracy. Confidence in democracy by citizens as a means of

political recruitment of good leaders must be boosted. There should be sound civil societal engagement to cause increase in grassroots' awareness of the right of citizens to choose leaders of their choice.

Democracy should also help in the enthronement of human social order by bringing out a sense of shared community. A shared community refers to a group of people who share common interest, goals, values or identity, who collaborate with each other to achieve a sense of belonging. There should be active participation and engagement that will culminate into collaborative decision making and problem solving. There should also be a common aspiration that can be defined through usage of democracy as a system of government. This socio-political aspiration can now be used to measure the political life and social action of individual in the society. Furthermore, Africans need a kind of democracy that can create a conducive environment for the flowering of the values that are essentials to any successful society, e.g, integrity and respect for the law, justice, diligence and healthy patriotism. There is no way morality can be divulged from democracy. It is only a community oriented person that can promote social order; democracy should be a necessary tool in arriving at minimal national agenda. The brand of democracy that is needed here should have a genuine in-built capacity to absorb crisis. This in- built mechanism should be the type that will only be known, respected and trusted by the citizens to solve any crisis that may come up along the way. Africa is known as a land of crisis. Many of these crises came up as a result of bad government. Therefore, any democracy that must replace the system on ground should be able to dissolve the tension in the land.

We need a type of democracy that will provide enabling environment for the formulation and execution of policies that will help in improving the standard of living of Africans. There is no need for democracy that cannot guarantee balanced diet food on the table of Africans. Despite the abundance of natural endowment of Africa which supposed to make its occupants to live a life of affluence, the reverse is the case. We are falling further and further behind other parts of the world in the quest for prosperity. Finally, this kind of democracy should help to guarantee flowering of intellectualism. It is a pity that post-colonial Africa is a land where brains are not celebrated and mediocre are not condemned until they die. It is only intellectualism that can bring dynamism to the system. The democracy that will enhance good eco-system, improve technological output and make sure we are no more lagging behind in digital development anymore. According to J.S Mill, as quoted by Mathebula (2022), "There have been and may again be great individual thinkers in a general atmosphere of slavery. But there can never be, nor ever be in that atmosphere an intellectually active people". Democracy should therefore help us to realize the importance of the ''spirit of free inquiry'' to our survival as a continent. Succinctly, what all these boil down to is that democracy is not an end in itself. For it to be maximized, we must see it as a means to achieve humanistic conception of development. Development should be the end product of a democracy and for the development to be completed, development must entail everything. It must create a kind of enviable identity for Africans among other continents, instead of the laughing stock that the continent has become. Now what kind of environment can nurture this kind of democracy? Do we really have enabling environment for this kind of democracy to grow? Our answer is categorical No! Instead, we have identity crisis. Let us then look at issue of identity and nationalism in African.

Identity and Nationalism in Africa

The concept of identity covers various aspects of an individual's or group's characteristics, experiences and affiliations that shape their sense of self belonging. (Florian Coulmas, 2019, p.27). Identity can be in different dimensions. Personal identity is all about individual characteristics, values and experiences. Social identity is about group affiliations, roles and relationships. Cultural identity deals with cultural practices, traditions and values. National identity entails citizenship, nationality and patriotism. The latest identity dimension is digital identity, which is about online presence, profiles and interactions. (Scientific American 2020, p.47). Nationalism is an ideology that points to the importance of national identity, unity, and interests over other considerations. We also have different dimensions of nationalism too: like civic nationalism, which entails shared values and citizenship; Ethnic nationalism emphasizes shared culture, language and heritage; expansionist nationalism seeks to expand national territory or influence. (Casanova 2020, p.20). The major correlation between identity and nationalism is that identity influences nationalist sentiment and movements.

Africa as a continent is bedeviled with the problem of identity. It is very complex and multifaceted. It stemmed from various historical, cultural and socio-political factors. It is historical because of the imposition of foreign languages, cultures and borders. Even before colonialism, slavery had led to the disruption of traditional identities and communities. The tribalism encountered today is as a result of precolonial conflicts and divisions. (Godfrey Maringira 2021, p.67). Ethnic diversity of Africa instead of being an asset for us, is really a headache. Africa is a land of over 2000 languages and 3000 ethnic groups (Mathebula 2022, p.35). It is a continent, that is rich, but where there is always tension between tradition and modernization. In many places in the land, there is what we can refer to as cultural hybridity; that is, a blending of cultural heritage and foreign influences that have made its inhabitants to be neither here nor there.

The social political factors have to do with competition between national and ethnic identities. For example in Nigeria, there is always a clash between indigeneity and citizenship. This is as a result of migration and displacement. Many Africans are more comfortable outside the continent than inside the continent. The moment they step out of their geographical origin, even within their country, they feel alienated. If you add the effect of global culture and economic forces to what is explained above, it makes the scenario in many places in Africa to be ugly. There is a serious problem of identity crisis and ethnic conflict as a result of competition for power and resources. Many places in Africa are suffering from cultural erasure; for example, local languages are at the brink of extinction. Fear and hostility towards outsiders known as xenophobia has alienated Africans from Africans. A pathetic situation. Everywhere in the continent, it is obvious that there is identity crisis. Chidinma Adetshina despite being born and bred in South Africa by Nigerian parents living in South Africa; and have never known any other country except her place of birth, was rejected by South Africans to represent their country in Miss Universe beauty pageant. She had to come to Nigeria before she can be able to participate in the beauty competition.

Inside Nigeria, there is a serious ethnic and religious tensions between Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo. South Africa is still battling with post-apartheid identity struggles and xenophobia. Rwanda was one time engulfed by civil war as a result of ethnic conflict between Hutu and Tutsi, the effect of the trauma is yet to completely go away. Add that to clan-based identity crises in Somalia, Africa fits the description of being called 'land of war of identity'.

Identity crisis can have significant impact on individual and collective development. A land where there is social unrest, protest and violence will experience economic and political

instabilities. There is no way it will not have impact on Human Development index (HDI). There will not be social cohesion as a result of political polarization (World Bank Report, 2022). Panacea to the problem of identity crisis in Africa is inclusive nationalism. Africans need to embrace diversity and promote unity. There is a need for cultural preservation and in some cases revival. Not all our traditional practices are bad. Our education should cause awareness and address the problem of historical trauma. To heal this historical trauma completely, I agree with Toyin Falola that there should be economic empowerment by reducing inequality. (Toyin Falola 2022, p.34).

Interplay Between Governance, Identity and Development: Nigeria as a Case Study

Nigeria gained independence in 1960. As a country, it has a complex history of military regimes, civil war and democratic transitions. Today, Nigeria continues to navigate challenges and opportunities as a diverse dynamic nation. Managing ethnic diversity and promoting development in Nigeria is a herculean task. The country still has a long way to go to achieve national integration and development. According to Adeniyi Ojo (2022), obstacles to national integration and development is as a result of ethnic conflicts, which has led to competition for resources and power. In many instances, suppression of cultural identity by national government has led to resistance from the ethnic groups, especially in the southern part of the country and even Biafra civil war that was fought between 1967 and 1970.

The current federal system in Nigeria is more or less a unitary model in disguise. It has been criticized for not adequately addressing the needs of different groups. There are serious tensions between the indigeneity and citizenship in Nigeria. The tension are deeply rooted in the country's history, politics and social structures. At its core, the issue is always about the definition of citizenship and who qualifies as an indigene. Many citizens of Nigeria are facing discrimination and exclusion based on their ethnic or geographic origins. Non indigenes, in particular, face significant barriers when it comes to accessing social services, economic opportunities and political representation. (Auwalu Musa 2024, pp. 46). It is unfortunate that a Yoruba man, from Osun state born and bred in Kano state will be discriminated against in that state, during election. He will not be voted for, if he decided to contest for any political post in Kano state. So it is in other states too. The indigeneity-citizenship nexus affect the delivery of public services, such as healthcare and education. In some cases, non-indigenes may be denied access to these services or face discrimination in their provision. These tensions have significant implications for development in Nigeria. For instance, the exclusion of non-indigene from decision-making processes and economic development can lead to social unrest, conflict, alienation and instability. Moreover, emphasis on indigeneity can perpetuate ethnic and regional divisions, undermine national unity and cohesion.

To address these challenges, it is essential to redefine citizenship in Nigeria as to prioritize inclusive equality and social justice. This will involve constitutional reforms, policy changes, and community-led initiatives that promote social cohesion and national unity. Moreover, Nigeria over the years, has formulated a lot of developmental policies like Federal Character Commission (FCP), to promote representation and equity among ethnic group, Quota System (QS), to allocate positions and resources based on ethnic and regional quotas, National Youth Service Corps, (NYSC), Derivation Principle, (DP), to allocate 13% of oil revenues to producing states. We just mentioned a few policies out of many policies being implemented presently in the country. What cannot be denied is that the tensions are still prevalent, thus preventing social cohesion among the sub-nationals. Over the years, the

problem of Nigeria has been ineffective implementation of the policies. It is at the core of the Nigerias's systemic failure and crisis in governance. The symptomatic effect can be found in the declining capacity of the state to cope with the political and social upheavals in the state. The symptomatic effects are election fraud, terrorist and bandit attacks, herder-farmer conflict and even police brutality; the end SARS riot of three years ago comes to mind. The present lack of trust in institutions, poor economic development, and regional polarization are the major implications of the policy ineffectiveness. Another challenge confronting development policies is corruption and patronage. The effect of corruption on our system has been debilitating, hindering economic development. For example, Money meant for important projects that can alleviate the suffering of the people have been syphoned our political leaders at different levels of government. Unfortunately, many of them have won elections in to another elective offices. Some have moved on to become ministers and ambassadors of Nigeria in another countries.

There is also lack of inclusive governance and participation. The problem has led to rising ethnic nationalism. Unfortunately the clamoring for restructuring in the country has not meant the favor of the people in power. (Suberu 2020, p.45). Agitations in many part of the country today is as a result of that. In Niger-Delta for example, the clamouring for resource and its accompanied crises is a result of this lack of inclusive governance. Similarly in Yoruba land, some group have been agitating for Oduduwa Republic. In the Eastern region, the movement known as Independent People of Biafra (IPOB) have been causing a lot of problems that have led to loss of lives and properties. There is no way meaningful development can take place if the democratic governance fail to address the problem of identity and development in Nigeria and other African countries at large. We must look for a way to strengthen institutions and accountability, we must also promote inclusive governance and participation, address regional disparities through strategic development initiatives. There is a need for checks and balances and civil society engagement. Finally, as a matter of urgency, we must foster inter-ethnic dialogue and reconciliation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

As it has been explained above, a critical look at the complexity of democracy in Africa, especially in Nigeria, reveals a multifaceted landscape of tensions between governance, identity and development. The paper has demonstrated that Nigeria's democratic journey is fraught with challenges stemming from its complex ethnic and religious diversity, historical legacies of colonialism and military rule, and the struggle for resource control. Despite these challenges, opportunities exist for strengthening democratic governance, promoting inclusive development, and managing identity based tensions. To do this properly, there must be institutional reforms that will engender accountability and representation, inclusive governance, economic development, civic education and engagement. Ultimately, Nigeria's democratic future must be able to balance competing interests and address historical injustices. It must be citizen-centered governance. The findings suggest that the politicization of identity has contributed to the erosion of democratic norms and the exacerbation of socio-economic inequalities in Nigeria. Although the agency and the resilient attitude of Nigerian citizens are making them to navigate the complexities of democracy in innovative and context-specific ways.

Based on the findings of this study, we recommend that government should put in more efforts to promote inclusive citizenship in order to reduce identity based divisions in Nigeria. It can be achieved through education, cultural exchange programs and community

initiatives that foster social cohesion and national unity. There should be consideration for decentralization and devolution of power by the Nigerian government to local governments and communities in order to reduce politicization of identity, which will promote inclusive and participatory decision making processes. Nigerian government should also prioritize economic empowerment and development initiatives that will benefit all the citizens, regardless of their identity and affiliations. It will help to remove inequalities and promote more inclusive and sustainable development. Moreover, efforts should be geared towards strengthening democratic institutions in Nigeria, including electoral commission, judiciary and the legislature. There is a need for transparency, accountability and responsive governance. These will engender active participants among the citizens in the democratic processes. Finally, we recommend that Nigerian government should foster regional and international cooperation to address common challenges and promote more inclusive sustainable development. This can help to reduce tensions and conflicts between the identity groups and promote peaceful and stable relationships.

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AUTONOMY AND DEPENDENCE: PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SPECIAL PERSONS

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Abstract
People with disabilities, in particular, frequently find themselves at the nexus of the lived realities of autonomy and dependence. The dichotomy between autonomy—defined as self-determination and independence—and the unavoidable dependence that people with special needs may experience due to social, environmental, and physical circumstances is examined in this article. Drawing on the works of philosophers like Martha Nussbaum, who supports a capacities approach that considers the various needs of individuals, and Immanuel Kant, who highlights autonomy as essential to moral agency, this study reexamines the ethical frameworks applied to special persons. It highlights how lived reality of people with disabilities is often overlooked or undervalued by traditional philosophical theories of autonomy, particularly when reliance on careers or specialized services is necessary. This essay argues that rather than lowering human dignity or autonomy, dependence is a relational feature of human existence that society should recognize and promote. This study provides a more complex picture of human agency that considers the different ways that special people negotiate their life. Using qualitative method of data collection. It also takes into account how important inclusive behaviors are in fostering the autonomy of people with special needs while recognizing their dependency with others. The paper concludes that philosophical and ethical paradigms need to be reconsidered in order to enable special people to exercise their autonomy without being stigmatized for their dependence. This will help to create a more compassionate and equitable society that respects the dignity of special people.

Introduction

The concepts of autonomy and dependence play central roles in ethical, social, and philosophical discussions, particularly when applied to the lives of individuals who are often categorized as "special persons," such as those with physical or cognitive disabilities (A Jarbi, 2024; Christinah Sadiki, et al., 2021; Lister, et al., 2024; Oduwole, 2019). In philosophical inquiry, autonomy is frequently celebrated as a core aspect of personhood, granting individuals the freedom to make decisions and act independently. However, for special persons, the balance between autonomy and dependence becomes complex, as they may require varying degrees of support in navigating daily life. Autonomy is traditionally understood as self-governance (Killmister, 2017) – the capacity of an individual to make informed, uncoerced decisions. It is often associated with freedom, independence, and moral responsibility. Philosophers like Immanuel Kant have emphasized autonomy as foundational to human dignity and moral agency (White, 2020). In contrast, dependence involves reliance on others for physical, emotional, or social support. While dependence is

often viewed negatively, as a loss of freedom or capacity, this paper argues for a reevaluation of this perspective, especially in the context of special persons who may require consistent support throughout their lives. The term "special persons" refers to individuals with unique physical, cognitive, or developmental conditions that may challenge conventional expectations of autonomy and independence. This group includes persons with disabilities, chronic illnesses, or other conditions that require accommodations or support systems. Recognizing the inherent diversity within this group is essential for understanding how philosophical concepts of autonomy and dependence apply in different contexts (Friedman, 2018).

Philosophical Foundations of Autonomy: Kant's (1785) moral philosophy holds that autonomy is a fundamental aspect of human dignity and moral worth. Based on reason and free will, autonomy is the foundation of moral agency, enabling individuals to act in accordance with universal moral laws derived from reason (Kant, 2017). This emphasis on rational autonomy, however, presents challenges when applied to individuals who may have cognitive or physical impairments, raising questions about how autonomy is conceptualized in the context of special persons. The concept of autonomy has deep roots in moral and political philosophy, where it is frequently associated with the capacity for rational self-determination.

Autonomy in Moral and Political Philosophy: Autonomy is frequently associated in political thought with personal freedom, self-governance, and independence from outside authority (Oshana, 2016). In his seminal essay On Liberty, this liberal definition of autonomy, which places a strong emphasis on personal accountability and choice, has come under fire for being unduly individualistic, especially when it comes to people with special needs who could depend on social support networks. Contemporary philosophers such as Nussbaum (2017) have challenged the conventional understanding of autonomy by putting out perspective that takes into consideration the various needs and talents of people—including those with disabilities. Nussbaum argues that autonomy should be understood in terms of what individuals are able to achieve, given their specific circumstances and the support they receive from society (Nussbaum, 2017).

Historical Perspectives on Autonomy and Disability: Historically, persons with disabilities were often viewed as lacking autonomy, both legally and socially. The Enlightenment's emphasis on reason and independence marginalized individuals whose abilities deviated from the norm, often leading to their exclusion from political and social participation. For example, during the 19th and early 20th centuries, eugenic policies sought to limit the autonomy of disabled individuals through forced institutionalization and sterilization, reflecting a societal fear of dependence (Oshana, 2016; Withers, 2024). These historical attitudes toward disability highlight the challenges of applying traditional philosophical models of autonomy to special persons, whose autonomy is often mediated by dependency on others.

Theories of Individual Agency and Freedom: The link between autonomy and dependency is further complicated by theories of individual agency like phenomenology and existentialism (Izenberg, 2015). This idea of freedom, however, is predicated on the idea that people are capable of acting without interference from other forces, which may not hold true for unique individuals who are constrained by their physical or mental abilities.

Contemporary feminists and disability theorists, on the other hand, support relational autonomy, which acknowledges that every person is a part of networks of dependency and reliance. According to Gordon-Bouvier (2024), "dependency work" is a concept that recognizes reliance as a normal aspect of human existence and care as a prerequisite for promoting autonomy., particularly for those with disabilities.

Dependence and Human Condition: Dependency is a natural facet of the human experience (Gómez-Vírseda et al., 2020; Muñoz Terrón, 2021), yet it's frequently misinterpreted as a restriction rather than a necessary component of social existence. Philosophical traditions praise autonomy as a sign of moral agency and dignity, while dependence acknowledges the fact that all people depend on others for existence and care at certain points in their lives (Gómez-Vírseda et al., 2020; Muñoz Terrón, 2021; Siniora et al., 2022). This section explores the ethical consequences of reliance and its philosophical foundations, particularly as they apply to special individuals who may need more overt kinds of support throughout their life.

Philosophical Perspectives on Dependence: Philosophically, autonomy and dependence are frequently seen as mutually exclusive (Pugh, 2020). Liberal classicists such as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau highlighted the significance of independence as a means of achieving freedom and self-governance. Disability researchers and feminist theorists contend that this binary oversimplifies human existence. As part of a larger ethical framework that encompasses "dependency work"—the labor and care given to those who need it, especially special people—Kittay underlines that dependency should be acknowledged (Kittay, 2019; Van der Weele, 2022)

Social Contract Theory and the Role of Dependence in Society: According to social contract theories, People make agreements to safeguard their autonomy and personal rights (Kapardis, 2023; Spector, 2022). Modern reinterpretations, however, especially when discussing special individuals, acknowledge that reliance is a common human experience that society needs to accept rather than a departure from the norm. In the authors' view of justice as fairness, society should be set up to help the least advantaged members, including exceptional people, in order to recognize their dependency on them while preserving their rights.

Balancing Autonomy and Dependence in Special Persons: Individuals with special needs frequently have to walk a tightrope between independence and reliance (Javits & Luby, 2022). Their lived experiences are shaped by their dependence on caregivers or support services, even if they may want to exert independent agency. The goal of this balancing is to empower people within their relational circumstances, not to eradicate dependence. Nussbaum's capacities perspective (2017) suggests that autonomy has to be seen through the prism of what people can accomplish with the resources at their disposal. This change promotes a social focus on creating the prerequisites so that individuals with special needs can live happy, meaningful lives.

Autonomy of Special Persons: Rights and Empowerment: It is important to view special people's autonomy in the perspective of their rights and empowerment. Autonomy is emphasized as a fundamental right of persons with disabilities by legal frameworks like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (Szmukler, 2019). These frameworks support inclusive settings, healthcare, and educational programs

that enable people to practice their autonomy in spite of cognitive or physical limitations. In this context, empowerment refers to giving exceptional people the means, resources, and accommodations they need to live freely while also acknowledging the value of their support networks.

Case Study Overview: The study addresses the duality of autonomy and dependence experienced by deaf individuals, emphasizing the cultural, social, and economic factors influencing their lives. In many Nigerian communities, deaf individuals face significant challenges related to communication barriers, access to education, and societal perceptions that often affect their independence. The study conducted qualitative research, utilizing interviews and focus groups with deaf individuals, their families, and community leaders in Onitsha and Awka. This approach aimed to gather diverse perspectives on how deaf individuals navigate autonomy and dependence in their daily lives.

Findings

i. The study highlighted how cultural attitudes toward disability often frame deaf individuals as dependent. Many families view deafness as a limitation, leading to a lack of opportunities for independent decision-making.
ii. Access to quality education for deaf persons was found to be inconsistent. While some individuals achieved a degree of autonomy through education and vocational training, many others were unable to find suitable employment, reinforcing their dependence on family and community support.
iii. Deaf individuals in Onitsha and Awka expressed a desire for greater social inclusion and recognition of their capabilities. The philosophical implications of their autonomy were rooted in the need for societal acceptance and accessibility in various aspects of life.
iv. The study identified local organizations and advocacy groups working to empower deaf individuals, emphasizing the importance of inclusive policies and practices that promote autonomy while recognizing the need for support.

Challenges of Dependence: Vulnerability and Caregiving

Vulnerability comes with dependence, particularly for those individuals who depend on others for basic necessities in their everyday lives. Because caregivers and institutions have a great deal of control over the lives of the people they care for, this dependence may lead to power imbalances. The ethical considerations of caregiving, stressing the importance of acknowledging the vulnerability of dependents while ensuring that care is delivered with dignity and respect (Morberg Jämterud, 2022). According to this perspective, providing ethical care entails protecting the autonomy and rights of special people in addition to attending to their physical needs.

Moral and Ethical Dilemmas

Particularly in interactions involving caregiving, the moral and ethical quandaries regarding autonomy and reliance for special people are nuanced. Finding the right balance between autonomy and required support frequently prompts concerns about how to maintain people's freedom and dignity while yet giving them the care they need. These conundrums cast doubt on established moral theories, especially when it comes to the duties of caretakers and the morality of encouraging independence as opposed to admitting dependency. Their actions have a direct impact on the autonomy and well-being of the

people they are caring for, caregivers have a great deal of moral responsibility in the lives of special people. Caregivers need to make sure that, in addition to resolving their dependence, their activities support the autonomy of special people. The ethical conundrum of determining how much autonomy to promote and how much control to exercise in decision-making processes is frequently brought on by this dual role (Miller & Barrie, 2022).

Ethical Concerns in Promoting Independence

Encouraging independence in individuals with special needs is frequently regarded as a moral objective (Frankfurt, 2018); yet, it presents issues when independence is sought at the price of essential assistance. Encouraging people to act independently without giving them the tools or accommodations they need might result in failure, loneliness, or dissatisfaction. Nussbaum's capacities approach, providing ethical care entails making sure people have the resources to express their autonomy, even if doing so necessitates acknowledging their continued dependency (Nussbaum, 2017). To prevent injury, the encouragement of independence and the supply of care must be balanced. Special people are more likely to be exploited and abused when they are dependent on others for basic necessities. Since caregivers and institutions might have a great deal of influence over dependent people, it is critical to create moral standards that guard against mistreatment. In this context, vulnerability of dependents and the significance of developing moral caring procedures that prevent exploitation and uphold the dignity and autonomy of persons receiving care (Miller, 2020). Preventing the exploitation of special people in interactions including caregiving requires addressing power dynamics.

Philosophical Debates

Debates between reliance and autonomy in philosophy frequently center on criticisms of classical liberal individualism, which exalts autonomy above everything else (Lukes, 2024). These discussions raise the question of whether those who, like special persons, frequently live in a position of dependence, can ever truly achieve autonomy. Liberal individualism, which places a strong emphasis on freedom and self-sufficiency, has come under fire for neglecting people who need assistance and care (Arzuaga, 2019; Bussen et al., 2024). Some philosophers contend that the liberal paradigm fails to acknowledge the fact that all people are reliant and vulnerable at certain points in their lives (Curtis, 2015; Kymlicka, 2017). Liberal individualism ignores the fact that interdependence is a more accurate representation of human existence and that autonomy and reliance are not mutually exclusive when it comes to special humans. According to this perspective, autonomy should be interpreted in a relational sense, recognizing that unique individuals can exercise agency within support networks.

In communitarian philosophy, it is observed that relationships and communities determine our identities and well-being since humans are social creatures at their core (Miles, 2021). This communitarian viewpoint is beneficial for unique people because it emphasizes the significance of shared responsibility for care. Individual autonomy only has value when it is placed inside a society that supports one another and encourages mutual dependency, according to Charles Taylor's communitarian critique of liberalism (Pham et al., 2023). This point of view contests the notion that autonomy is best expressed through independence and supports an autonomous model that is intricately entwined with social interactions. The traditional emphasis on autonomy has long been criticized by feminist philosophers, who contend that it ignores the relational aspect of human life and favors

independent, masculine values (Osuji, 2018; West, 2018). Feminist critiques of exceptional persons emphasize that dependency should be seen as a normal aspect of human existence that calls for ethical consideration rather than as a moral failing or a loss of autonomy. These criticisms push for a reinterpretation of autonomy that recognizes interdependence and caring as essential components of moral and political existence.

Practical Implications for Policy and Society: Policy and societal frameworks are directly impacted by the philosophical investigation of autonomy and dependence, particularly with regard to unique individuals (Khogali & Mekid, 2023). It takes careful legal, social, and political actions to make sure that these people can exercise their liberty while getting the support they need. For these interventions to create inclusive communities that support both autonomy and care, they must be based on an understanding of both individual rights and collective responsibilities.

Policy Approaches to Supporting Autonomy: Policy and societal frameworks are directly impacted by the philosophical investigation of autonomy and dependence, particularly with regard to unique individuals (Evans et al., 2015). It takes careful legal, social, and political actions to make sure that these people can exercise their liberty while getting the support they need. For these interventions to create inclusive communities that support both autonomy and care, they must be based on an understanding of both individual rights and collective responsibilities. Because it promotes laws that give people the tools to realize their potential, capabilities approach has a significant impact on how policies are made (Nussbaum, 2017). When it comes to unique people, this can entail funding, specialized education, and medical treatment intended to improve their ability for self-governance.

Legal Rights and the Role of Advocacy

Legal frameworks are essential for safeguarding the autonomy and defending the rights of unique people. Legal safeguards against discrimination are provided by laws like the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in the US and the Convention on the Rights of the Person (CRPD) worldwide. These laws also require accommodations to be made in public places, workplaces, and educational institutions (ADA, 1990) as seen in (Blanck, 2019). Even in environments of reliance, special people are able to live independently thanks to legal rights that ensure their access to resources, services, and support networks. Advocacy groups like Disability Rights International play a vital role in ensuring that institutions and governments respect the rights of those with disabilities (Gelfgren et al., 2022; Organization, 2022). Promoting assisted decision-making, a legal framework that enables people with cognitive impairments to exercise their autonomy with the help of dependable allies, requires advocacy as well. This approach replaces more paternalistic legal frameworks, such as guardianship, where autonomy may be curtailed, with one that strikes a balance between respecting human autonomy and providing help. Practical accommodations like ramps, sign language interpreters, and assistive technologies are necessary for inclusion (Ahmad, 2015), but it also calls for a cultural transformation that acknowledges the intrinsic worth and dignity of individuals with disabilities. This larger social commitment to inclusion is reflected in policies that support universal design, which guarantees that surroundings are accessible to everyone, regardless of ability. True autonomy can only be attained in a community that appreciates and encourages the care of all of its members, including the dependent (Nisbet, 2023; Ryan *et al.*, 2015)

Conclusion

Dependency and autonomy are two essential ideas that have a significant intersection in the lives of unique individuals. Philosophical investigation shows that these ideas are connected in ways that go against conventional ideas of independence, rather than being mutually exclusive (Laszlo, 2021). Practically speaking, laws and social structures must be modified to accommodate both reliance and autonomy, guaranteeing that individuals with special needs are enabled to make their own decisions and receive the assistance they require. A balanced approach that recognizes the value of interdependence is essential for fostering inclusive, ethical societies that prioritize the dignity and rights of all individuals. Philosophical viewpoints are going beyond the liberal individualist binary opposition to emphasize the necessity of a synthesis between autonomy and dependence. In the "Relational autonomy," the exercise of autonomy occurs in the framework of supporting relationships (Rachmad, 2017), especially in the lives of those who are dependent on others for care. Similar to this, Kymlicka's criticism of liberal individualism emphasizes that autonomy must be viewed in the context of human dependence as a fundamental truth (Kymlicka, 2017) These philosophical synthesis emphasize that genuine autonomy is attained in human interactions, where agency and care coexist, rather than in isolation. Going forward, inclusive policies that take into account the realities of the lives of special individuals must be the main focus of ethical and societal thought on autonomy and reliance. Future studies should look into creative strategies for striking a balance between the promotion of personal agency and the requirement for care. In order to take relational autonomy and interdependence into account, ethical frameworks will need to go beyond conventional notions of independence. In order to guarantee that individuals with disabilities are completely involved and empowered in all facets of life, societies must likewise keep tearing down institutional obstacles. This well-rounded strategy will promote a more just and equitable society that values both independence and reliance.

Recommendations

i. The government ought to promote laws and procedures that respect relational autonomy and highlight the value of supportive connections in the lives of individuals with disabilities. This may entail educating caregivers on how to support decision-making procedures that give the needs and preferences of the people they look after first priority.
ii. The state ought to guarantee that individuals with disabilities have the means to exercise their right to autonomy by providing them with healthcare, education, job opportunities, and assistive technologies, among other necessities.
iii. Legislators and policy makers should change the legal environment to encourage assisted decision-making procedures, which would let special people make decisions about their lives with the help of dependable allies. This strategy respects individual autonomy while offering the assistance required to make well-informed decisions.
iv. The state should guarantee that individuals with disabilities have the means to exercise their right to autonomy by providing them with healthcare, education, job opportunities, and assistive technologies, among other necessities.
v. Caregivers should get extensive ethical training that stresses the value of upholding autonomy while acknowledging the complexity of dependency. Aspects of this training that promote individual agency while maintaining a balance with support should be included.

vi. The government ought to fund studies that examine the relationship between reliance and autonomy, especially as it relates to special needs individuals. The goal of this research should be to pinpoint the finest practices and practical laws that advance the rights and welfare of people who fall into these groups.
vii. Policymakers, philosophers, medical professionals, and social workers should collaborate together to create comprehensive strategies for promoting both reliance and autonomy. Together, we can create solutions that are more comprehensive and efficient.
viii. Policies intended to support special people should be periodically assessed and evaluated to make sure they successfully foster autonomy while addressing dependency. Input from families and people with disabilities ought to be a crucial part of any assessment procedure.

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HERBERT HART'S SECONDARY RULES AND THE NIGERIAN ELECTORAL PROCESS: A CRITIQUE

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Abstract
The Nigerian electoral process which is a symbol of democratic governance is perpetually under attack by controversies, anomalies, and charges of malpractice. This work critiques the procedural and substantive shortfalls of the electoral process of Nigeria using H. L. A. Hart's theory of secondary rules in his *The Concept of Law.* Hart's theory gives us a model of jurisprudence for countering the structural weaknesses and uncertainty in law that can undermine the credibility of elections, namely rules of recognition, change, and adjudication. This paper holds that in as much as the 1999 Constitution and the Electoral Act provide a foundation for legal authority and legitimacy in elections, deficiencies in the effective application of secondary rules contribute to systemic failure. For example, contradictory court rulings and biased enforcement of the law tend to undermine the rule of recognition, which undermines the legitimacy of election results. Likewise, ineffective mechanisms of dispute settlement in elections result in tardy justice, which, in turn, nourishes political instability. Also, archaic conventions of elections are perpetuated by legislative gridlock and opposition to reforms, which hamper norms of change. The effect of these shortcomings on the public confidence in democratic institutions for political accountability is also addressed in the paper. This work applies analytic method of philosophy and case law to show how weak secondary rules raise Nigeria's difficulties when it comes to free, fair, and credible elections. This work argues that strengthening institutionalized frameworks and promoting a political culture that is committed to legal integrity and procedural fairness can ensure the development of Nigerian electoral jurisprudence. In addition, the sustainability of democracy in Nigeria rests on the creation of a robust electoral jurisprudence that promotes constitutional stability, political accountability, and public trust in the democratic system.

Keywords: Rule of Law, Electoral Jurisprudence, Secondary Rules, Primary Rules, Nigerian Electoral Process

Introduction

One of the cornerstones of democracy is the process of election, which reflects the principles of legitimacy, representation, and accountability. Elections continue to be a main instrument for structuring relations between the state and its citizens in Nigeria, a country characterized by political dynamism, cultural diversity, and centuries-old tradition of struggle for governance. But the root defects of the nation's electoral system are disputed election results, unclear law, inconsistent judicial decisions, and mass popular suspicions as a whole. All of these risks require an interdisciplinary analytical approach to take into account the interactive dynamic between politics, law, and democratic ideals. A fascinating perspective on this issue can perhaps be gleaned from Hart's jurisprudential theory of secondary rules. There are two types of rules in Hart's theory of law: primary rules of regulation of conduct

and secondary rules of regulation of the making, altering, and application of primary rules.

Secondary rules as a source to account for functioning and development of legal systems set a foundation to this end. These recognition rules, change rules, and enforcement rules are labeled according to their specific activities. The Nigerian electoral system, institutional setup, legal order, and susceptibility to systemic flaws are all examined in this paper using Hart's model. The rule of recognition is regulated by the 1999 Constitution and the Electoral Act, and it sets out the terms on which electoral law can be said to be valid. However, in the interpretation of the Nigerian constitutional sections like 134 and 285 there is a clash between judicial authority and political legitimacy. In the same vein, the rule of change emphasizes the dynamic development of electoral acts like the Electoral Act 2022 and technological advancements like the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS). These changes, while promising, are not immune to reversals since implementation flaws and political elites' opposition strive to denigrate them.

Lastly, adjudication law plays a role in the dispute resolution processes during and after elections, where the principal players are appeal courts and election tribunals. The legitimacy of these institutions is raised by questions regarding political neutrality, procedural irregularities, and judicial independence. In addition, this paper theoretically contributes to the literature of election law by illustrating how Hart's secondary principles apply to peculiar legal challenges, showing how important robust institutions that promote justice, accountability, and transparency are and the value of legal systems in the mediation of democratic disagreements and aspirations. The Nigerian situation educates experts and academics about how law and democracy interact within the transitional context. The study offers practical recommendations on how institutions of law can be strengthened, electoral justice can be guaranteed, and democratic culture enriched in Nigeria and the rest of the world using Hart's theory of jurisprudence to examine the election process in the country.

Nigeria's Election System: Growth and Disputes

Elections are the cornerstone of democracy as they give power to the people to choose their leaders and impact government. Nigeria's election process has however been plagued by deep-seated and structural problems that erode popular trust. In the 1923 elections under the Clifford Constitution, which only allowed literate male in Lagos and Calabar elite, were the beginning of colonial Nigeria's electoral history (Nwabueze, 1993, p. 93). Moving forward, Richards (1946), Macpherson (1951), and Lyttleton (1954) were only some of the constitutions that broadened representation and federalism within the regional setup. However, the first nationwide elections, the 1959 general elections, were marred with manipulation and racism (Ediagbonya et al., 2023, p.30). This highlights the fact that election instability was precipitated by Nigeria's transition to military rule following independence. For instance, the 1966 coup d'état was a consequence of malpractice that incapacitated the First Republic (1963–1966) (Dudley, 1973, p. 45). Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) and other reforms were established during the 1979 Constitution of the Second Republic (1979–1983), but election rigging continued and led to military intervention. Through the establishment of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the implementation of biometric voter registration and other reforms, the Fourth Republic (1999–present) reinstated democracy, though institutional corruption still exists (Tunmibi & Wole, 2023, p. 2).

In accordance with the 1999 Constitution and Electoral Act, Nigeria's legal system is a multi-party democracy (Electoral Act, 2022; Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,

1999). The Constitution further provides for the powers of the different organs of government and the election process: Section 14(2)(a) provides for free and fair elections form the foundation of governmental power. State and National Assembly elections are held under Sections 77 and 117. Sections 153–158 provide details of the function and duty of INEC regarding election monitoring, while Section 131 explains rules of elections regarding presidential and vice-presidential elections. The first-past-the-post system is used during elections for State Assembly, Governorship, and Legislature. Even though they are fundamental to citizens' engagement in government, local council elections are not well attended and are marred by irregularities (Omotola, 2010, p. 537). Voter registration process, party involvement, management of the election, and dispute resolution are provided for in the Electoral Act. It has been modified to face new challenges and meet international requirements: Section 4 gives authority to INEC to conduct and arrange elections, and Section 1(1) is formulated to fit every election in Nigeria. The Electoral Act and the Constitution together uphold democratic principles by making elections free, fair, and a manifestation of the popular will. Notwithstanding the constitutional amendment and Electoral Acts provision for free, fair, and credible elections, Nigeria's electoral system remains encumbered by several challenges which Harts Secondary Rules should be applied to.

Hart's Secondary Rules: An Application to the Nigerian Election System

Hart's legal positivism is a response to John Austin's legal views. Austin was a legal theorist, in his seminal work, *The Province of Jurisprudence Determined,* defines law as "a command issued by a sovereign, backed by sanctions" (John Murray, 1832: 18). In his view, law is essentially a command issued from a political superior to political inferior, enforced by penalties for non-compliance. In a detour, Hart was ill-at-easy with Austin's definition of law as a command or imperative. However, due to its inadequacies, such as the incapacity to explain constitutional norms prompted Hart's modification of Austin's idea of law as a command. Hart's rule-based model replaced Austin's rigid framework with a dual system: primary rules imposing duties and secondary rules enabling legal evolution. Hence, Hart's introduction of the secondary rules redefines legal validity beyond mere coercion; thus, the transition makes the legal social structure become more robust.

Hart defines law as a system of primary and secondary rules. According to him, in *The Concept of Law* (1961), primary rules are obligatory rules and they regulate all aspects of human behaviors directly. For instance, do not kill, do not steal, do not drive left hand side of the road, et cetera; and they exist in primitive legal systems without a centralized authority but are necessary for any legal order (91-99). Notwithstanding, Hart argues that primary rules were laden with difficulties as they are of pre-legal. Hence, they create the problems of uncertainty, inefficiency and static in nature. Therefore, he goes on to provide the remediation, by supplementing the primary rules of obligation with the secondary rules. His introduction of the secondary rules makes the legal social structure become more robust. The secondary rules govern the creation, modification and application of primary rules. They are called secondary rules because they operate on primary rules, rather than directly on human behaviour. Hart identified three: rule of recognition is like the "Master Key" that validates all other laws. Equally, it is as the "boss rule" in a legal system, that decides which rules count as real laws; rule of Change is like the "update button" for laws, outlines the process for the modification of laws within a legal system, enabling laws to stay relevant and responsive to societal needs and values, and rule of Adjudication checks the inefficiency that

burdens the primary rules of obligation and does not impose duties but confers judicial powers (94-99).

Therefore, Hart's theory of jurisprudence, more so his distinction between primary and secondary rules, is an ideal framework to the study of the Nigerian electoral process. Secondary rules provide a method for determination, application, and change of primary rules, while primary rules impose legal obligations and regulate behavior (Hart, 1994, p. 79). The Nigerian Electoral Act and the Constitution that offer for electioneering activity, procedure for the resolution of disputes, and voter rights constitute the key regulations that govern the electoral process in Nigeria. Section 14(2)(a) of the Constitution, for example, offers a guarantee of the right to vote, while Sections 77–131 offer for the mode of electing public officers. Hart goes on to state that there are secondary rules by which primary rules must be made valid and enforceable. The rule of recognition is one of the most fundamental secondary rules to pronounce the validity of legal norms in a system (Hart, 1994, p. 100). The judiciary and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) do so in Nigeria.

Electoral tribunals and appeal courts dispose of election conflicts and legitimize election results, whereas the electoral process is carried out by INEC and establishes that all legal conditions have been met. The effectiveness of Nigeria's election process depends upon how these statutes interact. Problematic situations remain despite this design. Application of secondary rules is often derailed by political intervention and institutional fragility. Courts' rulings on matters related to elections are more inclined to show traces of political intervention rather than keen deference to legal norms, and the independence of INEC has been undermined. Hart observes that legal system stability depends on the proper functioning of its secondary rules and that all these concerns show how susceptible secondary rules are in Nigeria's electoral process (Hart, 1994, p.116). In order to strengthen democratic governance and election legitimacy, the foundational weaknesses need to be addressed.

The Judiciary's Role in Election Disputes

The independence and efficiency of the Judiciary are so much important for democratic stability. The judiciary safeguards electoral justice by resolving election disputes, interprets electoral laws, validates or annuls results, oversees electoral commissions, protects voter rights, prosecutes electoral offenses and prevents post-elections violence. By the application and interpretation of the election rules, the court usually upholds the integrity of the electoral process and the rule of law. Through Hart's theory of internal point of view, jurisprudence alludes to the function performed by judges in determining and applying the law as commanded by the norm of recognition (Hart, 1994, p. 102). In Nigeria, the judiciary such as the Election Petition courts and the Courts of Appeal are obligated to resolve election dispute, including complaints of voter’s fraud, process failure, and electoral misconduct. Where electoral laws have been breached, their rulings confer legal remedies and validate the authenticity of election results. However, the concerns of judicial impartiality, are still being faced, especially in controversial cases where political interference in judicial verdicts is alleged (Omotola, J. 2010, p. 45). A case study in point of court involvement in electoral petitions is the 2019 presidential election in Nigeria. Despite several instances of alleged electoral corruption, the Presidential Petition Tribunal affirmed President Muhammadu Buhari's victory (Akpan, S. 2019, p. 78). The decision has been condemned. Others commended it for maintaining democratic principles. Hart submits that in order to gain legitimacy, a court must respect the norm of recognition (constitutions,

statutes, judicial precedents); Public confidence is undermined in the judiciary and electoral process if the judgments look politically motivated (Hart, 1994, p. 116).

Beyond the judiciary, the executive and legislative arms of government exert huge influence on the electoral processes. They do influence elections through law interpretation and resolution of disputes (Judiciary), oversee electoral administration (Executive), and legislation of laws and provides oversights (Legislature). The theory of Hart illuminates the interaction between legal and political architectures. In Nigeria, the legislature formulates electoral bills, which chart the course for elections, though government does retain a command over elections with appointments to Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Since executive control over INEC appointments have implications for electoral independence and legitimacy, this phenomenon is undesirable since it can be manipulated (Omotola, J. 2010, p. 63). Political aspects of electoral management are also exemplified by legislative endorsement of electoral legislation, where party influences may drive legislative changes rather than democratic principles. In order for Nigeria's electoral system to function efficiently, primary and secondary rules must be exercised equally. Legal positivism by Hart means that sound secondary rules and an unbiased court need to exist before a legal framework for sanction and enforcement of election norms may sanction and implement them (Hart, 1994, p. 132). The gap between institutional practice and doctrine has to be filled to achieve electoral legitimacy, making it firm enough for strengthening democratic governance.

Executive and Legislative Impact on Election Results

Of utmost importance in the electoral process in Nigeria is the position of the legislature and executive in deciding the direction of an election. By applying Hart's theory of law, the way through which the primary and secondary regulations influence the process of an election is better grasped. The integrity of the election relies most importantly on the legislature and executive, especially when the selection of INEC commissioners and the formulation of laws pertaining to elections come into play. In the case of executive power, the provisions of Section 153 of the Constitution, the executive and the President do have the ability to nominate INEC members. But this is normally done in a politically motivated way, which is a fear that there might be partisan appointments to favour the ruling party. Hart's theory would suggest that such political interference undermines the legitimacy of the electoral process since the application of electoral rules must be neutral and in accordance with the rule of recognition (Hart, 1994, p. 103).

As regards legislative power, the legislature, or the National Assembly, does have some control over the electoral process because it enacts the Electoral Act, but the enactment of electoral legislations is likely to be in line with political considerations. For instance, in 2018, the *Vanguard News* reports, "many politicians were concerned about the potential outcomes of free and fair elections facilitated by the amendments" (*Vanguard News*). Correspondingly, "the reluctance of lawmakers to pass the Electoral Bill was largely influenced by fears that its provisions might adversely affect their re-election" (*The Guardian Nigerian).* Legislative manipulation of the system undermines the legitimacy of the system in which election laws are manipulated for political purposes, according to Hart's secondary rule theory (Hart, 1994, p. 114).

Election Legitimacy and Hart's Theory

In Hart, both primary and secondary rules need to be accepted universally in order for the electoral system to be legitimate. This is because it has a bearing on impartiality in ensuring fairness and transparency in the conduct of elections, political interference that undermines impartiality undermines the legitimacy of the electoral system (Hart, 1994, p. 120). In addition, Hart's theory is concerned with making sure that the electoral process preserves the integrity of the primary and secondary rules. Nigerian elections would be valid if there are no political conspiracies and the laws are applied equally and impartially, guaranteeing transparency and accountability.

The Electoral Process's Rule of Recognition and Public Trust

From Hart's legal theory, the recognition rule is crucial in identifying other legal standards in a system. Public confidence in the court and the INEC, among others, upholds the legitimacy of Nigeria's electoral process. As long as the election is seen as free and fair and the results are their true choice, the people will remain convinced of it, thus making the rule of recognition legitimate. But allegations of electoral corruption, judicial partiality, and political manipulation can destroy the people's faith and damage the legitimacy of the democratic process (Hart, 1994, p. 121).

Hart would be against political manipulation of secondary rules, which regulate the use of primary election processes. But where there is political interference, it is most likely in the form of politicization of election law that undermines judges' independence in Nigeria. Neutrality in the regulation of elections has been tainted by politicized appointment of courts and political leaders' breach of the election Act. Politically motivated judgments taint the electoral process by eroding its integrity, as seen in the 2019 election petitions (Akpan, S. 2019, p. 56; Omotola, J.S. 2010, p.78). Hart posits that for a legal system to thrive, its rules must be impartially and equitably applied, without politics (Hart, 1994, p. 115).

Impact of Campaign Regulations, Political Parties and Institutional Challenges to Electoral Administration

The political parties in Nigeria play an enormous role in the electoral process despite their liking for loopholes in the law under which they operate to go after illegal activities such as vote buying and election violence. The party processes are regulated under the Electoral Act (2010, Amendments), but parties like to brush aside such laws for individual benefits. Hart highlights the manner in which society tolerates the law. As Hart (1994, p. 119) holds, political parties that breach election regulations erode the confidence of the public in the system and, by implication, the legitimacy of the electoral system and political parties.

Hart's secondary rules theory is quite significant for institutions like INEC, which conducts elections. For the rule of recognition to apply, INEC must efficiently administer electoral law. Malfunctioning of BVAS during the 2023 elections is a proof of how operational inefficiencies, untrained personnel, and resource availability can lead to skepticism about INEC's capability. The entire process of the elections can be questioned for its legitimacy if INEC does not carry out its functions professionally and openly(Eneji, 2019, p.45). According to Hart, the legitimacy of a legal order is based on members of institutions upholding its standards repeatedly (Hart, 1994, p. 123).

The Role of Electoral Reforms in Strengthening Legitimacy

Hart's argument is that reform cannot be avoided in its bid to overcome the strife Nigeria's electoral system is confronted with. The intention of the amendment should be to solidify

the institutional strength of INEC, the accountability of the judiciary, as well as the independence of electoral institutions. These can be made better by further reforms like electronic voting, increased election monitoring, and increased transparency in campaign finance.

Moreover, increasing judicial autonomy would deepen the rule of law and ensure the dignity of election results, particularly in election petitions (Hart, 1994, p.118). Assuming other factors are held constant, Hart's theory of law is an appropriate model of the interaction among institutional action, legal rules, and political authority in the Nigerian electoral process. Primary and secondary rules need to be enforced equally and uniformly so that the process will work accordingly. Nigeria can legitimate its electoral process and guarantee the result of elections to correspond to the people's desires by eliminating political interference and developing institutional capacity.

Issues with the Nigerian Electoral Process

Executive excesses, electoral vices, and inconsistencies in the law are only a few of the critical issues that undermine the integrity of Nigeria's electoral system. Arbitrary applications of the law and inadequate resources for election institutions, such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), tasked with conducting elections, are some illustrations of legal and institutional anomalies. These issues still linger despite attempts at reform, such as the 2018 election Act Amendment, that incapacitate the application of election law (Ogunbayo, 2023, pp.74-89). Some other habits of electoral malpractices which erode the rule of law and plant doubt include vote-buying and harassment of voters.

Inability to prosecute criminals exacerbates these challenges (Akinwale, 2020, pp. 101-118). The process is also tainted as unfair by executive misuses, including politically driven INEC appointments and the abuse of public funds to support or discredit candidates (Abubakar, A. 2020, pp.35-47; Duru, J. 2019, pp. 56-72). These issues prevent Nigerian elections from being legitimate, hence the necessity for radical reforms to ensure the independence of the judiciary and electoral institutions. Secondly, some problems like election violence, poor observation, lack of civic education, and the involvement of the army are issues slowing Nigeria's democratization process. They undermine the rule of law and the conduct of elections.

There is a common occurrence of violence like ballot snatchings and vote rigging as well as the intimidation of electors in elections in Nigeria, especially in volatile areas. Integrity of the polls is undermined and electors live in fear of violence (Nwolise, O. 2010, pp. 103-118). Apart from INEC and international organizations, electoral observation is hampered by political interference and insufficient funding, which further degrades process transparency (EU EOM, 2019). In exchange, citizens were not informed about their rights and how to vote because of a shortage of civic education, which dissuaded well-informed voting and rendered electoral legislation less efficient (INEC, 2020). Nevertheless, there have been reports of military intervention in the elections that have evoked vote-tampering and intimidation, especially in the 2015 election (Annan, 2015). Nigeria should end such occurrences by developing more robust institutions, improving civic education, and reforming legislatures in a bid to restore confidence.

Prospects of Hart's Theory-Based Reform for the Nigerian Elections

According to Hart's theory of law, the Nigerian voting process needs to be changed by using open and rational legal principles. Strengthening the rule of recognition, enhancing judicial independence, and closing gaps in election laws are a few of the measures. For the consolidation of the Rule of Recognition, Hart emphasizes universal adherence to the legal norms. Uniform application of Nigerian electoral laws is required to strengthen INEC's authority and reduce the politicians' role. Judicial autonomy is essential to guarantee impartiality in the adjudication of election complaints. The courts must be safeguarded from political interference through reforms. Hart favours reforming the law. Amending Nigerian electoral regulations to include provisions for party finance, technological innovation, and election result publication is essential. In Hart's thesis, the legal rules of the election mechanism must be shared. Trust and legitimacy will be regained through reforms enhancing legislative clarity, judicial independence, and the rule of law.

Conclusion

Hart's legal positivism is an explanatory framework which this work has clearly shown how his legal rules can be practically and consistently applied in a coherently manner to the Nigerian electoral process. His rule of recognition places immense emphasis on widely adhered and enforced standards in order to ensure legitimacy and discourage rigging during elections. An open and transparent electoral system preserves the confidence of the people and strengthens institutional integrity in democratic governance, especially in Nigeria. Ensuring democratic legitimacy and preventing manipulation of the system requires electoral law to be stated precisely, enacted impartially, and globally recognized. With the use of Hart's paradigm of law, electoral institutions can promote accountability, reduce conflict, and provide a stable democracy.

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SACRED EARTH: RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVES ON ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AND CLIMATE ACTION

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Abstract
The relationship between religion and environmental conservation has become more prominent as faith communities recognize their moral need to practice ecological stewardship. Human views toward nature have historically been influenced by religious teachings, which have impact on conservation, climate action, and sustainability. This study investigates how religious traditions use institutions, values, and beliefs to promote environmental awareness. Different but complimentary viewpoints on environmental ethics are offered by Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Indigenous spirituality, which place an emphasis on stewardship, interconnection, and the sanctity of creation. Using case studies of faith-based environmental projects, interviews with religious leaders, and content analysis of religious texts, this study takes a qualitative approach. The process comprised semi-structured interviews with religious leaders and environmentalists, a review of faith-based sustainability initiatives, and an analysis of sacred texts. According to research, faith-based groups are essential to environmental advocacy efforts that combat pollution, deforestation, and climate change. Interfaith cooperation encourages group efforts to promote environmental justice. But when religious convictions clash with industrial and economic advancement, tensions result, creating moral conundrums. Misconceptions regarding the compatibility of faith and science and resistance within religious communities continue to be obstacles. This study emphasizes how religious organizations have the power to influence environmental laws and incorporate spiritual principles into conservation initiatives. Talking with legislators, religious leaders, and environmentalists can promote a more comprehensive approach to sustainability. The findings underline the importance of religion communities actively participating in environmental discourse, ensuring spiritual and ethical principles support the global fight against climate change.

Keywords: Sacred Earth, Religious Perspectives, Environment, Conservation, Climate Action

Introduction

Unprecedented environmental challenges confront the world, such as climate change, deforestation, biodiversity loss, pollution, and the depletion of natural resources(Adekomaya & Majozi, 2022; Kolawole & Iyiola, 2023). The growing occurrence of extreme weather phenomena, the escalation of global temperatures, and the thawing ice caps indicate an

urgent requirement for sustainable measures. Human activities, including industrialization, deforestation, and carbon emissions, have sped up environmental degradation, endangering ecosystems and human societies alike (Brosius, 1997; Okorondu et al., 2022; Prakash & Verma, 2022). Although scientific and technological solutions are crucial, tackling environmental crises necessitates a transformation in (Carneiro et al., 2021). Throughout history, religion has influenced how humans view nature, offering moral and ethical frameworks for their interactions with the environment (Adekomaya & Majozi, 2022; Ulutorti, 2024). Numerous faith traditions stress the importance of honoring creation, acting as responsible stewards, and recognizing the interdependence of all living beings. Religions direct followers' perspectives on nature through holy writings (Jähnichen, 2021). Religious figures and organizations can also rally significant numbers of people for the cause of environmental conservation (Gulliver et al., 2023).

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology to evaluate the relationship between religious beliefs and environmental conservation. The qualitative technique is excellent for analyzing the depth of religious teachings, values, and institutional responsibilities in sustainability efforts. The main technique is content analysis, which is a methodical examination of sacred writings from Indigenous spiritual traditions, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity. The study finds recurrent themes pertaining to ecological stewardship and sustainable ethics by examining religious texts, theological commentary, and faith-based environmental pronouncements. Furthermore, officials involved in interfaith ecological initiatives, religious leaders, and faith-based environmental activists participated in semi-structured interviews. These interviews offer firsthand knowledge of religious organizations' goals, difficulties, and approaches to combating environmental degradation and climate change. Case studies of faith-based sustainability initiatives run by interfaith organizations and religious institutions are also included in the study. These case studies demonstrate practical implementations of religious concepts in conservation, including faith-led climate advocacy campaigns, water conservation programs, and tree-planting activities. Three main steps were involved in the process: (1) finding and gathering pertinent religious texts and official environmental statements from religious organizations; (2) interviewing chosen religious leaders and environmental specialists to learn about their views on ecological responsibility; and (3) examining documented faith-based environmental projects to assess their efficacy and impact. The study offers a thorough grasp of how religion affects environmental ethics and action because to its multifaceted methodological approach. To achieve a clear result, the study has the following objectives (1) To examine religious perspectives on environmental conservation. (2) To analyze sacred texts and theological interpretations regarding nature. (3) To evaluate the role of faith-based organizations in climate action. (4) To explore policy implications of religious engagement in environmental sustainability.

Significantly, this research will be of relevant in different facets of life. Religion is essential in the formation of human awareness and ethics (Ulutorti, 2024). Grasping the impact of religious beliefs on environmental attitudes can aid in developing more effective conservation strategies that are in harmony with cultural and spiritual worldviews. Moreover, faith-based organizations operate on a global scale and can motivate grassroots initiatives, positioning them as essential contributors to climate change mitigation. Governments and NGOs can cultivate a more comprehensive approach to sustainability that connects with various communities by weaving religious values into environmental policies. Moreover, examining the connection between religion and environmental ethics aids in dispelling

misunderstandings that religious viewpoints contradict scientific environmentalism. This study emphasizes the collaboration between faith and ecological duty, showing how spiritual beliefs can enhance scientific endeavors aimed at tackling climate change.

Religious and Scholarly Views on the Environment

Religious customs worldwide provide distinctive viewpoints on the preservation of the environment (Bridgewater & Rotherham, 2019; Ulutorti, 2024). These views are based on sacred texts, theological doctrines, and moral teachings that direct adherents in their relationship with nature. Christian teachings highlight the importance of Earth stewardship, illustrated by Genesis 2:15, which entrusts humanity with the care of creation. Numerous Christian denominations endorse environmental conservation as a moral obligation, promoting responsible resource management and sustainability practices (Ahmad et al., 2021). According to Islamic teachings, humans serve as custodians (khalifah) of the Earth, a concept referenced in the Quran (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:30). Islamic environmental ethics promote moderation, resource conservation, and the banning of wastefulness (Surah Al-A'raf 7:31). Nature is regarded as sacred in Hinduism, with deities frequently linked to natural elements (Singh et al., 2017). Dharma encompasses respect for all forms of life, and Hindu texts promote sustainability and environmental reverence. Mindfulness and compassion for all living beings are encouraged by Buddhism. The interdependence principle teaches that human actions impact the environment, so ecological conservation is vital for spiritual well-being (Chattopadhyay, 2024).

Indigenous worldviews often see the Earth as a living being that deserves respect and protection(Arrows, 2016; Kohler et al., 2019) . A number of Indigenous customs feature ceremonies and rituals that pay tribute to nature and stress the importance of equilibrium and concord with the environment (Agung et al., 2024). The sacred texts and teachings of these traditions emphasize that believers have a responsibility to safeguard the environment. A multitude of religious texts promote living in harmony with nature, denouncing exploitation and highlighting the need to care for creation as a godly duty. From a theological standpoint, numerous religions view nature as a divine creation, which fosters a feeling of respect and moral duty to safeguard it. (Omoyajowo et al., 2024). Scholarly perspectives on religious views of the environment highlight the integral role of faith in promoting ecological responsibility. Scholars such as Nicholson & Kurucz (2019) have argued that religious traditions provide a foundational ethical framework that fosters environmental stewardship. Their research emphasizes that sacred texts and theological principles shape believers' attitudes towards nature, reinforcing sustainability. Furthermore, Subhasmita & Behura (2024) explore how Hinduism's concept of Dharma instills reverence for all living beings, thereby encouraging sustainable practices. This scholarly perspective aligns with the idea that religious teachings act as moral compasses, guiding adherents in their interactions with the environment.

Theological perspectives further emphasize the divine mandate for environmental stewardship. Grothe, (2017). discuss Christian doctrines, particularly the concept of humanity as caretakers of creation, as derived from Genesis 2:15. This theological interpretation underlines the moral obligation to protect and sustain the Earth. Similarly, Islamic theologians reference the Quranic notion of khalifah (stewardship), as seen in Surah Al-Baqarah 2:30, to stress humanity's duty to manage resources responsibly. Sinha, (2025) contribute to this discourse by examining how various religious traditions view nature as divine, fostering a spiritual obligation to its preservation. These theological insights

demonstrate that environmental care is not just an ethical concern but also a religious imperative. From a philosophical standpoint, ecological ethics within religious traditions offer a compelling rationale for conservation. Promchin et al, (2024) examines Buddhist principles of interdependence and compassion, highlighting how mindfulness towards nature contributes to personal and collective spiritual well-being. Philosophers like McGregor, (2016) argue that Indigenous worldviews, which regard the Earth as a living entity, provide a holistic approach to environmental ethics. This philosophical perspective aligns with the broader ethical discourse that emphasizes balance and harmony between human activity and nature, advocating for an integrated and respectful approach to environmental conservation. Additionally, theological and philosophical discourse collectively reinforce the necessity of environmental responsibility as a sacred duty. Ogar, (2023) argue that Indigenous ceremonies dedicated to nature embody principles of sustainability, paralleling religious teachings that discourage exploitation. Goodenough, (2023) further examine how rituals and moral codes within religious traditions promote equilibrium with the natural world. The convergence of scholarly, theological, and philosophical perspectives underscores the multifaceted role of religion in shaping environmental consciousness, highlighting the universal moral responsibility to protect the Earth across diverse faith traditions.

Religion and Environmental Ethics

Many indigenous religions also embrace stewardship, viewing nature as a living entity that must be respected and protected. The principle of stewardship extends beyond religious doctrine into practical applications, encouraging sustainable agricultural practices, conservation efforts, and policies that mitigate ecological degradation. It calls upon individuals and communities to adopt lifestyles that reduce waste, promote biodiversity, and ensure the longevity of natural ecosystems (Emina, 2021). Stewardship is a key concept in religious environmental ethics that emphasizes people's moral need to preserve the Earth as a sacred trust. Stewardship highlights the need of sustainable practices and wise resource management, and it stems from the belief that nature is a gift from God (Dawson et al, 2021). The Christian Book of Genesis conveys the idea that humans are entrusted with the preservation of creation rather than its depletion. Through the idea of "Khilafah," which holds that it is humanity's divine obligation to act as stewards (khalifah) of the Earth, maintaining harmony and balance, Islam also encourages environmental responsibility.

Often misunderstood as a permit for exploitation, the idea of dominion is linked to human supremacy over nature (Oscarson, 2019). A more complex interpretation, however, contends that dominion does not imply unbridled consumerism but rather a type of responsible administration. True dominion, according to religious scholars, is consistent with stewardship, in which people use their power over nature sensibly, responsibly, and ethically. For example, in Christianity, dominion is explained in Genesis 1:26-28, where humans are granted power over the land and animals. Historically, this text has been interpreted incorrectly to support environmental damage and industrial growth. But according to modern theological viewpoints, dominion means having an obligation to preserve and care for the environment rather than take advantage of it (Luetz & Leo, 2021). Judaism and Islam share similar viewpoints, seeing dominion as a duty to preserve the Earth rather than destructively dominate it. Policies that stop pollution, deforestation, and climate change are necessary for the responsible exercise of dominion, which emphasizes the significance of an ethical approach to environmental governance.

The principles of sustainability, moderation, and respect for life are continuously emphasized as essential to human existence in a variety of religious traditions (Hermawan & Masruri, 2024). Religious teachings caution against excess and greed and support a balanced approach to resource utilization. For example, the "Right Livelihood" precept of Buddhism urges followers to follow morally and ecologically responsible behaviors that reduce harm to other living things. The sacredness of nature is also upheld in Hinduism, where writings such as the Bhagavad Gita highlight the interdependence of all living things and the need to coexist peacefully with the environment. The Earth must be revered as an ancestor or sacred being, according to indigenous spiritual practices, which frequently honor nature as an extension of the divine (Arrows, 2016; Omoyajowo et al., 2024). These religious perspectives align with contemporary sustainability goals, such as reducing carbon footprints, promoting renewable energy, and fostering conservation efforts. The principle of ecological responsibility extends to industrial and governmental policies, urging leaders to enact laws that protect natural resources and prevent environmental exploitation.

Religious ethics also advocate for ecological restoration, reinforcing the belief that environmental degradation is not only a physical crisis but also a moral and spiritual concern. Human exploitation of nature upsets the balance of creation and causes misery, as acknowledged by many religious traditions (Suzuki, 2022). In many religious contexts, the practices of wildlife preservation, soil protection, and reforestation are seen as acts of penance and spiritual devotion. Adopting eco-friendly activities like cutting back on plastic use, investing in renewable energy, and taking part in tree-planting efforts are encouraged by Christian movements like the "Green Church" program. Islam's teachings on the environment promote conservation as a kind of devotion by emphasizing "mizan" (balance) and against excessive use. Religious communities are essential to halting environmental harm and promoting a restoration culture because they incorporate these moral precepts into their everyday lives (Kolade, 2023). Furthermore, Christian philosophy emphasizes the necessity of systemic adjustments to preserve natural ecosystems, which is strongly ingrained in responsible environmental governance. Religious organizations and leaders are frequently strong proponents of environmental justice who have an impact on grassroots activism and policy choices. Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si', which calls for immediate action against climate change, is a shining example of religious support for sustainable environmental policy (Zagonari, 2023). In a similar vein, Islamic leaders have called on countries to enact laws that uphold the moral precepts of ecological justice and conservation. Additionally, indigenous groups support governance structures that put sustainability first (Dawson *et al.*, 2021) and frequently oppose industrial operations that endanger biodiversity. In the end, the values of sustainability, stewardship, and responsible dominion provide a moral framework that directs people toward a day when protecting the environment is a holy obligation rather than just a choice.

Faith-Based Environmental Movements

Organizations rooted in faith are essential to promoting environmental causes. Several faith-based organizations have begun efforts aimed at encouraging sustainable lifestyles, climate activism, and ecological justice (Shattuck, 2021). Examples include the Catholic Church's Laudato Si' encyclical (Laudato Si is not a movement, it is a document), urging immediate environmental action, as well as Islamic initiatives advocating for eco-friendly mosques. Faith groups have spearheaded significant religious initiatives such as tree-planting campaigns, sustainable agriculture projects, and community-based conservation programs.

Collaborations that cross faith lines, like the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative, unite various religious groups to tackle issues of deforestation and climate justice (Petrov & Rahman, 2023). Even with religious backing for environmental preservation, some communities exhibit resistance (Aiguobarueghian *et al.*, 2024; Carmenta et al., 2023). Barriers to environmental activism include prioritizing economic development, skepticism toward climate science, and doctrinal differences. Due to the perception of environmentalism as a secular agenda by certain religious groups, there is hesitance in fully adopting conservation initiatives (Alajmi *et al*., 2023).

When industrial growth endangers natural habitats, conflicts between economic development and religious ethics can occur. Although religious teachings endorse sustainability, economic pressures often pose challenges to the application of these principles. Misunderstandings regarding the role of religion in climate action continue to exist. (Eom *et al.*, 2021). Religious institutions can shape environmental policies by promoting ethical stewardship and sustainability (Abumoghli, 2023; Leary *et al.*, 2016). Involving faith leaders in conversations about policy can assist in crafting conservation strategies that connect with communities. Incorporating religious values into conservation initiatives enhances public dedication to environmental sustainability. (Shah & Asghar, 2024). NGOs, and faith-based organizations can promote comprehensive environmental policies. Policymakers can tap into religious networks to reach broader audiences and effectively promote environmentally friendly initiatives .
(Elgammal & Alhothali, 2021)

The Green Pilgrimage Network (Nigeria Chapter)

In Nigeria, cities like Abuja and Osogbo have incorporated green initiatives into their religious activities, ensuring that places of worship and pilgrimage sites maintain ecological balance. The Green Pilgrimage Network (GPN) is a global faith-based environmental initiative that encourages religious communities to adopt sustainable practices, especially in pilgrimage sites. The network works with churches, mosques, and traditional religious centers to encourage environmental responsibility as a religious duty. The Nigerian chapter of GPN has worked closely with faith leaders to instill environmental consciousness among pilgrims, reinforcing the idea that preserving the environment is in line with divine stewardship. (https://www.greenpilgrimageeurope.net/)

The Nigerian Interfaith Action Association on Climate Change (NIFA-CC)

The Nigerian Interfaith Action Association on Climate Change (NIFA-CC) is another important faith-based environmental movement in Nigeria that brings together Christian and Muslim leaders to address climate change through faith-driven advocacy. NIFA-CC was founded to bridge religious divides and promote a collective response to ecological challenges, especially in rural communities affected by flooding, desertification, and deforestation. NIFA-CC actively organizes workshops, tree-planting campaigns, and awareness programs that emphasize the ethical responsibility of caring for the environment, with one of their major projects focusing on reforestation and sustainable agricultural practices to reverse desertification in northern Nigeria. Religious leaders are crucial in spreading knowledge about climate change and promoting environmental policies that are in line with social justice and spiritual teachings. (https://www.nigerianinterfaith.org/)

The Kenya Catholic Church's Laudato Si' Movement

Based on Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si', which urges immediate action against environmental degradation, the Kenya Catholic Church's Laudato Si' Movement has been a driving force in East Africa for environmental conservation. The Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB), the movement's leader, has started a number of tree-planting initiatives, sustainable agricultural methods, and campaigns to combat climate change. Catholic churches in Kenya aggressively support ecological education, asking congregations to reduce carbon footprints and embrace renewable energy. The movement has partnered with schools, seminaries, and local governments to integrate environmental studies into religious education, ensuring that young generations view ecological care as a spiritual responsibility. The Kenya Catholic Church has emerged as a leader in faith-based environmental activism through national campaigns, illustrating how religious organizations can impact grassroots initiatives for sustainable development as well as policy. (http s://communications.amecea.org/index)

Conclusion

The research highlights the profound link between religion and environmental conservation. Various faith traditions share a common focus on stewardship, reverence for nature, and the ethical duty to safeguard the planet. Theological perspectives and sacred texts offer a robust ethical foundation for environmental responsibility, countering the misconception that religion and ecological sustainability are at odds. There is hope for the future of how religion will engage with environmental conservation(Ives & Kidwell, 2019) . Faith-based organizations' ongoing advocacy for climate action can influence global environmental policies and inspire grassroots movements. Religious leaders can mobilize communities, promoting a shared sense of responsibility for the environment. Religious environmental advocacy can be made more effective by bolstering interfaith cooperation, thus fostering a coordinated response to climate change. Religious institutions and policymakers need to be called to action. Religious groups should incorporate environmental education into their religious teachings and promote sustainable practices among their adherents. It is important for those who make policy decisions to acknowledge that religious organizations can play a role in promoting ecological sustainability. Through collaboration, the two sectors can develop policies and initiatives that are in harmony with ethical and spiritual values, resulting in more impactful conservation endeavors. It is important for environmentalists to work with religious leaders as a means of connecting science and faith. Environmentalists can garner wider backing for their initiatives by stressing common values of preservation and sustainability. Understanding how faith influences attitudes toward nature will help create a more inclusive and holistic environmental conservation strategy.

Recommendations

i. Environmental stewardship should be integrated into sermons, religious education programs, and community activities by religious institutions. Faith leaders can foster a culture of sustainability in religious communities by instructing followers on the moral and spiritual significance of safeguarding the environment.
ii. To tackle environmental challenges, organizations that are faith-based should collaborate beyond religious lines. Religious advocacy for ecological justice can be significantly enhanced through interfaith initiatives, including collaborative conservation efforts and awareness campaigns.

iii. It is important for governments and environmental organizations to work together with religious institutions in order to create policies that are consistent with ethical and spiritual values. It is important to include faith leaders in policy discussions to guarantee that religious viewpoints are taken into account in environmental governance.
iv. Religious organizations ought to set an example by embracing environmentally friendly practices, including the use of renewable energy in worship venues, advocating for waste reduction, and endorsing sustainable farming. When faith communities adopt sustainability, it will encourage a wider societal transformation.

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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 Chiedozie 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-fore 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 Chiedozie 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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AN APPRAISAL OF KWASI WIREDU'S PHILOSOPHY OF CULTURE

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Abstract
This study critically analyzed Wiredu's philosophy of culture,for its uniqueness in dealing with the interplay between tradition and modernization. Wiredu stresses that it is important to critically analyze traditional African cultural practices in terms of problems brought about by globalization and modernization. . In a sense, Wiredu's work was to refute western anthropologists' ethnocentric assertions that assume that Africans do not have logical contemplations couched in language, intelligence, and lack clear sense of self except that which can be characterized as primitive. This study utilizes the qualitative method of critical analysis of Wiredu's perspective and opinions regarding what informs African Philosophy and culture in the truest sense of the word. The study concludes that African cultures can develop and improve without losing their basic values and thus, opening a possibility for a rich and prosperous future despite the presence of other complementary cultures.

Keywords: Culture, cultural universals, cultural particular, philosophy of culture, African culture, ethnocentricism

Introduction
This study has been necessitated by controversy about how to do African philosophy., Kwasi Wiredu was one of those pioneering orientationists in African philosophy. To begin with, he has succeeded in appropriating major signposts in Western philosophy . Wiredu, a renowned Ghanaian philosopher, has made significant contribution to African philosophy, and more so to study of culture and its philosophical aspect. Wiredu emerged at a time when African philosophy was undergoing a renaissance, attempting to regain identity and to resist Western philosophical hegemony. In examining Wiredu's philosophy of culture, it would be impossible not to refer to his seminal work, "Cultural Universals and Particulars." Through his work, Wiredu endeavors to dismantle the universality-particularity divide and advocates a more expansive and contextualized view of culture. Wiredu's philosophy revolves around conceptual decolonization, and he invites Africans to redefine and define their cultural practices in terms of philosophical paradigms. Wiredu's focus on acknowledging some conceptual issues and humanistic elements provide a ground for interplay between cultures resonating with one of the philosophers' fascination with comparative philosophy.

Wiredu's philosophical principles in practical application in intercultural interactions gives a rich insight into what happens in intercultural interactions. On a broader platform in African philosophy, Wiredu's philosophy has raised problems in cultural identity conflict, authenticity, and tradition in a changing situation. Academics and intellectuals, both in and out of Africa, have reacted to Wiredu's work, making philosophy in Africa. Western and

African thought have been in collision with each other for a long period. Kwasi Wiredu and many African intellectuals believe that African thought system has been shaped a lot by Western epistemology, and in the process, conceptual distortions and misconceptions have emerged. African tradition and culture have thus been explained sometimes in terms of Western philosophical categories, and in the process, may lose part of what they originally meant. This study attempts to consider Wiredu's call for African thought to be decolonized and how applicable his method can be in contemporary African philosophy. According to Wiredu, such a method involves explaining African thought in terms of indigenous terms and not in terms of Western categories. But would it be effective in solving African problems? This is the most important question that this study sets out to attempt an answer in the light of Wiredu's theorizing on culture.

Wiredu's Idea of an African Culture

Wiredu's understanding of an African culture is premised on the idea that African philosophical traditions are rich and worthwhile and that they can offer new insights into universal human issues when subjected to critical examination and elaboration. One of the most dominant themes of Wiredu's work is the idea of "conceptual decolonization." This is the process of critically examining Western philosophical ideas that have been imposed on African philosophy and evaluating their relevance to African contexts. Wiredu argues that most of these ideas are not only alien but also inappropriate for the comprehension of African realities. Instead, he advocates the recovery and revitalization of native African concepts and frameworks (Wiredu, 1996).

Wiredu maintains that decolonization must not be understood as a rejection of Western philosophy but as a selective appropriation. He advocates that African philosophers should appropriate Western thought in a critically reflective and grounded manner in their own cultural contexts. This is intended to bring about a more authentic and autonomous African philosophy (Wiredu, 1995). In his book Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective, Wiredu explores the complex relationship between cultural universals and cultural particulars. He argues that while there are some universal aspects of human experience, the way in which these experiences are articulated and comprehended is heavily influenced by culture. This perspective rejects the idea that Western philosophical ideas are applicable universally without modification (Wiredu, 1996). Wiredu uses the Akan concept of truth as an illustration to make his argument. For the Akan, truth is conceived as a question of coherence and practical success, and not as an objective fact. This is the reverse of the Western conception of truth as correspondence to an objective fact. Wiredu thinks that it is necessary to appreciate such differences in order to construct a philosophy that is locally rooted but cosmopolitan in application (Wiredu, 1996).

Language is at the center of Wiredu's conception of culture. Wiredu believes that language is not only a medium of communication but also a repository of the worldview and philosophy of a people. The understanding and utilization of African languages are therefore at the center of gaining access to and constructing African philosophical thought. Wiredu is also critical of the dominance of colonial languages in African philosophical thought and encourages greater attention to indigenous languages (Wiredu, 1998). Wiredu's linguistic approach is also reflected in his study of the Akan language. He explores how the grammar and utilization of Akan words and sentences convey a particular philosophical view. For instance, the Akan word "onipa," meaning "person," is imbued with connotations of moral and social responsibility inherent in Akan conceptions of identity and community. This

linguistic analysis is used to uncover the philosophical foundations of African cultures that otherwise lie hidden (Wiredu, 1998). Wiredu's investigation of African culture goes as far as the level of ethics and morality.

Wiredu argues that African morality systems are communal and prioritize the good of the group over the individual. This contrasts with many Western systems of ethics, which prioritize individual rights and autonomy. Wiredu's analysis of African ethics showcases the importance of social harmony, respect for one another, and communal responsibility (Wiredu, 1992). While Wiredu is a strong believer in the value of traditional African thought, he is also critical of some of the elements that he believes need to be rethought. For example, he is critical of the wholesale adoption of some traditional practices and beliefs that are toxic or outmoded. Wiredu is in favor of a critical reconstruction of African traditions, where the useful aspects are retained and the toxic ones discarded (Wiredu, 1980).

Wiredu's Theory of Cultural Universals

Kwasi Wiredu's theory of cultural universals is a prevailing genre in his philosophical work, particularly in his influential book, Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective (1996). Wiredu's argument in this book is the possibility that while the beliefs and practices of individual human cultures are varied, there are some universal aspects of human experience shared by all cultures. Wiredu (1996) contends that there are "aspects of human experience and social practices that are common across different cultures". These are basic human needs and responses, e.g., the need for communication, social organization, and moral values. Wiredu's contention is that these universals rest on the shared biological and psychological nature of human beings. The particular expressions these universals take and are conceived, however, are mediated through culture. Culture

One of the cultural universals Wiredu writes about is communication. All human societies have developed systems of communication, primarily through language. But the structure, use, and meaning of language can be quite different from culture to culture. Wiredu emphasizes that recognition of these differences is essential to an appreciation of the richness of human linguistic diversity and to making intercultural communication meaningful (Wiredu, 1996). Wiredu also writes about the use of language in the construction of thought and perception. He employs the writings of philosophers like Ludwig Wittgenstein and Benjamin Lee Whorf to argue that the linguistic patterns of various cultures can condition the way people think about and accommodate the world. This view emphasizes the importance of an appreciation of and respect for linguistic diversity in philosophy (Wiredu, 1996).

Another cultural universal Wiredu identifies is social organization. Human beings everywhere organize themselves into social groups, either families, communities, or larger political organizations. The specific forms of social organization, however, can be quite different from culture to culture. Wiredu argues that these differences are conditioned by historical, environmental, and cultural factors. Recognition of these factors is essential to an appreciation of the richness of human social diversity and to solving social and political issues in a culturally sensitive manner (Wiredu, 1996). Wiredu also writes about the concept of political power and authority, noting that the exercise of power is a universal feature of human societies but the legitimacy and form of political systems can be quite different. He calls for a critical examination of traditional and modern African systems of government and

proposes systems that are democratic and consonant with African cultural values (Wiredu, 1996).

Moral values and ethical principles are another area where Wiredu discovers cultural universals. All human societies have systems of morality that govern behavior and maintain social harmony. But the content of such moral systems can be variable. Wiredu argues that while some ethical principles can be universally accepted, such as the prohibition on murder, their application and interpretation can be variable in accordance with cultural contexts (Wiredu, 1996). Wiredu's argument on African ethics, such as the Akan concept of "ubuntu," demonstrates the communal orientation of African moral systems. Ubuntu, which emphasizes the interdependence of people and the good of the community, provides a contrast to more individualistic ethical systems of Western societies. Wiredu argues that such communal values can be applied to solve modern ethical issues, both within and outside African societies (Wiredu, 1996).

One of the problems that run through Wiredu's work is the conflict between cultural universals and particulars. He argues that while there can be some universal features of human experience, the expression and interpretation of such experiences are always culturally mediated. This argument denies both cultural relativism, which denies any universals, and ethnocentrism, which imposes one culture's particularities as universals (Wiredu, 1996). Wiredu uses the example of the concept of truth to demonstrate this conflict. He contrasts the Western concept of truth as correspondence to an objective reality with the Akan concept of truth as coherence and practical success. This contrast demonstrates how different cultures can have different but equally valid conceptions of basic concepts. Wiredu argues that recognition and respect for such differences are necessary for effective intercultural dialogue and cooperation (Wiredu, 1996).

Wiredu's method of dealing with cultural universals has not been controversy-free. He admits that some of the conventional beliefs and practices have to be re-examined in the light of modern realities. He advocates for a process of critical reconstruction where good things in traditional culture are kept and things that are old or bad are abandoned. This method is directed towards the development of a dynamic and progressive system of culture that is responsive to universal human needs and to specific cultural contexts (Wiredu, 1995). Wiredu's criticism of traditional African philosophy is one of the ways through which he criticizes gender inequality and the maintenance of some superstitious beliefs. He believes that though these aspects have cultural and historical importance, they have to be critically re-examined and reformed so that they will be compatible with modern standards of ethics and human rights norms. This process of criticism is directed towards the strengthening of African cultures so that they will be effective and relevant in the solution of modern problems (Wiredu, 1995).

Wiredu's Concept of Cultural Particulars

Cultural universals are the universal aspects of human existence that are common to all cultures, and cultural particulars are the specific practices and expressions that differentiate one culture from another. Wiredu's method of dealing with cultural particulars is at the center of the enjoyment of the richness and diversity of human cultures and of intercultural understanding and cooperation. Cultural particulars, Wiredu (1996) argues, are "the specific practices, beliefs, and values that are unique to a given culture". These particulars are the result of the historical, environmental, and social conditions under which a culture develops. They are a manifestation of the specific way in which a community responds to universal

human problems and needs. Wiredu explains that while cultural particulars may be very different, they are all authentic expressions of human creativity and adaptation. One of the places where cultural particulars are most clearly visible is in language.

Wiredu argues that language is not just a means of communication but also a repository of a people's philosophy and worldview. Different languages have different ways of knowing and understanding the world. For instance, the vocabulary and grammar of the Akan language, which Wiredu frequently analyzes, reflect particular ways of thinking that are different from those reflected in Western languages (Wiredu, 1996). Wiredu explains how the Akan conception of "truth" differs from the Western conception. In Akan philosophy, truth is typically conceived of as coherence and practical success rather than correspondence to an objective reality. This specific concept of truth influences how Akan individuals understand knowledge and reality, referring to how cognitive processes are conditioned by cultural specifics (Wiredu, 1996).

Cultural specifics also manifest in moral and ethical systems. Wiredu highlights how African ethical thought, particularly the philosophy of "ubuntu" or communal harmony, is distinct from more individualistic Western ethical systems. Ubuntu emphasizes interdependence among people and the requirement of communal well-being. This ethical system shapes social practice and moral judgment in distinctive African societies (Wiredu, 1992). Wiredu argues that understanding these specific ethical systems is crucial to addressing moral challenges in their distinctive cultural contexts. For example, African approaches to conflict resolution and justice, emphasizing reconciliation and communal harmony, are distinct from Western legalistic and punitive practices. Understanding and respect for these cultural specifics can lead to more effective and culturally sensitive solutions (Wiredu, 1996). Social practice and institutions are another setting where cultural specifics are evident.

Wiredu explains how traditional African social arrangements, such as extended families and communal land tenure, are distinct from Western models. These social arrangements are shaped by cultural values and historical experiences distinctive to African societies. Understanding these specifics is critical to designing policies and interventions that are culturally responsive and effective (Wiredu, 1996). Wiredu also outlines traditional African political systems, which are based on consensus-building and collective decision-making. These systems are guided by cultural values of participation and inclusivity, which are distinct from the adversarial and majoritarian models dominant in Western democracies. Wiredu feels that these African political traditions must be incorporated into contemporary models of governance to create systems that are more responsive to the cultural contexts in which they operate (Wiredu, 1996). Religious beliefs and practices are a critical aspect of cultural specifics. Wiredu discusses how the ancestral spirit-based, interdependent material and spiritual world African traditional religions are different from the prevailing monotheistic Western religions. These religious details affect rituals, moral values, and worldviews in uniquely African fashions (Wiredu, 1998). Wiredu argues that these religious details need to be appreciated and understood in any intercultural interaction or comparative religious studies. Wiredu cautions against imposing Western religious models on African societies and instead advocates a more advanced and appreciative understanding of African religious traditions. This is essential to building mutual respect and understanding in a globalized world (Wiredu, 1996).

Wiredu observes that cultural specifics are heavily influenced by history and environment. The colonial history of colonization, resistance, and independence has

influenced African cultures in a distinctive way. Similarly, the environmental context within which African societies have developed - climate, geography, and natural resources have influenced their social practices, economic activities, and technological innovations (Wiredu, 1996). For example, traditional African farming practices, which are responsive to local environmental conditions, reflect a deep understanding of and respect for nature. These practices are part of the cultural specifics that need to be preserved and integrated into contemporary development planning.

Wiredu argues that ignoring these historical and environmental contexts leads to ineffective and often harmful interventions (Wiredu, 1996). While Wiredu values the richness of cultural specifics, he also insists on their critical examination. Wiredu argues that not all cultural practices are useful or relevant in contemporary contexts. Some traditional beliefs and practices may need to be re-examined and re-formulated to respond to contemporary challenges and ethical imperatives. Wiredu calls for a process of critical reconstruction, whereby cultural specifics are examined, and those that are harmful or outdated are discarded, while those that are useful are preserved and adapted (Wiredu, 1995). For example, Wiredu criticizes some gender norms and roles in traditional African societies that may perpetuate inequality and discrimination. He calls for the reformulation of these norms to promote gender equity and justice. This critical process is meant to lead to a dynamic and evolving cultural framework that is responsive to contemporary realities while rooted in cultural heritage (Wiredu, 1995).

The Relevance of Wiredu's Philosophy of Culture Towards African Development

Wiredu's philosophy is founded on the appreciation of the worth of African cultures for themselves, with a call for a process of "conceptual decolonization" through critical examination of and adaptation of Western concepts to African realities. He calls for a cultural orientation that is respectful of and inclusive of African values and practices in philosophical and development discourses. His models of governance founded on consensus emphasize dialogue and collective decision-making, providing a contrast to adversarial and winner-takes-all political systems (Presbey, 1997). These concepts can be used in the mitigation of political tensions and promotion of social harmony, resulting in the stability and development in African nations. For instance, the consensus format can be used in local governance, where community based decision making mechanisms can enhance participation and ensure that developmental efforts are responsive to the needs and aspirations of the local people (Oladipo, 2000).

This can create a sense of identity and pride and empower students with the knowledge and skills to help develop their communities. Incorporation of indigenous knowledge systems into education can also stimulate innovation and creativity by drawing on Africa's rich cultural heritage and diversity of outlooks (Hallen, 2009). Wiredu's philosophy appreciates cultural identity and social solidarity in development. Respecting diversity and intercultural communication, development policies can promote a sense of belonging and solidarity between groups (Hountondji, 2002). This can reduce conflict and increase social stability and developments. Wiredu's focus on cultural pluralism and intercultural communication also offers a framework for solving identity and integration issues in multicultural societies.

Evaluation

Although Wiredu's philosophy can be applied in African development, development policies must balance innovations of the modern and traditional practice to be relevant and effective

in the modern world (Oladipo, 2000). Consensus-based models of governance are hard to apply, particularly in cases where political power is centralized or politics is polarized (Presbey, 1997). Kwasi Wiredu's philosophy of culture is applicable in the understanding and development of African development. It offers a paradigm for the development of inclusive, sustainable, and culturally responsive approaches. His focus on consensus and cultural diversity offers practical solutions towards governance, education, economical development, and social cohesion. In a more globalized world, Wiredu's ideas are needed in ensuring African development respectful of cultural identities and making the global society more inclusive and equitable.

Kwasi Wiredu's philosophical exploration of cultural universals and particulars is a significant contribution to contemporary philosophy, particularly in the context of African philosophical thought and its engagement with global issues. Wiredu posits that recognizing cultural universals can help foster mutual understanding and cooperation among diverse cultures. By identifying and building on shared values and principles, it is possible to address global challenges and promote peaceful coexistence (Wiredu, 1990). Cultural particulars, on the other hand, are the unique aspects and expressions of specific cultures. These include languages, customs, traditions, beliefs, and social practices that define a culture's identity and distinguish it from others (Gyekye, 1997). Wiredu emphasizes the importance of respecting and preserving these particulars, as they contribute to the richness and diversity of human experience. Cultural particulars are vital for maintaining cultural identity and continuity, and they offer valuable insights into different ways of life and worldviews. Wiredu argues that acknowledging and valuing these particulars is essential for fostering genuine intercultural dialogue and understanding (Wiredu, 1998).

Intercultural dialogue allows for the exchange of ideas and experiences, promoting creativity and innovation. It also provides an opportunity for cultures to address misunderstandings and conflicts, paving the way for peaceful coexistence and collaboration (Hallen, 2009). Wiredu's philosophy emphasizes the need to balance cultural universals and particulars, recognizing that both play a crucial role in shaping human experiences and interactions. By acknowledging universals, cultures can find common ground and work together to address global challenges. By valuing particulars, cultures can preserve their unique identities and contributions, enriching the global cultural landscape (Gyekye, 1997). Wiredu's philosophy contributes to the development of a more inclusive and representative global philosophical discourse. By advocating for conceptual decolonization and recognizing diverse philosophical traditions, Wiredu's ideas challenge the dominance of Western thought and encourage the exploration of alternative philosophical perspectives (Masolo, 1994). This approach enriches philosophical discourse and promotes a more comprehensive understanding of human experiences and issues, reflecting the diversity of cultural perspectives and contributions (Hallen, 2009). Wiredu's great intellectual engagement is his endeavor to offer an African viewpoint on the problem of cultural particulars and universals. is acknowledged by D. A. Masolo (2005), who wrote that:

> Wiredu contributes and adds an African tone to the familiar and perhaps one of the most influential preoccupations of twentieth-century philosophy, viz., analytic theories on the relation between language, meaning, and mind. What he adds to the literature is the view that meaning cannot be understood in pure logical terms without the collective and relational social base that makes the very idea of meaning possible. Meanings and, by implication, mind, are objective in the sense

> that they are biologically made possible, and not in the sense that they exist as entities independently of the communicative act.

Wiredu's level of success in this endeavor is however debatable due to internal inconsistencies and weaknesses in his argument. It would seem that cultural universals cannot be explained by Wiredu's biological universalism. In a previous study titled *The Akan Concept of Mind*, Wiredu (1983) pointed out that the soul, which he claimed is equal in all humans at all times because it transcends the biological, is the foundation for the universality of the one human family. Okra is a quasi-material component of humans "whose destiny is received from God and whose absence means death and whose presence in the body means life" (Wiredu 1995). In other places, Wiredu (1996) supported the biological universality of man by citing the norms of human cognition and behavior, such as induction, reflective perception, abstraction, and the rules of non-contradiction. In light of these philosophical changes, it is important to remember that Wiredu's analysis could ultimately be upended by conceptual inconsistency if he doesn't clarify the connections between these disparate views. A predictable consequence of this conceptual confusion is that we shall have as many universals as we like because we can frequently spot significant similarities between two or more cultures.

Godfrey Onah's rejoinder to Wiredu's critique is that it is a continuum from "its biological base to all the spirals of potentialities" that Wiredu (1996) refers to as human experience. What these spirals consist in case they are not biological, Onah (2002) inquires. The argument "There is the idea of an advance beyond the biological at the human level, (but) there is no implication of an ontological transcendence of the biological" (Wiredu 1996) shows that Wiredu is acknowledging this challenge. Onah (2002) inquires more about what these human level beyond biology consist and how it can be argued to be without ontologically exceeding the biological. Kwasi Wiredu's theory of cultural particulars and universals offers a good platform to make sense and travel cross-culturally in a more globalized world. Intercultural communication, understanding, and cooperation are promoted by Wiredu's philosophy, which emphasizes the coexistence and interdependence of universals and particulars. His theories are critical in building a more inclusive and more equitable world where people of different cultural backgrounds can work together to solve problems and learn from one another.

Conclusion

Kwasi Wiredu’s philosophy of culture is a pioneering as it engages African heritage with universal philosophical thought. His appeal for conceptual decolonization acts as a bitter reminder that African philosophy must be un-entangled from colonial intellectual legacies in a struggle to be representative of lived experience, languages, and values in African societies. Wiredu’s approach is not a rejection of Western philosophy, however, but a re-consideration and remodelling in terms applicable in African contexts. This intellectual independence lies at the very centre of developing a genuinely African philosophy that speaks to local and universal problems.

Wiredu’s idea to reconcile tradition and modernity defies conventional wisdom that progress involves abandoning traditional values. Instead, he demonstrates that traditional African thought and practice can be reconciled with, and even be enriched by, contemporary technological and scientific advancements. This reconciliation of the new and old gives a model for culture-based development with practical applications to rapidly changing African

societies. Moreover, Wiredu's challenge to ethnophilosophy undermines reductionist accounts of African philosophy as naive description of culture. Wiredu's focus on how thought comes to be constituted by language is particularly significant. He maintains that African languages, with their respective conceptual schemes, offer alternative ways to experience the world. In inviting us to use African languages to be engaged in philosophical argument, Wiredu opens new possibilities to generate knowledge and keeps intellectual richness in these languages. Overall, Kwasi Wiredu's philosophy of culture offers a strong framework for coping with problems in cultural identity, intellectual decolonization, and balancing tradition and modernity. His thought has long-term implications for African philosophy and global thought and offers a wider and more sensitive philosophical thought approach.

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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF HUME'S NOTION OF POLYGAMY

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Abstract
Polygamy is a form of marriage in which a man marries two or more wives. Polygamous marriage is an acceptable practice in many countries in Africa, including Nigeria, which has the fifth highest prevalent rate in the World. Sometimes, polygamy is used to solidify economic and political relationship, while at other times, it serves to enhance one's social status. The practice of polygamy has raised ethical questions about whether or not it usurps the sovereignty of man and enslave him to a woman. The main problem that the paper seeks to address is: Can polygamy promote happiness? What is the justification for the practice of polygamy? Employing the method of content analysis and hermeneutics, this study examines a critical analysis of Hume's notion of polygamy vis-à-vis the call for its rejection as a form of marriage. The paper shows that Hume's incisive and innovative exposition of polygamy remains highly commendable in that it identifies incessant quarrels, fighting and jealousy as major defects capable of causing bodily/psychological harm and maiming of the spouses. The paper asserts that the premises upon which Hume based his outright rejection of polygamy is logically flawed. The paper concludes that Hume's explication contains metaphysical elements (love and jealousy), which shows him to accept metaphysics as a meaningful enterprise from the back door after his blanket rejection of it as sophistry and illusion from the front door.

Keywords: Polygamy, Metaphysics, Socio-political, Jealousy, Unhappiness, hermeneutic, Psychological

Introduction

David Hume is a Scottish thinker renowned for his important contributions to philosophy, specifically Epistemology in which he attacked the causal principle and in the process; removed objectivity from science. Immanuel Kant (2012) once remarked that 'Hume woke him up from his dogmatic slumber'. Buttressing the remarkable influence that Hume commands, Morris and Charlotte (2023, p.1) maintain that Hume is classed among the most influential philosophers in Western philosophical tradition, whose immense impacts in the realm of economics, epistemology, ethics, and socio-political philosophy remain indelible. His most insightful work in the realm of Epistemology is *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding,* published in 1748.

Hume was greatly disturbed with the incessant rate of marriage break-up in Europe, and as a Philosopher, he devotes his time to finding lasting solution to the quagmire. In order to get at the root causes of divorce, Hume x-rays the different types of marriage operated in Europe and picked out monogamy-one man and a wife- as the ideal. In his view, polygamy should be expunged as a form of marriage, because it contains several disadvantages and flaws that encourage divorce. Hume also harps on the importance of chastity, friendship, love and faithfulness in marriage. Highlighting the views of Hume on marriage and love is not the primary aim of the paper, but on the critical analysis of his position regarding Polygamy. Therefore, to achieve the objective, the paper is structured into three parts. Part one introduces us to a brief biographical sketch of David Hume. Part two explicates on the types of marriage in Hume's perspective and his notion of polygamy, followed by the lessons his views portend for humanity. In part three, we put forward a critique and comments which summarize the paper.

Hume on the Typology of Marriage

Hume begins his discourse on polygamy by first, analyzing the different forms of marriage present in his day. For him, the different customs, laws and practices globally have made it for diverse types of marriage to exist. Thus, he espouses that there is the marriage type which comprises of a man and his wife and this is called monogamy. The other consists of one man with two or more wives and it is known as polygamy. Lastly, he outlines community marriage, where women are shared to men randomly and children from such union are taken care of by the community as the third type of marriage. Buttressing his exposition for the sake of clarity, Hume (1896) posits:

> As circumstances vary, and the laws propose different advantages, we find, that, in different times and places, they impose different conditions on this important contract….I cannot, at present, recollect my authorities; but I have somewhere read, that the republic of ATHENS, having lost many of its citizens by war and pestilence, allowed every man to marry two wives, in order the sooner to repair the waste which had been made by these calamities…, where a great many men and a few women are supposed to be shipwrecked on a desert coast; the captain of the troop, in order to obviate those endless quarrels which arose, regulates their marriages after the following manner: He takes a handsome female to himself alone; assigns one to every couple of inferior officers; and to five of the lowest rank he gives one wife in common. The ancient BRITONS had a singular kind of marriage, to be met with among no other people. Any number of them, as ten or a dozen, joined in a society together, which was perhaps requisite for mutual defence in those barbarous times. In order to link this society the closer, they took an equal number of wives in common; and whatever children were born, were reputed to belong to all of them, and were accordingly provided for by the whole community (pp.3-4).

Hume uses the above to explicate on the various marriage types prevalent in his day. He explains that different situations and laws operating in diverse places and time determine the type of marriage that is practiced there. Thus, after the pogrom in Athens, Hume reveals that polygamy became the acceptable type of marriage promoted to encourage massive

procreation with a view to increasing the population that was reduced by war. He also explicates on community marriage where, as a result of shipwreck, the captain has the power to distribute women aboard the ship to the men, including himself with children from such union becoming the responsibility of the community as a whole. Interpreting Hume on the above, Nieli (2017) posits:

> Hume commences the fundamental part of his investigation with a fleeting narrative of the great assortment of marriage practices and customs that had existed in human society. …in different epochs and places, people enforce dissimilar conditions on the marital contract. Tradition and law in divergent eras and places have allowed polygamous marriage-one man with two or more wives; one man and one woman, monogamy;…assigned several men to one wife; allowed group marriages between numerous men and numerous women as in the case of Tonkin in Vietnam, and permitted sailors to indulge in provisional marriages with local women after docking their shop at the harbor in an alien land with the union lasting for a season (p.13).

From the above, Nieli also agrees with Hume that the marriage types include; monogamy, polygamy, polyandry, group and provisional marriage. These marriages, as we can decipher from the quotation, are based on different customs, laws, and are carried out in diverse periods and places.

Hume on Polygamy

In dissecting his views on polygamy, Hume (1896) first discards the notion that all marital customs are similarly good in producing desirable outcomes. So, his dislike for polygamy stems from his conviction that it destroys man's sovereignty and makes him a slave to women. Putting this point concisely for easy understanding, he asserts:

> The authority of the husband in a polygamous marriage is an actual usurpation which put an end to that proximity of rank, not to say equality, which has naturally been established between male (husband) and female (wife). Nature has made men to be their chums, their lovers, their sponsors. Do we need to freely exchange such appealing appellations for the barbaric caption of master and tyrant? (Hume, 1896, p.9).

Hume uses the above to show how polygamy debases man and make him exchange his sovereignty for passion in the hands of women (wives). This implies that the husband can sometimes be controlled in such a way that one would think he is under a spell by one or two of his wives to the detriment of others. Hence, Hume further reveals that polygamy comes with several disasters like incessant fighting between children or wives, quarrels between husband and wives, and some offsprings from such arrangement copy the negative lifestyles of their parents and they are not thoroughly guided by their father. Buttressing this fact tersely, he posits:

> The catastrophes brought by polygamous marriage do not abate with the adults in the union. Kids born in such arrangement copy only the character trait of masters and slaves and never comprehend the significance of human equality. The large number of children produced by such marriage also denies each child of considerable fatherly

> guidance, since a polygamous dad have little or no time to spend with each of his many offspring….what attention can a parent, whose wives gave birth to fifty children, give to inculcating moral principles when he himself is scarcely acquainted with them? (Hume,1896, p.12).

Hume once again demonstrates clearly why polygamous marriage will never appeal to him because it deprives children the natural affection from their father, prevents them from imbibing good principles and denies them sound upbringing. Sometimes, the father of these children, as insinuated by Hume, would end up not adequately knowing all his children. The children may be malnourished, their education placed in jeopardy due to the inability of the father to provide for their up-keep. For emphasis, Hume placed great premium on the care and education of children in marriage. Thus, it can be deduced that his justification for asserting that the education of children may be in jeopardy in a polygamous marriage originates from his notion that the husband is scarcely available in such arrangement to cater for the welfare and education of his children as highlighted in the above quotation. Adducing a cogent justification of Hume's strong dislike for polygamy, Brandon (2017) lucidly explicates:

> Hume triggers his criticism of polygamy with the experiment of a hypothetical protector. Having numerous wives, says the polygamy protector, remains the only efficacious cure for the malady of love and the only convenient for liberating men from bondage to the females which violence of our craving has imposed on us. It is by several spouses alone—spouses who can simply be used anytime and traded off one against the other that men redeem their right of sovereignty, and satisfying our cravings, reinstate the authority of thinking in our minds… (p.71).

Brandon (2017) clarifies that Hume's response to those defending polygamy follows the tradition of Locke's well-known onslaught on patriarchy and he did so in a way that greatly resonates with current liberal mindset. For Brandon, Hume was dissatisfied with polygamy for a number of reasons. First, the sufferings in polygamy in terms of the husband not satisfying the sexual urge of his multiple wives is unbearable, especially when the husband spends more of his time with a particular wife, thereby giving room for infidelity for those wives whose cravings are not met by the husband; and this may lead to divorce (Brandon, 2017). Secondly, Palmer (2015) also interprets Hume to opine that most children from polygamous marriage are not well-taken care of by their father, especially when his business or source of living collapses; and the father finds it difficult to direct the children alright with sound moral principles. Thirdly, Palmer (2015) equally lists the frequent tiffs between the wives on one hand and the occasional squabbles among the many children of the marriage to constitute another vital justification for Hume's outright rejection of polygamy. By and large, it can be inferred that Hume's exposition of the ills of polygamy prepared the ground for his insightful explication on divorce. Highlighting a better position for the ills of polygamy, Hume (1896) posits:

> To render polygamy more odious, I need not recount the frightful effects of jealousy, and the constraint in which it holds the fair-sex all over the east. In those countries men are not allowed to have any commerce with the females, not even physicians, when sickness may be

> supposed to have extinguished all wanton passions in the bosoms of the fair, and, at the same time, has rendered them unfit objects of desire. TOURNEFORT tells us, that, when he was brought into the *grand signior's* seraglio as a physician, he was not a little surprised, in looking along a gallery, to see a great number of naked arms, standing out from the sides of the room. He could not imagine what this could mean; till he was told, that those arms, belonged to bodies, which he must cure, without knowing any more about them, than what he could learn from the arms. He was not allowed to ask a question of the patient, or even of her attendants, lest he might find it necessary to enquire concerning circumstances, which the delicacy of the seraglio allows not to be revealed… (p.13).

Hume (1896) concludes that polygamy is a detestable form of marriage in that it encourages bad education of children, breeds jealousy, destroys love, promotes barbarism, leads to the crippling of women as is evident in Spain and prevents a husband from bringing his associate home in order not to inadvertently bring a lover to his numerous wives. Giving a profound elucidation of his strong distaste for polygamy, he asserts;

> In another country, where polygamy is also allowed, they render their wives cripples, and make their feet of no use to them, in order to confine them to their own houses….The bad education of children, especially children of poor condition, is another unavoidable consequence of these eastern institutions. Those who pass the early part of life among slaves, are only qualified to be, themselves, slaves and tyrants; and in every future intercourse, either with their inferiors or superiors, are apt to forget the natural equality of mankind. What attention, too, can it be supposed a parent, whose seraglio affords him fifty sons, will give to instilling principles of morality or science into a progeny, with whom he himself is scarcely acquainted, and whom he loves with so divided an affection? Barbarism, therefore, appears, from reason as well as experience, to be the inseparable attendant of polygamy. To demonstrate that polygamy is more loathsome, I need recount its appalling effects of distrust, jealousy,….No husband dares invite his friend to his home; else he brings a lover to his avalanche of wives. Polygamy promotes depraved education of progenies, destroys love and companionship. Therefore, from reason and experience, barbarism seems inseparably concomitant with polygamy (Hume, 1896, pp.9-10).

Having outlined the flaws of polygamy, Hume readily suggests that in order to regain one's sanity and prestige, one man, one wife (monogamy) remains the only panacea to harnessing of peace, stability, friendship and happiness in marriage. However, Hume kicks against those who advocates that polygamy "remains an effectual remedy for the disorder of love and freeing men from the slavery of women…" (p.8).

A Critical Analysis of Hume's Postulations on Polygamy

From the evaluation of Hume's explication on polygamy, one can infer that the loss and destruction of man's sovereignty by a woman as revealed by Hume in the name of polygamy,

contains a metaphysical mystery that nobody can explain. It is an established fact that when a man is in love, he can even behave childishly to a woman and vice-versa. That which makes him (the man) exhibit such conduct is a spirit (metaphysics) which Hume negates, but held to be responsible for making the man a slave to his wives. Hume also inadvertently refers to love as a spell which makes a husband to be easily controlled by his wives. This admittance clearly shows Hume to accept metaphysics as being meaningful from the back door after discarding it as meaningless from the front door in his famous critique of metaphysics. It is note-worthy to mention that Hume placed tremendous significance on love as being central to the attainment of happiness in marriage, but he fails to comprehend the fact that love in itself is metaphysical in nature. Today, when a man does the bidding of his wives due to love, most families believe that he is under the spell or charm of the wives, and this is responsible for ill-feelings of the man's family towards the wives. As a metaphysical concept, love is very strong and possesses the power to make a man or woman do things that are sometimes inexplicable.

From the social and political point of view, a critical analysis of Hume's assertion that polygamy facilitates neglect, destroys love and makes a husband unable to provide care for his family, when x-rayed in the perspective of Africa, particularly Nigeria, would be unfounded and cannot be sustained logically. This is due to the fact that in some parts of Africa, particularly Nigeria, polygamy remains a standard and acceptable culture/practice for Muslims in the South-West (Yorubas) and North (Hausas) which they are happy to indulge in. This acceptable practice of polygamy shown above is against the position of Hume that polygamy promotes unhappiness and make some husbands unable to acquaint themselves with their children. Showing how Hume committed a flaw in hastily generalizing that polygamy facilitates unhappiness, Alao (2025) asserts with reference to Nigeria:

> Nigeria has the fifth highest prevalent rate of polygamy globally. Nigeria has witnessed some Presidents, Governors, Senators, and Ministers practicing polygamy. Obasanjo had more than two wives. Buhari is a polygamist. Babagida is also a polygamist. Senator Adeleke, the current governor of Osun State is a polygamist. Atiku, former Vice-President of Nigeria, is a polygamist. These individuals are happy with their families and taking good care of their children… (p.12).

Also, for some persons in the South-East, polygamy is also practiced as it is seen as a symbol of wealth and for preserving the name and values of a family, especially where a first wife fails to give birth after several years of marriage. In this regard, the family of the husband might persuade him to take a second wife so as to preserve the name of the family and its values. Some scholars such as Anyanwu (2022) and Onyeji (2020) reiterate that in Igbo land, a man can be asked to take a second wife if it is established medically that the wife would be unable to conceive so as to perpetuate his name and that of his family.

Polygamy is also used in some parts of Nigeria to enhance social and political status. The belief here is that a polygamous husband who is able to manage his family without any issues and maintain harmony among his wives would be responsive and able to cater for the teeming needs of his constituents with ease when given leadership position. This is mostly evident in the award of chieftaincy titles to such husbands in South-East, South-West and the North. The above exposition shows that Hume's call for a blanket rejection of polygamy as a form/type of marriage cannot be sustained anywhere in the world including Nigeria.

Demonstrating the relevance of polygamy as a vehicle for elevating the status of a man socially and politically into leadership positions, Joshua (2019,p.5) avers:

> …It is noteworthy that irrespective of the bickering and challenges accompanying polygamy, the polygamous men are able to coordinate the entire family effectively and today, most of our great leaders came from such families. But, the pertinent question is: how were these men able to handle those challenges of many wives yet succeeded in bequeathing to us a society of high cultural, communal and moral values?

From the perspective of the above author, polygamous men succeeded because they ensured that the interests of their wives were not toiled with and they were also treated equally. However, Hume must be commended for his insightful elucidation that polygamy promotes jealousy. This is true as most wives in polygamous marriage have scalded the bodies of their co-wife or husbands with hot water as a result of jealousy. Jealousy is also a vital metaphysical element (spirit) in Hume's explication which pushes one into committing an act that has detrimental consequences as well as enthroning regret after the dastard act has been performed. Buttressing this fact succinctly with reference to Nigeria, Ahmed (2024, p.11) reiterates; "Hauwa'u, the first wife of Mallam Ibrahim, poured hot water on her co-wife, Bushra Ibrahim, and fled Jere Town in Kagarko Local Government Area of Kaduna State. Her grouse is that Bushrat prevented their husband from coming to spend quality time with her". There is no denying the fact that jealousy has sent some wives and husbands to their early graves in Nigeria as well as maiming many. Highlighting a vivid example of the power of jealousy in making a husband/wife do the unthinkable with regards to monogamy, Okoye (2023, p.2) avers; "In Ikotun area of Lagos State, a jealous husband, Gabriel Chukwuemeka, poured acid on his wife whom he accused of seeing another man. The wife sustained various degrees of injuries, while the husband is currently in a police cell in Ikotun". Also, a jealous wife poured hot water on the reproductive organ of her husband and Anyanwu (2022,p.4) captures it clearly; "After making his intention of marrying a third wife known to his wife, the wife angrily boiled water in a kettle and emptied its content on her husband's penis out of jealousy…".

The above expositions by Okoye and Anyanwu affirm that jealousy is rife in any marriage type be it polygamy or monogamous marriage, while Onyeji (2020, p.3) highlights jealousy in polygamy thus; "A high court in the Federal Capital Territory has found Maryam Sanda guilty for killing her husband Bilyaminu Bello. The Police, while presenting evidence in court, said the wife stabbed her husband with a kitchen knife out of jealousy for the other wife with the intent to kill". Bamidele (2020, p.5) also gives a comprehensive account of jealousy in polygamous marriage by positing:

> A house wife named Atika has stabbed her husband Ibrahim Salihu to death in Mararaba, a settlement in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. Salihu is married to two women and spends two nights with each on a rotational basis. He is also known to bid farewell to each wife before going to the other's room and that was what he did on the fateful day when Atika suddenly grabbed his finger and bite it. His shouting attracted the attention of the second wife who got to the scene and tried to tie the bitten finger. As she was on it, Atika came

> from the back with a knife and stabbed Salihu on the neck continuously leading to his death after losing so much blood.

The resultant effect is that Atika is standing trial for killing her husband. The above scenario confirms that jealousy thrives in both monogamous and polygamous marriage globally, especially in Nigeria. Hume pointed out in his analysis on polygamy that some husbands, as a result of jealousy, cripple the legs of their wives and sometimes deny them medical attention. This view of Hume can be likened to the scenario of acid pouring adumbrated above.

The paper also aligns with Hume on his notion that polygamy comes with several disasters like incessant fighting between children or wives, quarrels between husband and wives. In Nigeria, there are cases of wives fighting themselves and children doing same. Some of these fights can also lead to shedding of blood and maiming. Thus, the study applauds Hume for living true to his name as a philosopher, whose postulations can be used to make accurate predictions of the future. The position by Hume that polygamy has the tendency to promote improper upbringing of children is also accepted by the paper. In most polygamous homes in Nigeria, children are left to fend for themselves particularly if their father has lost his means of livelihood and the wives are full time housewives without any meaningful means of employment. We sum up by agreeing with Nieli (2017, p.8) that the innovative arguments put forward by Hume on polygamy is vital for today's world where the practice seems to be the norm in different society globally. The paper also stands with James Fieser (2016, p.1) who explains that Hume is a very important philosopher whose vast influence is evident in contemporary philosophy. In his view, Hume contributed significantly to the growth of philosophy especially in the areas of philosophy of religion, aesthetics, political theory, theory of knowledge, ethics, economic theory and philosophy of history (Fieser, 2016, p.1). Commenting on the vital contribution of Hume to moral philosophy with specific reference to the discourse on polygamy, he avers:

> Hume's postulations on polygamy was couched with apt philosophical precision associated with a genius who attached plausibility in his quest to overcome any daunting task. Hume is prominent for being among the first to offer a lucidly earthly moral philosophy, which founded morality in the pleasing and beneficial effects resulting from our actions (Fieser, 2016, p.1).

It must be mentioned that a lot of scholars were greatly influenced by Hume's explication of divorce and polygamy; hence a sort of revival and renewed interest has now been given to his essay on "*Of Polygamy and Divorce*".

Conclusion

Polygamy remains a marriage type that is generally acceptable globally, particularly in Nigeria. It has its benefits and disadvantages. Hume's position that polygamy be jettisoned on the grounds of promoting unhappiness, jealousy, improper upbringing of children, incessant fights/quarrels among wives, children and enslaves men is flawed. In Nigeria, there are lucid evidence of flourishing polygamous marriages with the children, wives and husbands exuding happiness. A vivid example is Atiku Abubakar, former Vice- President of Nigeria, Senators Ned Nwoko and Adeleke (present governor of Osun State), who are doing well for themselves and managing their wives and homes without any form of issue capable of truncating the family's happiness. The Paper also contends that Hume's explication of

polygamy contains some form of metaphysics manifesting in his use of love and jealousy. The inadvertent use of metaphysics by Hume as that which enslaves men to their wives and usurp their sovereignty, brings to the fore the fact that Hume accepts the meaningful nature of the subject from the back door, but discards it as sophistry and illusion from the front door. Therefore, the study holds, contrary to Hume, that polygamy, just like monogamy or any marriage type, has the capacity to guarantee mankind socio-economic and political happiness provided the financial implication can be met.

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THEOLOGY OF CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT: RELIGIOUS INSIGHTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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Abstract
The connection between religious viewpoints and environmental preservation has grown in importance in the current discourse on sustainability. Numerous theological traditions, which place a strong emphasis on stewardship, ecological harmony, and environmental justice, provide deep insights about humanity's duty to take care of creation. Faith communities are inspired to participate in conservation, ecological restoration, and policy change advocacy by the intersection of faith and environmental ethics, which impacts views toward sustainable development. Religious teachings create moral principles that direct environmental awareness, impacting both personal conduct and organizational procedures. Notwithstanding these beneficial effects, there are still major obstacles in the way of the full implementation of faith-based environmental participation. Financial constraints, misunderstandings of religious scriptures, and opposition from specific religious groups are some of these difficulties. A theological reinterpretation is necessary to solve these problems, as is active involvement from religious leaders and cooperation with legislators and environmental organizations. Using content analysis of religious beliefs, environmental regulations, and faith-based ecological projects, this study uses a qualitative research methodology. Results show that religion teachings are effective environmental conservation accelerators when properly interpreted and applied. Faith-based lobbying promotes moral approaches to sustainability and fortifies international environmental projects. According to the study's findings, including religious perspectives into environmental action and policy promotes a more comprehensive and ethically sound approach to sustainability. In order to address pressing ecological issues and guarantee long-term stewardship of the planet, strategic alliances between governments, religious institutions, and environmental organizations will be essential going forward.

Keywords: Theology, Creation, Development, Religious Insights, Environment, Protection

Introduction

Religious thought is essential in the formation of human values, ethics, and responsibilities regarding the environment. Creation is regarded as a sacred gift entrusted to humanity across different faith traditions, which entails a moral obligation to safeguard it (Eom & Ng, 2023; Le Duc, 2023). In times of environmental crises, it is essential to incorporate theological viewpoints into ecological discussions in order to promote sustainable development. As they shape personal and societal conduct, religious beliefs can serve as effective instruments for fostering environmental conservation. Faith-based organizations have a history of leading conservation initiatives, promoting policies that reconcile economic advancement with ecological health (Koehrsen & Burchardt, 2024).

The idea of creation is pivotal in many religious traditions, each providing distinct perspectives on humanity’s connection to nature (Goodenough, 2023). Christianity teaches

that the Earth is created by God, and humans are entrusted stewards responsible for its care (Medard, 2022: Carlson, 2016). The idea of Mizan in Islam alludes to the harmony or balance that God has created in the universe, (Johnson & VanVonderen, 2005). It is believed that Allah created this equilibrium as a basic law of the cosmos (Muhamad, et al, 2020). It means that all of creation—the natural world, human existence, and the cosmos—is in a state of balance that is meticulously controlled by God's will. According to this theory, everything has a perfect order and balance, and it is our responsibility as humans to uphold and respect this balance by acting morally and responsibly toward the planet (Suzuki, 2022). Islam essentially stresses that all elements of creation are interrelated and harmonious, and that it is the responsibility of humans to maintain this delicate balance in their relationships with the outside world (Sadiqa & Shad, 2024). Both Hinduism and Buddhism place emphasis on interconnectedness, regarding all life forms as components of a cosmic order that deserves respect. Nature is often seen as sacred in Indigenous spiritual traditions, which cultivates a profound respect for the environment. The significance of involving religion in discussions about the environment is highlighted by these varied viewpoints. The objective of this study is to investigate the impact of religious teachings on environmental protection and sustainable development (Minton *et al.*, 2015). The research aims to underscore the capacity of religious institutions to foster environmental stewardship by investigating scriptural interpretations, ethical duties, and faith-inspired ecological efforts. Moreover, the study examines the difficulties encountered by religious environmentalism and approaches for incorporating theology into the formulation of environmental policies. Grasping these dynamics will yield important insights into how to exploit faith-based approaches for ecological sustainability (Thebe, 2015).

Theology of Creation Across Religions

According to the creation narrative in Genesis, God created the world over six days and appointed humans as caretakers of the Earth (Moo & Moo, 2018). In a similar vein, the Quran depicts creation as a purposeful act by God, highlighting the importance of balance, responsibility, and conservation (Hanif, 2024). The notion of Prakriti (nature) in Hinduism emphasizes the divine essence present in all living beings and promotes non-violence (Ahimsa) toward the environment (Subhasmita & Behura, 2024). The Buddhist doctrine of interdependence promotes awareness regarding resource consumption (Daniels, 2015: Kittiprapas, 2015). Eastern traditions emphasize the importance of living in harmony with nature, advocating for a lifestyle that aligns with natural cycles instead of exploiting them for material gain (Moore et al., 2022). Nature is seen as sacred and spiritually vibrant in Indigenous religious traditions. Numerous indigenous groups adhere to animistic beliefs, holding that rivers, animals, and trees have spiritual importance (Allison, 2017). Their traditions and practices foster ecological balance, guaranteeing the sustainable use of natural resources. Indigenous environmental ethics are exemplified by sacred groves, traditional conservation areas, and rituals honoring Earth deities. (Anyinam, 2016). Religious narratives often feature common themes such as the sacredness of creation, the obligation of stewardship, and the quest for ecological justice (Andrianos & Tomren, 2021; Hrynkow, 2017). Numerous sacred writings promote moderation while cautioning against greed and exploitation. Faith traditions stress the importance of gratitude, responsibility, and interdependence, promoting a harmonious relationship with nature. These principles provide a valuable ethical basis for modern environmental policies and sustainability initiatives (De Sadeleer, 2020; Robertson, 2021).

Religious Ethics and Sustainable Development

Religious doctrines underscore a moral obligation to safeguard creation. Christian stewardship, Islamic Khalifa (guardianship), and Buddhist compassion motivate adherents to behave responsibly regarding the environment (Zimmerman-Liu, 2019). Religious teachings incorporate ethical principles like justice, equity, and accountability, which guide sustainable development initiatives (De Silva, 2016). Faith advocates for minimalism, moderation, and responsible consumption to promote sustainable lifestyles. Religious observances like fasting, pilgrimage, and almsgiving promote conservation of resources and awareness of the environment. A number of religious groups take part in environmentally sustainable efforts, such as organic farming, renewable energy initiatives, and campaigns to reduce plastic use (Mohamad *et al*., 2012). Theological arguments for ecological justice highlight the necessity of tackling environmental injustices that have a disproportionate impact on marginalized communities. Religious figures frequently voice their opposition to environmental degradation, emphasizing its ethical ramifications (Jenkins *et al.,* 2018). Faith-based advocacy supports the implementation of policies that guarantee fair access to natural resources, protect against pollution, and address climate change (Salter, 2024).

Religion and Environmental Development

Religious groups make substantial contributions to environmental efforts via tree planting, water conservation, and sustainable agriculture initiatives (Abumoghli & McCartney, 2020). With projects like water conservation, sustainable agriculture, and tree planting, a number of religious organizations significantly support environmental causes. Here are a few noteworthy instances:

Christianity: As part of their theological obligation, several Christian denominations encourage environmental stewardship, especially through groups like the Evangelical Environmental Network and the Catholic Church (Campbell, 2019). Tree planting, sustainable farming methods, and promoting climate change action are some of the initiatives. The Vatican has also taken the lead in sustainability-related projects, including as promoting environmental action through encyclicals like Laudato Si', which exhorts believers to take care of the environment (Stine, 2020).

Islam: Islam's concept of stewardship (Khilafah) over Earth highlights the need for people to preserve and protect the environment, and many Islamic organizations and individuals (Chaudhry, 2022: Hutagalung, 2024). especially in the Middle East, Pakistan, and Indonesia, are engaged in sustainable agriculture projects and tree planting (Nawaz, & Farooq, 2021: Ali,*et al*, 2025: Koehrsen, 2021). For instance, the Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences (IFEES) encourages Muslims to adopt eco-friendly practices, such as organic farming and water conservation (Ali & Agushi, 2024).

Hinduism: The sanctity of nature and the interdependence of all life are central to Hindu teachings (Subhasmita, & Behura, 2024). One prominent instance is the Chipko Movement, in which people in rural India, especially women, hugged trees to stop deforestation (Bajoria,et al 2021: Singh, 2023).

Buddhism: Numerous Buddhist organizations have sought to protect the environment because they believe that nature is an integral element of the interrelated web of life (Sponsel, *et al*, 2016: Seo, (2024). Initiatives to address climate change and environmental

sustainability are popular, and organizations like Buddhist Global Relief support tree planting and sustainable farming methods. Buddhist communities and monks place a strong emphasis on sustainability and sensitivity of the natural world (Poungpet, 2023: Le Duc, 2025)

Judaism: Strong environmental ethics are ingrained in Jewish teachings, especially in relation to the idea of Tikkun Olam (Tirosh-Samuelson, 2024: Case, 2023: Ijaz, & Mawson, (2020), or "repairing the world." Jewish environmental groups like The Jewish National Fund and Hazon concentrate on sustainability initiatives including encouraging eco-friendly farming methods and planting trees in Israel (Ao, & Chatterjee, 2024: Gould, & Kearns, 2024). Another idea that supports sustainable land management is the idea of leaving the land fallow every seven years (Shmita).

Indigenous Faiths: A strong bond with nature and a need to preserve the environment are central to many indigenous religious traditions worldwide, including Native American, African, and Aboriginal Australian spirituality (Nur, 2025). As part of their religious rituals, these organizations frequently plant trees, conserve water, and practice sustainable farming because they recognize their responsibility to preserve the planet for next generations (Shiva, 2016). Their contributions encompass:

i. The establishment of wildlife sanctuaries and conservation programs.
ii. Backing initiatives for clean energy and climate change mitigation.
iii. Participating in recycling and waste management efforts.
iv. Delivering disaster relief and initiatives for ecological restoration.

In Nigeria, a case study highlights a faith-based reforestation project in Kaduna State, where Christian and Muslim communities collaborated to plant thousands of trees to fight desertification. Another example from India showcases the efforts of a Hindu temple in water conservation by restoring traditional step wells to address water scarcity (Geva, 2023). Faith-based environmental education fosters a consciousness of sustainability. At religious schools and institutions, ecological teachings are incorporated into curricula, fostering a sense of environmental responsibility from an early age. (Magezi, 2024).

Challenges to Religious Environmentalism

Despite the moral and ethical underpinnings that many religious traditions offer for environmental protection, religious environmentalism encounters a number of substantial challenges. (Rolston III, 2020). Due to immediate survival needs, many communities, particularly in developing nations, place a higher priority on economic growth than on ecological preservation. To promote economic stability, industrialization, urban expansion, and natural resource extraction are often pursued with great intensity (Ahmed et al., 2020). However, these activities often lead to deforestation, pollution, and habitat destruction, which are at odds with religious principles of stewardship and sustainability. Faith communities often struggle to balance the urgent need for economic progress with the long-term necessity of environmental conservation, leading to compromises that may harm natural ecosystems (Mondal & Palit, 2022). A further major difficulty lies in the misunderstanding of sacred writings regarding humankind’s connection to nature. Some believers understand the notion of 'dominion' over the Earth, as referenced in religious texts such as the Bible, to imply a justification for unrestrained exploitation rather than responsible stewardship. Similar misconceptions exist in other religious traditions, where

economic aspirations sometimes override spiritual teachings on environmental responsibility (Hiebert *et al*., 2024). Such misinterpretations fuel indifference or even opposition to environmental initiatives, underscoring the need for religious leaders and scholars to elucidate theological views on ecological justice (Andrianos & Tomren, 2021).

Resistance from faith communities makes environmental advocacy more difficult. Numerous faith-based organizations perceive environmentalism as a secular initiative instead of a spiritual duty. Doubt regarding climate science, especially within conservative religious groups, has obstructed the implementation of environmentally friendly behaviors. Moreover, a number of faith-based organizations do not have the requisite resources and organizational structures to carry out extensive environmental initiatives (Iswan & Kihara, 2022). To surmount this resistance, it is essential to provide ongoing education, engage in theological discourse, and involve prominent religious leaders who can weave ecological issues into teachings based on faith (Taylor *et al.*, 2016). Moreover, obstacles to faith-based environmentalism arise from political and corporate influences. Due to the tendency of major industries and governmental policies to favor immediate economic profit over sustainability, it becomes challenging for faith-based organizations to affect environmental policy (Manuel & Glatzer, 2019). The effectiveness of faith-driven conservation efforts is diminished by corporate lobbying, government reluctance, and inadequate enforcement of environmental regulations. To create a lasting impact, religious groups must build robust partnerships with policymakers, scientists, and activists to ensure their advocacy leads to actionable policies and real-world outcomes (Keller & Limaye, 2020).

Integrating Theology with Environmental Policy

Environmental policies can be greatly influenced by religious teachings, which offer ethical and moral justifications for sustainable development (Chowdhury, 2018). A number of religious traditions stress the importance of stewardship, accountability, and justice—values that are in strong alignment with environmental ethics. Governments and policymakers can integrate these values into legislation, ensuring that environmental protection efforts are not solely driven by economic interests but also by moral obligations (García-Sánchez & García-Sánchez, 2020).The inclusion of religious perspectives in environmental policymaking fosters a holistic approach that appeals to diverse communities, encouraging grassroots support for sustainability initiative (Banso *et al.*, 2023). Faith leaders are vital in promoting sustainable development. Religious leaders, as trusted figures in their communities, can shape attitudes and behaviors related to environmental responsibility (Leary et al., 2016). They can galvanize their congregations to take positive action for the environment by weaving ecological themes into sermons, religious instruction, and discussions within the community. Moreover, partnerships among different faiths can enhance advocacy initiatives (Tatay Nieto & Devitt, 2018; Manuel & Glatzer, 2019).

Policymakers can team up with faith-based organizations to enact environmentally friendly policies, encourage the use of renewable energy, and back conservation initiatives. These collaborations can aid in the development of community-oriented environmental initiatives, including tree planting, water conservation, and sustainable farming methods(Kumar *et al.,* 2025) . Religious institutions can connect policy with practical implementation and make environmental sustainability a collective priority at all societal levels by utilizing their moral authority and extensive community networks (Shah & Asghar, 2024).

Conclusion

The Qur'an and the Bible both confirm the existence of a single Supreme God, from whom all truth and guidance originate. They place emphasis on monotheism, divine justice, mercy, and the need for righteousness. The prophets in both texts act as God's emissaries, conveying His message to people. Both texts advocate for moral values, including love, compassion, forgiveness, and justice. Both traditions share a central belief in the afterlife, encompassing Heaven and Hell. The Qur'an states, "Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds—their Lord will guide them because of their faith. Beneath them, rivers will flow in the Gardens of Pleasure." (Sure 10:9). Similarly, the Bible declares, "For the Lord loves the just and will not forsake his faithful ones. "Wrongdoers will be completely destroyed; the offspring of the wicked will perish." (Psalm 37:28). These shared teachings advocate for unity among believers of both faiths, rather than division. Even with the evident likenesses, there have been conflicts between Muslims and Christians due to historical misinterpretations and socio-political influences. Numerous disagreements stem from selective interpretations of scripture instead of a thorough comprehension of divine teachings. In the Qur'an, there is a warning: "And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it]." (Surah 2:42). This feeling is also reflected in the Bible: "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." (2. Timotheus 2:15). Due to misinterpretations and misrepresentations, sectarian violence and unnecessary hostility have arisen, which go against the fundamental messages of both scriptures that advocate for peace and mutual respect.

In light of the deep similarities, it is important for Christians and Muslims to pursue dialogue that is significant and understanding that is reciprocal. The Qur'an recommends, "Say, 'O People of the Scripture, let us come together around a word that is fair to both sides: we shall worship only Allah and not associate anything with Him; we shall not take one another as lords in place of Allah.' If they turn away, then say, 'Witness that we are Muslims.' (Surah 3:64). The Bible echoes this sentiment: "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." (Römer 12,18). By means of academic analysis, dialogue between religions, and cooperative community initiatives, believers can strive for a future in which faith serves to unite rather than divide. In the end, divine truth goes beyond human interpretations and sectarian biases. The Qur'an states, "And We sent not before you any messenger except that We revealed to him that, 'There is no deity except Me, so worship Me.'" (Surah 21:25). In a similar vein, the Bible mentions, "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. „Niemand kann zum Vater kommen, außer durch mich." (John 14:6). Both Muslims and Christians must prioritize God's guidance over the influence of historical conflicts and political divisions. Genuine worship consists of striving for divine knowledge, righteousness, and compassion.

Recommendations

i. Initiate interfaith councils and community initiatives that promote open dialogues between Muslims and Christians to enhance understanding and eliminate misunderstandings.
ii. Integrate comparative religious studies into educational curricula to emphasize the commonalities between the Qur'an and the Bible, fostering respect among adherents of both religions.

iii. In order to reinforce unity through common values, Muslims and Christians ought to work together on social and humanitarian issues like education, healthcare, and poverty reduction.
iv. Religious leaders and scholars should strive to rectify misinterpretations of scriptures that have sparked conflicts, with a focus on peace and coexistence.
v. Promote individual examination of the Qur'an and the Bible, focusing on comprehension of God's universal message instead of sectarian divisions.

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GODFATHERISM IN NIGERIAN POLITICS AND THE IDEALS OF MERITOCRACY FOR NATION BULIDING

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Abstract
Politics in Nigeria over the years have suffered from meritocracy especially at the level of appointments due to personal interest and other forms of affiliations. This paper will therefore examine the crisis of Godfatherism and the ideals meritocracy in Nigeria. This practice has undermined the principles of meritocracy encouraging corruption, and inefficiency in government appointments and has adversely affected nation building in all strata as it involves the appointment of individuals to positions of power based on their loyalty and connections to those in power, rather than their qualifications or merit. The paper argues that the roots of this crisis lie in the country's post-colonial history, where the emphasis on patronage and clientelism has perpetuated a system of privilege and exclusion instead of fair play and conscientiousness. It will also examine the ways in which the practice of meritocracy can justify national development against the danger of Godfatherism. The evidence from Nigeria's political history will be used to illustrate the consequences of this ugly practice and the harm it has caused over the years. The paper concludes that the crisis of Godfatherism in Nigeria can only be addressed by promoting a culture of transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in the country's political institutions, if and only if we can build a democratic nation that can compete with the global world.

Keywords: Meritocracy, Godfatherism, political appointments, Nation Building, Nigeria.

Introduction

Meritocracy is a social system in which advancement in society is based on an individual's capabilities and merits rather than on the basis of family, wealth, or social background.[1] The idea of meritocracy has received much attention since British sociologist Michael Young first coined the term in 1958. In particular, meritocracy has increasingly been recognized as a positive system in Western societies, and the ideology has been tightly coupled with the notions of capitalism and egalitarian values, which are fundamental to the concept of the "American Dream". Meritocracy, the idea that individuals should be rewarded based on their talents and efforts, is a fundamental principle of modern societies.[2] It is expected to promote fairness, equality, and efficiency in the allocation of resources and opportunities. However, in Nigeria, the practice of meritocracy has been compromised by the pervasive influence of Godfatherism, particularly in the realm of political appointment.[3] This is a form of African Godfatherism, and has become a dominant feature of Nigeria's political landscape.[4] This practice involves the appointment of individuals to positions of power based on their loyalty and connections to those in power, rather than their qualifications or merit.[5] The consequences of this practice are far-reaching, leading to a lack of, accountability, corruption, and inefficiency in government.[6] This paper examines the crisis of meritocracy in Nigeria, highlighting the consequences of this practice on governance, accountability, and

development. It argues that Godfatherism undermines the principles of fairness, equality, and justice, ultimately threatening the legitimacy of Nigeria's political institutions.

Meritocracy in Nigeria: Practice and Praxis

Meritocracy is the idea that individuals should be rewarded based on their talents and efforts in appointment in other to promote fairness, equality, and efficiency in the allocation of resources and opportunities. It is a social system in which advancement in society is based on an individual's capabilities and merits rather than on the basis of family, wealth, or social background. The abuse of meritocracy in Nigeria refers to the erosion of the principle of meritocracy, where individuals are rewarded based on their connections, wealth, or other forms of privilege rather than their talents and efforts. Nigeria's predicament is the inability of the country to produce the foresighted and transformational leadership to resolve its inherent challenges like nepotism, tribalism, social injustice, indiscipline, corruption, religious crisis and the cult of mediocrity. Nigerian leaders over the years have failed the country, putting about 133 million Nigerians in multidimensional poverty. The country's national, state and local levels political processes have failed to produce the leadership essential to transform the visions of the founders of the country into reality. Political leadership has been misinterpreted to mean opportunity for personal aggrandizement and wealth accumulation for family members and friends. The benefits associated with political and elective offices are so attractive financially and commands influence in social status. This explain the reason why politicians are so desperate to win elections by all means including manipulating the electoral process among which is votes and delegates buying and bribing their way through the process.

The principle of meritocracy emphasizes the need to base appointments of persons into public and political offices on the grounds of merit, competence, qualification, integrity, and ability to deliver assigned tasks. This has been absent in the conduct of government business. Public managers of the country's affairs need to cultivate the culture of meritocracy. Awards of contracts, public procurements, and handling official matters should be based on the merit of cases. It is important that the political processes that produce political appointees should be transparent and tailored to produce competent personnel who have the mind to serve and lead for the good of the masses. To achieve this, those at the herms of affairs must as a matter of urgency adopt the due process principles and be conscientious in appointments. The process should be organized to produce servant leaders. Servant Leadership is a theory of leadership by Robert Greenleaf and it contends that the most effective and profitable leaders are servants of the masses/people. Servant leaders contribute to organisational growth and performance, societal stability and development through whole-hearted attention and devotion to followers and they deploy public, organisational and personal resources to meet the needs of their followers. Servant leaders are able to deliver the dividends of democracy based on their attachment to "collaboration, trust, empathy, and ethics".[7] They demonstrate the ten features of servant leadership outlined by Larry Spears, namely, listening, healing, empathy, persuasion, awareness, foresight, conceptualization, stewardship, commitment to the growth of others, and building community. A leader that demonstrates the above leadership qualities will gain support, collaboration, solidarity, and engagement from the masses. The principle of meritocracy is enshrined in Plato's Republic, where he advocated for a society in which each individual belongs to one of three classes—rulers (philosophers), guardians (soldiers), and producers (farmers and craftsmen)—based on their natural talent, effort and abilities.[8]

It aptly assumed that when people occupied positions of influence, authority and power on the basis of their abilities, competence, integrity, knowledge and experience, it will translate to high performance for the benefit of the people, society and organization. We want to see this applied in Nigeria to promote the culture of quality assurance in the political, economic, educational, agricultural and banking sectors of the country. Appointment should not be based on whom you know or party affiliation but one's ability, integrity, achievement in past assignments, wealth of experience, competence, etc. The culture of Person-Job-Fit should be institutionalized and those make laws, public policies and implements them should occupy those positions on the bases of merit and not social status or family background. Several factors have contributed to the crisis of meritocracy in Nigeria, for example, Corruption affects most fabrics of the country and primarily accounts for the slow progress recorded in the socio-economic life of the country. A country cannot record significant progress in the midst of political and bureaucratic corruption. In the 2021 Transparency International Corruption Index, Nigeria ranked 154th in the 180 countries (with South Sudan ranked as the most corrupt (180th) and Denmark the least corrupt) (Transparency International, 2021). It is estimated that the country has lost over 400 USD to corruption since independence. Such amount if deployed to execution of public programmes and projects will transform the country to a greater height of development. Political and bureaucratic corruption is regarded as the primary obstacle preventing Nigeria from accomplishing its full potentials. Corruption has been categorised in various forms: political party corruption, media corruption, electoral corruption, legislative corruption, bureaucratic corruption, petro-corruption, trade related corruption, industrial corruption, agricultural corruption, infrastructure corruption, power sector corruption, financial sector corruption, environmental corruption, defense sector corruption, police corruption, judicial corruption, anticorruption corruption, educational corruption, health sector corruption, humanitarian corruption. It is our conviction that Reversing the trend and repositioning the conduct of government business will demand a rebuilding of new Nigeria on the principles of meritocracy, pragmatism and honesty. Also, the practice of nepotism, where individuals are appointed to positions based on their family connections, has also eroded meritocracy in Nigeria, and Tribalism has also played a significant role in undermining meritocracy in Nigeria, as individuals from certain ethnic groups are often given preference over others.

The Emergence of Godfatherism in Nigerian Politics

Godfatherism has become a pervasive phenomenon in Nigeria politics, influencing various aspects of the country's governance, including appointment processes. People now believes that they can get whatever position in the country, even without merit as long they have highly influential person's in the top which they call Godfather. Godfatherism refers to the practice of influential individuals exerting control over political actors and processes, often through patronage, coercion, or manipulation.[12] in the context of appointment processes, godfatherism involves the selection of individuals for public offices based on personal connections, loyalty, or other considerations rather than merit or competence. The emergence of godfatherism in Nigeria politics can be traced back to the country's post-colonial era. During this period, the ruling elite established patrong-client relationships to consolidate power and maintain control.[9] Over time, these relationships evolved into complex networks of influence and loyalty, which have become a hallmark of Nigerian politics. In explaining God fathering and political patronage in Nigeria, the following speculative paradigm will be considered:

Coalition Principle

This principle focuses on government formation, which simply means on how governing political party or parties enter and construct and consolidate their own government identity.[10] According to this principle, one way to do exactly that is through dispensing patronage politics via state jobs whereby political principals distribute and manage state institutions‟ jobs in order to bargain over policy output. For this school of thought, political patronage or rather political appointment system is an inherent feature of all governing political parties in government worldwide and there is no problem in dispensing the system at all. However, there are variations between countries on the quality and integrity of bureaucrats appointed based on political patronage rather than merit. It is argued that all governing political parties widely apply this political tool to tame, control and regulate the behaviour of the state agents as they may not be entirely trusted, especially as they deal daily with public monies and other state resources. Even countries castigated as developmental states such as Malaysia, Brazil, China, Japan, South Korea, etc., apply the system at varying degree.[11] In similar tone, Du Gay,[12] argues that political principals dispense political patronage via state jobs to tame the power of agency officials and to enhance their (politicians) own positions within government. According to this theory, political patronage via state jobs is not only about controlling but also about ensuring that the state agents achieve the principals‟ policy objectives particularly given the danger of the opposition political parties‟ agents to derail and sabotage the governing political party's policy vision and objectives.

Party System Principle

The party system principle also agrees that the conduct of political parties influences the performance of the state institutions including the legislatures since government is constructed by political parties. They can either limit or enhance the powers and operations of the state institutions. According to this theory, certain party systems are able to limit the extent or level of political principals or political parties dispensing political appointment. This theory distinguishes between „fragile party system‟ and „competitive party system‟. One basic difference is on the level of competitiveness, meaning the likelihood that the incumbent governing political party or parties can be defeated. GrzymanA-Busse,[13] argues that lack of robust competition between programmatic political parties in the state results into ineffective and inefficient state institutions evident in poor institutional quality or performance thus allowing a governing party or parties to dispense political patronage via state jobs. This in turn leads to corruption and poor governance, which are used widely by the World Bank, Transparency International, etc., as indices for measuring the quality or performance of the state institutions worldwide. In such situation where the state is inefficient due to poor governance systems and or corruption, the governing political party or parties legitimizes itself or themselves based on their ability to reward supporters through selective incentives rather than their ability to generate the kinds of public goods necessary for human and economic development as well as growth.

Meritocratic Principle

This principle literally rejects political patronage via state jobs as enhancing the performance or quality of state institutions. Proponents of this theory [14] argue that political patronage leads to politicization rather than professionalization of state institutions. Politicization of the state institutions eventually culminates into poor institutional capacity and lack of

accountability on public goods provision as the system is immoral and a democratic pathology.

Dahlstromet al,[15] gives an example of the mayor of Spain between 2001 and 2003 who replaced „merit-recruited" state agents with political appointees. According to these scholars, the Spanish mayor was able to coordinate his corruption intensions with appointees he had himself selected based on political patronage. Conspicuously, the theory of meritocracy argues that poor performance by state agents appointed on political patronage is often blamed on others or covered up by their political principals. Empirical evidence indicates that officials appointed based on political patronage may be recalled at any time once they have lost favour with their political principals. As noted by Kanyane,[16] with a culture of patronage politics an atmosphere of playing safe is often created, which is not conducive for responsible and accountable bureaucratic institutions. Proponents of this theory strongly maintain that people in the state should be appointed on merit because such officials see office holding as a vocation. For this theory, office holding is not considered a source to be exploited for rents or emoluments nor is considered a usual exchange of services for equivalents.[17] In the study of bureaucracy, Max Weber, for example, advocated for „career personnel" with specialized training and expertise, among others, as the prerequisite for employment in any bureaucratic institutions. Of course, Weber"s work on bureaucracy has a profound impact on our theoretical understanding of how principal-agent relationship within institutions plays out and how the bureaucratic institution developed. Therefore, the theory of meritocracy has intellectual roots from the Max Weber"s study of a bureaucracy.

Moreover, Woodrow Wilsons,[18] in his study of administration also argued for an administration apparatus that is devoid of politics and meddling after he was concerned about the bureaucratic system in America that operated as a bastion for political patronage. Proponents of this theory suggest that democratic states all over the world should shun away from political patronage via state jobs and embrace a culture of meritocratic recruitment and promotion. They argue that access to institutions of government as an employee should be conditioned on the bases of possession of relevant knowledge, skills and qualification credentials, what Max Weber,[19] refers to as „expert-officialdom". This is due to the fact that partly qualified officials in terms of specialized training and examination always enter the state as employees with an understanding that office holding is a vocation. The executive office is separated from the households much as business assets are separated from private fortunes. Proponents of this school of thought give examples of some countries such as Australia, Brazil, Malaysia, China, Japan, UK, etc., that have also introduced a system of tough public civil service examination to select the best potential candidates for the state institutions as agents. The civil service examination system in China, for example, has a created a unique class of „scholar-bureaucrats" irrespective of family or party pedigree even if cadre deployment is applied.[20]

The emergence of political appointment/patronage has also robbed the citizens of the privilege of enjoying the dividends of democratic governance in the sense that government has become reluctant to initiate and implement policies that would advance the well-being of the generality of the citizens. This was a result of the fact that political patronage in Nigeria was basically predatory in nature. The primary motive of venturing into politics was born out of the need to acquire wealth (money) from the coffers of government to which their „godsons" held sways.[21] Therefore, the lean financial resource accruable to the state from the federation account which was meant for the improvement of living

standards of the citizens was paramount interest to them. There are palpable instances where the „godsons‟ (governors, chairmen) and so on, refused to settle their godfathers‟ as agreed before securing public office, hell was let loose. The experiences recorded in Senator Rashidi Ladoja of Oyo state and Lamidi Adedibu between 2003 and 2007, Olusola Saraki and Mohammed Lawal (2003-2007), and Chris Uba and Chris Ngige (2003-2006), (Asewaju Tinubu and Akinwunmi Ambode 2015-2019) were awful and devastating. The end point and consequences of these godfatherism‟ in our politic is that economic activities are brought to a halt, especially education sectors, health, security (political wrangling), agriculture, housing and infrastructural developments etc. The political patrons or godfathers in Nigeria see governance and political power as the cheapest and surest method of amassing wealth to the detriment of the governed. Sponsoring a weak and poor candidate to win election by appointment is seen as a lucrative business whereby the sponsor will invest heavily in imposing his candidate on the people as their leader, with all intent and protégé, called chairmen, and governors.

Political appointment is a dangerous development in Nigeria politics. The electorates are impoverished the more, and the corrupt rich godfathers are corruptly enriching themselves the more. The circle is endless, as the solution to this menace is the serious problem facing Nigeria until a morally sound, committed and patriotic leader emerge to lead the people honestly with the attribute of transparency, openness, people-oriented policies and programmes, Nigeria economic development will be a mirage. The susceptibility of the political structures and institutions to the influence and control of forces operating outside the government but within the political system is a great and potential threat to growth and economic development of the country.

Godfatherism and Political Appointment Processes in Nigeria

Appointment processes in Nigeria have been significantly influenced by godfatherism. The selection of individuals for public offices, including ministerial positions, ambassadorial appointments, and leadership roles in government agencies, is often based on personal connections, loyalty, or other considerations rather than merit or competence. The study by the Nigerian Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies,[22] found that 75% of appointments made by the federal government between 2015 and 2017 were based on personal connections rather than merit. Another study by the Centre for Democracy and Development,[23] revealed that godfatherism played a significant role in the appointment of ministers and other public officials in Nigeria.

A formal definition of patronage is "the power of appointing people to governmental or political positions" and "the positions so distributed".[24] Generally, the word patronage has a negative connotation that this straight-forward definition fails to convey. Patronage suggests the transgression of real or perceived boundaries of legitimate political influence, the violation of principles of merit and competition in civil service recruitment and promotion. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that governments the world over accept that some political appointments are fully legitimate. A small number of these appointments are justified as a means for political leaders to fashion a circle of government policymakers and managers who share a common agenda. Patronage is clearly a problem, however, when these appointments pervade public administration, severely undermining merit principles. Somewhere between these two extremes the line between appropriate and inappropriate uses of patronage is crossed. Political appointment is the dispensation of favours or rewards such as public office, jobs, contracts, subsidies, prestige or other valued

benefits by a patron (who controls their dispensation) to a client. The patron is usually an elected official or is otherwise empowered to make such grants. In return, the client supplies the patron with some valued service, such as voting for the patron's party or providing money or labour for electoral campaigning. The relationship between patron and client is typically unequal, selective and discretionary; the patron does not generally grant favours to all potential clients but picks and chooses among them.

The Implications of Godfatherism in Appointment Processes: The influence of godfatherism in appointment processes has significant implications for democratic governance and development in Nigeria. These implications include:

i. **Undermining Meritocracy:** The selection of individuals for public offices based on personal connections rather than merit undermines the principle of meritocracy, leading to incompetence and inefficiency in government.
ii. **Perpetuating Corruption:** Godfatherism in appointment processes creates opportunities for corruption, as individuals selected for public offices may be beholden to their patrons rather than the public interest.
iii. **Eroding Public Trust:** The pervasive influence of godfatherism in appointment processes has eroded public trust in government and the political process.

Political appointment/patronage is one of the factors that embedded democratic setting in Nigeria since first republic.[25] Regrettably in the face of dilapidation or non-sufficient existence of social infrastructures especially in states and local governments, public resources are used for political patronage. In Nigeria's fourth republic, the emergence of godfatherism posed great threat not only to good governance but also the socio-economic stability of democratic governance.[26] Perhaps one of the most disturbing and damaging influence of political patronage in Nigeria's fourth republic was in domain of making nonsense of a truly free, fair and credible electoral process in which the electorates by right are expected to freely elect people of their choice into public office to represent their interests. Indeed, the privilege of electing people of their choice into public office was denied given the situation in which „godfathers" foisted candidates of their preference on the generality of the people. This is to say the least very inimical to the tenets of democratic rule, when public office holders would not be accountable to the people, who at any rate did not count in their elections into public office. Invariably, the loyalty of such public office holders would be tilted towards their godfathers and this in itself negates one of the critical attributes of democracy which is responsive and transparent government. This scenario is also inimical to good governance and political stability which are predicated on the rule of law, due process, accountability and transparency in the management of public business. The emergence of political patronage has also robbed the citizens of the privilege of enjoying the dividends of democratic governance in the sense that the-would be government became reluctant to initiate and implement policies that would advance the wellbeing of the generality of the citizens. This was as a result of the fact that political patronage in Nigeria was basically predatory in nature.

The primary motive of venturing into politics was borne out of the need to acquire money from the coffers of government to which their godsons held sway. Therefore, the lean financial resource accruable to the state from the federation account which was meant for the improvement of living standard of the citizens was paramount interest to them. In instances where the „godsons" upon reflection refused to settle their „godfathers" as agreed upon before securing public office, hell was let loose. The experiences recorded in Enugu

State in 1999 between Jim Nwobodo and Governor Chimaroke Nnamani. Also, in 2007 between Governor Sullivan Chime and Chimaroke Nnamani were awful, shameful and disgraceful. However, political patronage has become a scary phenomenon in Nigerian politics. As observed by Omotola,[27] political patronage in Nigeria, particularly in its current form and character, is distributive. Though it is a longstanding and deeply rooted feature of the cultural values of Nigerian society, where it is purely socio-economic in nature and mutually productive for both parties, its politicization would appear to have contributed to the criminalization of politics. Political patrons reign across all spheres of the society: academics, legal, and religion environment. Therefore, the clamour for democracy in Nigeria is to improve both political and socioeconomic situation of the country through massive involvement in the policy making, but reverse is the case as those that attained political power in both legislative and executive arms of government got to the seat of powers through the support of some political „godfathers" in various states cum the center, however, the desire of political godfathers is to hold political and socio-economic powers both at the center cum the component units as mechanisms to politically influence the activities of political office holders, that is, the Governors and some Legislators in terms of appointing people into various positions, such as Ministers/Commissioners, Chairmen of the boards, Secretaries to the various Institutions, and Treasurers of Local Governments as well as allocation of some developmental projects into various localities within the state or centre as well.[28]

Indeed, Nigeria has joined the comity of democratic nations with the hope that the ideals of democracy will be upheld and sustained. However, the signals political events in Nigeria are showing are that what we actually have is a democratic system „sustained" by political patrons. It is not one primarily aimed at improving the welfare of the people. Rather it is system the political class craves for in order to gain access to state resources to finance patronage, patrimonialism and for personal gains.[29] This is why violence has to be used to silence the opposition and actualize primitive and exploitative acquisition. Thus, what the present democratic dispensation have brought forth for Nigeria in general is a system sustained by hoodlums for the sake of the political class and not the electorate. To address the problem of godfatherism in appointment processes, several solutions have been proposed including:

i. **Strengthening Institutional Frameworks:** Robust institutional frameworks, including transparent and merit-based appointment processes, can help to reduce the influence of godfatherism.
ii. **Promoting Transparency and Accountability:** Greater transparency and accountability in appointment processes can help to prevent the abuse of power and manipulation of the selection process.
iii. **Encouraging Civic Engagement:** Increased civic engagement, including public participation in appointment processes, can help reduce the influence of godfatherism and promote democratic governance.

Conclusion

For politics in Nigerian to thrive and enjoy stability, a service driven leadership and critical thinking orientation is required as this paper noticed that the problem of Godfatherism is one of the major problems of leadership in Nigerian polity. It recommended that Nigerian leadership must have Philosophers as their rulers as Plato opined in his Republic proposing for good governance when he said, "There will be no end to the troubles of the state or

indeed of humanity until philosophers become kings or until those we now call kings really and truly become philosophers." This group of leaders must maintain the principles of liberty, equality and due process.

The appointments of state agents based on political Godfatherism instead of meritocracy create problems of poor strategic planning. It also creates institutional instability and loss of institutional memory as evident in increased number of prolonged acting roles as a result of suspensions of more senior state agents by their political principals and high staff turnover. Nigeria has a huge pool of expertly trained and qualified labour force to draw from but political meddling during recruitment and promotion processes pose a threat to building a capable, career-oriented and professional civil service. This must stop, if we want to have a polity that can compete with global practice.

Finally, unless political patronage is stamped out of Nigerian politics, it would be difficult for Nigeria to be stable in politics, democratic governance, and economic development.

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HISTORICISING AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE IN OCTAVIA BUTLER'S *KINDRED* AND *FLEDGLING*

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Abstract
The people of African descent in the United States have a traumatic history, which this work sets out to interrogate through Octavia Butler's *Kindred* and *Fledgling.* It employs a qualitative critical literary approach, by combining close reading, historical contextualisation and theoretical critiques to interpret the primary texts in an attempt to explore the history and psychological effect of slavery on the perception of African Americans as well as the survival strategies they employed to overcome slavery and marginalisation. From a New Historicist perspective, the trauma of Black history of the slave trade, the yearning for a distinctive Black culture, the struggle with poverty and lack of identity are brought under scrutiny. In the context of this work, New Historicism explores how the socio-economic context of Octavia Butler and peculiar happenings in society affect the interpretation of *Kindred* and *Fledgling*. The study therefore reveals that our uniqueness comes from our differences and accepting such differences determines our growth as a society because beyond racial classification, there are no real differences in human essence.

Keywords: African American, Trauma, New Historicism, Neo-slave Narrative, Marginalisation.

Introduction

African American history is the account of a people who came to the United States as slaves and became constituent members of that society at emancipation, but they are still struggling for determination because of the contradictions in America's racial politics. In the 16th and 17th centuries, people from Africa were forcibly taken as slaves to Spanish America and English colonies in North America through the trans-Atlantic slave route or the Atlantic Ocean. According to Davis (1966) and Gray (1975), although slavery had existed in Western tradition for about two thousand years before Africa's encounter with the West, it was nothing compared to the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. The largest number of slaves transported across the Atlantic Ocean to the New World was from West Africa. Before the Atlantic slave trade, there were already people of African descent in America because some countries in Africa would buy, sell and trade with other enslaved Africans, who were often prisoners of war, with the Europeans (Franklin, 1978; Sertima, 1976). According to Carson, et al (2011), the people of Mali and Benin were known for partaking in the events of selling their prisoners of war and other unwanted people off as slaves.

According to Jordan (1969) and Uya (1992), slavery became an economic enterprise when Europeans had contact with Africans in the coastal towns of West Africa. Initially, the plantations in

America were cultivated by Native Indians and White indentured labourers "who were limited both in number and the level of manpower they could provide", but Africans were stronger than the white indentured labourers and their supply was inexhaustible (Emenyi, 2004: p1). As Miller and Smith (1988) and McColley (1974) reveal, the trans-Atlantic slave trade is officially linked with the events in which a Dutch ship sold 19 Blacks as indentured servants (not slaves) to Englishmen at Point Comfort (now known as Fort Monroe), thirty miles downstream from Jamestown, Virginia. Though indentured servants were released after a number of years, the practice was gradually replaced by the system of race-based slavery used in the Caribbean in 1640. As servants were freed, there was a need for replacement; and with time, the difficulty in using any other group of people as forced servants led to the relegation of Blacks into slavery, which institutionalised by law in the 1660s.

African American Literature has captured all the happenings of these periods: first in the works of the 18th century writer, Phyllis Wheatley, slave narratives of Equiano and Douglass, and autobiographical spiritual narratives. Since slaves had no access to formal education, they used orature to assert their humanity and spoke from a silenced margin to the centre of slave culture and ideology with its exploitation and mechanism. By this, African American literature began from tradition, which involves songs about physical activities on the plantation and progressed to Negro spirituals, blues, ballads, sermons, stories and hip-hop songs. African American women who wrote spiritual narratives had to negotiate the precarious positions of being Black and being women in early America because the setting made them double slaves and objects of sexual gratification; first to the American society, the white men and then to the black men too (Wade-Gayles, 1971).

The emergence of women writers such as Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Ntozake Shange, among others in the 1970s and 1980s ushered in the era for daughters who sought to live above the stereotype which the American society imposed on their mothers. In the 1990s, there was the struggle for identity, as many families were matriarchal in nature. There were sons who opposed their fathers while struggling to bring themselves into prominence. One prominent writer of this era was John Widerman as seen in his *Fatheralong*. The 1990s laid the foundation for the queer theory, while the 2000s was a period of multi-culturalism and pluralism as there was a rise of ethnic voices to promote their cultures since America is seen as a cultural melting pot. In the 21st century, African Americans have re-written the history of slavery, servitude and racism through the genre of Science Fiction. Science Fiction is a genre of speculative fiction, typically dealing with imaginative concepts such as advanced science and technology, genetic engineering, space flight, time travel and extraterrestrial life. Black Science Fiction, also known as black speculative fiction, is an umbrella term that covers a variety of activities within the science fiction, fantasy and horror genres, in which African Americans feature. Its defining characteristics include a critique of the social structures that sustain black oppression and an investment in social change.

This research employs New Historicism to unearth the historical, cultural and social events that produced Octavia Butler's *Kindred* and *Fledgling* and its impacts on the psychology of the Blacks. New Historicism is a school of literary criticism that developed in the late 1970s and early 1980s, primarily through the work of Stephen Greenblatt. Its goal is to understand history through literature, and literature through its cultural context. This theory is a derivation from the Old Historicism, which considers history as the central or sole element in literary analysis and the core determinant of meaning in a literary text. New Historicists are of the notion that history is a

subjective element and cannot be depended upon as the exclusive criterion for literary analysis because it ends in the subjective evaluation of a text. Their aim simultaneously is to understand a work of art through historical context as well as how to relate with cultural and intellectual history through literature. Thus, every writer presents his/her work based on personal understanding of the time or an era, and so does the critic. New Historicism is mainly interested in the stories of people who lack political or social power, whose discourses are excluded and silenced in recorded history or master narrative canonised by persons of power.

It is in this view that history cannot be relied upon that Bressler (1994: p128) observes that New Historicism declares that "all history is subjective, written by people whose personal biases affected their interpretation of the past". "History", asserts, New Historicism, "can never provide us with the 'truth' or give us a totally accurate picture of past events". Bressler (1994) argues further that history is one of the many ways through which the world is examined. Consequently, the literary work is a reflection of the happenings in the world. New Historicists hold it that the assemblage of several elements such as history, politics, current happenings, authorial background, religion, cultures and belief system, etc., hold great significance in the evaluation of a text. New Historicism deals primarily with the historical and cultural conditions that produce a literary text as well as its meanings, effects, and also its later critical interpretations and evaluations. The theory conceives of literary text as situated within the totality of the institutions, social practices and discourse that constitute the culture of a particular time and place, and with which the literary text interacts as both a product and a producer of cultural energies and codes. Therefore, New Historicism pays a close attention to the historical context of literary works. The use of New Historicism suits the subject of this study since Octavia Butler's works, *Kindred* and *Fledgling*, are products of America's history of slavery, racism, servitude, class distinction and colour segregation and the writer's personal experiences, which she presents by introducing the characteristics of science and technology as products of the 21st century scientific expansion into literature. These experiences have persistent psychological impact on the modern time, which in turn affects our perception of society.

Critical reviews on Octavia Butler's *Kindred* centre on the story of a young African American woman who was constantly pulled back in time to a slave plantation before the Civil War. While Spillers (1987) analyses *Kindred*'s portrayal of slavery's psychological and physical brutality, Hooks (1994) discusses how *Kindred* challenges dominant narratives of slavery and its legacy. From these two authors, there is a clear acceptance of the existence of slavery and the damage the horror of slavery wrought on the minds of the Blacks. To Goyal (2010), Butler's novel subverts traditional historical narratives. Canavan (2016) opines that Butler saw not race but men – masculinity, not just on the level of ideology, but also on the level of biology – as the real problem to be solved. In her journals, she reports that Butler wrote about mixed racial couples for the same reason she wrote about sexually egalitarian societies: an effort to imagine, not utopias, but societies in which women do as they please. Through the two interracial couples who form the emotional core of the story, the novel also explores the intersection of power, gender, and race issues, and speculates on the prospects of future egalitarianism.

To Sheremet (2018), the problem of Octavia Butler's *Kindred* is the treatment of ideas; how she handles her themes so didactically and without nuance such that *Kindred* simply cannot be real literature, only functional, moralising prose. He opines that her plots are simple, the symbolism

obvious, the moralising, heavy-handed, and the purpose, clear. This is a work of a critic, whose interest is in concentrating on the weaknesses of this work, rather than dealing with the central message of both Blacks and Whites accepting each other and existing together in peace. Christian (1988) explores the novel's portrayal of intersectional identity, particularly Dana's experience as a Black woman by dwelling more on the psychological and emotional impact of slavery. While Dubey (1994) analyses how *Kindred* critiques essentialised notions of identity, Jones (2010) discusses how Butler's novel explores the complexities of identity performance. Both authors are interested with the issues of identity.

Govan (1986: p79-80) traces how Butler's novel follows the classic patterns of the slave narrative genre: "loss of innocence, harsh punishment, strategies of resistance, life in the slave quarters, struggle for education, experience of sexual abuse, realisation of white religious hypocrisy and attempts to escape with ultimate success". Crossley (2004: p279) notes how Butler's intense first person narration deliberately echoes the ex-slave memories, thereby giving the story "a degree of authenticity and seriousness". Re-echoing the experience of slavery, Butler brings to the readers a clear picture of that time and the pains it bred through a firsthand experience. Yaszek (2009) sees Dana's visceral firsthand account as a deliberate criticism of earlier commercialised depictions of slavery, such as the book and film *Gone with the Wind*, produced largely by the Whites, and even the television miniseries *Roots*, based on the book by African American writer, Alex Haley. While Butler-Evans (1987) examines how *Kindred* portrays resistance and survival strategies under slavery, Ferguson (2004) analyses the novel's critique of patriarchal structures and Keaton (2010) discusses how Butler's novel highlights the intersection of racism and sexism. Bedore (2010: p2) notes that while Rufus seems to hold all the power in his relationship with Alice, she never wholly surrenders to him. Alice's suicide is her way of ending her struggle with Rufus with a "final upsetting to their power balance", an escape through death. By placing *Kindred* in comparison to other Butler novels, Bedore (2002: p73) explores the bond between Dana and Rufus as re-envisioning slavery as a "symbiotic" interaction between slaves and masters: since neither character can exist without the other's help and guidance, they are continually forced to collaborate in order to survive.

Scholarship on *Kindred* often touches on its critique of the official history of the formation of the United States as an erasure of the raw facts of slavery. Yaszek (2003: p1057) places *Kindred* as emanating from two decades of heated discussion over what constitutes American history, with series of scholars pursuing the study of African American historical sources to create a "more inclusive novels of memory". Blacks had been tortured for too long in America before Butler recounted their experiences in *Kindred*. While McCoy (2013) examines how Butler's novel informs social justice education, Smith (2015) analyses how *Kindred* can be used to teach thinking and empathy. Kubitschek (1991) argues that Butler sets the story during the bi-centennial of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence of the United States to suggest that the Nation should review its history in order to resolve its current racial strife. To Rushdy (1993: p135), Dana's memories of her enslavement is a record of the "unwritten history" of African Americans, a "recovery of a coherent story explaining Dana's various losses". By living these memories, Dana is enabled to make the connections between slavery and current social situations, including the exploitation of blue-collar workers, police violence, rape, domestic abuse, and segregation.

Vint (2007) and Bould (2010) believe that Butler's *Kindred* is a reiteration of the perpetuation of racial discrimination into the present and, perhaps, the future of America. Vint

(2007: p243) insists that "we cannot escape or repress our racist history, but instead must confront it and thereby reduce its power to pull us back, unthinkingly, to earlier modes of consciousness and interaction". By this, Blacks can only heal by confronting their past and living above it. To Hollinger (2006), *Fledgling* analyses the exploration of female agency and desire. While Geyh (2006) discusses how *Fledgling* challenges traditional notions of masculinity and femininity, Thomas (2014) examines the novel's portrayal of queer relationships and identities. But as Bast (2010) argues, Butler's novel is a typical African American narrative where the victim of a racially motivated crime is in quest for the truth about her former self, about the agony that she has endured and about her assailant's identity. Westfahl (2005: p1120) observes that the title of the text refers to "the genealogical links between its modern-day protagonist, the slave-holding Weylins, and both the free and bonded Greenwoods; at its most universal, it points to the kinship of all Americans regardless of ethnic background". Since Butler's novel challenges readers to come to terms with slavery and its legacy, one significant meaning of the term "kindred" is the United States' history of miscegenation and its denial by official discourses. This kinship of Blacks and Whites must be acknowledged if America is to move into a better future. Both black and white Americans have to reconcile and face the country's racist past together so that they can learn to co-exist as kindred.

Through the use of a vampire protagonist, Butler presents the issues of race, gender and acceptance in her vampire narrative, *Fledgling*. Sanchez-Taylor (2014) discusses how *Fledgling* critiques racialised power structure and challenges dominant discourse on race. Here, we realise that racism has created a power structure that makes one race greater than the other. Crawford (2017) argues that Butler's novel exposes the intersections of racism and patriarchy. Here, not only does racism affect the activities of the characters, patriarchy also becomes a problem as the male also subverts the female. To Reid (2010), *Fledgling* subverts traditional vampire narratives and challenges racist stereotypes. One of the most commented aspects of *Fledgling* is its unusual type of vampire, the result of Butler's fusion of vampire fiction with science fiction. According to Sanchez-Taylor (2014), the traditional vampire's monstrosity and abnormality routinely symbolises deviant sexuality and decadence, and serves as a foil for humanity, or is a projection of repressed sexual desire or fear of sexual or racial contamination. As Nayar (2011) observes, Butler creates an alternate history where humans and Ina have always coexisted in non-hierarchic, inter-dependent and unified ecosystems.

According to Reid (2010), *Fledgling* challenges traditional notions of identity, community, and power; explores the complexities of race, gender and sexuality, and subverts dominance discourse on American history and culture. Morris (2012) argues that Shori's hybrid identity handles traditional notions of identity and performance. While Dubey (2011) examines how Shori's identity performance reflects the complexities of African American experiences, Jones (2015) analyses how *Fledgling* explores the tension between essentialised and performative identities. These scholars seem to concentrate on Shori's identity issue as the "other" different from other members of her race. Butler narrates the power struggle in America between the Whites and the Blacks using the vampire story. While Johnson (2013) argues that *Fledgling* critiques power structures related to race, gender and sexuality, Thompson (2016) examines how Butler's novel explores the complexities of power and oppression.

However, Crawford (2017) sees *Fledgling* as challenging dominant discourse on power and privilege. Some critics view Butler's decision to endow her protagonist with a large dose of melanin

than what is normal for the Ina as a metaphor for how the concept of race is created. Brox (2008: p391) points out that Shori is not just "made black biologically, but also socially when the Ina fixated on her difference". Thus, Shori's skin colour forces her to defend herself from a hostile world before she has even learned about institutional hierarchies. As Strong (2011) remarks, the relationship between Shori and her symbionts is mutual, which is why Horton-Stallings (2015: p131-132) describes Shori's memory loss at the beginning of the novel as involving "the erasure of the physical and collective memory through Transatlantic Slavery". The reason for ignoring discourses on American racism by White supremacists is an attempt to deny the history of subjugation and dehumanisation as shown by Hollinger (2006) who sees *Fledgling* as the exploration of female agency and desire and Geyh (2006) who believes that the work is used to challenge traditional notions of masculinity and femininity. But as Bast (2010) argues, Butler's novel is a typical African American narrative in which the victim of a racially motivated crime is in quest for the truth about her former self, about the agony that she has endured and about her assailant's identity.

Black History in Octavia Butler's *Kindred* and *Fledgling*

The traumatic history of the American past can be seen in the depiction of slavery and slave communities in *Kindred.* In the words of Govan (1986: p80), *Kindred* is an accurate fictional account of slave experiences as there probably is no more vivid description of life on an Eastern Shore Plantation than that found in *Kindred*. Through *Kindred,* we have a first-hand account of slave life during the plantation period, and the physical and psychological abuses faced by these slaves. The slave community is depicted as a rich human society, who are concerned with the pains experienced by each member. Dana is transported across time to relive slavery in the Antebellum South, with the accompanying threat to the overall existence of the black man.

Dana's first encounter with the past when Rufus dragged her across time is that of horror. After saving the drowning child, she is nearly killed by the unappreciative Weylin who considers the presence of a black woman by the riverside so close to his son dangerous; her second visit is not any better. After putting out the fire, she expects to be transported back to the 1976 California**,** since "her first trip had ended as soon as the boy was safe – had ended just in time to keep me safe" (Butler, 1979: p20). When this is not forthcoming, she goes to the Greenwoods, only to see how inhumane Alice's father, the Weylin slave, is severely beaten for leaving the plantation to visit his family, while obscenities are thrown at his wife stripped naked, as they ask: "What do you think you've got that we haven't seen before?" (Butler, 1979: p37). He is dragged back to the plantation by a moving horse and he could hardly revolt because "blacks were not allowed to fight back" (Butler, 1979: p46). This traumatises Dana as she figures out that she has to fight for her survival or be taken in as a slave.

Violence in the plantation was much intense, except where a freed black had papers to attest to his freedom, which was not easily earned, and survival was a matter of strength and endurance. Slaves were not supposed to call Whites by their names, including white children. They were not to stare back at their masters or it was considered a form of hostility; they were only allowed to feed from wooden bowls using wooden spoons and in some other plantations, kids were "being rounded up and fed from troughs like pigs" (Butler, 1979: p72). The only real meal the slaves ate was corn meal mush, except for the remnants from the master's table, as Dana reports, "we get better food later on after the white folks eat, we get whatever they leave" (Butler, 1979: p73). Even among the slaves, one is treated with resentment, if he/she dresses more like the white folks than

like a slave. Also, an educated slave was usually considered a threat because he/she could start "putting freedom ideas" into the heads of the slaves (Butler, 1979: p74).

Bould and Vint (2011) place *Kindred* as a key science fiction literary text of the 1960s and 1970s Black consciousness period, noting that Butler uses the time travel trope to underscore the perpetuation of past racial discrimination into the present and, perhaps, the future of America. The lesson of Dana's trips to the past is that "we cannot escape or repress our racist history but instead must confront it and thereby reduce its power to pull back, unthinking, to earlier modes of consciousness and interaction" (Vint, 2007: p248). With this, we must learn to live above a past we cannot change. Similarly, Dana and Kevin's prolonged stay in the past "reframes their modern attitudes" and affects their perception of the 1976 California (Hood and Reid, 2009: p46). To this, they had to seek the modern day representation of the past they had lived in order to keep their sanity. Butler's depiction of her principal character as an independent, self possessed, educated African American woman defies slavery's racist and sexist objectification of Blacks and women (Paulin, 1997). At the same time, their relationship extends the concept of "community from people related by ethnicity to people related by experience" (Kubitschek, 1991: p39). In these new communities, Whites and Blacks may "acknowledge their common racist past and learn to live together" (Mitchell, 2001: p53). Rufus, who grows up in 19th century America, finds Dana and Kevin's relationship shocking, exclaiming: "Niggers can't marry white people!" (Butler, 1979: p60).

Kindred reveals the repressed trauma which slavery inflicted on the Blacks in their collective memory of America. To Butler, this trauma partly comes from attempts to forget America's dark past and their inability to walk past the pains. Amnesia refers to the loss of memories, including facts, information and experiences. Here, some historical facts are deleted from memory or history intentionally or unintentionally. From missing sources and perspectivism in past and present, Dana is confronted with a lack of historical sources about her family's fate. Before her time travel, Dana can only dimly recall her family history through a "large Bible in an ornately carved, wooden chest," in which Hagar "had begun keeping family records" (Butler, 1979: p28). This symbolic entombment mirrors "the way history is handled and ignored rather than used in Dana's modern world" (Wagers, 2009: p29).

When Hagar passed away in 1880, most of the information about her life "had died with her," Dana regrets, "at least it had died before it filtered down to me" (Butler, 1979: p28). On her travel to Maryland in order to search for records of her ancestors, she just finds "an old newspaper article" and a "notice of the sale of the slaves" (Butler, 1979: p262). The only traceable information is the mysterious death of the master, Mr. Rufus Weylin. Her African American ancestors are briefly mentioned as the "slaves from Mr. Rufus Weylin's estate" and "listed by their first names with their approximate ages and their skills given" (Butler, 1979: p262). Consequently, Dana is left trying to piece together their fates from an auction advertisement. There is also the contemporary silencing of the historical past. The date of Dana's final return to Los Angeles is not coincidentally on the bicentennial of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. Whereas the nation is looking proudly upon its history, Dana and Kevin spend the day of the 200th anniversary isolated in hospital dealing with the injuries of America's slaveholding past. In this context, Mitchell (2001: p53) points out that "using the bicentennial in conversation with slavery reveals inherent contradictions in American history".

Dana's assertion of herself starts with her reaction to Rufus' mother after saving the drowning boy: "I turned and managed to catch her pounding fists. Stop it! I shouted, putting all the authority I could into my voice" (Butler, 1979: p14). She is yet to come to terms with the new environment she finds herself and tends to shout at a White woman, which is contrary to the principles of the 19th century England. Again, when she time travelled the second time, she declares herself a free woman: "I'm free, born free, intending to stay free" (Butler, 1979: p38). By now, she understands the complexities of her new environment and by all means intends to survive. During her first encounter with the patrollers, Dana sounds indignant and earns a slap from one of the patrollers as such was not known in Antebellum South. He screams, "You got no manners, nigger, I'll teach you some!", but she fights to escape being turned in as a runaway: "I dug the nails of my free hand into his arm and tore the flesh from the elbow to wrist" (Butler, 1979: p41). Contrary to how women behaved, Dana prepares for survival as she has a well-arranged tote bag with some immediate necessities in case she is called back again. This shows that she is unwilling to be totally marred by her past.

Dana's education is also a challenge. She speaks clear English with no southern accent, which surprises the black folks. Nigel asks her, "Why you try to talk like white folks?" (Butler, 1979: p74). Dana is considered 'too educated' and this gets her into trouble with Mr Weylin. Kevin warns her, "Weylin doesn't like the way you talk. I don't think he's had much education himself, and he resents you" (Butler, 1979: p80). This coincides with the belief of the area that an educated slave is dangerous and could start bringing freedom ideas to the minds of the slaves. For all her abuses, Dana gets off easier than many other slaves, partly because the privilege of her education allows her to almost entirely escape working in the field, and largely because she can time travel. She soon defaults, reads to Rufus and starts teaching Nigel, which earns her a terrible beating. *Kindred* challenges traditional notions of historical narrative by highlighting the importance of Black perspectives and experiences.

In *Fledgling*, Butler grapples with the issue of racism and race relations. Shori is a victim of prejudice because of her genetically engineered body and dark skin colour. In order to ensure that her form of Ina would never reproduce, the Silks murder her family and attempt to murder her as well. Her dark skin colour allows her to withstand the sun, even though many Ina consider humans as lesser beings. Shori's human DNA does not replace her strength and agility, and her melanin makes her more resistant to the sun and therefore capable of staying awake in the day, and this is considered a threat to the white Ina. Although this novel takes place in a world where vampires exist, it is used as a metaphor to depict the existence of prejudice and discrimination in our own society. Morris (2012: p61) opines that "Butler's Ina transgress conventional vampire tropes not only by being mortal but also by experiencing (and succumbing to) hierarchical divisions, such as those of racism, mirroring the violent systems of oppression that are the foundation of much of the human world". Some of the similarities that the Ina share with human beings are their involvement in social class divisions, their oppression as a result of prejudice, and their ability to die. Butler's decision to endow her protagonist with a larger dose of melanin than what is normal for the Ina is a metaphor for how the concept of race is created. Brox (2008) points out that Shori is not just "made black" biologically, but also socially when Ina fixates on her difference. Thus, Shori's skin colour forces her to defend herself from a hostile world before she understands what institutionalised hierarchies are. Shori has been genetically enhanced. While the Ina are stereotypically white, as is

traditional for vampires, Shori's genetic makeup includes human melanin, which renders her skin brown, a necessary trait for her kind to be able to survive exposure to the sun.

At the beginning of the novel, Shori wakes up to discover that she is covered in scars as she reports: "My skin was scarred, badly scarred over every part of my body that I could see. The scars were broad, creased, shiny patches of mottled red-brown skin" (Butler, 2005: p4). This recalls the scars on the bodies of enslaved Africans in America from the wounds inflicted on them by the slave masters. Horton-Stallings (2015: p131) describes Shori's memory loss at the beginning of the novel as "invoking the erasure of physical and collective memory through Transatlantic slavery". It therefore serves as "a metaphor for the experience of New World black subjects whose physical and cultural memory of affection and relationships have been erased or colonized" (Horton-Stallings, 2015: p132). When the novel opens, we are not aware of the race of the narrator because she has forgotten about the social concept of race, which is first raised in the novel when Wright asks Shori: "Ordinary sun exposure burns your skin even though you're black?" Shori responds: "I'm … I stopped. I had been about to protest that I was brown, not black, but before I could speak, I understood what he meant" (Butler, 2005: p37). This immediately triggers another memory as Shori reveals to Wright: "I think I'm an experiment. I think I can withstand the sun better than … others of my kind" (Butler, 2005: p37). In this sequence, the concept of human racial categories is connected with the theme of genetic experimentation and racial difference among the Ina.

Shori feeds on the blood of her symbionts, such that the genetic and biological nourishment of the symbionts occur in conjunction with the material and physical nourishment of the vampires. The conflict that acts as the engine for *Fledgling* is racial discrimination, and Shori's skin colour creates political factions and feuds among the elite vampire families. As the melanin allows her to survive in the light of the day, it threatens the purity of the Ina/vampire race as well as presents the possibility of racial evolution. Although Shori is not aware of the hierarchy that exists among her people as it deals with age and purity, she soon discovers that to be of pure blood is a basic tenet that the Ina hold dear. There are peculiar stylistic devices employed by Octavia Butler to embellish her works. In *Kindred*, while Dana uses the educated standard English of the 1976 California, Rufus and the rest of the people on the plantation use old Southern accent as seen in the scenes where he is eating with Dana: "Daddy'd do some cussing if he came in here and found us eating together" (Butler, 1979: p134). The old Southern accent reflects historical authenticity through the use of antiquated language; cultural identity by exploring African American cultural heritage and resilience; social commentary by critiquing historical and contemporary racial tension and timelessness as the language bridges the past and present, and emphasises ongoing struggles.

The narrative's non-linear structure, facilitated by language, underscores the past's ongoing influence on the present. Butler in *Fledgling* employs simple, direct language to convey Shori's innocence and naivety: "I was hungry. I was alone. I was scared" (Butler, 2005: p12). Butler employs vivid sensory details to describe Shori's experiences, creating an immersive and intimate atmosphere. She also employs fragmented sentences to convey Shori's disjointed thoughts and emotions. There are a lot of repetition to emphasise Shori's obsessions and fears, and metaphors and similes to create vivid and powerful descriptions. Both works make use of visual language to recreate the African American past, reinforce thematic concerns, create vivid imagery, convey emotional intensity and challenge the reader's perspective.

Dana and Kevin's interracial relationship can be read as a metaphor for how America may be healed from tortured racial relations. Other instances of metaphor include the children's game of "auction" and "slavery", information about other atrocities happening in the world and Dana's dual existence in the past and the present. In *Fledgling*, metaphor is seen in the comparison of vampires to insects and animals. The character of Shori also serves as a metaphor for the theme of identity, and the vampire community in *Fledgling* serves as a metaphor for marginalised communities. In *Kindred*, allusion is made to the Compromise of 1820, President John Quincy Adams, the abolitionist, and the Emancipation Proclamation; in *Fledgling*, Butler employs allusion to draw connections between her vampire world and the human world, as well as to explore themes of history, culture, and identity. Shori is compared to Isis, while Wright is compared to the Greek hero, Odysseus. The symbols used in *Kindred* include whips, birthdays, maps, and damaged bodies, which are all relevant to being a slave. Symbols in *Fledgling* include the character of Shori herself, who represents the theme of identity, the vampire's bite, which represents the theme of community and the character of Wright, which represents the theme of power. Also, blood and the house are symbols of life, nourishment and safety.

Conclusion

Kindred and *Fledgling* offer powerful historicising of African American literature, one that challenges traditional narratives and offers fresh perspective on the experiences of Black people in America. The novels also offer powerful vision of resistance and liberation by highlighting the ways in which Black people have resisted oppression and fought for their freedom and humanity throughout history. In addition, they are necessary reminders of the importance of community and the ways in which Black people have come together to resist oppression and fight for their freedom despite existing limitations. Through this, Butler presents a clearer picture of the ways in which community has been a source of strength and resilience for Black people throughout history. This work, therefore, concludes that our uniqueness can be seen in our differences and the best way for survival is building on the footprints of the past while avoiding its mistakes.

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