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CONTENTS

UNDERSTANDING HOMOSEXUALITY IN AFRICA THROUGH AFRICAN LITERATURE: A PHILOSOPHICAL READING OF "LOVE ON TRIAL"

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Abstract

The kind of right gay people should be accorded is, perhaps, the single most divisive moral issue in the world today. Many countries, especially western countries, believe that gay people have a right to openly express their sexual orientation like their heterosexual counterparts. Some others, mostly from Africa, are totally opposed to it. For them, homosexuality is against their cultural and religious practice and anti-nature. Offenders are liable to punishment ranging from two months to fourteen years imprisonment with or without corporal punishment. This raises a serious concern: How justified is the punishment for those who transgress the boundaries of what is culturally sanctioned as acceptable or 'normal' sexual behaviour? To provide insight into this thorny problem this study employs the philosophical methods of hermeneutics and dialectics. The study identifies African literature as having the capacity to portray homosexuality within the African cultural context. The study's specific interest is on a story, "Love on Trial", by a Malawian writer, Stanley Onjezani Kenani. The story is based on the plight of Charles Chikwanje, a law student, caught in a homosexual act. The essence of philosophy is based on its ability to get to the core of an issue, expose it, take a careful exploration of all its contents and provide the best insightful and analytical perspective on it. This study finds that there are challenges to the persistence of anti-gay intolerance that favours the strict binary - us/them, native/foreign, natural/unnatural practice in Africa. This study concludes that humanity needs to continue to challenge itself in philosophical dialectics of understanding and knowledge.

Key words: Homosexuality, Africa, Philosophy, African literature, Culture

Introduction

The issue of homosexuality is causing a lot of controversy in Africa. Most African countries denounce it on the account that it is totally against African custom, culture, religion, values and anti-nature. In Malawi, the African country depicted in the story, offenders serve a term of imprisonment of fourteen years with or without corporal punishment. Yet as the story suggests this has failed to contain the activities of homosexuals.

To deal with a topic that concerns the human person and its differences and fragmentations demands an enquiry, even if cursory, into the nature of the human person. This

is particularly pertinent given that the claim of homosexuals, like the main character in "Love on Trial", is that they are acting true to their nature. Is it possible that some people are born gay? Importantly, given that by nature a human being is a rational being, does being gay contravene this? In other words, is homosexuality a contingent or necessary feature of what it means to be human? Is a heterosexual human, for being a heterosexual? Is a eunuch human without being heterosexual or homosexual? Are the anthropological questions relating to man strictly speaking matters of sexual orientation?

Pertinent as the above concerns are, the opposition against homosexuality in Africa is based on cultural, religious, and moral considerations and not on nature. The central question is: what does homosexuality portend for African societal arrangement, and societal progress? Obviously, the answer will depend in large measure on whether we conceive of African society as tied to its culture, tradition and norms; whether we feel inclined to accept that culture, tradition and norms do not matter, or whether we try and find a balance between these two extremes.

The story forces recognition of the importance of not neglecting philosophical reflection on how cultural-sensitive issues are handled. The essence of philosophy is to keep chipping at reality, probing its multifaceted dimensions with the aim of getting closer to what there is, although always conscious that there will always be some aspects uncovered. For Hilary Lawson even though there will always be something which philosophy cannot cover, the attempt of philosophy to continue to probe at reality is powerful because such interrogations "are capable of changing how we think and what we can achieve" (290).

"Love on Trial": Summary

The story is based on the plight of an undergraduate law student, Charles Chikwanje, caught having sex with his male partner. This event turns his small town, Chipiri, in Malawi to an instant tourist attraction as people, reporters and even international media swam to the place. In the interviews he granted, instead of being remorseful, Charles insisted that he was gay by nature. He dismissed suggestions that his sexual orientation is a psychological problem or that he became so through contact with western ideologies and tourists. He also rejected the notion that homosexuality is anti-God fearing, insisting that he is deeply religious, a follower of Jesus Christ. In spite of all these claims, Charles is sentenced to 12 years of imprisonment with hard labour, without an option of a fine. This brought Malawi face-to-face with the wrath of Britain, America, Norway, France and Germany. Their request that Malawi should rescind her action or face sanction was unheeded. The donors reacted by cutting aids to Malawi, thus plunging the country into economic hardship.

Kenani's "Love on Trial" brings to the fore many contentious issues surrounding homosexuality in Africa. It particularly calls attention to the issue of criminalisation of gay people, challenging whether it is the right thing to do.

Homosexuality as a contested space

The idea of whether homosexual offenders should be criminalised or not has to do with the side of the divide one is situated. For those who see homosexuality as natural, it is not an offence. For those who see it as unnatural, it is evil, sinful and offenders deserve to be punished. Most African countries belong to the latter. Malawi, the country depicted in the story is an example. Equally, Charles the main character in the story is an example of an African who sees homosexuality as natural, thus pitting his ontological stance in conflict with that of his country. The point of a philosophical intervention is not to take sides but rather to turn over and examine the compelling reasons from both sides so as to arrive at an informed conclusion. Based on

this, this analysis will focus on the tensions arising between the two critical cores of the disagreement. The first is Africa's world view of gay as a cultural taboo, evil, anti-nature and morally reprehensible. The second is Charles' claim that he is gay by nature. This will be done by extracting the reasons proffered for criminalisation of gay people in Africa and those advanced for the non-criminalisation of homosexuals as suggested in the story and subjecting them to philosophical evaluation.

One way to properly interrogate Africa's cultural and moral stance is to subject it to an African ethical theory. For this reason, the philosophy of Ubuntu will be used given Ubuntu's wide acceptance as representing African ethical values that should guide our actions and responses to issues. The core features of Ubuntu can be captured in three critical strands: interdependence (every human being is connected to a whole); co-existence (every human being exists in the company of others); and communion supremacy (every human being as a member of a community respects the common values set by the community). Ubuntu, then, "represents the interconnectedness and interdependency of humanity. In other words, one's real humanity is rooted in his communion with others. Without such union, a person can only live the life of an outcast or, at best, exist at the peripheral of existence" (Okolo 35). For Mkhize the idea of existing outside the humanity of others makes one inhuman both in the sense of not being human and disregarding the humanity of others. He insists that an atomistic human is not a real human being (40). Mbiti represents this as "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore, I am" (141). Importantly, Ubuntu as a philosophical concept recognises the "value of humans to live a meaningful and purposeful life through recognising, practising and sustaining the universal bond of cooperation that unites all humanity" (Okolo 36). A proper interrogation of Ubuntu, then, reveals the need to recognise and assign proper places to every individual in the most possible attitude of respect and inclusiveness. Ubuntu as such implies cultural justice. Cultural justice here refers to acknowledging the worth of individuals and making the need of every individual the concern for everyone. All these will play a critical role in evaluating the reasons proffered for the criminalisation of gay people in Africa and those advanced for their non-criminalisation as suggested in the story under review.

In "Love on Trial" Charles and his partner were caught in a public toilet by Mr. Kachingwe who became instantly popular by exposing their deed. Kachingwe is a much older person, from the same village as Charles. In their village, Charles is one of only three people to make it to the university. In line with Ubuntu's principles, as an older person what should have been Mr Kachingwe's response to Charles' action given what the consequences of his revelation will entail? Should a caring community willingly destroy the future possibilities of one of its brightest youth for a deed which origin remains a subject of irresolvable contestation? Should a government that should cater for the welfare of its citizens, provide an enabling environment for citizens to contribute to the development of the country sentence a brilliant law student, one of only three university students from his community, to 12 years imprisonment with hard labour and no option of a fine for an action which the offender claims to be his natural orientation? If what Charles said is true, how does the imprisonment correct his nature? Importantly how does his imprisonment reflect cultural justice as implied in Ubuntu?

To begin with, Mr Kachingwe's action fails to show any social responsibility an older person should show to a younger person in African traditional system. Africans believe that it is the responsibility of an elder to correct a younger person. But this is not what happened in "Love on Trial". Instead of talking to Charles, whom he knows very well, about his conduct, Mr Kachingwe spread the news with possibly the intent of achieving cheap popularity for himself. Even when cautioned by his friend, Maxwell Kabaifa, that he would ruin the boy's

future given the State's disposition to such conduct, he continued. Instead, he defended his action by quoting what he learnt from Civics in primary school. According to him, "among the qualities of a good citizen of any state on earth, telling the truth was of great importance. He was reporting the truth as he saw it. The consequences of the truth were none of his business" (51). Mr Kachingwe's submission brings some interesting dimensions to the discussion. Why was this particular truth so important to report? Was it because of the unnaturalness of the act? Or the instant fame it brought to the reporter? Has consequence no place in telling the truth? To what extent did Mr Kachingwe's truth transform Malawi for the better? What necessity did it serve? What is its role in preserving past custom, protecting present norms, and sustaining things to come? It is perhaps through consequence that the usefulness or otherwise of any truth can be revealed. Usefulness or otherwise can be gauged through the extent that the truth can help in nurturing, promoting and sustaining progress and development in human affairs and enriching our knowledge. Consequence as such plays a key role in the truth of our knowledge. It is important to keep these in mind as the discussion progresses.

Importantly, by failing to engage with Charles, Mr Kachingwe foreclosed a unique opportunity to discover Charles' true feelings and motive, thereby disconnecting the link of humanity between them. Eze implies this when he notes that "what Ubuntu does offer us is a context of intersubjective discovery. It is only when we get to know the other that empathy becomes a possibility, that humanism can be legitimately evoked" (105). It is possible that if Mr Kachingwe had counselled Charles, pointing out what he had already achieved as "one of only three" people from their village to make it to the university, his position as the hope and future of their village and how his conduct can send him to rot in jail, he might have listened. According to an African proverb "there is nothing that softens human nature as much as kindness and love" (132). Importantly, such a dialogue would have opened the opportunity for him to find out Charles' reason and possibly better understand his action. Oyebade and Azenabor submit that truth or factual claims are impossible without adequate knowledge and understanding of the nature of things (48). He could have extended his intervention by discussing it with Charles and his parents. Together they may be able to make Charles see the need to align his actions with the general social interest of his community which stresses the belief that one is a person because of people and that a tree, no matter how big, does not make a forest. Without these interventions Mr Kachingwe is as, if not more, guilty as Charles going by Africa's cultural norms on which alter Charles is being tried and crucified. Olatunji submits that in "Yoruba land…elders humbly take the blame for the misdeeds of younger ones, especially if they have failed in their primary social responsibility to warn them against the consequences of their attitude or intending course of action" (226).

Granted that from his societal perspective, Charles action is morally condemnable. The critical question however is: what is actually being condemned? Is it that he is caught with his partner '*in flagrante*' or that he is naturally gay? Is there any scientific evidence to show that he is or that he is not or that he cannot be? More importantly is there scientific or even metaphysical evidence that he can alter his nature? Yet it appears as if his action and his natural disposition are fused in the way his society perceives him. To simply disagree with Charles without a provable alternative to his plight serves no real purpose in the journey of enlightenment. Socrates' dictum that wisdom begins when a man finds out that he does not know what he thinks he knows should act as a guide. Punishing Charles only entrenches societal position without addressing the fundamental issue for which punishment is being served.

African society, of course, has a right to decide her response in any issue that affects the wellbeing of her people. This admission, however, should be handled responsibly. Here,

this entails recognition that global intimacy demands an intellectual openness from all participants, willingness to make reasonable adjustments and a spirit of give and take. This is why Charles' case that should have been contained in Malawi attracted the concern of some western countries with devastating social and economic consequences for the people of Malawi. The cutting of aids by donor countries throws into sharp relief the power dynamics that exist between the West and Africa; how easily Africa's sovereignty, and by extension her democratic institutions, can be undermined by the western countries. This kind of highhandedness makes a mockery of the hard-won national independence by most African countries as their claim to sovereignty is tossed aside. Malawi's claim to her right to keep her religious and cultural values is severely tested against the onslaught of donors' action on her economy. "The results of aid being cut are beginning to show. There is no medicine in hospitals. Fuel has become scarce. Teachers are protesting because their salaries have been delayed for four months. Inflation is rising. In prison the warders are not paid for three months. The government says it will not be in a position to distribute the subsidized fertilizer to poor subsistence farmers" (63-64). Even Mr Kachingwe became a victim as he could no longer get free drugs for his HIV treatment. This saddens him as he watch himself deteriorate into a skinny man, coughing terribly, spitting blood and abandoned by friends except for Maxwell Kabaifa, the same person who had cautioned him against exposing Charles. At the end of the story, as his death becomes imminent, he doubts the wisdom of his action given its consequences. Importantly, the donors action also demonstrates how easy it is to undermine a weak state (the category into which most African states belong) by a strong state (the class into which most western nation fit) in the name of globalisation. By tapping into such power imbalances the West can dictate to Africa. Such overbearing attitude shows a lack of cultural sensitivity and spells danger for the gains achieved by most African states in claiming back their sovereignty from their ex-colonial masters and taking control over their own lives. The ability of African states to retain the right to pilot their affairs remains a very critical, even central, focus as this deeply affects the lives of their people. The only consideration is that they get it right. The second question then is anchored on this: how justified is the treatment meted out to Charles?

In judging Charles other considerations need to be allowed. According to Oyebade and Azenabor "central to African ethics is the notion of morality which cascades to character of individuals" (28). They further identified the components of moral virtues to include honesty, courage, diligence, fellow-feeling, empathy, sympathy, humility, justice, temperance and so on. Based on these, Charles demonstrated rare honesty in not denying his action given that he knew what the consequences would be and, especially given that he could have denied it. As a brilliant law student, he knows that Mr Kachingwe's report will not stand in court if he cannot prove it beyond reasonable doubt. Mr Kachingwe is a known drunk and there was no witness except Charles and his partner. Before that time, no one had ever associated Charles with that kind of conduct. His parents knew nothing about it; neither did his fellow law students. He is friends with the president's daughter, and she is willing to cover up for him even after his action became public knowledge. If he had denied from the outset, he had credible people to back him up. It is, in fact, Charles' honesty that lent authenticity and credibility to Mr Kachingwe's truth. His decision to 'come out in the open' strongly underscores his need to demonstrate his true nature, to open up for the world to see him as he truly is. Again, his steadfastness, faithfulness and courage in protecting the identity of his partner not minding the difficulty he has to face is worthy of note.

Besides, Charles claim that he is gay by nature introduces a pre-deterministic twist to the debate. For this reason, Charles claim will be evaluated using the theory of idealism and materialism. In other words, to what extent can idealism and materialism help in understanding

Charles' conduct? Idealism is a philosophical world view that places primacy on mind over matter. Hence, idealism favours the concept of character as innate and inborn. This is opposed to materialism that supports the supremacy of matter over mind and the physical sphere of reality over the mystical. Hence, materialism is in line with the concept of character as acquired through nurture and experience.

Evaluating Charles action based on these two strands, from the idealist perspective Charles' action appears to be predestined, and determined, and programmed for him from birth. This aligns with Charles' self-assessment. This, however, is at variance with his society's understanding of the issue. For his society his claim is unsubstantiated, his action evil, and a product of dangerous influence from tourist and exposure to western literature. In other words, his society's perspective is in line with the materialist stance that man is morally neutral and blank and requires nurture and experience to become moral. Does this explain Charles conduct? His father claimed to be as shocked as everyone over the revelation. Equally, Ozumba's prescription that it is "the duty of every family to groom its wards in the order of communal morality, customs and tradition," (60) is hardly helpful in understanding Charles' situation. Importantly, does his society's denial of his claim automatically invalidate it? The fallacy of appeal to ignorance cautions against the acceptance or non-acceptance of a belief or the existence of a thing purely on the grounds that the person giving the verdict lack the proof or otherwise of the issue in question. Charles action somewhat symbolises the tension between the idealist and the materialist view point. For him, his conduct is based on something innate while for his society it is explainable through experience and nurture, which he denies.

The main problem of gay rights in Africa, however, is that it comes with a cultural price which most African communities cannot pay without a complete erosion of the traditional pillars in which their society stand. The complex tangle of customs, traditions and norms that constitute an African marriage, for instance, cannot be subdued under a homosexual arrangement. Among the Igbos in Nigeria, for example, a male child is highly valued as the upholder of the family name. This is because he is the one who stays, marries a wife and continues to keep his family linage unlike a daughter who is expected to marry into another family and leave. In such an arrangement there is no cultural space for a man to marry another man. It will be regarded as a cultural suicide and the kinsmen from both sides will ensure that it does not happen. Given that in African society the sanctity of culture is derived from experience of what is best for humanity, promoting gay activity will bring unnecessary confusion to gender roles which as in the case of the Igbo society will seriously disturb the family arrangement on which their society rests. The fact that homosexual activity forecloses the act of procreation sets it totally against the Igbo cultural belief that children are necessary, at times the only necessary, reason for marriage. As such any arrangement that threatens this already sabotages the entire fabric of the Igbo system. Right or wrong African culture is in danger and the only viable option is to protect it. This, perhaps, encapsulates the main difficulty of Charles' position: how does his plight pass the normative test? How can his behaviour pass as what 'ought' to be acceptable? These are some of the critical issues facing gay people in most African societies. The question is: should a system that the majority sanctions as beneficial for human progress, advancement and development give way to one that undermines their sense of identity and judgment about what is best for them? This question, however, invites further probing. Should those who find themselves outside the fold of acceptable cultural norm be treated as outcast, especially, if as they claim they are acting true to their nature? Is it possible that there are facts humans may be incapable of discovering? To what extent is cultural intolerance, even where majority is favoured, good for human progress? Fundamentally, is culture superior to nature? What kind of dialectical synthesis will resolve

the tension between upholding action that falls outside communal acceptance and the recognition to respect and accommodate unique differences? Are there merits to the cultural stance of African's concerning homosexuality?

There are no easy answers to any of these questions. If like Bruce Janz argued that understanding the place(s) of philosophy is crucial to understanding how philosophy can deal with human meaning (105) then it will be difficult to distance African culture from acceptance or non-acceptance of homosexuality. Even in African countries where gay is legalised there remains an uneasy calm surrounding its acceptance. The murder of Mushin Hendricks, an openly gay imam, on February 15, 2025 in South Africa was suspected to be linked to his promotion of gay activities. As such a philosophical interrogation for this study incorporates paying serious attention to the social, cultural, religious, ideological orientation of the African people. Indeed, Pope Francis' in his *Fiducia Supplicans* declaration of 2023 is very mindful of this. He enjoined priests while dispensing same-sex blessings to take into account the context, the sensitivities, the places where one lives and adopt the most appropriate ways especially in the case of Africa which he referred to as a "special case." In this wise, Pope Francis' position acts as a bridge and a more rational approach between African culture that is totally opposed to gay activities and African homosexuals like Charles in need of integration. While recognising the need for cultural context and sensitivities to be respected in the handling of gay matters, the Pope submits that God's mercy should not be denied anyone who willingly asks for it as such demonstrates one's trust in God and the desire to live according to His commandments. Equally, Jesus' response in Luke 5:27-32 when he was queried about eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners is instructive. He said that "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." What Jesus' response points to is that God's mercy is for all and His goodness is active in the lives of all who seek Him. Indeed, Charles insists that he "is deeply religious, a follower of Jesus Christ" (60).The push for gay marriage may be irreconcilable with the cultural arrangements of most African societies but the understanding that some Africans may be gay cannot be denied. Indeed, at a fundamental level, Charles' fight as a representative of homosexual people in Africa is a claim to existence, the right to live what to him is a normal life. His plight, then, calls for a broader interrogation of sexuality that recognises the different strands of sexual orientation, avoids criminalisation and essentialist interpretation of issues that are not properly understood, and points out our shared humanity as the most important consideration.

Conclusion

As disturbing as the gay issue is to African society, it cannot be wished away. There is need for African societies to keep open channels of investigation and understanding. This entails that from time to time we must revisit the drawing board and redefine what is important. Is a person automatically evil for being gay? Tagore submits that "if you shut your door to all errors truth will be shut out" (129). As such it is important that African societies continue to aspire towards the kind of dialectical synthesis that offer broad scope of understanding and knowledge, particularly, on contentious issues whose ontology do not yield easily to interpretation. In all, "Love on Trial", calls attention to a need for a broader interrogation of sexuality that recognises the different strands of sexual orientation, avoids criminalisation and essentialist interpretation of issues that are not properly understood, and points up our shared humanity as the most important consideration.

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RECONCILING TRADITIONAL AFRICAN TEMPORALITY WITH MODERN DEVELOPMENT: MBITI'S FRAMEWORK AND NIGERIAN INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This article critically examines John Samuel Mbiti's African concept of time and its implications for infrastructural development in Nigeria. Mbiti posits that African time is two-dimensional, emphasising the past and present while virtually neglecting the future, which influences decision-making, project management, and policy implementation in Nigeria's infrastructural landscape. By engaging with Mbiti's temporal framework and assessing how cultural values affect development projects and Nigeria's socioeconomic fabric, this study investigates the impact of time consciousness on the country's economic progress through a comparative analysis with Western notions of time and case studies of infrastructural initiatives. The cultural dimensions of time in Nigeria are explored through the lens of African philosophy and indigenous cosmologies, particularly focusing on Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa traditions, revealing how time is conceptualised as a relational, cyclical, and event-based phenomenon that intersects with infrastructural planning and development. The article argues for a paradigm shift towards integrating structured time planning with cultural sensitivities to improve infrastructure development, recommending revisions to time perception policies, fostering interdisciplinary approaches to future-oriented planning, and adopting culturally attuned participatory strategies while maintaining efficiency. The study concludes that Nigeria's infrastructure development must embrace cultural sensitivity while implementing structured planning mechanisms to reconcile African time consciousness with modern efficiency and pave the way for sustainable and successful infrastructure initiatives.

Keywords: African philosophy, time, infrastructural development, Nigeria, John S. Mbiti, cultural values, policy implications.

Introduction

Infrastructural development is essential for national progress, as it influences economic growth, connectivity, and overall societal advancement. However, the implementation of large-scale infrastructure projects in Nigeria has been plagued by delays, inefficiency, and inconsistency. Scholars have often attributed these challenges to governance issues, corruption,

and resource-allocation problems. However, an under-studied dimension is the role of cultural perceptions of time in shaping these inefficiencies.

John Samuel Mbiti (1969) presents a unique conceptualisation of African time, arguing that traditional African societies focus on the past and present while treating the future as practically non-existent. This view contrasts sharply with Western time perceptions, which prioritise future planning and structured scheduling. The present article examines Mbiti's theory of time and its implications for infrastructural development in Nigeria. By evaluating case studies and comparing African time constructs with Western notions, this study explores whether Mbiti's philosophical framework inadvertently contributes to infrastructural inefficiencies and delays in Nigeria. Examining the intersection of the African concept of time and infrastructural development in Nigeria would unearth the contemporaneous significance of studies on indigenous epistemic architecture. The paper investigates how cultural values and perceptions of time influence decision-making, project management, and policy implementation in Nigeria's infrastructural landscape. This study assesses the impact of time consciousness on a country's economic progress through systemic and critical notions of time, and case studies of infrastructural initiatives.

The article explores the cultural dimensions of time in Nigeria through the lens of African philosophy and indigenous cosmologies, with a particular focus on Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa traditions. This shows how time is conceptualised as a relational, cyclical, and event-based phenomenon that intersects with infrastructural planning and development. Understanding the cyclic and nonlinear nature of time would engender a paradigm shift towards integrating structured time planning with cultural sensitivities to improve infrastructure development. By engaging with Mbiti's temporal framework and assessing its relevance to contemporary development challenges, this research contributes to ongoing dialogue on culturally appropriate development strategies. This study offers insights into how Nigeria can reconcile traditional time perceptions with the demands of modern infrastructure projects, potentially paving the way for more effective and sustainable development initiatives.

Mbiti's Concept of Time: A Critical Exposition

John S. Mbiti, introduced a distinctive interpretation of time in African thought in his work, particularly in *African Religions and Philosophy* (1969). He argues that traditional African societies possess a cyclical and past-oriented conception of time, which contrasts sharply with the linear, future-oriented model prevalent in Western thought. For him, African societies perceive time as cyclical and rooted in lived experiences and tangible events rather than abstract units of measurement. He writes:

> African peoples have no 'belief in progress' in the linear sense, the idea that the development of human activities and achievements moves from a lower to a higher degree. The people neither plan for a distant future nor 'build castles in the air (23).

This assertion suggests that development strategies that are dependent on long-term forecasting may be a struggle in African societies. Infrastructure planning often relies on future projections, structured scheduling, and timelines, elements that are absent in traditional African conceptions of time.

Furthermore, Mbiti emphasises that time in African cultures is measured through events rather than numerical sequences. The rhythm of life is dictated by seasons, communal ceremonies, and generational cycles rather than clocks and calendars (16). This orientation significantly affects perceptions of progress and development, as infrastructural projects often require meticulous long-term planning, an approach that clashes with the event-based African

time model. For Mibiti, there are Two-Dimensional Time models within African intellectual thought:

- Sasa (present and immediate past): This includes events that have just occurred or are about to occur imminently. It is the most significant dimension in African life.
- Zamani (distant past): This encompasses the deep past, including mythic and ancestral time. Events eventually move from Sasa to Zamani, where they are remembered and ritualised.

According to Mbiti, the future is virtually non-existent in traditional African thought because it has not been experienced and thus holds little existential or spiritual weight (17).

Mbiti's model suggests that African societies are deeply rooted in memory, ancestry, and communal experience. Time is not an abstract continuum, but a lived, experiential reality. This has implications for ethics, religion, and social organisation, where the past serves as a moral compass and guide. Furthermore, Mbiti's perspective on African spirituality emphasises the importance of communities and relationships in personal development. His view that it takes an entire village to raise a child suggests a cyclical and communal view of time, where knowledge and wisdom are passed down through generations within a village setting (Mbiti, 1969; Masango, 2006). Interestingly, this aligns with broader concepts of time, as noted by Ringel (2016). Ringel mentioned different versions of time, including cyclical time, and explored the notion of "future-tricking" as a form of temporal agency. This view highlights the diversity of temporal perspectives across cultures.

John S. Mbiti's interpretation of time in African philosophy—particularly his assertion that traditional African societies are predominantly past-oriented—has been both influential and controversial. While his work opens up new avenues for understanding African worldviews, it has also drawn criticism for its methodological and philosophical limitations. For instance, Mbiti's claim that African societies lack the concept of the future and are primarily concerned with the present and past *(Sasa and Zamani)* has been criticised for overgeneralising diverse African cultures. Moses Òkè (2005) argues that such a sweeping claim fails to account for the plurality of African ontologies, many of which do recognise future-oriented thinking, especially in ritual, agriculture, and governance (26–28). Others have also enacted an epistemological enquiry into Mbiti's view that denies Africans a concept of future time. This is because such a view implies an inability to engage in scientific reasoning or long-term planning. It can be considered both inaccurate and potentially damaging, as it risks reinforcing colonial stereotypes of African irrationality (Òkè 2005; Adesuyi, 2017).

In the same vein, Scott A. Moreau points out that Mbiti's conclusions are largely drawn from linguistic and anecdotal evidence, rather than systematic philosophical analysis epistemologies (37–39). As such, Mbiti's framework could be adjudged to be shaped by Western intellectual categories, which may not align with indigenous African intellectual heritage (Oluwole 2015; Oyekunle 2024). Furthermore, Mbiti's binary model of *Sasa* and *Zamani* could be considered too rigid and exclusionary to capture the dynamic and context-dependent nature of temporal African thought. For instance, the Yoruba incorporates both cyclical and linear notions of time, depending on whether one is dealing with cosmology, ethics, or social planning (Adesuyi 2017; Jeko and Ayomiposi, 2024; Onuh 2018). This suggests a stance of a more flexible and pragmatic notion of African conceptions of time

Mbiti's emphasis on community and intergenerational relationships in African spirituality implies a cyclical communal understanding of time. His concept of time can be adjudged to align with broader anthropological discussions on diverse cultural conceptions of temporality. Mbiti's concept of time remains a foundational contribution to African philosophy, opening the intellectual vista for deeper explorations into how African communities understand

existence, memory, and destiny. While some of the critiques noted above reveal conceptual and methodological limitations, John Mbiti's work remains the cornerstone of African philosophy. His insightful model should be seen as a starting point for diverse, dynamic, and future-conscious ways in which African societies understand and live time, rather than a definitive account of African temporality. Thus, this paper is not entirely concerned with critique, but borders on the applicability of the temporality of time to contemporaneous existential challenges in Nigeria - the issue of infrastructural development. In the next section, we shall examine the cultural dimensions of time in Nigeria through the lens of African philosophy and indigenous cosmologies, with a focus on the Nigerian cultures of Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa traditions. It is not saying that these are the only cultures of Nigeria or Arica, but to use these cultures and their cultural views as a genus from an African perspective. The paper hopes to, via this exposition, unearth how time is conceptualised not merely as a chronological sequence but as a relational, cyclical, and event-based phenomenon; and how such conceptualisation intersects with infrastructural planning and development in Nigeria.

Cultural Dimensions of Time in Nigeria

Time is taken here as a cultural construct, and as such, it is not universally perceived, but is often grounded within the epistemic underpinnings of any cultural usage. In African philosophy, particularly within Nigerian contexts, time is often understood not as a linear continuum, but as a cyclical and event-oriented phenomenon. This conception influences everything, from agricultural practices to moral reasoning and intergenerational relationships. As John Mbiti famously asserted, "Africans are never in a hurry", not because of indolence, but because time is experienced through the rhythm of life and community events rather than abstract chronology (17).

In Nigeria, diverse ethnic groups such as Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa possess distinct yet overlapping conceptions of time rooted in their cosmological frameworks that shape temporal consciousness in ways that challenge Western linear models, with implications for ethics, development, and social organisation. In many Nigerian cultures, time is intimately tied to communal events and ancestral memories.

The Yorubas

Among the Yoruba, for instance, time is marked by festivals, rites of passage, and agricultural cycles (Adesuyi, 2017; Jeko and Ayomiposi, 2024; Oke, 2005). Indeed, the Yoruba notion of time is deeply embedded in language, rituals, and cosmology. Terms like *àkókò* (moment), *ìgbà* (period), and *àsìkò* (season) reflect a nuanced temporal vocabulary that resists rigid linearity (Ayoade, Fayemi 2016). The Yoruba concept of *àkókò* (time) is closely linked to events and natural cycles rather than strict chronological ordering (Ayoade, 1984). As such, time is experienced through events, such as festivals, rites of passage, and agricultural cycles, rather than abstract units. Yoruba cosmology, centred on the Orisha pantheon and the concept of *Ayanmo* (destiny), situates time within a metaphysical order in which the past and present are more ontologically significant than the future (Abimbola 1975; Dopamu, 2008; Oladipupo, 2018). This cosmological viewpoint supports a three-dimensional model of time: the past (which is known and revered), the present (which is lived), and the future (which is uncertain and less emphasised). As Fayemi (2016) argues, this model challenges the claim that African thought lacks a future orientation; rather, it prioritises lived experiences and ancestral continuity.

The Igbos

In the same vein, the Igbo cosmological notions permit the conceptualisation of time *oge* as event-based and relational, thus emphasising the appropriateness of action rather than its punctuality (Okoro 2010, 45). This aligns with Mbiti's notion of "potential time", which refers to events that are expected or imminent, as opposed to a distant, abstract future (Mbiti 1969). The Igbo calendar is structured around market days (Eke, Orie, Afo, Nkwo) and agricultural cycles, reflecting a cosmology that links human activity with cosmic rhythms (Okoro 2010). The New Yam Festival (*Iri Ji)* highlights how time is ritually reset through offerings to the earth's deity, *Ala*, and ancestral spirits. The festival marks not just a harvest but also a moral renewal, reinforcing communal bonds and ecological stewardship (Okoro 2010). The concept of *chi* (personal god or destiny) introduces a metaphysical dimension to time, in which individual life paths are seen as unfolding within a divinely sanctioned temporal order. Igbo cosmology reflects a cyclical understanding of existence, where life, death, and rebirth are interconnected. In this context, time is not a straight line, but a spiral of existential recurrences (Eruka, 2021).

The Hausas

The Hausa traditional cosmological worldview integrates Islamic temporal frameworks with indigenous cosmological elements (Last, 2021). Time is structured around five daily prayers: *salat*, the lunar calendar, and agricultural seasons. However, pre-Islamic Hausa cosmology, as preserved in oral traditions, also emphasised the cyclical time marked by festivals, initiation rites, and ancestral veneration (Barkindo, 1989). The Hausa concept of *Lokaci* (time) encompasses both the divine timing *kaddara* and human agency. This duality reflects a worldview where fate and effort coexist: a temporal consciousness shaped by a blend of Islamic eschatology and indigenous pragmatism, where time is both a divine gift and a moral test (Adamu 2001). As such, the advent of a season of rainfall is not credited to the calendar but is believed to come whenever the ancestors and Allah agree to let it come.

Obtainable to these traditional Nigerian cosmologies is the view that cultural dimensions of time in Nigeria reveal a complex interplay of cosmology, ritual, and lived experience. The Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa traditions offer alternative models of temporality that emphasise relationality, cyclicality, and moral embeddedness. Time within Nigerian traditional viewpoints, as shown above, is not a neutral metric, but a lived, relational experience. In Nigeria, temporal consciousness is deeply embedded in cosmological systems that shape social organisation, ethical reasoning, and ecological practices. Nigerian cosmological tradition situates time within a moral and communal framework. The past is not merely a history, but a source of ethical guidance; the ancestors are not dead, but active participants in communal life. This temporal orientation within African cosmology fosters a sense of continuity and accountability that transcends individual lifespans (Babalola and Alokan, 2013). The cultural dimension of time within Nigerian culture informs not only how time is perceived but also how it is lived ethically. In the context of this study's concern about the intersectionality of time and development, the exposition of traditional cosmologies becomes significant as it correlates with Oladipo 's (2006) view that development must be rooted in indigenous temporalities that value sustainability, renewal, and communal well-being. Thus, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of African temporal consciousness on cyclical and event-based times and its implications for development.

Infrastructural Development and African Time

Infrastructural development is often framed within the Western paradigms of linear progress, efficiency, and future-oriented planning. However, intellectual focus now borders on questioning the imposition of Western linear time models on development paradigms and calls for a culturally grounded approach to infrastructure policy and practice (Metz, 2020; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012, 2019; Oyekunle 2022; Mignolo, 2013, 2019).

Drawing on Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa temporal frameworks, this paper argues that Nigeria's indigenous conceptions of time—shaped by cosmology, ritual, and communal life—offer alternative temporal logics that influence how infrastructure is conceived, used, and maintained. Yoruba's cosmological stance fosters a planning culture that prioritises immediate communal needs and ancestral continuity over long-term projections. The Igbos temporal framework on time, reflecting a spiral understanding, makes infrastructure to be based on the alignment of such developmental projects with communal rhythms and ancestral expectations, rather than abstract timelines. However, the Hausa worldview of temporal synthesis introduces a theological dimension of infrastructural development, in which infrastructural projects and outcomes are contingent on divine will and communal harmony.

While these worldviews have potential challenges, which are discussed below, it is worth noting that the African conception of time engenders ancestral accountability and communal memory. This view allows leaders to be judged not by future promises but by their alignment with past legacies and present obligations. To this end, projects that lack symbolic or ancestral resonance are often viewed as suspicious or apathetic (Babalola and Alokan 2013). This explains why there is a sea of abandonment projects within the Nigerian society. Development must be rooted in indigenous epistemology (Oladipo, 2006). Developmental projects tailored alongside non-indigenous paradigms and frameworks would lead to "white elephant" projects that are out of sync with local needs. On the other hand, a culturally grounded approach would prioritise infrastructure that supports cyclical livelihoods, such as irrigation systems, seasonal roads, and communal markets, over abstract megaprojects. Falola (2022) believes that colonial and postcolonial infrastructure projects often failed because they ignored indigenous temporalities and imposed rigid timelines that clashed with local rhythms. Infrastructure projects in Nigeria frequently stall because of the mismatch between bureaucratic and communal times. For instance, In Osun State, road construction projects have historically encountered delays because of the need to consult traditional authorities and align them with ritual calendars. During the Osun-Osogbo festival period, construction activities are often paused to respect sacred timelines and avoid spiritual disruption. This case not only underscores how Yoruba cyclical time and sacred seasons influence project timelines and community acceptance but also reflects what Mbiti (1969) calls the "phenomenological time" of African societies, where events unfold when conditions are spiritually and socially appropriate. Nonetheless, proper planning that considers indigenous temporalities and context of the location of a project would avert such delays. In Lagos, several urban renewal projects have struggled because of a clash between bureaucratic deadlines and community-based temporalities (Gilbert and Shi, 2023). For instance, the demolition of informal settlements often disregards the time needed for communal negotiation and ancestral consultation, leading to resistance and legal challenges (Afinow, 2018; Bakare, 2024; Dano *et al., 2019*). These examples reflect the Yoruba's understanding of time – *àsìkò*, as spiritually charged and event-based (Fayemi 2016). Infrastructure, in this context, is not merely a technical endeavour but a communal and metaphysical undertaking.

The cyclical conception of time prevalent in traditional African cosmology influences the maintenance of infrastructure. A perfect example is seen in Igbo communities, where

market squares and shrines are periodically renewed through communal labour, reflecting a model of infrastructure as a living entity. In contrast, state-led projects often deteriorate owing to a lack of local ownership and misalignment with indigenous maintenance cycles (Umar et al. 2019). In southeastern Nigeria, the redevelopment of the Nkwo Nnewi market faced resistance when planners failed to consider the Igbo four-day market cycle (*Eke, Orie, Afo, Nkwo*) (Onumonu and Anutanwa, 2017). Traders and elders emphasised that disrupting this rhythm would not only affect commerce, but also spiritual and communal balance. Eventually, the project was redesigned to accommodate the traditional calendar, demonstrating the relational and cyclical nature of Igbo time - *oge* (Okoro 2010). This case underscores the importance of aligning infrastructure with indigenous temporality. The market, as a socioeconomic and spiritual hub, cannot be divorced from the cosmological order that governs its operation (Eruka, 2021).

In Zaria, Northern Nigeria, a major water infrastructure project was delayed because of misalignment with Ramadan and other Islamic observances (Berkley Centre for Religion 2018). Community leaders emphasised that project milestones should respect prayer schedules and fasting periods. Additionally, traditional beliefs about divine timing and *kaddara* influence public expectations about the completion of the project (Adamu 2001). This case reveals a dual temporal consciousness in Hausa communities: one shaped by Islamic eschatology and another by indigenous pragmatism. Infrastructure is thus evaluated not only by technical standards but also by its resonance with divine and communal timing. Hence, the appeal to Hausa Fulani view that "Any engagement [project] that ignores the time of Allah will not flow with *Albarka* [blessing]." A study on transport infrastructure in Kebbi, Sokoto, and Zamfara states revealed that poor planning and lack of coordination with local temporal practices led to underutilised or deteriorating road networks (Hamza, 2019; Saleh and Ghani, 2009). If the indigenous timeframe on seasonal migration patterns and agricultural calendars had been factored into the design, a situation of having roads that were impassable during key farming periods would have been avoided.

These case studies reveal a common thread: across Nigeria's major ethnic groups, time is not an abstract metric but a lived, moral, and cosmological reality. Whether through the Yoruba ritual calendars, Igbo market rhythms, or Hausa-Islamic observances, infrastructure must align with indigenous temporalities to be effective and sustainable. The failure to recognise these cultural dimensions often results in stalled projects, community resistance, and infrastructural decay. As Falola (2022) argues, development initiatives that ignore local epistemologies of time risk becoming "white elephant" projects - technically sound but socially irrelevant.

On the other hand, existential realities within the Nigerian system show ample infrastructural developmental deficits. The Nigerian government has historically grappled with infrastructural setbacks owing to temporal inconsistencies and shifting development priorities. For instance, the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, initially scheduled for completion in 2013 after more than a decade of commencement, has undergone continuous revisions owing to bureaucratic delays and cultural influences on scheduling (The Guardian, 2021). It was not until late 2022 that the project was concluded. Likewise, Third Mainland Bridge maintenance schedules have faced interruptions caused by event-oriented time consciousness, prolonging essential repairs (Guardian, 2015). The current mega project of the Tinubu led-Federal Government: the Lagos - Calabar Coastal Highway - has been criticised as moving at a snail speed.

Obtainable thereof is the fact that a significant consequence of African time in infrastructural development is its impact on project management. The decision-making

processes in Nigerian infrastructure planning, for example, often suffer from extensive deliberations and consultations. The prioritisation of consensus over efficiency contributes to extended project timelines, as decision makers aim to ensure community acceptance rather than meeting strict deadlines (Oyegun, 2012). Additionally, compensation demands from indigenous populations, often tied to cultural beliefs, further hinder infrastructure projects. In some regions, traditional land ownership rights require prolonged negotiations and appeasement rituals before construction can commence (Sanumioluwa 2021). Such cultural interjections illustrate the far-reaching effects of African times on infrastructural progress.

In addition, the complexity of Nigeria's diverse cultural landscape engenders a complicated relationship between time perception and infrastructure planning. Among the Yoruba, Hausa-Fulani, and Igbo populations, varying temporal orientations emerged, often influencing work ethics, decision-making, and project execution. Igbo people perceive time as fluid, emphasising communal interactions and responsibilities over fixed schedules (Eruka, 2022). Hausa-Fulani time consciousness, shaped by Islamic traditions, prioritises a structured discipline but remains flexible in communal settings (Last, 2021). These differing conceptions illustrate the challenges of implementing uniform infrastructure policies across Nigeria. Large-scale projects such as the ongoing Federal Government Lagos-Calabar Coastal High-way would often require synchronised coordination among different regions because traditional African time perceptions create disparities in project adherence, leading to delays and inefficiencies.

Policy Implications and Recommendations

To mitigate infrastructural inefficiencies caused by African time perceptions, policymakers must adopt a hybrid approach that blends cultural awareness with structured time planning. This involves:

1. Community Engagement Models – Infrastructure projects should incorporate culturally attuned participatory strategies to ensure local acceptance while maintaining efficiency (Okonedo, 2018).
2. Flexible Time Management Policies: By recognising Nigeria's varied time orientations; policies should accommodate cultural flexibility while enforcing critical deadlines to prevent excessive delays.
3. Education and Awareness Campaigns– Government initiatives should emphasise the importance of structured time planning and encourage long-term forecasting in infrastructural development (Ola, 2020).
4. Interdisciplinary Approaches: Integrating African philosophy with modern development economics can create informed strategies that balance tradition with progress (Gautier *et al.,* 2020, Mignolo, 2013).

Conclusion

This article explored the complex intersection between John S. Mbiti's concept of African time and infrastructural development in Nigeria, revealing the multifaceted relationships between cultural values and project execution. The study has demonstrated that while Mbiti's framework offers valuable insights into traditional African temporality, its rigid application does not fully account for the adaptive strategies employed in modern African societies, particularly in the context of development initiatives. The study concludes that Nigeria's infrastructure development must embrace a nuanced understanding of time that respects cultural values while implementing structured planning mechanisms. This hybrid approach aims to reconcile African time consciousness with modern efficiency, potentially

paving the way for more sustainable and successful infrastructure initiatives. In conclusion, while Mbiti's concept of African time provides a valuable starting point for understanding temporal perceptions in Nigeria, the complexities of modern development necessitate a flexible and adaptive approach. By acknowledging the cultural dimensions of time and integrating them into development strategies, Nigeria can potentially overcome many of the challenges that have historically plagued its infrastructure projects. This study contributes to the ongoing dialogue on culturally appropriate development strategies and offers a pathway for reconciling traditional values with the demands of contemporary infrastructure needs.

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PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF INTER-RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN SOCIO-POLITICAL SPACE

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Abstract
This paper is a critical discourse on inter-religious conflict as a variety of identity-based conflict in Nigeria that explores its causes and effects, particularly in the post-independence period. Despite the stark reality of the grave consequences of countless cases of violent encounters predominantly among the adherents of the two foreign religions over the years, religion still control the psyche of many to the extent of committing heinous acts against humankind with impunity. This paper employed critical-analytical method to examine the dynamism of inter-religious conflict with data collected through documentary evidence that comprises books, journal articles and other textual materials. The article contends that religion may continue to be a dicey and controversial issue in the country because the record of religious conflicts has revealed that religion as a form of identity plays a dominant and influential role in Nigerian socio-economic issues and political matters. This article, therefore, concludes that there is need for effective religious education that will not only promote mutual understanding, but also inculcate emotional intelligence in citizenry. Besides, media censorship, involvement of community leaders, and adoption of golden rule are imperative in preventing religious conflicts that contribute significantly to national insecurity.

Keywords: Conflict, Religion, Nigerian Politics, Identity, Violence

Introduction

It is an epistemic truth that religion is a striking and dynamic phenomenon that cannot be ignored by any human person including the sceptics, agnostics and even the atheists. This is not only because of the controversial nature of its unverifiable claims, but also for its potent and wide-ranging influences and effects on human life, emotions, and relationships as well as its socio-political and economic dimensions in human societies across the globe. It is a statement of fact that religion wields the potency to control man's life as some individuals in

recorded history have abandoned their material possessions and isolated themselves from other people for ascetic life while countless number of people have lost their lives on account of their religious beliefs and convictions. Thus, religion has such a powerful grip on humankind that it has hardly been perceived to be given less attention in any human culture or civilization since the world began. (Omoregbe, 13).

However, one of the major worrisome issues of ultimate concern in this contemporary period of a globalized world is the problem of religious conflict (Olupona, 1). Religion is both functional and dysfunctional in nature and thus has been rightly regarded as a double-edged sword that has indeed cut both ways. Many of the awful periods in the history of humanity are those that witnessed the inhumaneness and brutalities of religious bigotries and extremism. It is therefore a truism that intra or inter-religious conflicts are seriously harmful to the peace and development of nations with terrible effects on those who indulge in it. History has affirmed religion as a catalyst of conflict as there were many hostilities and inter religious contentions that culminated in violence and left an ineradicable blemish on the concept of religion and inter-religious relations in different climes (Ikenga-Metuh, 10). Despite the fact that the most inspiring passages on peace or related to peaceful and harmonious relationships are found in the holy books of major world religions, the same scriptures are frequently cited to justify and promote violence. Some adherents of these religions, who claim that God is peace and that the eternal joy and peace of God surpasses human comprehension, tend to jettison this assertion when they contend over religious issues. Thus, religion, which proclaims, love, peace and harmony, is also the root cause of many conflicts, violence and wars in the global landscape (Ikenga-Metuh, 10).

Religion forms an integral part of identity construction and re-construction in politics all over the world. The history of religious differences in Africa is of importance in the analysis of conflict on the continent. In Sudan, the North and South are divided in terms of religions and this has been very instrumental to the occurrence of civil war in the country. The South is Christian and its history has been of resistance to the Islamisation of the whole country. It is discernible in Nigerian politics that the North and the South are separated by religion, and the socio-political manifestations such as voting behaviour and development in the country are identity- based owing to the interplay and affinity between ethnicity and religion. In fact, many ethnic and political conflicts have religious undertones and vice-versa, and one major reason why it has become increasingly difficult for the North and the South to be united is the differences in the different religious commitments, backgrounds, history, experiences and culture (Idowu, 18).

Religion has indeed taken a global dimension and has again occupied centre stage in world politics. Since the September 11 terrorists attack against America, which was caused by religious and ideological fundamentalists, religion has become a grave threat to global security and stability. The conflict between the Shiites and the Sunni in Iraq is a case in point. Besides, some internal conflicts such as the protracted Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria have international dimensions. For instance, a Nigerian young terrorist named Abmutalib that was arrested sometimes ago got his training in Yemen while some of those arrested were trained in Afghanistan and received foreign assistance. However, many people are incurably religious the world over and because religion is a formidable variable that permeates every aspect of national life, its role in socio-political, legal, ethical and environmental decisions globally cannot be over-emphasized. It is against this backdrop that Olupona (1) contends that religion contributes significantly to the quest for a lasting solution to global challenges, because the recommendation of possible panaceas to many problems confronting humanity are consciously or unconsciously based on religious convictions.

Conceptual Clarification

The complexity of religion as a social concept manifests in several attempts by different scholars from different disciplines to define or conceptualize it. Despite myriads of attempts, it is noteworthy that there is no universally acceptable definition of religion because the concept of religion means different things to different people who consider it from different perspectives. However, the phenomenon of religion continues to have a powerful influence in any social milieu. Etymologically, the word religion derives from three Latin words namely, *Ligare* (meaning to bind), *Relegare* (meaning to unite or to link) and *Religio* (meaning relationship). Thus, the origin of the word religion reveals that it is essentially a relationship, a link established between two persons namely, the human person and the divine personality believed to exist. It is something that links or unites man with a supreme or supernatural being, believed to exist and worshipped by man. Whether such a deity really exists or simply a figment of imagination of the religious man is not important to the concept of religion, as long as the deity is really believed by the religious man to actually exists as a reality. Hence, where a belief in a deity is lacking there can be no religion (Omoregbe, 2, Ayantayo, 25).

The concept of Supreme Being (God) is fundamental to religion and all world religions are offshoot of different cultures and part of those cultures from which they emerged (Aina, 37). Although philosophically speaking, the existence of God is not empirically verifiable and cannot be conclusively established by human reasoning, people in different cultures have strong conviction in the existence of God and other supernatural beings. Theologically, Rudolph Otto argues that every religion has God as its innermost core and without it no religion would be worthy of the name. However, some conceptualizations exclude belief in God. For instance, Buddhism is usually considered to be a religion but encompasses no belief in God such as clearly found in Judaism and Christianity. The word religion indeed has been overstretched. Some individuals uphold that belief in the fundamental goodness of man is a religion and that an ideology such as communism is or can be regarded as a religion, because it is the highest value to those who hold it. In this sense, one's religion is whatever value one holds highest in life, or whatever is one's ultimate concern. Religion has even been defined as "what one does with his leisure time." In these loose senses, everyone has a religion, since everyone has something, he values highly and everyone does something with his leisure time. Karl Marx defines it as "… the opium of the people". However, this extension of the meaning of religion to this extent, may not only deny its main purpose, but also be misleading (Hospers, 425).

Ayinla (447) conceptualizes religious conflict as the threat or actual implementation of acts, which have potential capacity to inflict physical, emotional or psychological injury on a person or property for religious objectives. According to Ushe (117), religious conflicts become violent if physical or emotional force is used to hurt or kill people. Religious conflict arises because of opposing views and monopolistic claims to religious truth by adherents of different religions in the same social milieu. This established incompatibility of religious positions often lead to incidences of opposition, antagonism, hostility, clash, violence and war between them. Religious conflicts can therefore be understood as a state of disagreement between two or among religious persons arising from the possession of absolute religious truth, which often times sparks conflict whenever the adherents of two different religious groups engage in an argument that degenerate into controversy, protest and dispute over religious beliefs and practices (Ayantayo, 59).

Inter-religious argument is closely connected to differences in religious backgrounds and traditions. Those people who engage in religious conflict fail to take cognizance of the fact that religions emanated from different cultural backgrounds. And the practice of undermining

the doctrines, seriousness, authenticity and validity of religions of other people opposing religious group in a socio-political space explains the rationale behind the thriving of inter-religious conflict in any human society. Religious conflict attracts diverse definitions from scholars that convey the same meaning of disagreement between two or more religious groups. Leveraging the idea of Lewis Coser regarding the conception of conflict, Otite and Albert (1999) perceive religious conflicts as struggle over values and claims to scarce resources, status and power in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals (Ushe, 118).

Global Historical Antecedents of Religious Conflict

A critical reflection on the past reveals that the recorded world history contains unpleasant narratives of atrocities perpetrated against humanity in God's name whenever there is an inter-religious or even an intra faith competition for doctrinal and political hegemony in any country of the world. The introduction and dominance of Christianity in Rome brought about untold bloodshed and misery on the people within the empire after Emperor Constantine (324-336AD) got converted to Christianity and compelled Rome to adopt it as a state religion (Takaya, 109). From the time of Emperor Constantine through the medieval period, Christianity fought several battles that gave rise to the Greco-Roman empire until the establishment of Islam in Persia (Danjibo, 49).

The establishment of Islam in 5th century prompted the Muslim Turks to embark on destructive warfare that led to the creation of Ottoman Empire. Several battles of high magnitude of destruction of both human and material resources were recorded in the history of the beginning, expansion and strengthening of the Islamic religion within the first eight provinces comprising Mecca, Medina, Syria, Jasira (Mesopotamia), Basra (Persia or Iran), Kufa (Iraq), Egypt, Palestine and especially during its spread to north Africa, the Mediterranean and Europe. The crusade spearheaded by Peter the Hermit in 1096AD, which was a political warfare between Muslims and Christians over territorial control, led to the movement of over six million people in Europe to repossess Christianity's homeland from Islamic political authority and governance. This action degenerated to protracted violent conflict that persisted for two centuries, leading to millions of fatalities of the adherents of the two religions (Takaya, 109). These historical accounts validate the assertion that the "blood of the martyrs" established many Christian and Muslim nations. Indeed, both Christianity and Islam are contending forces of change and civilization and more often through violent means.

From the twentieth century hither to, religion has continued to be perceived as one of the major causes of war and violence the world over. Some of the international and national conflicts have religious undercurrents. The Arab/Israeli conflict, the Iran/Iraq war, the Civil War in Sudan, Hindu/Sikh and Hindu/Muslim conflict in India, Lebanon Christian /Muslim conflict and Northern Ireland Protestant/Catholic conflict were fought under religious banners. Religious extremism was responsible for the demise of President Answar Sadat and Indira Gandhi who were notable world leaders in the 1980s. (Ikenga-Metuh, 10). The Afghanistan conflict and 9/11 terrorist attack against America had a connection to religious fanaticism. Many contemporary African societies have also witnessed inter-religious wars and riots, which are most prominent of all types of conflict on the continent.

The upsurge of religious fundamentalism in Africa promotes religious fanaticism and intolerance (Ositelu, 87). In Africa, inter-religious conflicts are characterized by use of abusive words, press wars, denigration of other people's religion, verbal assaults and finally physical combat, all these are accompanied by ridicule, instigation, destruction of lives and property etc. Nigeria, Iran, Sudan, Vietnam, North Korea and China are nations where religious conflicts are

rampart. Other African States with noticeable religious wars are Egypt, Tanzania, Algeria and Cote d'Ivoire where religious fanaticism, killing, destruction of human and non-human resources are regular experiences (Ayantayo, 58). The struggle for occupation of Africa by the missionaries of the two religions created acrimony, division and tension between the same people of the same traditional religious background, who were divided into two or more by new religious beliefs and practices. Religion will continue to play a vital role in global politics as long as the so-called religious people are vulnerable to political manoeuvrings as well as manipulations of some fundamentalists who use religion to cause conflict. Since people use religion to perpetrate evil and foment trouble at both local, regional and international levels, religion would continue to be a force to reckon with in international politics.

Religious Conflicts in Nigerian Political Space

The incidents of religious conflicts in the Nigerian State has an enduring historical background traversing colonialism through military rule and the present democratic experiment (Suberu and Osaghae, 2, Danjibo, 50). Nigeria is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multicultural society characterized by conflicts and human rights violations (Falola, 1, Akinwale, 266)**.** Some scholars have traced the rise and continuity of religious and ethnic conflicts in Nigeria to Lugard's amalgamation of 1914, which brought together different and incompatible ethnic and religious identities under one geographical and political entity (Adenuga, *et al.* 130). This problem is more pronounced among the majority ethnic groups of Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa-Fulani and among the adherents of the foreign but predominant religions of Islam (which is prominent in the North) and Christianity (which is prominent in the South). Thus, the three major religions namely Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion thrive side by side in the Nigerian social and political space, frequently in exasperating conflictual relationships (Manus, 40).

In Nigeria, religious pluralism is a source of potential conflicts. The history of Nigeria as an independent state and the political history of even the two received religions in Nigeria is replete with occurrences of violence and bloodshed in different part of the country, especially, the northern states. Islam and Christianity have made large particularist claims, each claiming to be the only true religion. The rivalry snowballs to hatred and mutual suspicion, which often culminates in religious conflict. Although the phenomenon symbolizes the history of the country, especially in the 1980s, the period from 1990s manifests incessant inter-ethnic rivalries, religious bigotry and upsurge in conflict escalation in the country (Obadiah, 156). Before electoral conflicts became a new challenge, most of the violent conflicts in Northern Nigeria were either purely religious or ethno-religious conflicts (Danjibo, 50). Thus, identity conflict and violence frequently manifest in the uncouth expression of ethnicity and religion, which have played dominant and influential roles in Nigeria's politics (Afrobarometer, 2002; Ayinla, 447). Besides, religion and politics have been bedfellows throughout Nigerian history and since mid-seventies, religion has become a formidable force that influences politicians, the electorates and voting patterns (Falola, 2).

Although religion exudes some moral values, the incessant manifestations of religious conflicts and its awful consequences and fatalities have led to the skepticism of many citizens regarding the capability of religion to drive a sustainable peace in Nigeria (Abdul Raheem, 70, Adedeji, 13). The fact that some religious radicals oftentimes stir many religious violence has made some people to query the genuineness of the teachings of peace and love in Christianity and Islam. This is because there is a dim reflection of this impeccable concept of peace in the relationship that exists particularly among the devotees of these two foreign religions down the memory lane (Falola, 3; Ushe, 5, Abodunrin *et al.* 2024). Although, violent identity-based

conflicts are not new in Nigeria, its dramatic upsurge in the country, especially after the return to the current democratic dispensation has made the issue quite worrisome.

The beginning of religion-driven violent conflicts in Nigeria (which dominated the North) can be traced back to 1953 Kano riots between the Northerners and the Southerners. This was followed by a serious tension during the period of investigation by the Willinks Commission in 1957, owing to the fear of the minority groups especially in Northern Nigeria for the Islamization of the north. The Tiv riot of 1960 had religious undertones and the religious tension between Muslims and Christians also occurred during the 1977/78 Constituent Assembly, arising from some Muslim delegates' insistence on the establishment of a Federal Shara Court of Appeal. The North also witnessed Maitasine crisis in Kano 1980, Kaduna and Maiduguri in 1982, Yola in 1984 and Gombe in 1985 (Bako, 2023). There was a tension between Muslims and Christians in 1986 over Nigeria's membership of Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), which the Christians saw as a move to Islamize the country and the wanton destruction of property of Muslims by Christian in Kafanchan in 1987. Other notable religious crisis are Zango-Kataf crisis of 1992, the November, 2002 Miss World Crisis and the February 2006 crisis in Maiduguri, Kontagora, Aba, Umuahia as a result of the cartooning of the Prophet Muhammed in Denmark. Religious conflicts were also witnessed in Jos in 2001, 2004 and 2008 with reprisal attack mostly in Kano (Danjibo, 56).

Recent religious conflicts also included violent occurrences in Bauchi in November 2008 and February 2009 and in Niger State in April 2009. There was hijab crisis in secondary schools in Ilorin between 2021 and 2022 (Aliyu, 2023, Gambari and Abdulhammed, 1). In May 2022, a female student was accused of blasphemy in Sokoto and was gruesomely murdered (Ewang, 2022). Furthermore, Boko Haram insurgency, which is still being experienced in Northern Nigeria started in 2009 with the intention of replacing the existing political system with an Islamic State. (Aina and Thompson, 87). In August 2004, a planned 5-day crusade by the late German evangelist Reinhard Bonnke in Kwara state provoked religious violence. The aggrieved Muslim youths claimed that the crusade clashed with Ramadan fasting. Besides, the intolerance arising from the insistence on the hijab ban by some of the secondary schools led to the protracted crisis (Akanbi, 2022). There were cases of hostility against the adherents of African Traditional Religion in Kwara State in 2023 (Ogunro, 2023).

Causes/Sources of Religious Conflict in Nigeria

There are quite a number of factors responsible for inter religious conflict in Nigeria and in other part of Africa. However, they are all interrelated and man-made. Religious conflicts, which have remained a grave issue in Nigerian socio-political history, are frequently triggered by intolerance and fanaticism envy, fear of domination, bigotry, hostility, harassment, distrust, mutual discrimination and suspicion, leading to wanton destruction of lives and properties (Sulaimon, 85, Adedeji, 8, Touitou, 863). The root of these religious conflicts mostly between Christians and Muslims is the absolutely unjustified and logically indefensible claim by each religion to be the only true religion approved by God for all mankind, that all the others are false and that its own doctrines are the only true doctrines revealed by and acceptable to God (Omoregbe, 299, Ayantayo, 12). The serious and seemingly economic problem that the country is enmeshed in for the past few decades have led to the growth of religious fanaticism among the youths and thousands of uneducated and unemployed youths have fallen easy prey to religious bigotry (Jega, 2000).

Religious differences are more important than language differences as a social cleavage that can develop into a conflict and generate more violence than other social cleavages because of the exclusivity of religion. One can speak two or more languages but one can only possess

one religion, which can be used as a sign of identity. Ethnic and religious conflicts, which are often referred to as identity conflicts, usually emanate from competition for power and resources that lead to politics of alienation and non-accommodation. Thus, the politics of exclusion is one of the underlying factors of identity conflicts all over the world (Danjibo, 50). Nigerians, like other African peoples, are incurably religious and since religion permeates every aspect of Nigerians' lives, the fundamental causes of religious conflicts in Nigeria socio-political structure more often than not are quest for political power, socio-economic issues and resource-based competitions (Jegede, 53; Adenuga *et al*, 130).

There is persistence of conflict between Muslims and Christians over conversion, missionary activities, evangelism, and staging of crusades as well as observance of religious practices. There is mutual suspicion among religious people so much that illogical meanings are given to almost every religious activity of any person whose religion is different from that of the other person. Some religious clashes are due to passion for membership, and against apostasy; prevalence of religious misconception among different religious adherents, which is precipitated by factors each of which can stand by itself as a cause of inter-religious conflict. These are ignorance, poor theological education, politicisation of religion, poor economy and high level of illiteracy of religious adherents. It has been rightly observed that most religious adherents in Africa are ignorant of the content and intent of their religions (Ayantayo, 60).

Incitement is another precipitating factor of religious conflicts in Nigeria. It is a truism that inciting one religious group against another is capable of creating violence. In recent times, the use of inciting statements and publications by different religious groups in Nigeria has resulted into violent conflicts. The mass media on many occasions have also contributed to the eruption of religious clashes in Nigeria. Most often, the actions and reactions of Christians and Muslims are determined by the mass media reports. For example, sectarian violence rocked the city of Kaduna, after a newspaper made disparaging remarks about Prophet Muhammed in the context of the Miss World beauty pageant in 2002 (Ayantayo, 2010). The role of the elites is a contributory factor to religious clashes in Nigeria. The elites in Nigeria have promoted religious violence as they represent essentially capitalists who depend on the state for survival. They are also the major player in the ethno-religious conflicts for exploitation and manipulation of the non-elites for their groups' interests, which mostly promotes division and hatred (Ayinla, 448).

Consequences of Inter-Religious Conflict in Nigeria

A critical look at inter- religious conflict shows that it has both positive effects and negative implications. However, the negative consequences significantly surpass the positive effects. Inter-religious conflict builds harmony within a religious group involved in conflict with another as members are genuinely united to collectively fight a mutual adversary. Although inter-religious conflict promotes group cohesion and more cooperation, its negative effects are untold and unquantifiable. It impedes progress and national development which manifest in terms of disharmony, lawlessness, causes socio-economic instability, insecurity and displacement, hatred, wanton destruction of lives and property as well as loss of financial opportunities (Sulaimon, 85).

The problem of religious conflict strain social relationship among people and negatively affect peaceful co-existence in the society. It leads to social dislocations, social tensions, political instability, disruption of family and communal life, general atmosphere of mistrust, fear and fury, dehumanization of women and children, increasing hunger and poverty in the society and loss of confidence in political leadership and apprehension about the system (Ayinla, 448). The disruption in family life has a serious sociological result as husbands become widowers, wives become widows, many children are turned orphans and they have to live with

such pains. It has also led to physical displacement and forced relocation of individuals, families and groups and serious humanitarian crisis in the country. The loss and damage emanating from religious violence leads to psychological trauma on the part of the affected individuals as it ingrains further conflicts and effortlessly provokes reprisal. This is because it is hard for the victims to pardon the persons or group of people involved in or responsible for their tragedy. Thus, inter religious conflicts further increases the hostility, which hitherto exists among various religious adherents (Sulaimon, 100).

Management of Inter-Religious Conflict in Nigeria

The Nigerian state has witnessed many strategies devised to combat religious conflicts and tensions. Although the government makes use of the security forces to restore order, the most favoured mechanism is the promotion of religious understanding through inter-religious/faith dialogue (Aboekwu, 54). However, this management strategy has been accused of many shortcomings (Zamani and Markus, 289), and this form of conflict seems to defy any solution or any management strategy as its reoccurs without notice in different manners from time to time (Abodunrin *et al.* 360). There is a continuous unhealthy inter-religious relation between Christians and Muslims especially in Northern Nigeria, despite various attempts made to resolve the problem (Ayantayo, 14, Ushe, 124). Based on the dynamic nature of religion, it has and may possibly remain a delicate and controversial issue in the Nigerian state because the record of religious conflicts has revealed that religion as a form of identity plays a dominant and influential role in Nigerian socio-economic issues and political matters.

Mutual suspicion defines the relationships of the three religions. The complexities of these conflicts, entwined with issues of identity, ethnicity, religion and politics, compound the challenge of finding effective and enduring solutions. It is therefore imperative to devise a holistic preventive approach that would factor in the roles of the media and community leaders in the state. There is need for religious people to have a genuine and robust religious education that will not only promote mutual understanding, but also inculcate emotional intelligence in them. Besides, media censorship, involvement of community leaders who are responsible for maintaining law and order and sustaining peace within local communities and embracing of golden rule are imperative in preventing religious conflicts that contribute significantly to national insecurity (Ayantayo, 63; Ushe, 125).

Conclusion

Religion is not based on knowledge but on belief and whatever is believed about religion may be false even though it is believed to be true. All religious traditions should be objectively considered equal as no adherent of any of the world religions can prove conclusively that his or her religion is better than any other one or is the true religion. The unjustifiable monopolistic claim to religious truth, which is the basis of rivalry, acrimony and hate should therefore be jettisoned, as there is nothing that establishes the superiority of one religion over others. Religion as a social phenomenon should be practiced based on the belief of religious individuals in the necessity of a relationship between them and the deity or deities believed to exist and should not be an obstacle to other humans' freedom, security, socio-political stability, development, harmonious relationship and societal peace.

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THE PARTIALIST INTERPRETATION OF IMMANUEL KANT'S SECOND PRINCIPLE

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Abstract
In ethical studies, some moral theories are adjudged and presented as universalist and by implication, impartialist. These theories are persuasive and have domineering influence as a result of their claim to moral impartiality. They include normative ethical theories like utilitarianism, Kantianism, and contractarianism. Kantianism expressed this moral impartialism in ethics through two moral principles- the principle of universalizability and treating persons as ends and never as means to ends. These two principles are adjudged to be universalist and impartialist in ethics. In this paper, I aim to argue that these principles are partialist even when adjudged to be impartialist. My focus will be on Kantian second moral principle- treating persons as ends and never as means to ends. I will demonstrate the partiality in this principle to establish that though this Kantian second principle is impartialist, it also has partialist interpretation. This will prove that the universalist and impartialist moral theories or principles are partialist at the same time. The paper will conclude that Kant's second moral principle is not just impartialist and partialist at the same time but that there is partiality in impartiality.

Keywords: Immanuel Kant, Impartialist, Interpretation, Partialist, Universalist

Introduction

In ethics, universalist theories (ethical utilitarianism, Kantianism, objectivism and Rawls's contractarianism, among others) are presented and interpreted as impartialist theories. This paper aims to argue that these universalist theories interpreted to be impartialist also could be given partialist interpretations. The paper will argue and demonstrate the partialist interpretation of these universalist theories through a partialist reading and interpretation of Immanuel Kant's second moral principle- treating persons as ends and never as means to ends. This principle is also known as the Categorical Imperative Principle. This paper argues that though this Kantian moral principle is classified as universalist and interpreted as an impartialist theory but unbeknown to the universalists, this principle could also be given Partialist interpretation.

The implication of this will be that moral impartialism is partialist, such that a moral impartialist could endorse principles that sanction partial attitudes or conduct and a partialist could also endorse impartialist attitude. This implies that the gap between moral partialists and impartialists is not as wide as ethicists envisaged. To argue this view, the paper is divided into three parts which are the introduction, Kant's second principle as a universalist and impartialist principle and the partialist interpretation of the principle and the conclusion.

The introductory part is a brief synopsis of the anatomy of the paper. It briefly outlines and summarises what should be expected from each section of the paper. The second part of the paper takes up the explanation of Kant's second principle- treating persons as ends and never as means to ends. This is with a view to showing the universalist and impartialist nature of the principle. In this same section, the argument of the paper will be carried out. The partialist interpretation of Kant's second principle will be demonstrated. This will reveal not just the partial nature of the universalist and impartialist moral theories but also the partiality in impartiality in ethical theories. This will be followed by the conclusion which will be a summary of the major points discussed in the paper.

The impartialist and Partialist Interpretation of Kant's Second Moral Principle (Treating Persons as Ends, and never as means to Ends)

Kant's second moral principle holds that persons must be treated as ends in themselves and not as means to ends. This is otherwise interpreted as the principle of respect for persons. According to Kant:

> In this principle, we conceive of humanity not as an end that one happens to have (a subjective end)- that is, as an object which people, as a matter of fact, happen to make their end. We conceive of it rather as an objective end- one that, as a law, should constitute the supreme limiting condition on all subjective ends, whatever those ends may be.[1]

This second principle also states that "act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end". Or never treat people only as means, but always also as ends. The implication of this principle is that every moral agent should treat each human being as a being whose existence as a rational and autonomous person should be promoted. This is an element of moral impartialism in Kant's second principle. According to Kant, this means two things (1) respect for each person's freedom by treating people only as they have freely consented to be treated beforehand, and (2) develop each person's capacity to freely choose for him or herself the aims he or she will pursue. These two meanings also depict how impartialist Kant's second principle is. Kant re-emphasized the importance of a person and humanity with this principle thus:

> A human being regarded as a person, that is, as the subject of a morally practical reason, is exalted above any price… he possesses a dignity (absolute inner worth) by which he exacts respect for himself from all other rational beings in the world. He can measure himself with every other being of this kind and value himself on a footing of equality with them. Humanity in his own person is the object of the respect which he can demand from every other human being, but which he must also not forfeit.[2]

On this principle, Kant argues that moral agents are required to view others as abstract persons rather than as particular, unique or special individuals. Since this implores us to respect people as rational agents, it requires us to attend to features of persons shared by all human beings. In this regard, human agents should not focus on aspects of persons that are distinctive or specific. This makes the principle impartialist. Our respect for others as ends in themselves then represents an impartial attitude and outlook. This implies that in respecting persons, we

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[1] Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 1997, pp. 38-39 (4:430-1)
[2] Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.41-42. (6:434-5)

are viewing them all as abstract and interchangeable. This is how impartialist the principle is. But this second principle as an impartialist principle could also support or justify Partialist act.

Kant's second principle emphasizes the role of human autonomy and rational agency. The individual is an autonomous being, capable of making moral choices. This includes partial and impartial choices. This implies that since human moral agents are autonomous, their autonomy do not only justify their impartial choices. Human autonomy also justifies human partial choices, since according to Kant "Autonomy is the property, the will has of being a law to itself (independently of any property of the objects of volition)".[3] The autonomy and rationality of moral agents provides them with the ability to make moral laws. But since every moral agent dictates the moral law in accordance with his or her personal autonomy, there will be no objective way of arriving at the moral law. This implies that since moral agents have the capacity to make moral laws, they can make partial and impartial rules or laws. The point is that the way human autonomy justifies impartial acts is the same way human autonomy will justify partial moral acts and choices. And consequently, this second principle will endorse those partial acts and choices.

In Kant's view, the kind of respect required by categorical imperative is the kind that is owed to all persons on the ground that they are rational agents. This principle holds that persons have absolute or unconditional moral worth. They have this worth by virtue of being autonomous rational agents. The conferment of special worth by rational agency obliges everyone to treat himself or herself and others with respect. This implies that morally, special and particular features and characters as well as social status/constitution are morally irrelevant. The justificatory feature is the humanity in persons. This is also an impartialist interpretation of this second principle.

But contrary to the above view, in many circumstances, it becomes morally appropriate that we must value persons as a result of their individual characteristics and features. We value persons this way by paying attention to their particular features, thereby showing them respect. This attitude is partialist.[4] It is partialist because we now focus on individual's special, particular and idiosyncratic features. These features do not matter morally to the impartialists. But to the partialists, these features help us to identify, recognize and respect persons as moral agents. This is in tune with the impartialists' respect for persons as rational moral agents by virtue of being humans or on the humanity ground. The point is that we do not only respect persons by viewing them as abstract individuals. We also respect person as particular individuals with particular features. Since the second principle aims at recognizing human beings, it will still not reject the recognition of human beings as particular individuals. If it endorses such act, then it will not reject partialist respect for persons which focuses on particular features of human beings.

However, it may indeed be true as Kant opined that we must respect others because they are rational and autonomous agents. But viewed from the partialist angle and interpretation, it does not always follow that in respecting human beings (ourselves inclusive) we must pay attention only to their rational agency. As a matter of fact, in most cases, it would be practically impossible to respect someone as a moral obligation without attending to his or her particular situation; which includes his or her needs, personal history, concerns and aspirations. The argument then is that it is practically impossible to respect people without attending to their particular situation, and then respect for persons is partialist, at least for

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[3] Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 1997, p.47. (4:440)
[4] Dillon Robin, "Respect and Care: Towards Moral Integration", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 22: 105- 131 (pp. 116-117).

sometimes. It is partialist because we sometimes respect or treat people as ends in themselves for partialist reasons.

For example, we can illustrate this point with the case of a pregnant woman begging for alms. There are two ways I could be motivated to assist her. The first is that I may pity and see her as a part and parcel of humanity, which I share as a human. In this regard, I may help the woman because we share one thing in common- the humanity. This is an impartialist interpretation, which is otherwise the Kantian view. However, the second perspective that one could be motivated to assist the pregnant woman is by appealing to her particular situation. Her particular situation includes the way she looks hungry and malnourished, the way she looks frail and unhealthy. These are partialist factors. These factors are also moral motivations to assist the pregnant woman. We help and respect people as moral agents as a result of these partialist factors. Hence, Kant's second principle has Partialist interpretation.

In fact, the partialist interpretation, in my own view is more plausible because it is particular and personal view points that make up the humanity as a whole. The impartialist view therefore commits fallacy of composition by using the humanity (the whole) view to represent personal and particular (the part), and regarding them as morally irrelevant.

Kant, and other Kantians like Harman and Baron, presents the second principle as if it is only rational agency (abstract rational agency) that makes human beings respect-worthy, hence our rational agency should be respected. The argument is that persons must be respected because they have moral worth exclusively on the ground that they are rational agents. Human beings are judged from the rational perspective alone, leaving out human moral emotions. By judging human beings from rational perspective alone, Kant as a universalist, interpret the second principle (treating human beings as end, never as means to ends) as impartialist. He only focused on the feature that human beings possess in common, which is human reason. However, when we consider other human attributes like emotion, we will also realize that Kant's second principle is partialist. It is partialist because by respecting or treating a person as end, and not as a means to an end, we must appeal to his or her particular characters and situation.

Emotion vs Motivation

Emotion as pointed above is a part of what makes up human personal situation. In respecting a person as a result of his or her personal situation, we are doing that for partialist reason and motivation. This shows that Kant's second principle has partialist interpretation. It is possible for impartialists to argue that emotion is a universalist human attribute, such that respecting persons on the basis of emotion is still an impartialist interpretation of the principle. But a partialist could reply that even if emotion is established as a universalist attribute, it varies from individual to individual. It is not evenly distributed. We often make reference to individual's particular emotion, personal concerns and situation for our moral evaluations and deliberations. In doing this, we arrive at partialist interpretation of Kant's second principle- Treat persons as ends in themselves, and never as means to ends. Even Kant's second principle that deals with respect for persons as rational agents (autonomy and human dignity) as opined by Kant could be interpreted to be partial. It is partial for the sake of individual as a person, not as a moral agent or for the sake of impartial view of morality as Kant's theory presupposes. Also, for not using individuals or persons as means but as ends could be interpreted to be for partial reasons, and not for impartial moral reasons or impartial morality. Once it is about particular and individual reasons, it amounts to partialism, but if it is about general and universal reasons, it amounts to impartial reasons.

Furthermore, Kant holds that every action a moral agent performs must be in accordance with his/her moral duty; moral duty here implies being in tune with the categorical imperative. We have general duty and special duty, which does Kant refer to? This question is relevant because they define different obligations for moral agents. What are general duties and what are special duties? In what way(s) are they different if they are? In partialism-impartialism debate, general duties are said to be universal and impartial, while special duties are said to be particularistic. The duty to assist just anybody in need is a general duty, while the duty to assist those that stand in close and special relationship with us is a special duty. This implies that general duties are duties of moral agents to everyone as a human being, while special duties are duties of moral agents to close and special people by virtue of special relationship in which they stand with us. In the words of Goodin;

> There are some "general duties" that we have toward other people, merely because they are people. Over and above those, there are also some "special duties" that we have toward particular individuals because they stand in some special relation to us. Among those are standardly supposed to be special duties toward our families, our friends, our pupils, our patients. Also among them are standardly supposed to be special duties toward our fellow countrymen.[5]

What sense of duty does Kant refer? The obvious sense of duty that Kant's principle refers is duty in the general sense. But if that is the case, what then happens to special duties? Kant's theory is not likely to account or accommodate special duties that we have towards friends and close associates. This thesis is of the view that Kant's theory as a universalist and impartialist theory though only talk of general or universal duties, could also be interpreted to be partialist and particularistic. Special duties which are partialist and particularistic are embedded in general and universal duties. In fact, universal or general duties emanate from special and particularistic duties. Actions motivated by duty, a sense of obligation or even a sense of responsibility are often unacceptable in personal relationships. A healthy personal relationship cannot be based on this sort of motivation; indeed, it cannot even come into play very often. Stocker's example of learning that your friend has come to see you in the hospital purely from a sense of duty is disturbing. Even more devastating it would be to learn that your spouse of thirty-seven years had stayed in your marriage purely or even primarily out of a sense of obligation stemming from the marriage contract.[6]

The point above is that, in reality, people pursue whatever they want to pursue simply because they want to. People perform actions they perform because their ends are in connection with other people's ends, not because it stems from a sense of duty or contract, neither is it because it is from an impartial point of view. If people do what they do because they want to, it must be because of their personal and partial reasons for themselves, their associates or others in the moral picture.

In *Impartiality and Friendship*,[7] Marcia Baron denies that impartialists and their theories claim that universalizability and equal consideration of interest imply that what I do for some people (myself inclusive) is what I should or would do for everyone in similar situation. To Baron, "the idea seems to be that I fail the test if I would not do for just anyone what I am doing, or contemplating doing, for so- and-so". In other words, if I am willing to do

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[5] Robert E. Goodin, What Is So Special about Our Fellow Countrymen? *Ethics*, Vol. 98, No. 4 (Jul., 1988), pp 663-686, (663).

[6] John Hardwig, In Search of an Ethics of Personal Relationships, in Person to Person, George Graham and Hugh LaFollette (eds.), Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989, P. 74.

[7] Marcia Baron, Impartiality and Friendship, *Ethics*, Vol. 101, No. 4, July 1991, PP. 836-857, (P. 851).

favour x for Susan, I should be willing to do the same favour for anyone.[8] Baron's view is that no impartialist and impartialist theory (Kant's ethics in particular and impartialist theories in general), believe that our conduct must meet a test like this. But this is exactly what Kant's theory claims and aims to achieve with equal consideration of interests, whereby every body's interest should be accorded equal weight. This is manifested in Kant's assertion that for a reason to pass as moral reason, it must be impartial, because partial reasons are not moral reasons. Having this in mind, the appropriate normative motivation of a moral agent performing an action cannot adequately be attributed to duty or impartial morality as claimed by Kant's ethics. Moral agents perform actions because they want to not because it stems from impartiality as a moral point of view or because it is their duties.

Absolute and Unconditional Worth

In a similar vein, Kant maintains that persons have what he calls absolute and unconditional worth. To him, as human beings, we have this worth in virtue of the fact that we are autonomous and rational agents. Our special worth, conferred upon us by our rational agency, obliges people, including ourselves, to treat and regard us with respect. In this regard, Kant is of the view that particular and idiosyncratic features of our character, emotional constitution or social position (which are otherwise partialist), are as far as our moral status is concerned, irrelevant. The humanity in persons is the justificatory ground of the principle of respect for persons. But according to Cynthia Stark, while it is true, on Kant's account that I must respect others because they are rational agents, it does not follow that in respecting them I must pay attention only to their rational agency.[9] The point is that in most cases, it would not be possible for us to fulfil our obligation to respect persons without attending to their particular, peculiar and partial situations. It would be impossible for us (at least in some cases) to fulfil our obligations to respect people without attending to their particular needs, aspirations and concerns. As a matter of fact, personal needs, aspirations and concerns are partialist emotions. And for Kant's respect for persons to be possible, they must be present or take place. In this regard, Kant's respect for persons is a partialist principle, despite its impartialist interpretation. It is a partialist principle because it cannot adequately take place without some of these moral emotions – personal concerns, personal history, aspirations and personal needs.

According to the Kantian moral tradition, the value of a person is explained by the value of her autonomy.[10] This implies that respecting a person means respecting her autonomously formed decisions in his or her life. To the Kantians, this is impartialist. But a critical look at it reveals its partialist interpretation. It is partialist because if our reason for respecting persons is because they are autonomous, then such reason supports partialism. It supports and serves as reasons for partialism because the value of the autonomy of any person defines our reason for treating the person the way we do. But to the partialists, our reasons for partialism are also reasons to respect the autonomously formed decisions of those that share special relationships with us. Hence, respect for persons on the ground of human autonomy as an impartialist principle is also partialist. In support of this, Keller writes:

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[8] Marcia Baron, Impartiality and Friendship, P. 851
[9] Cynthia Stark, Decision Procedures, Standards of Rightness and Impartiality, *Nous*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Dec. 1997), PP. 483-484.

[10] Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, especially pp. 39- 42. Also, for a relevant contemporary statement in this regard, see Velleman J. David, "Love as a Moral Emotion", *Ethics*, 109: 2 (1999), pp. 344- 348.

> Out of respect for the autonomy of a friend, you might intervene to prevent her from becoming addicted to a drug, or to prevent someone else from forcing her to live a life that she does not herself endorse. These might be acts you would perform for the sake of someone with whom you share a special relationship, but not for just anyone.[11]

From this, it becomes noteworthy that it is possible to have a special concern for a particular individual's value of her autonomy. This is accommodated by Kantian view as an impartialist theory. Hence, this brings out the support of partialist act by Kant's second principle. However, it is pertinent to note that Kantian conception of the moral point of view ignores personal and close relationships. According to Lawrence Blum:

> In the Kantian conception of morality, impartiality and impersonality are central notions, definitive of the moral point of view. Moral rules and principles embody a perspective which excludes no one, and which takes everyone's good into account. Every human being, simply in virtue of being human, is worthy of equal consideration, and his good is equally worthy of being promoted. Moral rules and principles must reflect this fact. So, taking the moral point of view in one's actions and judgments means regarding them from an impartial standpoint, not giving weight to one's own preferences and interests simply because they are one's own, but rather giving equal weight to the interests of all. The view-point is impersonal because it gives due consideration to all, favouring none simply because of personal preference, but only according to principles which can be vindicated from that impartial perspective. This line of thought draws also on a notion of fairness as central and definitive of morality: it is unfair to accord a benefit or burden simply because it accords with one's preferences or interests. Action which fails to stem from or to be justifiable by appeal to, this impartial standpoint is, on the Kantian view, contrary to morality.[12]

The point is that Kantian view does not necessarily condemn benefiting close and personal relationships. What it condemns is benefiting oneself or one's close relations simply because they are one's own. Similarly, Kantian morality does not condemn all acting for the sake of one's own interests; what it condemns is doing so simply because it is one's own interest. In Kantian view, such benefiting gives no guarantee of being justifiable from an impartial perspective – which is what morality requires on Kantian perspective. In *Anatomy of Values*, Charles Fried explicitly spells out Kantian conception of morality in the conjunction of the following passages:

> The principle which specifies the content of morality is an expression of the concepts of equality, impartiality, and of regard for all persons as ends in themselves.[13]
> The domain in which the concept of morality… applies is the domain of all ends and action which impinge in any significant way on other persons.[14]

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[11] Simon Keller, *Partiality*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013, p. 105.
[12] Lawrence A. Blum*, Friendship, Altruism and Morality*, Routledge Revivals, 2010, P. 44.

[13] Charles Fried, *An Anatomy of Values, Problems of Personal and Social Choice*, Harvard University Press, 1970, P. 42.

[14] Charles Fried, *An Anatomy of Values, Problem of Personal and Social choice*, Harvard University Press, 1970, P.41.

> The interests, preferences, or desires of the agent have no special status or higher priority just because they belong to the agent; that is, an agent may not prefer his own interests as such.[15]

Obviously, any conception of morality that encourages a moral agent not to give preference to his/her own interest in moral evaluation poses a problem for personal relations. We need to nurture personal relationships. One of our responsibilities is to nurture personal relationships. But how possible it is for a moral agent to give equal weight to his/her own interests in moral evaluation as advocated by Kantian view of morality is seriously in doubt.

Looking at close relationships, they appear condemned on Kantian moral perspective because close relationships thrive on partial treatment. In fact, partial treatments are part and parcel or integral parts of close relationships. But as human beings and moral agents alike, what we do for those who stand in close relationships to us are simply done maybe because they are our friends, family relations or close associates. Our special considerations to friends and family members are based on our special relationships with them; such action cannot be vindicated from an impartial point of view. And if our actions towards friends and family members cannot be justified by appeal to impartial morality, then Kantian requirement of moral impartialism is mistaken. It tries to justify morality on wrong and mistaken ground. This implies that Kantian justification of morality cannot avoid partialist acts. This is because what obtains among those in close and personal relationships can only have partialist interpretation, not only impartialist undertone as Kant's moral principles erroneously assume. For example, the reason why a moral agent gives special treatment or special consideration to his/her parents is because of the close relationship s/he stands with his/her parents, not because they are human and rational agents that are worthy of equal consideration, and their good is equally worthy of being promoted. This will be a justification of morality for the wrong reason. For Kantian view of morality to involve impartiality as well as equality is not free from partiality as he claims.

Human beings as Autonomous and Rational Agents

Furthermore, in Kantian moral theory, especially with the second principle, emphasis is placed on human beings as autonomous and rational agents. This implies that each person has incomparable value. If this is the case, then Kantian second principle that emphasizes on the dignity, autonomy and rationality of human beings is partialist. This is because the Kantian emphasis on autonomy, dignity and human rationality is not different from the partialists' grounding of partialism on the value of the individuals with whom we share special and close relationships. Besides autonomy and rational capacity, human beings possess other capacities. Autonomy is compatible with partialism. Kant's choice of autonomy and rational capacity is partialist. Kant favoured or preferred human autonomy and rational capacity when human beings possess other capacities such as emotional or psychological capacities. This choice among other alternatives is partialist itself. Also, if I am an autonomous being in Kantian sense, then I should be the one to determine who to favour or support without any interference.[16] This establishes that Kant's attempt to favour autonomy and rational capacity is partialist. Autonomy justifies partialism; hence Kant's second moral principle supports partialism.

However, if every person has value in himself or herself, as Kant's second principle claims, then it is partialist. This informs partialists' special treatment of those that share special relationships with us. This is so because the proper response to the value of those that are special to us is to respond to it uniquely as possessors of values. In the words of Keller:

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[15] Charles Fried, *An Anatomy of Values*, P. 42
[16] I am very grateful to my PhD Dissertation supervisor (Late Prof. J. O. Famakinwa) for calling my attention to this point.

> The Kantian claim is that every person has a value that defies comparison; every person has a dignity, not a price. Within the Kantian framework, this value is understood to flow from the autonomy of persons, so that a person has value in his capacity as a rational agent who can act according to his own autonomous will. In principle, though, the Kantian thought could be adapted so as to apply to the value held by persons in their capacities as creatures with interests, or as beings that can flourish. The important claim, for present purposes, is that the value of a person can be appreciated from an impartial point of view and by its nature defies comparison.[17]

The point above is that Kant's second principle reinforces the belief that every human being has dignity, is autonomous and rational; hence deserves value that defies comparison. In the same vein, partialists are saying that every individual has value as a person. And the appropriate response to the value of each person is to accord them special treatment as possessors of value. Individuals have self-standing value. Giving different treatments to people with whom we share special relationships is a response to the self-standing value of those people.[18] In this regard, the Kantian second principle is partialist. Both the second principle and the partialist requirement of special treatment are not mutually exclusive. Keller's view supports this. In his words:

> If persons have value of a kind that defies comparison, then in perceiving the value of a person you may find not only that it makes demands but also that the force of those demands cannot be meaningfully compared with the force of other demands. A parent who fully appreciates the value of her child, for example, may resist any comparison between the importance of giving good treatment to her child and the importance of giving good treatment to other children- not because she does not think that other children are valuable, but because the activity of comparing children is inherently misguided. On the Kantian view, it can make sense to give special treatment to one person over others, even though all persons have the same value, because the proper response to the value of any one person is to focus on the demands it makes of you, without comparing them to any demands coming from elsewhere.[19]

The point here is that Kantian second principle that says persons must be treated as ends and never as means to ends expresses such view because the principle presupposes that every human being should have value in himself or herself by virtue of being autonomous, rational and having dignity. It is important to note that even treating a person as an end and never as a means may not imply treating a person impartially. To Kant, executing a criminal is in his or her interest because that is what he or she deserves. But such treatment does not amount to impartiality because he or she is being paid back on the account of crime he or she committed. The partialists, likewise, justify the special treatment of some people over others on the value possessed by those persons. However, the meeting point for Kantian second principle and partialist principle is on the value of individuals as persons. In this regard, Kant's second principle is partialist. It is partialist because it justifies the treatment of individuals on their values, which is not different from the partialist justification of special treatment of individuals, that is, the value of the individual attracts special treatment.

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[17] Simon Keller, *Partiality*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013, p. 129
[18] Simon Keller, *Partiality*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013, p. VIII
[19] Simon Keller, *Partiality*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013, p. 130. David J. Velleman also expresses this view. To him, in his "Love as a Moral Emotion", *Ethics* 109: 2 (1999), p. 364, he maintains that the value of a person "calls for a response to the object in itself, not in comparison with others".

Kant's second moral principle does not only agree with moral partialism, it in fact incorporates moral partialism. It incorporates moral partialism because it supports the view that giving special treatment to people that stand or share close relationship or affinity with us amounts to responding to their value as human beings. In this regard, Keller writes further:

> The Kantian view captures something central to the phenomenology of partiality. It seems exactly right to say that when we give special treatment to someone with whom we share a special relationship, we often find ourselves to be responding appropriately to her value, as it stands in its own right, not as it compares to the value of other people. As we respond to the value of particular individuals, the value of other individuals seems to be, somehow, irrelevant.[20]

The Phenomenology of Moral Partialism

The view this paper has been defending is that Kant's moral principles as an impartialist also permit and incorporate the phenomenology of moral partialism. The point is that Kantianism supports that having intimate acquaintance with the value of one person explains why you find reason to give him or her treatment that you do not extend to people in general. This justifies the claim of this thesis that Kantianism is partialist because it endorses and approves of the phenomenology of partiality because every individual has value and treating each individual differently amounts to responding to self-standing value of such individual. As long as Kant's moral principle justifies human autonomy, dignity and rationality on the value of individual persons, it will always support partialism. The value of the individual connects Kantianism to partialism. It turns out that what justifies impartialism (human dignity, autonomy, and rationality) on the basis of human value, at the same time connects Kantianism to moral partialism. For Keller:

> …While the Kantian view grounds our reason of partiality in the value of individuals, it does so by reference to certain of our own subjective attitudes. We have reasons to respond to the value of some individuals, and not others, because we perceive- or are vulnerable to, and not others. The view, as a result, does not appear able to take a critical stance on our patterns of perceiving and responding to the value of individuals.[21]

The argument of the section of this paper has been that Kantianism endorses moral partialism or that there is partialism in Kantian second principle. From this, it follows that the gap between partialism and impartialism is not wide. For example, in the case of Kantianism, the only gap between partialists and impartialists is that while a Kantian impartialist will justify partialism by explaining the value of the individual from human autonomy, dignity and rationality; partialists will justify partialism on the ground of the value of the individual emanating from personal and special relationships. The difference is that while partialists will explain special relationship and the consequent special treatment that rests on it as partialism's ethical or moral requirement, impartialists (Kantians) will not be able to do so. But the fundamental issue is that both partialists and impartialists see the value of the individual as the basis for partial treatment, hence Kantianism as an impartialist theory is partialist for grounding moral partialism on the value of the individual person just like partialists. Partialists are also of the view that the importance of demands made by one person's value is comparable to the importance of demands made by the value of others. Impartialists (Kantians) deny the

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[20] Simon Keller, *Partiality*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013, p. 130.
[21] Simon Keller, *Partiality*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013, p. 131.

comparison of demands made by the value of individuals. This difference is captured and summarized by Simon Keller thus:

> … The Kantian view suggests that we find reasons of partiality partly through a refusal to compare the demands made by the value of one person with the demands made by the value of another. But what is more accurate to say, and still in need of explanation, is that we often compare the demands made by the value of one person with the demands made by the value of another, find that the demands made on behalf of the second person are more important, and yet find reason to follow the demands made on behalf of the first person nevertheless.[22]

The value of the individual serves as the source from which reasons of partiality arise, for both partialists and impartialists. Impartialists (such as Kantians) argue that human beings have value because they have dignity, are autonomous and rational agents. Partialists (such as Bernard Williams, John Cottingham, and Simon Keller) argue that individuals have value because they share certain relationships with some people which they do not share with others. The value of the individual explains reasons of partiality for partialists and impartialists. Therefore, Kant's moral principles as impartialist principles are also partialist.

Conclusion

In ethical studies, some moral theories have been adjudged to be universalist and impartialist in nature, outlook and evaluation. The task undertaken in this paper has been to demonstrate the partialist interpretation of these universalist theories through one of Immanuel Kant's famous moral principle- the second principle, treating persons as end and never as means to ends. This paper demonstrated that universalist theories that has been assumed to be impartialist also have partialist interpretation. Immanuel Kant's second principle as a universalist principle was shown to have partialist interpretation on the grounds that just as kantians as impartialists treat persons on the basis of value, the principle does not only agree with moral partialism, it incorporates it at least for agreeing that individuals should be treated based on their values. Kant's attempt to favour autonomy and rational capacity rather than the partialists' preference of subjective emotions is partialist. It was also argued that treating persons as rational and autonomous moral agents as Kant claimed may not even imply treating persons impartially. Such treatment could be partial or impartial. It was demonstrated that moral autonomy justifies partiality. This has strengthened the argument of the paper that there is partiality in impartiality such that an impartialist can endorse partialist attitudes or dispositions and vice versa, hence unbeknown to the universalists and impartialists, the gap between moral impartiality and partiality in the debate is not as wide as they assumed.

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AN X-BAR ACCOUNT ON NOUN PHRASE (NP) IN IBIBIO

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Abstract
This paper examines the different patterns of the Noun Phrase (NP) in Ibibio - one of the agglutinating languages of the Lower Cross spoken in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The aim is to account for the order, headship as well as examines the intermediate categories within it. This paper adopts the X-bar module of the Government and Binding (GB) framework and strengthens its analysis on the relations of dominance and precedence. Based on this perspective, it is revealed that the Ibibio language attests a mixed word order for NPs in overt syntax. It displays the sequences of Noun plus Determiner (N+Det) and a Determiner plus Noun (Det+N). The paper therefore postulates that the item which occurs to the left dominates the entire NP. It reveals the noun to be the head of any NP irrespective of its position of occurrence within the phrase. The paper also observes a movement mechanism of the head to its optimal left position in a Determiner (Quantifier) and Noun sequence. It is also discovered that the Ibibio NP structure ranges from being a bare noun (proper), a pronoun, a determiner and noun, an adjective plus Noun plus Determiner, a noun and determiner plus a relativized clause and a noun plus a relativized Prepositional Phrase (PP). In conclusion, the paper maintains that what precedes does not always head until the grammatical condition of movement is obeyed for such nominal phrases in the language.

Keywords: Dominance, Determiner, Ibibio, Lower Cross, Precedence.

Introduction

Judging from both the genetic and typological evidence, the Ibibio language belongs to the Lower Cross of the Benue-Congo language phylum, Essien (1990), Connel (1994), Urua, (2000), Okokon and Okon (2020). The characteristics of languages that are traced to the Lower Cross exhibit a high degree of complexity and morphological richness. As a result, Okon and John (2023) maintains that Ibibio serves as an exemplary case for the typology of agglutinative languages, characterised by a direct and consistent mapping of morphemes to their respective meanings. For instance, many nominal expressions are derived from the verb. Borrowing an idea from Mbah (2008), the Ibibio language just like the Igbo language is described as a verb language. Many nominal expressions in the language are derived from the verb. An NP could be a noun or a combination of different words to express or describe an idea, concept and abstraction. The Ibibio language attests some nominal expressions that are basic in the language and some that are derived. In other words, some nouns are inherent while the derived ones are generally produced through prefixation combined with compounding in some instances.

The Nouns are a common lexical category of any natural language. Nouns are generally names. Anything that has a name is a noun. Almost every sentence will definitely have a noun, and they perform different roles in a sentence. Nouns can equally function as adjectives and verbs based on what is technically termed, 'functional shift or conversion. Nouns basically head Noun Phrases. This means, they function as the head of the phrase irrespective of its position of occurrence within the sentence even if it is just one nominal constituent within the maximal category. The Ibibio language just like other languages of the world attests different structures for the NP. The NP can occur alone. This means it can be just an item, it can also occur with the determiner, adjective and so on.

This paper hinges on Chomsky (1981) Government and Binding (GB) framework with particular reference to the X-bar module. This paper presents an X-bar account of Ibibio NP structure and examines its word order, intermediate categories and headedness. The adoption of the X-bar theory for data analysis is relevant since the theory emphasizes the notion of head and word order. The X-bar account is adopted with reference to the relations of dominance and precedence for analysis.

Statement of the Research Problem

Many studies have been done in Ibibio or related languages in relation to the Noun Phrase. For instance, Okon (2012) had discussed NP movement in Uda, one of the Ibibiod lects spoken in Mbo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom. Again, Udosen and Okon (2019) worked on NP movement to argument position saying that argument position is a case and theta role motivated position. Okon (2023) worked on interrogative word movement in Ibibio and revealed that interrogative words are equally treated as NPs. Okon, Etim & Udoeyo (2024) examined argument preposing saying that arguments (NPs) move leftward for some communicative prominence. None of these works had discussed the order of the NP and the notion of the head which the X-bar convention advocates. This study therefore presents an X-bar account to determine word order and headedness in Ibibio NP structure

Conceptual Review on Noun Phrase (NP)

It is important to begin this section by first considering the definition of a noun. A noun is traditionally defined as a name belonging to person, animal, place or thing. Nouns are a common lexical category of any natural language. Udoh, Anyanwu & Osuagwu (2019) define nouns as lexical items that refer to persons, places, things, items and concepts. Nouns are generally names. Anything that has a name is a noun. Almost every sentence definitely has a

noun, and nouns perform different roles in sentences. A noun can function as a subject, a direct object, an indirect object, a subject complement, an object complement and a prepositional complement. A noun phrase can be a word or a group of words functioning as a unit. According to Ndimele (2008), a Noun Phrase (NP) is a group of words in which the noun element is recognized as the head. *It is a group of grammatically related words where the Noun serves as the head.* The head of an NP is the noun. Structurally, it is the largest expansion or the maximal projection of the noun. This also means that the NP is a composition of words in which the noun serves as the head.

An Overview of the NP Structure in English
        The order of occurrence of the lexical items in the English language NP simply shows that the NP structure can occur in the following order based on the generative rules given below:
Rule A.   NP → Proper N
        The above rule expresses a situation in which an NP occurs as a single noun or a proper noun.
   1. Okon, Peter, Ikwọ
Rule B.   NP → Det} + N
This rule states that an NP can consist of a determiner and a common noun.
   2. The boy, this place and so on.
Rule C.   NP → {Det} + N'
               N' → {adj} + N
Rule C states that an NP can consist of a determiner plus one or more adjectives and a noun. Examples include:
   3. That handsome young man.
Here, 'that' functions as the determiner, 'handsome' is adjective, 'young' is another adjective while 'man' is the noun. The N^I notation is an intermediate level in which a complement, complementizer is introduced or recognized. In the structure, 'the handsome young man', handsome and young are intermediate categories at different levels. In line with the X-bar module, the adjective 'handsome' is N^{II} while 'young' is N^I.
Rule D.   NP → {Det} + N'
               N' → N + (PP)
The above rule states that an NP can consist of a determiner and a noun followed by a prepositional phrase (PP) as shown in the following examples:
   4. The story about Uyo, the book of poems, the cup on the table, the book with the red cover.
Rule E.   NP → Pro.
This rule states a situation where an NP can consist of only a pronoun. Examples are given below:
   5. I, you, he, she, we they, me, him, us and so on.
Rule F.   NP → NP + S'
Under this rule, Ndimele (2008) observes that a sentence can be contained within an NP. This situation expresses a condition where a relative clause is derived. It is important to also indicate that the entire clause functions as an NP in this situation. In English, these clauses which are embedded sentences are always introduced by complementizers or relative pronouns such as: who, that, which. Consider the following examples:
   6. (a) The student *who won the best prize,*
        (b) My neighbour *who bought beautiful green shirts*.

Sentences (6a and b) demonstrate the idea that a relative clause can contain within an NP. For instance, in example (6a) '... who won the best prize' and in (6b) '… who bought beautiful green shirts' are relative clauses introduced by the relative pronoun 'who' in both examples. The two clauses are both found within the NP in example (6a) 'the student' and example (6b) 'my neighbour'. The 'who' relative pronoun is always hosted within the complementizer node. They form the S^I (embedded) found within an NP.
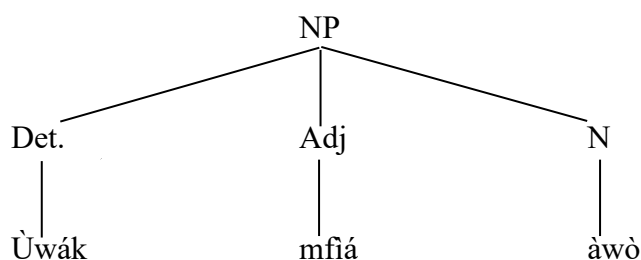
Theoretical Framework Review

This work is driven by the concept within the X-bar syntax of the Government and Binding (GB) grammatical model. The X-bar is one of the modules of GB credited to Chomsky (1981). Other modules within the GB framework include: Case, Government, Theta, Binding, Bounding and Control sub-theories. The name X-bar stems from the fact that the letter 'X' is used as a label to signify an arbitrary lexical category (part of speech). When analysing a specific utterance, specific categories are assigned. Thus, X may become an N for noun, V for verb, an A for adjective, or a P for preposition. The term X-bar is derived from the notation representing the new structure. Certain structures are represented by X^I (an X with an over bar). The notation 'XP' stands for X phrase, and it is equivalent to X-bar-bar (X with double bar), written X^{II}, usually read aloud as X double bar.

The X^{II} is the maximal projection (X^{max}) of the lexical head X, which for instance, may be a noun. The $SPEC_x$ (Specifier of X) refers to such things as determiners. This suggests appropriate grammatical labels. X-bar analyses sentences in terms of its syntactic constituents as subject, verb, and object. It makes use of re-write rules that consist of a set of strings of linguistic elements to generate new strings from the initial one. Apart from accounting for word order, the X-bar convention arose out of the need to seek remedies to the inadequacies of Phrase Structure Grammar (PSG). PSG is a more powerful model of generative grammar whose major goal is to identify the constituents of a construction and how they are related to one another. PSG has a lot of advantages over previous models such as Immediate Constituent (IC) and Finite State Grammar (FSG). Unlike the previous models, PSG does not only segment the constituent of a construction, it also identifies the constituents and even their constructions in grammatical terms i.e. PSG also provides appropriate grammatical labels for both constituents and their constructions. In PSG, syntactic relations such as dominance and precedence are crucial. It is a form of re-write grammar. A re-write grammar is that which is made up of write rules as shown below:

(i)   S → NP + VP
(ii)   NP → D + N
(iii)   Aux → T (M) (have + -en) (be + -ing)
(iv)   VP → V + NP
(v)   D → the, etc.
(vi)   N → boy, rice
(vii)   T → past (-ed) or non-past
(viii)   V → eat, etc.   Ndimele (2008:153)

As earlier mentioned, there was no recognition of the existence of the intermediate categories which are larger than the lexical categories but smaller than the phrasal categories in the Phrase Structure Model. This was an area of weakness in PSG. Hence, a lexical head can only project into a maximal phrasal category in PSG. A sample instantiation of an NP using the PSG model is illustrated as follows:

Diagram 1: NP Structure under PSG Model

```
                        NP
         ┌──────────────┼──────────────┐
       Det.            Adj             N
         │              │              │
       Ùwák            mfiá           àwò
```

In tree diagram (1) above, it is observed that an N projects directly into an NP. It can also be said that, the NP dominates Det., Adj and N simultaneously, and that all of them are sister nodes at the same hierarchy level. In other words, the Det (Quantifier) ùwák '*many*' modifies the adjective, mfiá '*white*' and the adjective modifies the noun àwò '*people*' in that order. From the perspective of the X-bar theory, the maximal category NP cannot dominate other items simultaneously. The Phrase Structure Rules (PSR) determines which constituent follows or precedes the other depending on the syntagmatic or dependency relation between them.

According to Anyanwu (2007), the X- bar theory is developed in generative linguistics as an alternative to the traditional account of Phrase Structure Grammar (PSG) and lexical categories. This model was first highlighted by Harris (1951) and was taken up in Chomsky (1970) in his article "Remarks on Nominalisation", a paper which introduced what became known as X-bar theory. It was later popularised by Jakendoff (1977).

The X' theory argues that Phrase Structure Grammar (PSG) should be more constrained and that there is need for the recognition of more categories instead of just the two kinds recognised in PSG. The two kinds of ultimate categories recognised in PSG include the lexical categories which are Noun, Verb, Adjective, Preposition, Adverb et cetera. and phrasal categories NP, VP, PP Adj.P, Adv.P. As a remedy to this empirical inadequacy, proponents of the X'-theory maintain that, there must be certain intermediate categories between the lexical head N and the maximal category NP. The overall GB theory consists of an interlocking network of these sub-theories in which each interacts with all others. A phrase in the X-bar syntax always contains a head. Hence, a maximal projection is related to its head through the intermediate categories. This is an idea within the government sub-theory of GB which is concerned with the structural relationship between the head and its complement. The X-bar sub-theory is adopted for the analysis of the Ibibio NP since it provides information on intermediate categories, accounts for headedness and word order.

Headedness Principle

The headedness principle is concerned with the notion of head. It simply states that every phrase has a head. Every phrase is governed by its head. This principle flows from the extended endocentricity principle, which contends that a word projects into a symmetrical phrase. In other words, a phrase is a symmetrical projection of a lexical item. Consider these examples:

7. a book of poems
8. ate the mongo
9. by the road

It is stated that example (7) is a Noun Phrase (NP) with *book* as the head complemented by a Prepositional Phrase (PP) *of poems*. Example (8) is a Verb Phrase (VP) with the verb '*ate*'

functioning as the head followed by its complement, *the mango*. Example (9) is a Prepositional Phrase (PP) with *by* as the head and *the road* as the PP complement. They are heads because they are the obligatory elements in the phrase. The phrases get their respective names based on the syntactic head. Even though two or more languages may attest the same sentential typology, they may differ in the typology of their phrasal head. Mbah (2016) observes that Igbo is a head initial language while English is a head final in their noun phrases. Beyond the Noun Phrase in English, it is observed that the English VP and PP categories are structurally head initial. The following examples illustrate the claim about the Igbo language presented by Mbah (2016):

    10. Akwa   edo
        Cloth yellow
        Yellow cloth

    11. Nwaanyi ọcha
        Woman white
        White woman

Culled from Mbah (2016: 117)

Examples (10 and 11) are both NPs with *akwa* 'cloth' and *nwaanyi* 'woman' functioning as head respectively.

Apart from the examples presented in (7) above, the following structures are also possible NP structures in the English language.

    12. The young man
    13. The boy

In example (12) *man* acts as the head while in example (13) *boy* is the head. One of the parametric nuances of natural languages is that the head occupies particular positions for phrasal categories in overt syntax. This headedness requirement includes phrases because phrases are composed of other modifying elements.

The notion of 'head' is fundamental and central in X˙-bar theory. Sells (1985 p.27) and Ndimele (2004 p.32) posit 'any adequate theory of phrase structure must account for the notion of the head of a phrase'. In X-bar theory, a head governs everything in its maximal projection. Apart from the heads, there are other elements that can be found in the phrase. These are known as complements and specifiers.

The Concept of Dominance and Precedence

Dominance and precedence are the two types of relations identified in the X-bar syntax. To say that node A precedes node B is to say that node A occurs to the left side of node B in a tree diagram. For a node or item to precede the other means that the node or item comes before it. Also, a node for instance, X is said to immediately dominate Y if X occurs directly on top of Y. According to Radford (1981), a dominating constituent and a dominated one are usually linked together by branches that are not broken. Thus, Mbah (2008 p.164) maintains that 'in a tree diagram, two nodes must relate to each other either by precedence or dominance.' Any structure that violates this configuration crashes out of the PS component of grammar. In other words, the notion of precedence and dominance determines well-formed structures in a language.

The tree diagram labelled (2) demonstrates the concept of dominance and precedence as well as recognises the intermediate categories.

Diagram 2: An NP with Intermediate Categories
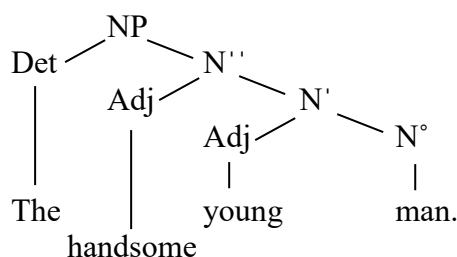
```
                    NP
           Det          N''
                 Adj         N'
                      Adj        N°
                       |          |
           The         young     man.
                handsome
```
                                                            Okon (2012: 20)

From the diagram it is observed that, each node has a two binary branching. This is in obedience to the binary principle – a syntactic condition and requirement that a syntactic diagram has two branches Mbah (2016). The principle relies on the principle of constituent commanding. A constituent A c-commands another constituent B if the constituent dominating a constituent A dominates B but neither A or B dominates each other. Again, the diagram illustrates that N^{II} is the adjective '*handsome*' and it precedes N^{I}, another adjective '*young*'. N^{o} is the head word – man. Baded on Ndimele (2008) analysis, the determiner, *the* is a word level category. N^{II} dominates the others because it occurs to the left of all of them. In the above diagram, it is also observed that, NP immediately dominates N^{II} since there is no node intervening between it. It is to be noted also that, NP does not immediately dominate N^{I}, and N^{o}. However, N^{I} (Adjective 1) and N^{I} (Adjective 2) are intermediate categories between NP (maximal category) and N^{o} (minimal category) which is the head of the projection. In reference to Mbah (2008), the above syntactic structure contains two types of nodes. These are: terminal node and non-terminal node. The lexical items such as *the*, *handsome*, *young* and *man* are referred to as terminal nodes. The non-terminal nodes are the nodes with category labels such as NP, N, etc.

The Ibibio NP on the Concept of X-bar Syntax

The X-bar syntax on Ibibio NP is concerned with the analysis of the constituents found within the NP in relation to word order, headedness and intermediate categories. The principal category of the Ibibio NP is the noun. The sequence of the NP structure is observed to be a mixed order whereby nouns precede determiner, and at some instance, the determiners precede the noun. This idea corresponds to what Udosen and Okon (2022) had earlier proposed for Ibibio nominal compounds to be left headed driven. This paper is designed to examine the word order and headedness for NP using the two relations of dominance and precedence within the X-bar syntax. This paper identifies the following NP structures in Ibibio:

1. **NP with a Null Determiner**
   This entails a situation where the NP occurs with a null determiner. A null determiner describes a situation the proper noun does not co-occur with any lexical item. That is, the noun usually occurs alone. In the Ibibio language, other nouns mostly derived nouns and proper nouns can be expressed without the determiner.
14. Okon, Ìnèmèsịd, Etim, Atim are used.

Diagram 3: An NP with a Null Determiner

```
     NP
      |

    Okon
    Ìnèmèsịd
```
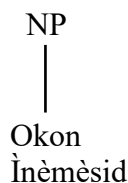
15. Okon ámáádép úfọk.
Okon 3sg-pst-3sg-V house
Okon bought a house.

Every sentence or phrase is a constraint on the output of the X-bar rules. It requires that every sentence must have a subject. An NP subject such as the one mentioned in example (15) is a single one. As observed, there are two nominal positions in the sentence. The subject position where *Okon* occurs and the object position where *úfọk 'house'.* occurs in an SVO sentence typology in which the Ibibio language is one.

The second pattern of NP realization in Ibibio is a situation where the noun precedes the determiner as in:

16. NP ⟶ {Noun and Determiner}

As opposed to what obtains in English where the determiner precedes the noun. The Ibibio expresses a pattern where a noun occurs before the determiner in overt syntax. Examples:

17. Èkà   mmì
    Mother my
    My   mother
18. Èté   ádò
    man   the
    The woman

A diagram is presented thus to demonstrate this sequence.

Diagram 4: NP with a Noun and Determiner Sequence


```
            NP
          /    \
        N       Det
        èté     ádò
```
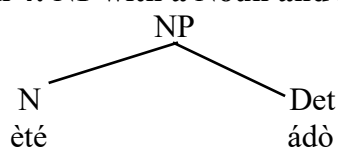
The issue of dominance has been discussed by Udosen and Okon (2022) when they remarked that every nominal expression in the language has a dominant or operative word in it. The dominating constituents are heads while the other is a complement or modifier. This is also to say that the constituents that precedes is structurally the head in the language. It is noted that the functional semantic load of the complement defines the head of the phrase. In examples (17 and 18) above, the elements that occur finally mmi '*my*' in example (17) and ádò '*the*' in example (18) define the head and show definiteness and specificity.

The third possibility of NP structure in Ibibio is a situation where the noun is preceded by a determiner. The class of words which responds to this order is the quantifier. Consider the following examples:

19. Ùwák áwò
    Many people
20. Ùsʌk ndìtọ
    Some children
21. Àfịd íbààn
    All women

Within the X-bar syntax, determiners are regarded as modifiers or complements and within the Ibibio grammar, this paper strongly argues that in situations where the determiner element precedes the noun as illustrated in examples (19 - 21), the determiner which occupies the complement position undergoes a leftward movement to the specifier position for the grammaticality of the phrase. Observe the diagram below:

Diagram 5: NP with Determiner and Noun Sequence
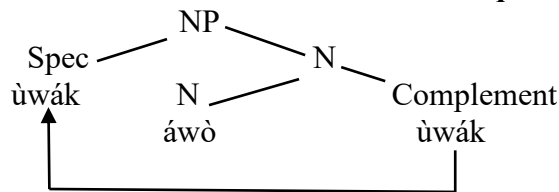
The diagram above illustrates a situation where the quantifier element, ùwák '*many*' which was base-generated as a complement undergoes a leftward movement to the specifier position. The nominal element, áwò '*people*' functions as the head of this phrase. As earlier mentioned, the Ibibio language displays a mixed word order parameter. The mixed word order principles which stem from Kayne (1984) Specifier-Head-Complement (SHC) is also discussed by Okon, Etim and Udoeyo (2024).

In Ibibio grammar, both the cardinal and ordinal quantifying elements are used as determiners but only ordinal items precede the noun they modify. Examples are presented thus:

22. Àkpá áwò
    first person
    The first person
23. Údíáná áwò
    The second person
    second person.
24. Àkpàtré áwò
    Last   person
    The last person

The cardinal numbers display a different position in the syntactic arrangement within Ibibio grammar. Note that cardinal numbers used as determiners always occur after the noun they quantify. In this case, this structure will suffice. Consider the following examples:

25. Ñwèd kèèd
    book one
    'one book'
26. Áwó dùòb
    person ten
    ten presons
27. Íbààn ànààñ
    women eighty
    eighty women

Note that adjectives can break the sequence of determiner (quantifier) and noun as illustrated in examples (28 - 30). Note that the grammatical rule of the language allows the order of adjective plus noun and determiner (cardinal numeral) as shown in examples (31 - 32).

28. Ùwák mfiá àwò
    Many white men
29. Ùsʌk mfɔɔn ndìtɔ
    Some beautiful children.
30. Àfịd ìkpọ íbààn
    All big women
31. Àbúbịd ákpàráwà kèèd
    black man   one
    one dark man

32. Ìkpọ íyàk ìtíòn
    Big fish five
    Five big fishes

Diagram 6: NP Structure demonstrating Dominance and Precedence
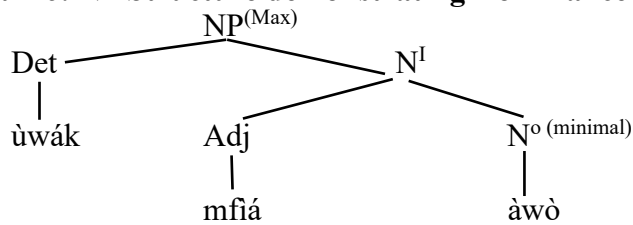
The notion of precedence and dominance determines well-formed structures in a language in relation to word order and headedness. From the diagram it is observed that, N^I, *mfiá 'white'* precedes N° - *àwò 'person'* in that order. The N^I is an intermediate category between NP and N°. This is because N^I occurs to the left of it. In the above diagram, it is observed that, NP immediately dominates N^I since there is no node intervening between it. It is to be noted also that NP does not immediately dominate N°. However, N^I is the intermediate category between NP (maximal category) and N° (minimal category) which is the head of the projection. The syntactic structure contains two types of nodes: terminal node and non-terminal node. The lexical items such as *ùwák 'many'*, *mfiá 'white'* and *àwò 'people'* are referred to as terminal nodes. The non-terminal nodes are the nodes with category labels such as NP, N. Adj. *Ùwák 'many'* is a word level category.

In Ibibio, adjectives must always precede the nouns they qualify. This is the reason examples (33 and 34) crash because adjectives post modify the noun. Adjectives in the language pre-modify the noun, hence the name 'adiana ikọ anyịñ'. This means the one that occurs with the noun.

33. *ùwák ' àwò   mfiá.
    *many people white
34. *èté ànyán ádò
    *Father tall the

To make examples (33 and 34) grammatical, the adjective must precede or come before the noun it modifies and the quantifier must always precede the two such items. Hence, the following derivations:

35. Ùwák mfiá àwò
    many white people
    My beautiful mother
36. Ànyán èté ádò
    Tall man the
    The tall man

The Ibibio nominal expression is claimed to be left headed based on the study conducted by Udosen and Okon (2022). The language displays both the pre and post modification systems where complements can be found initially and finally as it is the case for ordinal quantifiers (pre) and cardinal modifiers (post) in overt syntax. The intermediate categories include adjectives and complementizers in some cases.

The next NP structure in Ibibio is the case where a Prepositional Phrase (PP) complement is derived within the NP. Consider the following rule:

37. NP → Det + N^I
    N^I → N + PP

The above rule expresses a situation where a PP complement is derived within an NP. The following examples illustrate the idea:

38. Ùsàn ké ànyọ̀ñ ákpòkóró
    Plate on top   table
    The plate on top of the table

39. Àfọ̀ñ ádò ké mbèn ésà
    Cloth the on edge veranda
    The cloth on the edge of the veranda

40. Íyák ké ìnyàñ
    Fish in river
    The fish in the river

From the examples presented, it is observed that the NP houses its PP and makes it its complement. For instance, *ùsàn 'plate'* in example (38) precedes its complement, *ké ànyọ̀ñ ákpòkóró 'on top of the table'*. *Àfọ̀ñ ádò 'the cloth'* in example (39) is complemented by the PP, *ké mbèn ésà, 'on the egde of the veranda'*. In example (40), *íyák 'fish'* is the nouns that are complemented by *ké ìnyàñ, 'in the river'*. In relations to the notion of dominance and precedence, it is stated that the nouns which occur to the left side of the phrase precede the PP complement to the right and dominate them as well. Again, within the PP complement phrase, the prepositions precede its complements and dominate them too. This means that there are two levels of dominance and precedence within the NP with a PP complement. Consider the tree diagram below:

Diagram 7: NP with a PP Complement
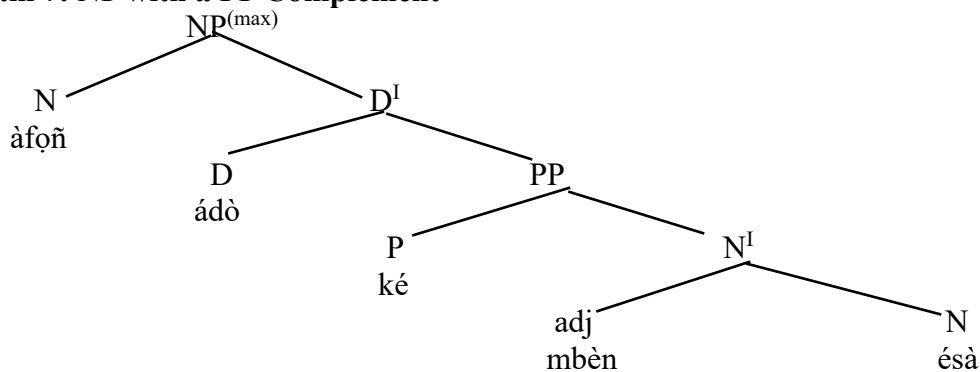
From the diagram, the levels with the bars (D^I and P^I) are intermediate positions within the different projections of the phrases. This is the level the PSG did not recognise. This is the level between maximal projection and the minimal projection. Note that the NP dominates the entire structure. From the tree diagram too, it is assumed N or D can project since they share the same maximal projection within a language with a mixed word order. But Okon (2023) observes that the parametric nuances for languages with mixed word order for nominal expressions can be explained in terms of movement. This is because, every language is supposed to account for one direction of headedness. As earlier stated, the Ibibio language attests a left-headed parameter for nominal expression.

The next NP structure is a type that accommodates or contains a sentence within it. This is where a relative clause is formed. In this situation, a rule such as the one stated in example (41) is presented thus:

    41. NP → N + REL. CLAUSE
The rule will produce the following NPs in the Ibibio language. Consider the examples below:
    42. Mbòn é-   ké-é-   kà-há úkárá
        Those 3pl-pst 3pl go neg governance
        Those who went to rule
    43. Èté   ádò á-   ké- á- yém- mé   ábọọñ
        Man the   3sg pst   3sg seek-process king
        The man who wanted to be the king
    44. Ùfàn á- dì   èghè   kó.
        Friend 3sg-come process there
        The friend coming there

Diagram 8: NP with Relative Clause
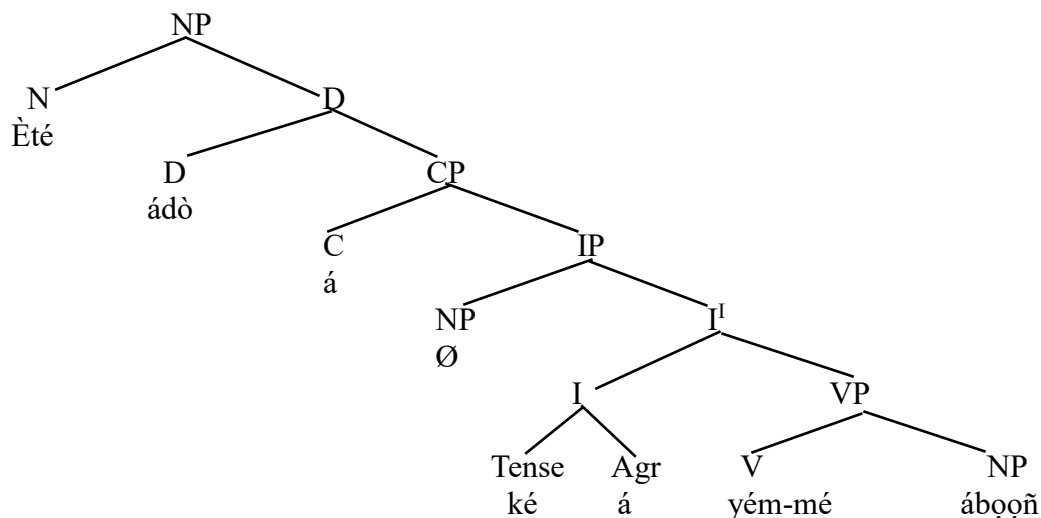
       From the diagram above, it is observed that the NP comprising the noun and determiner at the left periphery take the relative clause introduced by the low tone pronominal marker (á) as their complements as shown in the diagram. The complementizer phrase is the node that introduces the relative marker. The relative marker, an (á) affix is placed under complementizer.

Summary
       The notion of head is quite important in the analysis of NP realisations in Ibibio. The paper adopted the X-bar module of Government and Binding framework. The X-bar, apart from being an alternative to the traditional account of Phrase Structure Grammar (PSG) is used to account for the order of constituents that form a certain phrase so as to determine the head. The Ibibio NP patterns of occurrence ranges from being a bare noun, derived nouns, pronouns, noun and determiner sequence, determiner and noun sequence, NP occurring with prepositional phrase as complement and an NP with relative clause as complement.

Conclusion
       NP derivation just like sentence building is a creative activity of the human brain. This is the reason Etim & Okon (2023) maintain that the possession of the grammatical ability to create or process lexical items in the mind is a sign of normal grammatical acquisition in NP formation. This paper accounts for the Ibibio NP realisations which express the mental activity of the native speaker using the X-bar theory. The two relations within this theory: dominance

and precedence are used in accounting for the head of an NP. Within the X-bar syntax, determiners are regarded as modifiers or complements. The paper maintains that what precedes does not always head until the grammatical condition of movement is obeyed for such nominal phrases in the language. Therefore, the language resort to movement mechanism in deriving the determiner (quantifier) and noun sequence. The Ibibio language is opined to be left-headed in its NP structure even with the fact that the language displays a mixed word order in overt syntax. The paper examines the Ibibio NP with the recognition of intermediate category within it.

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REFORMING NIGERIAN EDUCATION:
A MODERATE ESSENTIALIST APPROACH FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract
This article proposes "moderate essentialism" as a comprehensive framework for reforming Nigeria's educational system. It critically examines William Bagley's Essentialism, an educational philosophy emphasizing core academic knowledge, discipline, and cultural transmission through a teacher-centred approach. While Essentialism offers significant strengths in building foundational skills and promoting teacher professionalism, its rigid preservationist stance and potential for cultural lag present considerable challenges for Nigeria's dynamic needs. The analysis advocates for a balanced approach that integrates beneficial Essentialist principles such as a "back-to-basics" curriculum and strong teacher roles with the imperative demands of the 21st century, including technological literacy and critical inquiry. This integration, however, involves navigating inherent pedagogical and philosophical complexities. A traditional, teacher-centred, knowledge-transmission model can conflict with the student-centred, inquiry-based, and adaptive learning environments necessary for fostering critical thinking and technological fluency. This research outlines key recommendations focusing on elevating teacher status, improving educational infrastructure, ensuring the recruitment of qualified personnel, and strategically restructuring curricula to address Nigeria's foundational gaps while simultaneously fostering responsible, adaptable citizens prepared for a rapidly evolving global landscape.

Key words: Reform, Moderate, Essentialism, Approach

Introduction

Education stands as the fundamental bedrock of national progress, and for Nigeria, establishing a robust and effective educational system is unequivocally crucial for sustained advancement. This article delves into Essentialism, a prominent educational philosophy that advocates for a "back-to-basics" approach, emphasizing the systematic instillation of core skills and knowledge to comprehensively prepare students for life. The research undertakes a critical examination of William Bagley's Essentialism, focusing on its specific relevance and profound implications for Nigeria's contemporary educational landscape. While Essentialism initially

originated in the United States of America. in response to perceived declines in educational standards, its core tenets offer valuable observations for addressing Nigeria's unique and pressing challenges.

The overarching aim of this study is to meticulously analyse Essentialism's core principles, identify its inherent strengths and limitations within the distinct Nigerian context, and ultimately propose a refined, "moderate essentialist" philosophy that is well-suited for the demands of 21st-century Nigeria. The foundational gaps in the Nigerian educational system are often multi-factorial. These challenges extend beyond mere pedagogical approaches to encompass systemic issues such as chronic underfunding, inadequate teacher training and motivation, outdated curricula, lack of essential infrastructure, socio-economic disparities, and governance challenges including corruption and political instability. This broad context implies that pedagogical reforms, while undeniably vital, require parallel efforts to address these deeper, underlying systemic issues for their efficacy to be significantly enhanced. The success of educational transformation in Nigeria is thus inextricably linked to wider societal changes, positioning education as a critical component within a larger, interconnected framework of national development. A little review on some philosophical and educational perspectives relevant to the discourse on educational will help draw insights from historical and contemporary thinkers.

Emmanuel Ette (2019) in a book titled "*Philosophical Foundations of Nigerian Education*" begins this piece with an in-depth explication of the term Education. He argues for the importance of vocational training, but maintains that there are even more important and engaging factors involved in matters concerning education. According to him; " educators should not shut their eyes to the short-term practical needs of the society in which they are working as reflected in the type of employment available" (153). The implication of this claim as documented by the author is that, emphasis should not be totally placed on vocational education as it may becloud the capacity to properly furnish one's cognitive and psycho-motive capacity. Montaigne (1533-1592), a French nobleman, in his essay *On the Education of Children*, openly admired Epicurus's ideas on the philosophy of education. He strongly attacked the superficiality of medieval education that superseded a person's own understanding. He thinks that children should be taught things that nourishes their souls, educate their nature and thinking, and teach them to know themselves and to do right (Montaigne 52). Gianbattista Vico, Locke's Italian contemporary, in *On the Study Method of Our Time*, sought a balance between liberalizing traditional teaching and fostering child's imagination. He emphasized imagination's role in efficient teaching, enabling insight and original thinking (Vico 77). He opposed underestimating children's capacity to think and argued against teaching speculative and abstract philosophical criticism too early, as it damages common sense (Vico 21). Vico believed education's early stages should offer experiences relevant to the child's life, fostering thinking and sound reason. Vico's insistence on common sense aligns with Bagley's focus on essential knowledge and skills for productive societal members. However, Bagley should have tailored his curriculum to contemporary trends like communication, robotics, and AI, which Vico's emphasis on imagination supports.

William Bagley's Essentialism: Core Principles and Pedagogical Implications

The philosophical framework of Educational Essentialism, formally articulated by William Chandler Bagley in "The Essentialist's Platform" in 1938, is built upon three fundamental tenets. These include the paramount importance of a well-educated teacher, the critical necessity of transmitting societal ideals, and a strong emphasis on accuracy, rigor, and diligent effort from the learner (173). For Essentialists, the primary aim of education is to instil

essentials or main ingredients for knowledge transmission, adopting a "back-to-basics" approach that focuses intently on fundamental core skills. This educational philosophy prepares students for life by systematically transmitting knowledge, cultivating literate, noble, and patriotic citizens, and fostering the development of a socially efficient individual.

Bagley firmly believed that education's core purpose was to preserve society, not alter it. In this view, education systematically transfers "educational requirements via a common body of knowledge, skills, concepts and traditions from a generation of learners to another to equip them for societal contribution and patriotism, while also sharpening the reasoning faculty and training the mind". However, this explicit goal of preserving society, without an emphasis on its alteration, carries significant implications for a dynamic and developing nation like Nigeria. While stability is a valuable objective, a purely preservationist stance risks inadvertently entrenching existing societal inequalities, outdated structures, or even harmful norms. If education merely transmits existing societal ideals without a critical lens, it may perpetuate problematic practices rather than empowering citizens to critically examine and reform them. The aim of producing patriotic citizens could, in certain political contexts, be interpreted as fostering unquestioning obedience, rather than cultivating the critical, engaged citizenship necessary for robust democratic progress and meaningful societal transformation. This highlights a fundamental philosophical challenge: for a nation actively requiring significant internal transformation to address complex challenges such as corruption, an education system primarily focused on preservation might inadvertently impede necessary societal evolution and the cultivation of critically engaged citizens.

The essentialist curriculum places a strong emphasis on a common core of knowledge that is transmitted systematically, focusing on intellectual training in core subjects such as grammar, literature, writing, mathematics, sciences, and history. Elementary education specifically prioritizes literacy and numeracy, with the curriculum expanding to include history, science, math, literature, and English in secondary education. Bagley particularly stressed solid facts of the physical and social sciences as the essential basis of subject matter.

The teacher's role within Essentialism is central and authoritative, positioning the educator as the centre of the classroom, its leader, and the custodian of both knowledge and order. Teachers are expected to impart knowledge primarily through lectures, manage student behaviour effectively through rewards and penalties, and are required to be academically well-qualified with an enthusiasm for teaching and human grooming, serving as demonstrators of the model for their students. While Essentialism states its aim is to sharpen the reasoning faculty and training the mind and emphasizes accuracy, rigor, and diligent effort, the described pedagogical approach, which is highly teacher-centred or content-centred with teachers primarily imparting knowledge through lectures, presents a potential pedagogical contradiction. The genuine development of reasoning and critical thinking often necessitates active student engagement, questioning, problem-solving, and collaborative inquiry. Such active learning can be constrained by an overly didactic model of instruction that encourages passive absorption rather than the active construction of knowledge. This inherent tension suggests that even within the framework of pure Essentialism, there is a challenge in reconciling its stated intellectual objectives with its prescribed instructional methods.

Table 1: Core Tenets of William Bagley's Essentialism

Aspect	Essentialist Stance (Bagley)
Aims	Instil core skills; prepare for life; produce patriotic, socially efficient citizens; preserve society.

Aspect	Essentialist Stance (Bagley)
Role	Transmit knowledge across generations; equip for societal contribution; sharpen reasoning.
Focus	Intellectual training in core subjects (grammar, math, sciences, history); literacy/numeracy (elementary); history/science/math/literature/English (secondary); solid facts.
Teacher's Role	Central authority; impart knowledge via lectures; ensure order/discipline; guide students; qualified, enthusiastic, model; distribute rewards/penalties; obey superiors.
Curriculum	Core, teacher-centred; systematic knowledge transmission; demands thoroughness/accuracy; focuses on basic elements; aims for scientific teacher education; organized/abstract.

Strengths of Essentialism for Nigerian Educational Reform

William Bagley's Essentialism (Bagley, 1938) offers several significant strengths that are directly applicable to improving Nigeria's educational system, particularly in addressing its current challenges.

One core strength lies in its commitment to the foundational and fundamental instillation of core skills through a "back-to-basics" approach. This approach focuses on essential subjects such as grammar, literature, writing, mathematics, sciences, and history. This rigorous methodology is designed to foster thoroughness, accuracy, persistence, and good workmanship and is believed to effectively sharpen reasoning and train the mind. Essentialism provides a pertinent framework for establishing a solid educational foundation.

Furthermore, Essentialism is based on the principle of discipline and duty, offering a compelling solution to educational philosophies that may tend to reject discipline unless it is entirely self-imposed. Essentialist teachers are expected to embed traditional moral values and virtues such as respect for authority, perseverance, fidelity to duty, consideration for others, and practicality. The philosophy aims to instil patriotism, and character development, ultimately producing literate, noble, and patriotic citizens. This aspect is highly relevant for Nigeria, a nation with an urgent need for character development and a return to foundational values. However, while individual ethics and character development are undoubtedly important, large scale societal issues such as corruption, prevalent in Nigeria, are often systemic, deeply rooted in weak institutions, lack of accountability, economic pressures, and entrenched power structures, rather than solely individual moral failings. This indicates that educational reform, while crucial for fostering ethical citizens, is insufficient on its own to tackle deep-seated societal corruption without parallel reforms in governance, legal frameworks, and economic opportunities. Education is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for addressing such complex societal problems; its ultimate success is contingent on these wider societal changes.

Bagley also strongly advocated for enhancing the teaching profession (Bagley, 1938: 321), emphasizing well-educated, properly trained and culturally knowledgeable teachers as the center of the classroom and its leader. This aligns with the widely held view that "good educators make the most indelible impacts on humanity" (Nwankwo, (2005: 92). For Nigeria, where the teaching profession faces significant challenges such as low motivation and diminished status, Essentialism underscores the critical necessity to "raise the standard of teacher motivation and propagate a career in teaching to be more desirable" (Naong, n.d. 176).

Finally, Essentialism places a strong emphasis on preserving and transmitting cultural heritage, ensuring that the accumulated wisdom of our civilization as taught in the traditional academic disciplines is passed on from teacher to student. This aims to ensure a common culture for all citizens and facilitate inducting each generation into its heritage of culture. For Nigeria, this implies actively incorporating the nation's rich history and diverse cultural traditions into the curriculum, thereby counteracting the abandonment of indigenous ideals due to over-Europeanization (Nkrumah, 1972: 245). Nevertheless, while the preservation of cultural heritage is a significant strength, particularly in addressing the effects of over-Europeanization, it also presents a subtle yet significant tension with the later advocacy for critical inquiry as a 21st-century skill. Merely transmitting accumulated wisdom and cultural traditions without a critical lens risks perpetuating biases, inequalities, or outdated practices inherent in any historical tradition. For a diverse and complex nation like Nigeria, fostering critical inquiry means empowering students to interrogate their heritage, to discern what is beneficial to preserve and what needs to be reformed or discarded. This implies a need for a nuanced approach to cultural transmission that balances appreciation with critical evaluation, ensuring education does not inadvertently reinforce harmful aspects of tradition.

Critiques and Limitations: Challenges in the Nigerian Context

While beneficial in certain aspects, Bagley's Essentialism (Bagley, 1938) also faces critiques and limitations that are particularly relevant when considering its application in Nigeria. A primary criticism revolves around Bagley's belief that "education was not supposed to change society but to preserve it" (213). Critics contend that this stance is a fundamental flaw, particularly as societies are dynamic and frequently contain elements and phenomenon that require transformational surgery. For Nigeria, a purely preservationist approach could significantly hinder necessary societal reforms and prevent education from serving as a powerful tool for positive change, especially in addressing pervasive issues such as corruption and other societal ills. This philosophical stance, if rigidly applied, could inadvertently become a barrier to the nation's progress by discouraging the critical examination and transformation of existing societal structures.

Furthermore, Essentialism gives minimal attention to extracurricular activities, which can lead to passive roles for students, potentially undermining their motivation and stifling creativity. Its highly teacher-centred or content-centred methodology can be perceived as autocratic, paying little attention to individual student abilities or interests. In the Nigerian context, a rigid application of this pedagogical model could stifle student agency and the development of critical thinking skills, both of which are vital for fostering innovation and effective problem-solving within a complex and rapidly changing society.

Perhaps one of the most significant limitations for Nigeria is Essentialism's potential for cultural lag in a dynamic world. The philosophy's singular stress on traditional basic subjects can limit the capacity to teach more contemporary and creative education, potentially manufacturing students who do not really reason for themselves. This approach risks promoting cultural lag by conditioning students to reason in line with the larger culture, thereby discouraging individual creativity and subversive investigation. This is a profound concern for Nigeria, especially as the world rapidly evolves with advancements in information, and communication technology, robotic engineering and artificial intelligence. The inherent contradiction between Essentialism's "preservationist stance" and the rapid global technological evolution means that "cultural lag" is not merely a potential outcome but a near certainty if the philosophy is not fundamentally re-engineered. This implies that adaptation to modern trends and future readiness is not an optional add-on but a necessity for the philosophy's

continued relevance and efficacy in the 21st century, requiring a fundamental shift in the educational mindset from one of static preservation to one of dynamic adaptation.

The risk of manufacturing students who do not really reason for themselves carries critical implications for Nigeria's long-term national development. In a global economy increasingly driven by innovation, critical thinking, and complex problem solving, an education system that primarily produces rote learners or individuals conditioned to conform will severely hamper the nation's ability to compete, adapt to new technologies, create new industries, or effectively address complex societal challenges. This directly undermines the stated goal of education as the bedrock of national development. The causal link between a rigid pedagogical approach and stunted national development underscores the urgency of adopting a more flexible and inquiry-based educational model.

Towards a Moderate Essentialism for 21st-Century Nigeria

Understanding Essentialism requires situating it within the broader landscape of educational philosophy, particularly in contrast with Progressivism. Essentialism, with its content-focused approach, and Progressivism, with its child-focused orientation, represents a fundamental tension in educational thought; effort vs. interest, discipline vs. freedom, race experience vs. individual experience. For Nigeria, a balanced approach that transcends this dichotomy is crucial. While Essentialism provides a strong framework for foundational knowledge and discipline, it must be complemented by elements that foster critical thinking, creativity, and adaptability. The concept of moderate essentialism is therefore advocated, proposing a synthesis that combines beneficial essentialist principles with other educational theories designed to guarantee 21st-century technological learning. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) serves as an instructive conceptual model in this regard, having successfully fused solid essentialist traditional subjects and way of life with 21st century technology, thereby demonstrating that massive technological development can be anchored upon national culture and tradition.

However, while the United Arab Emirates (UAE) model is conceptually instructive, its direct transferability of implementation strategies to Nigeria may be problematic without addressing significant socio-economic and governance disparities. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) benefits from a significantly higher GDP per capita, strong centralized governance, substantial financial resources, and a relatively smaller, more manageable population. Nigeria, in stark contrast, faces challenges such as lower per capita income, a more complex and decentralized governance structure, pervasive corruption, a much larger and rapidly growing population, and significant infrastructure deficits. This highlights that while the idea of fusing tradition with technology is profoundly relevant, the practical execution must be meticulously tailored to Nigeria's unique socio-economic, political, and cultural realities. Resource availability and institutional capacity are critical limiting factors that must be explicitly acknowledged and addressed for any successful implementation.

The challenge for moderate essentialism is not just to integrate technology as an additive component but to fundamentally shift the educational mindset from one of static preservation to one of dynamic adaptation and future-readiness. This necessitates a profound re-evaluation of what truly constitutes essential knowledge in a constantly evolving global landscape. The basics of the 21st century are not merely the basics of the 20th; they encompass new literacies and competencies required for a technologically advanced and interconnected world. This implies that curriculum restructuring must be a continuous, adaptive process, rather than a one-time fix, ensuring that education remains relevant and prepares students for unforeseen future challenges.

Recommendations for Educational Reform in Nigeria

Based on the critical examination of William Bagley's Essentialism and its implications for the Nigerian educational context, the following recommendations are proposed to rebrand and reposition the educational system for optimal functioning, integrating beneficial essentialist principles with 21st-century demands. It is crucial to recognize that these recommendations are not isolated but form a holistic, synergistic strategy. The success of the entire reform hinges on simultaneous and sustained progress across all these interconnected areas, as failure in one area, such as inadequate teacher remuneration, can significantly undermine success in others, like attracting qualified personnel or effectively restructuring the curriculum. This emphasizes the systemic nature of the proposed reforms and the critical need for a coordinated, long-term national effort with sustained political will.

Elevating the Prestige and Incentives of the Teaching Profession

Teachers in Nigeria are often treated with levity, a factor that significantly impacts their confidence and commitment (Naong, n.d. 178). It is imperative to Elevate and Attach Prestige to the Teaching Profession by ensuring teachers are "adequately respected for their selfless contributions" (Broudy, 1960: 41). This requires a fundamental "repackaging of personnel working in the education sector," making teaching more attractive at all levels, particularly within early childhood and primary education (Naong, n.d. 312).

Improve Remuneration and Monetary Incentives

A substantial upgrade in remuneration and incentives is crucial across all sectors of education, with a particular focus on early childhood and primary educators (Naong, n.d. 213). Teachers' pays and working conditions must be reasonable when compared to personnel of similar qualifications in other professions to foster a sense of fulfilment and job security, thereby motivating them for more work and increasing their commitment and output (Naong, n.d. 216).

Strategic Investment in Educational Infrastructure and Qualified Personnel

The pervasive lack of infrastructure and basic amenities has significantly bedevilled schools and stunted the growth of education particularly in Nigeria. There should be a concerted effort to invest a substantial amount of state budgets in education, recognizing that quality education is the bedrock of a sound economy. Resolving the persistent teacher shortage through sufficient initial training, recruitment of qualified teachers, and in-service training is also critical. It is equally vital to Place Premium on Hiring Highly Qualified Personnel or Teachers to prevent incompetence amongst teachers. However, the challenge of ensuring strategic investment in educational infrastructure and qualified personnel in a context of pervasive corruption and resource mismanagement presents a significant practical hurdle. Simply allocating more funds does not guarantee they will reach their intended targets or be utilized effectively for infrastructure development or teacher training and recruitment. Without robust mechanisms for transparency, accountability, and stringent anti-corruption measures within the education sector, increased budgets could be siphoned off, leading to minimal tangible improvements despite the investment. This highlights a crucial need for robust governance and oversight frameworks to ensure the successful implementation of these financial and human resource recommendations.

Restructuring Curricula for a Balanced Approach (Moderate Essentialism)

The Ministry of Education should strategically restructure certain educational policies and reforms to reflect beneficial essentialist principles. This entails grafting and drafting of

curricula and syllabuses around teachers especially at the beginner's level, promoting a "back-to-basic style teaching, where the child is thoroughly grounded from a young age. Crucially, this report advocates for moderate essentialism in tandem with any other educational theory that will guarantee 21st century technological learning as a balanced approach for education in Nigeria.

Cultivating Discipline and Critical Inquiry in Learning Environments
The implementation of essentialist principles should focus on instilling respect for elders and tolerance for humanity. Classroom management should actively effectuate the instillation of the culture of respect within students and reinforce core values of morals and discipline. While essentialism provides a strong framework for discipline, it is also important to foster critical theorizing and allow students to critically reason and communicate what he feels, implying a necessary blend with progressive elements.

Conclusion
William Bagley's Essentialism, with its distinctive back-to-basics approach, offers valuable principles for Nigeria's educational reform, particularly in strengthening foundational knowledge, instilling discipline, and elevating the crucial role of the teacher. However, its inherent limitations, such as a rigid preservationist stance and a potential for cultural lag, necessitate a nuanced and adaptive application within the Nigerian context.

This article strongly advocates for a moderate essentialism in Nigeria, positing it as a balanced approach that effectively combines Essentialism's core strengths in foundational learning and character development with the imperative for developing 21st-century skills and fostering critical inquiry. The success observed in countries like the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which have effectively integrated traditional values with cutting-edge technological advancement, serves as a compelling and instructive conceptual model for Nigeria's path forward.

It is noteworthy that the discussion suggests that future studies could further examine "Nonessentialism," focusing specifically on the provisions and requirements of computer science, computer engineering, and programming to further enhance education and advance humanity in Nigeria. This suggestion, following the advocacy for moderate essentialism as the balanced approach, implies a subtle recognition that even the moderate framework might serve as a necessary foundational step or a bridge, but perhaps not the ultimate philosophical framework for achieving true leadership in advanced technological fields. This perspective indicates that educational philosophy itself must be dynamic and continuously evolve, acknowledging that more radical shifts and pedagogical innovations might be required for Nigeria to reach the forefront of technological prowess and innovation in the long term.

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THE AESTHETICS OF *IFÁ* TEXTS:
A PHILOSOPHICAL EXPLORATION

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Abstract
The *Ifá* corpus, the sacred compendium of Yoruba divination wisdom, represents one of the richest reservoirs of African indigenous knowledge systems. Beyond its epistemological and religious dimensions, *Ifá* is a profound aesthetic phenomenon, integrating language, performance, visual art, and ritual into a coherent philosophical worldview. This paper critically explores the aesthetics of *Ifá* texts, focusing on how their artistic elements—poetic language, symbolic imagery, performative ritual, and ethical vision—serve epistemological and ethical functions. Engaging interdisciplinary methods rooted in African philosophical and aesthetic theory, the study reveals *Ifá*'s unique capacity to dissolve artificial distinctions between art and philosophy, beauty and truth. By situating *Ifá* within global aesthetic thought while affirming its indigenous specificity, this research challenges Eurocentric models of textuality and calls for a radical reappraisal of African oral literatures as vital philosophical resources.

Keywords: *Ifá*, Yoruba philosophy, African aesthetics, Oral tradition, Indigenous knowledge systems

Introduction

In the global history of philosophy, textual traditions have long been privileged over oral literatures. Yet, the *Ifá* divination system, central to Yoruba cosmology, defies such hierarchical categorizations. Comprising thousands of *ese* (verses) organized into 256 *Odu* (chapters), the *Ifá* corpus encapsulates the Yoruba understanding of existence, destiny, morality, and the cosmos. However, beyond its religious and philosophical significance, *Ifá* stands out for its compelling aesthetic architecture. The term "aesthetics," often defined narrowly as the study of beauty and artistic taste in Western philosophical traditions, assumes a broader, more integrated meaning within African intellectual contexts. In Yoruba thought, aesthetics permeates language, ritual, performance, and ethical behaviour. Beauty (*ẹwà*) is not only sensuous but moral and existential, intertwined with the good character (*ìwà rere*) and the truth (*òtítọ́*).

This paper proposes that *Ifá* must be understood as an aesthetic phenomenon, where philosophical meaning is not merely transmitted through artistic forms but constituted by them. Through an analysis of *Ifá*'s language, imagery, performance, and ethical structures, the

research seeks to demonstrate that aesthetics in *Ifá* is not ornamental but integral to Yoruba philosophical thought. In so doing, the paper addresses critical gaps in the scholarly literature, bringing African oral literatures into contemporary debates on aesthetics, epistemology, and decolonial philosophy.

Scholarship on *Ifá* has traditionally emphasized its religious and philosophical dimensions. Pioneering works by Wande Abimbola, such as Ifá: An Exposition of Ifá Literary Corpus, present *Ifá* as a sophisticated system of knowledge, undercutting colonial assumptions of African intellectual inferiority. Abimbola demonstrates that *Ifá* contains theories of causality, morality, ontology, and epistemology comparable in depth to any written philosophical system. Barry Hallen and J.O. Sodipo's analytic approach in Knowledge, Belief, and Witchcraft further situates Yoruba thought within epistemological discourse, arguing that indigenous categories like *ọgbọn* (wisdom) and *ìmò* (knowledge) possess distinct, coherent philosophical structures. Their work highlights *Ifá*'s role as a repository of communal knowledge, navigating the boundaries between belief and certainty.

In the realm of aesthetics, scholars like Rowland Abiodun (18, 244-46), Babatunde Lawal (242), and Henry John Drewal (*Ifá: Visual and Sensorial Aspects* 328-30) have advanced critical insights. Abiodun, especially in Yoruba Art and Language, insists that Yoruba art must be understood as an integrated phenomenon where visuality, verbal expression, and spirituality converge. He argues that aesthetics in Yoruba culture is pragmatic, ethical, and communal (18, 244-46).

Lawal, through his concept of *àṣẹ* (creative power), elaborates on how verbal and visual artistry manifest spiritual agency (241). Drewal's exploration of performative epistemology shows how knowledge is enacted, not just stated, challenging static notions of textuality (*Ifá: Visual and Sensorial Aspects* 328-30).

Nevertheless, focused studies on the specific aesthetic dimensions of *Ifá* verses remain relatively scarce. While Abimbola discusses *Ifá*'s poetic structures (*Ifá Divination Poetry* 1-3) and Abiodun addresses Yoruba verbal artistry (1-18), a sustained inquiry into *Ifá* as an aesthetic-philosophical system is overdue. This paper builds on these foundations while filling the scholarly lacuna by foregrounding aesthetics as central, not peripheral, to *Ifá*'s philosophical identity.

Theoretical Framework: African Aesthetics and Indigenous Epistemology
African aesthetic theory resists the compartmentalization typical of Western thought. Scholars like Okpewho (*The Epic in Africa* 11), Gyekye (246), and Irele (114) highlight how African art is inherently functional, communal, and ethically charged. As Okpewho argues in The Oral Performance in Africa, the artistry of African oral texts is inseparable from their social function. In Yoruba thought, aesthetics is deeply linked to *ìwà* (character). As Rowland Abiodun puts it, "goodness and beauty are inseparably entwined in the Yoruba perception of reality" (*Yoruba Art and Language* 6). Beauty is not merely decorative but reflects moral and existential values. This indigenous framework contrasts sharply with Western traditions that often separate aesthetics from ethics and epistemology. African aesthetics insists on holistic integration, a perspective critical for interpreting *Ifá*. Moreover, indigenous epistemologies affirm oral, performative, and symbolic forms of knowing. Smith's Decolonizing Methodologies insists that indigenous knowledge systems must be engaged on their own terms, resisting the imposition of literate, Eurocentric analytical frameworks. Thus, *Ifá*'s aesthetics cannot be seen merely as embellishment but as constitutive of its philosophical validity.

Language and Poetic Devices in *Ifá*: Tonality, Rhythm, and Orality

The Yoruba language is inherently tonal; meaning is embedded not just in words but in the specific pitch contours with which they are pronounced. *Ifá* texts harness this tonality for poetic effect, weaving meaning and musicality into a seamless whole. In divination sessions, the *babaláwo* (diviner) chants ese *Ifá* in a carefully measured rhythm, balancing tonal precision with musical expressiveness. This chanting transforms the delivery into a multisensory experience, where auditory beauty reinforces semantic depth. Abimbola notes that tonality in *Ifá* is critical not merely for aesthetic pleasure but for maintaining the efficacy of divination: "The slightest tonal error could alter the meaning of a verse and thus compromise the guidance offered to the client" (*Ifá: An Exposition of Ifá Literary Corpus* 47). Rhythm also structures the narrative flow of ese *Ifá*. Many verses follow call-and-response patterns or cyclical progressions that mirror the cosmological emphasis on continuity and return. The rhythm both pleases the ear and aids memory, allowing for the faithful transmission of verses across generations. However, this oral and performative character distinguishes *Ifá* texts from written literature and places them firmly within what Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o terms the "orature" tradition—a category that foregrounds the beauty and logic of oral communication systems as valid literary and philosophical modes (13-15).

Parallelism, Repetition, and Structure

Parallelism is a hallmark of *Ifá* poetic structure. Verses often unfold in mirrored or iterative phrases that build cumulative meaning while reinforcing key themes. For example, in Odu Obara Meji:

> He who knows not his destiny stumbles in darkness;
> He who consults *Ifá* walks in light;
> He who walks in light fulfills his destiny.

Here, the structure emphasizes the movement from ignorance to knowledge, from disorder to order—a central preoccupation in Yoruba thought. Repetition serves mnemonic, performative, and aesthetic functions. It allows the *babaláwo* to emphasize critical points, deepen emotional resonance, and facilitate audience participation. As Okpewho highlights, repetition in African oral literature is not redundancy but a vital aesthetic device that "creates texture, builds suspense, and enacts philosophical depth" (*The Oral Performance in Africa* 31).

Metaphor, Allegory, and Philosophical Imagery

Ifá verses are densely metaphorical. Animals, plants, celestial bodies, and everyday objects become vehicles for conveying abstract concepts. The tortoise (*ijapa*), for example, symbolizes cunning and resilience, while the palm tree represents life, sustenance, and spiritual ascent. An allegorical example from the *Odu Otura Meji* tells of a bird whose feathers are plucked by villagers yet who continues to sing. The bird represents the human spirit's resilience amid suffering—a profound philosophical meditation encoded in accessible narrative form. These metaphors are not merely illustrative; they are epistemological tools. As Hallen and Sodipo observe, understanding Yoruba philosophy requires grasping the "web of analogical reasoning" that structures its worldviews (89). Thus, the aesthetic beauty of *Ifá*'s language is not ornamental; it is constitutive of its philosophical power.

Sacred Objects: *Opon Ifá*, *Ikin*, and Instruments of Divination

Ifá's aesthetic experience extends beyond verbal performance into the realm of visual and material culture. The *opon Ifá* (divination tray) is a central artifact, typically carved from

sacred wood and adorned with intricate designs. These carvings often depict cosmological symbols, such as the four cardinal points representing the balance of forces in the universe. The *ikin* (sacred palm nuts) used for casting signs carry tactile and symbolic significance. Their handling during divination is a ritual performance embodying the delicate interplay between fate, chance, and human agency. As Drewal argues, these sacred objects "anchor abstract concepts in tangible, sensuous forms, making philosophical reflection an embodied experience" (*Yoruba Ritual: Performers* 126).

Colour, Costume, and Ritual Space

During *Ifá* ceremonies, the use of colour is highly symbolic. White garments signify purity and alignment with spiritual truth, while specific colours may be associated with particular Orisha (divinities) invoked during divination. The spatial arrangement of the ritual site—the positioning of objects, the orientation of the tray, the gestures performed—creates an immersive aesthetic environment designed to heighten spiritual receptivity. Lawal emphasizes that these visual elements are not decorative but function as "visual speech," communicating ideas, values, and emotions that reinforce the verbal content of the divination session (44). Thus, *Ifá*'s visual aesthetics engage the eye, the body, and the spirit in a holistic philosophical experience.

Performative Aesthetics: Ritual, Movement, and Embodied Philosophy

The *babaláwo*'s mastery of voice is central to *Ifá*'s performative aesthetics. Through modulation—raising and lowering pitch, altering volume, emphasizing certain syllables—the diviner enlivens the text, animating its philosophical content. As Agawu points out in discussing African musicality, "voice is not simply a carrier of words but a sculptor of meaning" (88). In *Ifá*, the aesthetic shaping of sound transforms ideas into lived experiences.

Gesture, Movement, and Spatial Dynamics

Gesture is integral to the divination performance. Tracing patterns in sacred powder (*iyerosun*) on the *opon Ifá*, handling the *ikin* with ritualized movements, and posturing the body according to cosmological directions—all constitute a grammar of meaning. Performance transforms abstract ideas into visible, embodied actions, allowing participants to "feel" the philosophy through sensory engagement. Drawing on Victor Turner's theory of ritual performance, one could argue that *Ifá* rituals create a "liminal space" where normal cognitive boundaries dissolve and participants experience profound aesthetic and philosophical transformation.

Audience Interaction and Communal Aesthetics

Ifá sessions are not solitary performances but communal events. Clients often respond verbally or nonverbally, and the diviner may adjust the rhythm, content, or style of chanting based on the audience's reactions. This dialogical nature aligns with Yoruba aesthetics, which prioritize communal engagement over individual expression. As Abiodun asserts, Yoruba art is "always in dialogue with its audience," seeking to elicit not passive admiration but active participation (12). Thus, the aesthetic of *Ifá* is intrinsically relational, rooted in the co-creation of meaning between performer and audience.

Ethical Aesthetics in *Ifá* Texts: Beauty, Goodness, and Character (*Ìwà*)

In Yoruba philosophy, beauty (*èwà*) and goodness (*ìwà rere*) are fundamentally intertwined. Aesthetics is not merely about visual or auditory pleasure but about moral

excellence and existential fulfillment. In *Ifá* texts, this connection is explicit. The ideal human being is one who possesses *ìwà pèlé* (gentle character), and this virtue is described in aesthetically rich language. Consider a verse from the *Odu Irosun Meji*:

> Character is the beauty of a person;
> Goodness is the adornment of life;
> Wisdom is the clothing of destiny.

Here, ethical attributes are not just praised but visualized: character as beauty, wisdom as clothing. This metaphorical fusion emphasizes that to live well is to embody beauty aesthetically and morally. As Gbadegesin notes, in Yoruba thought, "the beautiful life is the good life; aesthetics and ethics are twin pillars of the same moral universe" (55). Thus, *Ifá*'s aesthetics actively promote a vision of ethical life, urging individuals to cultivate inner beauty that radiates outward into communal harmony.

Destiny (*Àyànmò*) and the Art of Living

Another major ethical aesthetic theme in *Ifá* is destiny (*àyànmò*). According to Yoruba cosmology, every individual chooses a destiny before birth, but realizing that destiny on earth requires wisdom, perseverance, and moral rectitude. *Ifá* verses often liken life to an artwork that must be carefully crafted. Just as a sculptor must patiently shape stone into beauty, so must an individual shape destiny through ethical choices. This aesthetic conception of life as art positions every human being as an artist of existence, continually negotiating between inherited fate and creative freedom. In this way, *Ifá* dissolves the boundary between ethics and aesthetics: to live beautifully is to live rightly, and vice versa.

Comparative Aesthetics: *Ifá* and Classical Western Aesthetics

While Western traditions, particularly in ancient Greece, also linked beauty and morality (e.g., in Plato's *Symposium*), they often privileged static forms—idealized sculptures, eternal ideas—over dynamic processes. In contrast, *Ifá*'s aesthetics are processual, emphasizing becoming over being. Beauty is not a fixed ideal but an unfolding achievement realized through continual ethical action and communal participation. Moreover, whereas Western aesthetics historically marginalized oral, performative, and participatory forms, *Ifá* centers them. As Irele observes, African thought offers a "celebration of the dynamism of life" often absent in Western metaphysical systems (114). Thus, *Ifá* enriches global aesthetic philosophy by offering a dynamic, relational, and ethical model of beauty rooted in lived experience.

Ifá and other Indigenous Epistemologies

Ifá shares affinities with other indigenous knowledge systems that integrate aesthetics and philosophy. For example, among the Native American Navajo, the concept of Hózhó similarly fuses beauty, balance, and moral order. Both traditions see aesthetics not as isolated contemplation but as existential participation in cosmic harmony. Thus, *Ifá* is part of a broader decolonial reimagining of aesthetics that affirms the plurality of human experiences of beauty and meaning.

Challenges and Future Directions: Preservation and Transmission

In the face of globalization, urbanization, and the erosion of indigenous knowledge systems, preserving the aesthetic integrity of *Ifá* is an urgent challenge. Modern technology offers both risks and opportunities. Digital recordings, apps, and online platforms can

disseminate *Ifá* texts widely, but they also risk decontextualizing them, stripping away their performative richness and communal embeddedness. Scholars like Toyin Falola have argued for a careful, ethically sensitive approach to preservation that respects the living, performative nature of African oral traditions (55-60). Thus, safeguarding *Ifá*'s aesthetics requires more than textual documentation; it demands sustaining the communities, languages, and ritual practices that give it life.

Academic Recognition and Decolonial Philosophy

Another major challenge is the marginalization of African oral literatures within global philosophical and aesthetic discourse. Despite growing interest in African philosophy, many Western institutions still privilege written, analytical modes of thought. As Wiredu contends, decolonizing philosophy requires recognizing the validity of African oral, communal, and symbolic ways of knowing (22, 25). By foregrounding the aesthetics of *Ifá* as a legitimate philosophical mode, scholars can contribute to a more inclusive, pluriversal understanding of human intellectual achievement. The aesthetics of *Ifá*, far from being peripheral or exotic, should be recognized as offering profound insights into the nature of beauty, morality, knowledge, and existence.

Conclusion

Ifá texts embody an integrated vision of aesthetics and philosophy where beauty, truth, and goodness converge. Through intricate language, symbolic imagery, embodied performance, and ethical exhortation, *Ifá* offers a rich, dynamic model of human flourishing. Its aesthetic power lies not in passive representation but in active creation: shaping sound, gesture, space, and character into a living tapestry of meaning. By engaging *Ifá*'s aesthetics seriously, philosophers and scholars can challenge Eurocentric biases, expand the horizons of aesthetic theory, and affirm the vitality of indigenous African knowledge systems. In a world increasingly marked by fragmentation, *Ifá*'s holistic aesthetics offer a profound reminder: that to live beautifully is to live wisely, ethically, and communally. Thus, the aesthetic of *Ifá* texts is not merely an ornament of Yoruba culture but a vital philosophical achievement with enduring relevance for humanity.

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DEMOCRACY: A CRITIQUE

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Abstract

This paper, "Democracy: A Critique", uses qualitative critical analysis to examine the ideal (theory) and practices of democracy. It observes that the concept, arguably the best form of government, is full of glitches. Its major vulnerability is that it accommodates many unrelated, unnamed or unidentified political concepts. This makes democracy fictitious. Many democratic institutions today are fictitious and a threat to humanity. To forswear fictitious democratic institutions and save humanity from the dangers of contemporary democracies and their cronies, the paper submits that political theorists must rescue democracy by strengthening the concept with sturdy physiognomies or postulating a better political concept that is ideal, realistic and viable. Based on the former part of this submission, which this paper sees as the best option, it argues for a healthy democracy that reduces inequality and empowers all citizens with qualitative education and skill acquisition to guarantee their participation in government.

Keywords: Democracy, Fictitious democracy, Humanity, Healthy democracy.

Introduction

Democracy is an enduring political system in human civilisation. For its over two millennia of existence, it has had its critics from Plato's outright condemnation to Aristotle's systemic rejection of the concept and many others down the line. The disagreements on the concept concern its meaning, desirability and practicability. Political theorists' discourse about it is full of discrepancies, such that different people view the concept from different lenses; the kind of lens one uses will determine how she or he understand and portray it (Kurki 371). The above has made every attribute of democracy and its other related concepts and their attributes disputable.

Democracy is a difficult political concept to define; if political theorists are assembled to define it, they will give several definitions. Scholars agree that democracy is a difficult and disputed political concept to define (Diamond 21; Fayemi 2; Kurki 271-275). Democracy's definitional problem arises because multiple unrelated political practices and cultures have christened themselves democracy. An attempt to define the concept will lead to a web of difficulties, and the definer would most likely give a fragmentary description. Then, a lazy definer can escape through Augustine's route, when he attempted to define time: "If no one asks me, I know: if I wish to explain it to one that asketh, I know not" (200).

There are some fundamental elements of the ideal democracy that every definer takes cognisance of when defining the concept. These elements include: (i) the participation of the people in how policies that affect their lives are formulated and implemented; (ii) the guarantee and protection of the fundamental human rights of the people; (iii) providing a platform for the

people to choose and replace the government freely and fairly when they cannot directly participate in government; and (4) the availability of a legal system that ensures laws and measures apply to the people equally (Fayemi 2).

Historically, democracy is laced with many problems and has not been practised in its ideal form. Etymologically, democracy means '*demo*' (people) and '*kratia*' (rule). So, in its crude stage in Athens, Greece, which is acclaimed as the birthplace of the concept, democracy means 'the rule by the people'. The Greek cradle of democracy has been disputed; it is argued that democratic systems were practised in some societies before the Greeks and some practised it at the same time but independently of the Greeks (White & Cooper 3). Irrespective of its origin, the above meaning does not capture the reality of democracy, then, because it was the rule of some people. It was not based on the principle of egalitarianism: some citizens, such as women, aliens and slaves, were not part of the decision-making. This deception lingers and is why democracy (in its various strands) is difficult to define. In defining any concept, its features are embedded in the definition, but democracy has two sides: the ideal and the practical aspects. The features of one contradict the other, so incorporating the two sides in a definition is difficult. And if a side is considered, it would be tantamount to someone reading this article to claim that he or she is solving a mathematical equation.

Many definitions of democracy are far from the truth and are tied to hidden agendas; they pretend to be what they are not, to get the people's legitimacy. One such definition was given by former USA President Abraham Lincoln, who defined democracy as the government of the people, by the people and for the people. In line with this, Scruton says democracy is 'literally', a "government by the people as a whole (Greek: *demos*) rather than by any section, class or interest within it" (169). Scruton further agrees that the above definition is 'immensely complicated' because it is difficult to understand "who the people are, and which acts of government are truly 'theirs' rather than those of some dominant group or interest" (169). Despite these challenges, the definition is the most common or the best summary of the concept's definition. The problems with the above definitions and many related ones would be obvious when the normative and practical aspects of democracy are examined. In other words, the problems of democracy would be obvious if the ideal and idea, or the 'ought' and the 'is' of the concept, are properly scrutinised.

The Ought and Is of Democracy

The idealists' description of democracy presents the concept as a pure system that guarantees absolute good for citizens, wherever applicable. It opines that the entire citizens of a state decide or agree on how they are ruled. According to Keane, democracy involves techniques "for arriving at collective decisions in a way which secures the fullest possible participation of interested parties" (X). The utopian colouration of democracy portrays the perfect way of governing society, and it is desirable because, among other things, it gives every citizen self-esteem, a sense of belonging, freedom and equality. This makes everyone strive to make democracy the system of government in their society. Though people know they cannot all directly be part of the decision-making in their society; but the fact that they will indirectly, by giving legitimate support through the means of elections, public opinion, referendums and so on, which are the major features of representative or indirect democracy in modern societies, is satisfactory to them. Democracy's political Eldorado has not been available since its introduction in Athens in the 5th century BC. Scholars like Wiredu (182–190) argued that perfect democracy, which he called 'consensus democracy', existed in some African societies in the past. His claim has been questioned by Eze (313-323) and Fayemi (1-13) in their respective responses to Wiredu's assertion. The impracticability of the normative nature of

democracy is a result of numerous issues, which include: the fictitious nature of democracy from the beginning in Athens, and the complex nature of society.

The idea of democracy, since the time it flourished in Athens, has been contrary to the ideal presentation of the concept. Democracy has endured the test of time because it is arguably one of the best forms of government in which humans rule over their affairs. Accordingly, Churchill argued that "democracy is the worst form of Government except for all other forms that have been tried from time to time." (House of Commons Debates, vol. 444, 11 Nov. 1947, col. 207.) In other words, Churchill says that only the system of government that has not been practised can be better than democracy, as for others that have been or are in practice, democracy is far better. It is, however, good to note that Churchill is quite aware of abuses of the concept by some political leaders. As proof, he made the above statement to persuade the members of parliament in his society to pass a law that would strengthen democracy and save it from being abused by some political barons.

Now, the problems of the practice of democracy everywhere, which form the basis of Churchill's statement, stem from the manipulative definition that pretends to be the ideal form of the concept. Defining democracy as government 'by the people' is an advancement of the fraud in the Athenians' conception of democracy. The assumption is that in a democracy, the 'people rule' is to connote that "the whole" citizens are involved in the way their society is governed. Meanwhile, a larger percentage of the inhabitants are exempt from having a say in how they are governed. The exception of a larger percentage of people from having input in governmental policy should necessarily mean that such an organisation is not democratic. Dahl explained the foregoing thus: "An organization is democratic if and only if the process of arriving at governmental policy is compatible with the condition of popular sovereignty and the condition of political equality" (37). The exemption of aliens and women from Athenian democracy raises the ontological question of what makes the 'freeborn' male, people and the exempted non-people. What defines a person or people? It could be argued that, considering the ancient society's ways and practices, women's exemption could be justified. But such a position raises an ethical question: is good relative to time and place?

Lincoln's definition, which has been described as the corruption of Wycliffe's prologue to Bible translation (Langley), was given at a time when women, Native Americans, African Americans and many middle-class Americans were exempted from the democratic process of America's Democracy. This should raise the question: Who are the people? In other words, who are the people Lincoln refers to as people in his definition? Chomsky (Quoted in White & Cooper) gives a clue to the above question when he says, the American "Founding Fathers didn't mean person when they said person. The *Person* didn't include Native Americans, you could do anything you liked to them. It didn't include slaves, it didn't include women… a woman was the property of her father or her husband, so they weren't persons" (9). From Chomsky's assertion, one should know that only certain individuals were referred to as 'the people' who rule for the benefit of, mainly, some people in a democratic society. Thus, democracy has always been a fictitious concept.

Fictitious Democracy and Its Problems

People's desire to have democracy as their society's system of government makes every system of rule, irrespective of how draconian it is, declare itself democratic, even though such a government lacks legitimacy. Every system of government is now a democracy, once some people rule. A military regime that comes to power through a *coup d'état* could declare itself democratic. It would organise an election which systematically places the head of such a government at an advantage to win by weakening other candidates or making it a sole

candidate, a kind of one-party arrangement, then declare the ruler the winner and remain in power for many years. Many autocrats who emerge as rulers follow the same pattern (Barka & Ncube). Such was the case in many African and developing nations like Uganda, Libya, Chad, Zimbabwe, Sudan, and Cuba (Harsch). These ugly scenarios persist because the concept of democracy in practice today is too weak, fragile and susceptible. It does not have the tenacity or physiognomies composition to deal with a large and modern-day complex society.

Today's democracy seems to suit only a small group of people, such as social clubs, peer groups, trade unions and community associations, because they are, to some extent, homogenous and have the same aspirations. Sharing a similar position with this, Roosevelt argued that Universal Human Rights, which are the rights that the UN believes can only be guaranteed under democracy, "begin in small places", like home which are so close and small to the extent that "they cannot be seen on any maps of the world." She opined that "the world of the individual person" is his or her 'neighbourhood,' 'school or college,' 'factory, farm or office.' She emphasized that every individual seeks "equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination;" then, "unless these rights have meaning" at the grassroots, "they have little meaning anywhere" and "we shall look in vain for progress" of democracy "in the larger world" (190). The question is: When will democracy have meaning everywhere and make progress in the larger world?

To buttress Roosevelt's last point above, it is pertinent to say that democracy, as it is currently conceived, cannot deal with modern-day complex societies, because such societies are unjustly established. Rather, they are established for people to outdo, manipulate and deceptively have their ways at the expense of others. For instance, Maddison, one of the major framers of the USA's constitution, was said to have deliberately limited democratic processes of the new USA to certain categories of people (White & Cooper 7). The inequality is so wide that the opposite classes in the society, the poor and the rich, and the educated and uneducated, find it difficult to relate. The foregoing has led to socio-political and economic rivalries and class struggle. Any group, therefore, that emerges from the tussle determines the kind of democracy and how democratic such a democracy is. To protect the interests of such a group, laws are made, and policies are formulated to safeguard their interest. Such laws would, perhaps, be more concerned with the economic sector than any other sector; if it concerns politics, it will be on how to consolidate and maintain the government's continued dominance. This was the exact act of the Nazi regime; immediately after the party came to power they made laws which would ensure they remained in power as long as possible. They proceeded with policies that exterminated democracy (Wolin 53).

Based on the foregoing, a society where the socialist group emerges as the ruling class will "make laws that will constrain how a man might get wealthy" and ask for part of the wealth of the rich through "taxation to advance social justice or the common good" (Maclean 19). A society where the capitalist group emerges as the ruling class will formulate policies that enhance the 'maintenance of order and military defence'. They will make laws to protect individual properties from being taken over by force by another person. Because 'to protect the wealth' is equivalent to protecting individuals from all kinds of organised crime. The implication of the above is that different societies, or the same society at different times, would have different versions of democracy. The only similarity to these democracies, then, is that human beings (people) are ruling.

The electoral system is a major issue in representative democracy. An election is a means to acquire democratic power (based on Article 21 of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948), and could also be bastardised in some countries today. Elections and electioneering processes have diverse natures, such that many cannot be called elections in the

real sense. Also, other features of democracy, such as legitimacy, equality, freedom and human rights, mean different things in different societies. The non-uniformity of democracy, owing to its weakness and susceptibility, has made demagogues emerge as rulers and carry out evil acts that were dangerous to humankind. If no measure is taken to address the weaknesses of democracy, such evil leaders will continue to emerge.

An example of demagogues who came to power through democracy is the Nazi regime in Germany. Even though the movement openly vowed to exterminate their democracy and constitutionalism (Wolin 35), Germans proceeded to vote massively and support the aggressive movement because of the glitches in their fictitious democracy. The worst form of government that replaced the evil democracy in Germany and the evil that followed then nearly put some races, such as Blacks and Jews, into extinction. Though, oftentimes, only Jews are mentioned to have been targeted on the global stage. It could be argued that the Nazi regime was not democratic, however, it is undeniable that the regime emerged from a democratic process. And the people voted it into power because of the weakness of democracy in their society.

Apart from the Nazi regime, the recent threat to democracy in the USA, concerning the events surrounding the 2020 Presidential Election of that nation (in which the then incumbent president, Donald Trump did not concede defeat owing to what he described as the election of allocating votes to his main opposition) is another challenge that necessitates the rethinking of democracy. The emergence of Trump as the US president in 2016 is democratically questionable. Ordinarily, the majority should decide who rules in a democratic state through election processes. However, the fictitious nature of America's democracy technically denied the person who should have emerged as the president, having polled around three million votes ahead of Donald Trump. The question is: what becomes of Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, which states: the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by 'universal and equal suffrage'? Where is the feature of democracy that guarantees equality: one man, one vote? Should the US Electoral College be more important than 'universal and equal suffrage'? These are questions that every defender of the fictitious democracy in America, and elsewhere, would find difficult to answer.

Election is a major area where democratic evil is prevalent in contemporary society. An election is so central to representative or indirect democracy that modern societies practice because it is through an election that the masses choose who should rule on their behalf. Understanding this fact, political leaders and constitution framers manipulate the type of election in their societies. In the US, as noted earlier, the framers of the Constitution ensured that the poor, women, Native Americans, and Black Americans were not part of the electoral processes initially and deliberately concentrated power in the hands of the wealthy because "the poor could use their voting power to overcome the more powerful minority" (White & Cooper 8). Protection of the interests of the minority from the majority is perceived as a major function of government, and to achieve this, power should be in the hands of the minority. White and Cooper noted that "the bulk of this power rested with the Senate, which was the dominant group at the time" among the wealthy. They emphasise that "interestingly enough, the Senate was not an elected body" (White & Cooper 9). The American System is logically inadequate because it contradicts the democratic principle of majority rule. The story of democracy all over the world has always followed this same pattern.

Away from the US electoral system, other democracies have diverse problems with how the people's representatives emerge from the fictitious nature of democracy. Democracy's major assumption is that the majority rules. In a representative democracy, the person with the majority's support emerges as the winner to represent the people after an election. However, a

critical evaluation of elections worldwide shows that the winners are not always the representatives with the majority support but those with what is best referred to as a 'regimental selected majority'. Regimental selection could be defined as a process that deliberately exempts many people from the election process. It could also mean the election processes that could not produce an absolute majority, owing to the deliberate fragmentation of the people into many groups.

For instance, the population of Nigeria is estimated to be around 200 million; the statistics of the country's 2019 Presidential Election show that there were 84,004,084 registered voters, but only 28,614,190 voted, representing 35.66%. There were 73 candidates for the election, and the eventual winner scored 15,191,847 votes according to the country's electoral authority (the Independent National Electoral Commission [INEC]). The winner's popularity in the above example represents about 53% of the votes and 18% of the total registered voters. This is about 7% of the country's population. So, the assumption that 'majority rule' in democracy becomes debatable here. It could be argued that the popularity and majority should be based on the number of votes cast. But, there are many elections where the declared winners do not score the majority of votes cast, that is, they score less than 50%. The 2019 Governorship Elections in states like Kano, Ogun, Adamawa, and Nasarawa, and the 2018 Osun State Governorship election, all in Nigeria, are examples of numerous ones. To address this anomaly, some nations practice different types of elections that must produce an absolute majority, either by conducting run-off elections or the electorate's vote by preference; nonetheless, such types of elections could be described as an act of limitation and could lead to voters' apathy. Suppose apathy to election is the order of the day, one will have no option but to agree with Hutchins that the death of democracy is near, and it "is not likely to be an assassination from ambush. It will be a slow extinction from apathy, indifference, and undernourishment" (23).

Limiting and exempting people from an election are common in African Nations. For instance, in Nigeria, electorates are to vote wherever they registered, not considering that many would have changed locations for one reason or another. Until recently, voters' cards could not be transferred to another location. People involved in elections (serving in various capacities as electoral officials and others) are massive in Africa, and they are not voting because they are usually posted where they did not register for the elections. Hence, they have no opportunity to choose their leaders. This could be why many are involved in election malpractices.

The electoral problems in a democracy are too numerous, and every nation has its share. In all democratic states, residents without citizenship are not allowed to participate in the electoral process of such states, even if such persons have legal permanent resident documents. Also, people below a certain age are not allowed to vote, even if they will attain the age before the commencement of the tenure of the elected officials (USA Government; Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre, Nigeria [PLACNG]). One of the most bizarre things about the age limit is that, in a country where the age limit is 18 years, if a person's age is 17 years and 11 months as of the time of elections, he or she cannot vote, irrespective of his or her brilliance and intelligence. Another person, probably around 95 years old and suffering from old age-related sicknesses, can vote. It is possible that two months after the election, the winner is sworn into office, and four months after the election, the 95-year-old dies while the 17-year-old is still alive. One will wonder whose interest the elected leader governs: the dead or the living who have no part in the decision-making process. It would have been better to allow people to vote if they could attain the age of responsibility within the tenure of the winners of an election.

The party system is another problem with fictitious democracy. Political parties are structured in such a way that the poor cannot emerge as rulers. The resources required to get a political party ticket to contest an election are beyond the reach of the poor, thereby giving the

rich a competitive edge. In societies where candidates can contest an election independently, without affiliation with any political party, the poor will find it difficult, because party men would pull resources together that no poor or average individual, no matter how good and popular he or she is, will be able to outmuscle organised political parties. Therefore, political parties are tools for sieving or separating who should rule and who should not rule in society.

The capability of the elected representatives to provide quality representation and leadership is often lacking in many contemporary democracies. Democracy is a game of numbers; many vote based on emotional impulses and personal gains or benefits. Consequently, electoral candidates and their political parties produce appealing propaganda as manifestos to get majority votes without putting plans in place to actualise these manifestos. In most cases, campaign manifestos are set aside after the election. Thus, rather than focusing on getting capable hands such as technocrats and virtuous people who can run the government effectively and efficiently and present them as candidates for an election, political parties, which are a key aspect of democracy, will work on propaganda that will be appealing to people while they produce incapable candidates. Meanwhile, propaganda can win an election, but not equip the winners with the necessary tools to run the government effectively and efficiently. This is a problem many nations face in a fictitious democracy.

Another problem of fictitious democracy is the elected representatives. Having been elected to act in the masses' interest, many elected officials turn to represent their personal and their masters' interests. They represent the masses only if the people's interests are the same as those of their interests and the interests of the masters they serve (White & Cooper 10). Not putting these masters into consideration would attract their ire and that of the party. Based on the foregoing, it is obvious that the representatives have preferential interests over those of the masses. White and Cooper sum up the foregoing thus:

> If the representative is presented with a dilemma, such that the people being represented want the vote to go differently than that envisioned by their representative, the representative generally votes the way that he or she would have voted regardless of the wishes of the represented populace. The rationale for this is that those who are ejected from office are no longer able to represent their supporters. In short, when push comes to shove, the representatives of the people vote to preserve their power, often at the expense of those they represent (10).

If elected officials are not representing the masses, evidently from the above, can we say the 'people rule'? In other words, can we say "democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people," and the people here refer to the masses, without contradiction? The answer to the above question can only be a denial. As indirect or representative democracy is today, it could be best defined as the government ruling over the people by elected officials for the benefit of the representatives and their masters. We can also say democracy is the government of the people (owned by the few) by the people (powerful minority) for the people (benefit of the powerful minority.) Then, "democracy" is best described "as code-word for *oligarchy*" (Sloterdijk 52). Given this, democracy, therefore, needs redemption to serve the interest of the masses as it ought to be. If such is not possible, political philosophers should postulate a better political concept that is ideal, realistic and viable. While the latter suggestion above is a long-term project and seems unattainable soon, it will not be advanced in this paper. The former appears to be the best option owing to democracy's potential if fully practised in its ideal sense. Also, the dogged long survival and some achievements of democracy in human civilisation, despite the disproportional practices of the concept, show it is redeemable.

Redeeming Democracy

The fictitious democracy that we practice today is presented as a perfect system, such that many democrats – scholars and policymakers – in an attempt to defend it, attribute its failures to 'weak democracies', which are the early stages of emerging democratic nations, also that the failure of democracy in any society are the result of external values, such as civil strife, war, economic recession, natural and human-made disaster and so on (Chou 25). Trump's US election saga proves that the failures of democracy are not associated with external, weak and emerging democracies, as many Democrats claim. It could be argued that the strength of America's enduring democracy saved it from collapse during the period under review. Nonetheless, such a defence points to the fragility and fictitious nature of democracy today, which are the focal points of this paper.

Democracy is often associated with economic success, progress and development (Plattner 30). The Proponents of the above emphasise the economic, scientific and technological advancement of Europe and America as gains of democracy. However, recent developments on the globe prove otherwise; for instance, China is not considered a democratic nation, but today, the Chinese are leading the world in technological advancement. Also, North Korea's deal with atomic energy and technology is a piece of evidence that any purposeful regime can advance in science and technology.

Unarguably, democracy has numerous positive sides, but the denial of its negative sides is an attempt to undermine the necessary reforms that would save not only democracy from the processes of self-destruction, but also humankind. If democracy is not reformed or restructured, such that it will be impossible for those in government to exclude the masses from the processes of governance, elected officials will continue to manipulate the system in their favour, and their accumulated power will soon destroy democracy and the governed. To avoid that, there is a need to move towards a healthy democracy.

Towards a Healthy Democracy

To enhance healthy democracy, democratic societies must move away from the concept of indirect or representative democracy that excludes the masses, towards a democracy where the interests of the majority (masses) and the minority (the representatives and their masters) would be taken care of. The question at hand is the possibility of this ingenuity, particularly given the often-conflicting interests of the two groups involved. A healthy democracy can be achieved by harvesting and harnessing the good sides of its various versions. For instance, liberal democracy's values that give autonomy to citizens and defend individual freedoms (Kurki 372) should be combined with social democracy's values that emphasise social solidarity and socialist democracy's values that emphasise the removal of social and economic inequalities.

In a healthy democracy, every individual would have the right to autonomous acquisition of knowledge, wealth, skills, and so on, and they must give a considerable percentage of their acquisition to the development and empowerment of others. As such, the inequality gap in a society will be reduced or eliminated. If the above is done, it would lead to 'participatory democracy' which guarantees citizens' empowerment and active participation in policy formulation and decision-making (Kurki 373). In that sense, a healthy democracy does not put the masses above and against the elite in society, as advanced by Marxist socialism, nor place the elite above and against the masses, as is common in liberal democracy. In other words, a healthy democracy is not calling the elite to come down from their flying horses, however, it advocates that the platform the masses should be raised to allow their involvement in how their

fate is being decided. Rulers should stop playing God, who decides the fate of people without their awareness.

Raising the platform of the masses entails massive qualitative education and skill acquisition; this will 'increase equitable treatment' and allow better 'life opportunities' that will reduce 'inequality between the various classes of people.' Because "it is this very inequity that results in inequality that is eating away at the heart of democracy" (White & Cooper 11). Once this is achieved, the people will choose their representatives and hold them accountable for their policies and conduct in office, as a result, the elected representatives would have to carry along the people they represent in decision-making. The initial reason the masses were kept away from power was to protect the interests of the minority rich; the few poor that acquired wealth always joined the rich without constituting a threat to the latter. Therefore, if the poor are helped, it will achieve the same purpose, ensuring they do not turn against the rich (White & Cooper 12).

A Defence of Healthy Democracy

There are insinuations that democracy is unredeemable (Chou 27) because redeeming democracy would give the masses more power, which can lead to 'mob rule.' This was Plato's reason for rejecting democracy, and Aristotle's major objection to democracy concerned the level of the masses' intelligentsia. Mobs in this regard are illiterate or uneducated, and the poor masses. It is also argued that the majority, based on democracy, can abuse the fundamental human rights of the minority within their society (Kirchschlaeger 120). Also, that the masses can vote into power forces that will later terminate democracy like the Nazi regime in Germany, or the masses agree to end democracy, which has been described as 'democide' (Chou 25-26).

The above challenges are possible in an ideal democracy. In other words, the challenges associated with the notion of fictitious democracy stem from the constraints imposed on democracy as it is implemented in various societies across the globe. The objections fundamentally confront the very essence of the ideal conception of democracy. However, the objections are pseudo, because if the masses are empowered through massive education and skills acquisition, they will have the capacity to deal with every nuisance that arises from democracy. For instance, the issue of 'mob rule' will dissolve naturally because through sound education, the masses would have been well-trained on some of the intricacies of society like citizenship, governance and economy. Such training would bridge the gap between the elites and the uneducated and illiterate masses. Everyone will be equipped with skills that enhance interpersonal relationships, such as fellowship, followership and leadership.

Also, the chances that the minority's fundamental human rights will be abused are slim if the people's intelligentsia have been developed with a rigorous education. In this sense, the people will, in Oyeshile's words, know that "the 'self must be reconciled with the other'" (46). In other words, they will know how to reconcile themselves with others. Abuse of minority rights is always a result of the mismanagement of differences, intolerance to others, holding a supremacist ideology, and holding an anti-social and anti-cosmopolitan belief. Contemporary societies are pluralistic and multi-dependent; when people are made to know that no individual, race or ethnicity has a monopoly on anything, is more important than others, is supreme to others or can survive without others, abuse of minority rights will be impossible. And if it arises, addressing it appropriately will be easy.

Democide will be impossible in a healthy democracy because no reasonable human being will think of it, let alone take actions that will destroy the platform or institution that guarantees the maximisation of his or her potential. The people in a healthy democracy are no longer 'ordinary gullible people' who can be manipulated easily; they are sophisticated minds

that will rationally process their issues before acting. On the possibility of voting in forces that will terminate healthy democracy, they will not vote for people with obsolete or obnoxious agendas. In a situation where they voted into power forces (perhaps, people who feign their reality) that will terminate healthy democracy, they will rise against such persons and remove them from power before endangering their cherished institute of governance.

The emergence of the Nazi regime is a reference point to democide. But the question is: What type of democracy was in practice? Was it the fictitious type or the ideal form? Germany's democratic constitution was then modelled largely on America's Constitution (Chou 33), which had earlier been noted as full of contradictions. Hence, when many Germans opposed the idea of their Republic and its system of parliamentary democracy, the reason should be obvious. Germany's condition then was fuelled by the harsh conditions the people were encountering, perhaps owing to the aftermath of the First World War, poor economic policies, and the non-commitment of their representatives to their plights.

The Germans' conditions could be likened to the challenges many 'third-world' countries face today. If their citizens have the means or option, they will slaughter their fictitious democracy without a second thought. Over the years, many citizens of these countries have lost faith in their political leaders. There is a wide social and economic inequality between the masses and the political class. The political class works for personal gain when in office, such as increasing wealth, living an excessive and expensive lifestyle, and securing mammoth after-office packages, which are irritating to their citizens. The judiciary, the police and other security agencies, and other institutions of governance are seen as tools for suppression, manipulation, and infliction of more pain. The recent surge in the mass emigration of citizens to advanced countries attests to the despondent of third-world country citizens with their political system. So, with the aid of rhetoric prowess, the way the Nazis did in Germany, any society that is afflicted with a retrogressive fictitious democracy will grab the opportunity to end such a democracy.

Additionally, when citizens democratically opt out of a democratic system, it does not imply they are against democracy in its ideal form; rather, they are against the fictitious type of democracy in their society. Democracy, it should be noted, cannot stand on its own as a system of government (Brown 427); it accommodates other forms or systems such as socialist, capitalist or mixed economy, parliamentary or presidential system, bi-cameral or uni-cameral legislature, and so on. Democracy entails giving the people a platform to express themselves and have a say in the government's decisions and implementation of programmes and policies that affect their lives. The absence of the above is why political systems like theocracy, monarchy, plutocracy, and so on can never be democratic, and the masses will never opt for them.

When German citizens decided to end their fictitious democracy in return, they got an autocratic rule, which was not what they wanted, but happened as a result of the demagogue who pretended to be a saviour. The German experience can happen anywhere; this is a major reason democracy needs to be strengthened to prevent such, and if it emerges, a mechanism would have to be put in place to reject them immediately. A mechanism to deal with an emerging threat to democracy can only work in an ideal, healthy democracy, where everyone is mentally empowered. Rational and informed people are less susceptible to deception by opportunistic actors. Politicians often depend on uneducated and poor individuals to easily mobilise and influence them during electoral processes. These politicians recognise that the outcome of democratic elections is determined by the number of voters. Therefore, many political figures globally ensure that a large number of the population is poor and ignorant,

thereby enabling their mobilisation and manipulation for electoral gains. Only an ideal healthy democracy, therefore, can address the anomaly ravaging fictitious democratic societies.

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PHILOSOPHY, NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE RE-EVALUATION OF NATIONAL VALUES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The challenge of underdevelopment has been a fundamental malady in the African continent, particularly in Nigeria over the years. Development which has to do with social, political, cultural, economic, technological and human progress or advancement in the society has been a basic goal or aspiration of Nigeria and has seemed not only far-fetched but also extremely difficult to attain. Numerous reasons such as corruption, bad leadership, bad followership, ethnicity, injustice, religious extremism, religious violence, militarism, insurgency, colonialism among others have been aptly identified as the core causes of underdevelopment in the Nigerian state. However, in this paper we vehemently argue that the actual bedrock of the problem of development in Nigeria is the possession of wrong/inimical personal and social values which is in turn a product of wrong mind-set or mentality prevalent in the heart of the populace. Hence, we contend that the solution to Nigeria's current deplorable state necessarily lies in a philosophical or critical re-evaluation of our individual and social values, and that until this is done, the state's aspiration to attain national development will significantly remain elusive, unattainable and a mere dream. To avoid stopping at the level of positing theoretical solutions, we have further given specific lines of action that should be taken to ensure that this necessary re-evaluation is realised. This substantiates the invaluable importance of philosophy to individual and societal development as opposed to the misconception that philosophy is essentially abstract and as such, has no practical value for the society.

Keywords: Nigeria, Philosophy, Development, Underdevelopment, Individual and Social values

Values and National Values

A discourse on the re-evaluation of national values necessarily warrants an understanding of the term values, for an articulation of a subject would be impossible where an understanding

of the subject is lacking. Given this, what are values? Wolfgang Bilsky and Shalom Schwartz note that there are in literature, five features common to many definitions proffered of the term 'values.' These features are that values are: concepts or beliefs, about desirable end states or behaviours, transcend specific situations, a guide selection or evaluation of behaviour and events, ordered by relative importance (1994:164). Thus, values may be considered the determining factors of acceptance, rejection, approval, or disapproval of an idea, opinion, belief or state of affair by an individual (Khoshtaria, 2017:2-3). Andrew Uduigwomen considers values as representing reasons, beliefs, convictions or virtues that guide human conduct. For him, values are thoughtful considerations that help individuals evaluate their relationships with others, and to determine whether and to what extent those relationships are socially correct and agreeable (2006:228). Values may also be termed as the qualities/virtues we promote and live by. An individual's values are those qualities the individual holds in esteem.

At this juncture, it is important to specifically mention that the value being discussed in this paper is strictly moral values. The moral values one pursues or promotes determine the course of one's life – what one does, where one goes, the people one associates with, and so on. Values help in decision making and the projection of goals; one's behaviour clearly shows the sort of values held by one. Hence, the values a serious-minded student pursues is clearly at variance with those pursued by a mediocre student. In fact, we could say a mediocre student pursues or holds no values; for while the serious-minded student has values such as diligence, excellence, commitment, and discipline among others; the mediocre does not. Elliot Sibiri affirms the relation between values and behaviour when he avers that "Values influence people's behaviour and serve as criteria for evaluating the actions of others" (2014:9). Values prompt actions; hence, we evaluate those actions on the basis of the values we hold.

There are two forms of values; individual values, and group values. Individual values are virtues held or promoted by an individual, such that serves the purpose of the individual. These values are usually beneficial to the individual who promotes them. Noteworthy, is the fact that some personal values align with group values that serve the purpose or are beneficial to all members of the group (Agbada, 2024:13). Group values, as the preceding statement suggests, are values that are pursued by, and serves the collective purpose or interest of a group (Uduigwomen, 2006:229). Where members of a group share common values, the values of the individuals within the group conflicting with the values of the group are subjected to such group values. Within the group, the values of an individual are valid insofar as they align with the group's values, speaking from collectivist or communitarian perspective (Gyekye, 1992:120). This is not to say that the individual's values are trampled upon to the individual's detriment, it only means that they are set aside to accommodate or suit all members of the group – including the member in question.

Joseph Omoregbe notes that the importance of values varies, that is, all values are not placed on the same pedestal; hence where values conflict, the more important value is pursued (1993:68-69). For example: in relation to society, values for human development rank higher than those for structural development as structural development is meaningless without human development. However, the case becomes different if the structural development is ultimately targeted at human development. Brought down to the individual, the same principle applies; higher personal values are pursued when they conflict with those that do not measure up.

Nigeria's national values are spelled out in Section 23 of the 1999 constitution as amended in 2011. These values spelled out with the appellation "National Ethics" are: "Discipline, Integrity, Dignity of Labour, Social Justice, Religious Tolerance, Self-reliance, and Patriotism" (1999:30). One who is familiar with Nigeria cannot help but marvel at how ironic it is that the Nigerian State is not a reflection of her national values as they have been jettisoned

by the government and the masses. Deciding which group holds a greater responsibility in this is not exactly an easy task. Apportioning blame is quite dicey since on the one hand, the government is responsible for overseeing the State affairs and by extension ensuring that national values are upheld to foster national development; and on the other hand, the people, from whom those who constitute the government emerge, are private citizens from families – the bedrock of values. What is seen in the Nigerian state today is a negation of all the national values stipulated in the constitution, and given that values are not considered in negative terms, one can conveniently say that the Nigerian State does not have values; and argue that this is the primary reason for the stall in her development.

The Concept of Development

The word 'development' is one that has been subjected to various definitions by different scholars seeing it from different perspectives. This is because different people have various indices for measuring its rate in the society. The 8th edition of the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines development as "the gradual growth of something so that it becomes more advanced, stronger etc." (Hornby, 2010: 400). This implies that development entails a change or transformation from one stage to another of which the latter can be said to be better, higher, and more desirable than the former. According to M. S. Ajibola, development can be defined as the advancement of the management and use of natural resources to satisfy human need & improve quality of life (2015:63). Development has also been conceived as "the process of unfolding, evolving or maturing that entails a movement from a lesser stage to a greater one" (Unegbe, 2002:101). Ajibola in his discussion on development quotes Nnoli who avers that: "Development is a dialectical phenomenon in which the individual and society interact with their physical, biological environment and transforming them for their own betterment and that of humanity at large and being transformed in the process" (2015:63).

The concept of development can be broadly divided into two – human development and socio-political development otherwise termed by some writers as material or structural development. However, there are those who view development only from the perspective of structural or material development. This is a position or perspective we vehemently decry or contend against in this paper. Looking at development from the human point of view, Walter Rodney asserts that development "implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being." (Rodney, 1972:1) Maintaining the same line of thought as Rodney is Maraizu Elechi who argues that:

> The ultimate essence or purpose of development is the development of man,
> the realization of human potentials of man from poverty. In other words, true
> development at the individual level must seek to realize the creative capacities
> or potentials of man, enabling him to improve his material conditions of living
> through the use of the resources available to him (2014:136-137).

Although these definitions emphasise the place of the individual in the discourse of development yet there is an aspect they do not stress and that is the place of the moral development of the individual in the society. Recognising this vital fact, Elechi further argues that:

> Development is a process by which human personality is enhanced in a
> creative, organized and disciplined fashion. It is the enhanced personality that
> is the driving force behind the material transformation of any society. This
> simply means that development does not start with goods or material things; it
> begins with people – their beliefs, values, attitudes, organizations, confidence
> and more importantly, self-discipline (2014:139).

It is this very position that we set out to defend throughout this paper. This is because the place of the individual cannot be over emphasised in the discourse of the development in the society in that the society is essentially made up of the individual. This perhaps informs the argument of the philosopher par excellence, Plato who unequivocally posits in his Republic that the society/state is 'individual-writ-large.' By this he meant that the state grows out of the nature of the individual such that the individual comes logically prior to the societal development. Ajibola avows that development essentially revolves around the situation of man. For him, development is simply human development; hence, any kind of development devoid of proper regard for the circumstance of man is not oriented or geared towards the right course (Ajibola, 2015:64).

On the other hand, development has also been conceived to have socio-political dimension. This has to do with structural perspective to development. It emphasises scientific and technological advancement alongside its multifaceted benefits in the society, nation or state. In fact, this is where the minds of most people quickly run to once development is talked about. Daniel Adekeye aptly captures this when he contends that "economic development, that is, the dynamic progression or upward movement in the material welfare of the human person has come to dominate the discursive terrain of development studies. He conspicuously decries this conception of development when he posits thus:

> Economic development is occupying the central position in most developmental concerns and policies. To this effect, development has come to reducibly mean elimination of poverty, disease and ignorance, increase in the national wealth in such a way that every person will have enough. The chief aspect of development going by this idea is the degree of access to the wealth of the society and the means of production (2015:213).

This conception of development is essentially concerned with raising the standard of living for the vast number of the people in the society or state. It focuses on creating an enabling environment and atmosphere for self-fulfilment or self-actualisation. The structural understanding of development is highly materialistic. It is majorly measured by the advancement in the machinery of the state, provision of essential services, creating of opportunities for the people, construction of basic infrastructure etc. Development therefore implies economic, technological, political, social and cultural progress. It is vital we clearly state at this juncture that we are not denying the importance of this latter sense of development. It is indeed very important. It is in fact the aspiration of every well thinking people or society. However, it is our contention that of more value and importance is the development at the individual level.

Prevalent Values and Under-development in Nigeria

It is important to emphatically state here that no state, society or people can outgrow their values. Put differently, the value system of any society or state determines to a large extent the level of development that can be attained or achieved within such a state or society. We contend that values do not only exist at societal or national levels but also at individual/personal levels. A society whose members possess right values can easily engender development. However, a state whose members/citizens are depraved by the possession of wrong or inimical values are doomed to be underdeveloped. This informs the very reason most scholars have argued that the development of the individual in the society or state is above and beyond the socio-political, that is, structural/material development of any state which is essentially measured by economic indices, good roads, architectural sophistication, industries,

technological advancement, etc. What then constitutes the development at the individual level? Omoregbe answers this all-important question when he aptly pontificates that:

> The most important aspect in the development of the human person is his moral development. Moral maturity is a mark of human development and it is the most important aspect of national development. For we cannot talk of the development of a country if its citizens are morally undeveloped and immature (1993:147).

Here, Omoregbe emphasises the importance of the moral development of the people in a state as a prerequisite to achieving or obtaining the desired development, that is, national development. Moral development entails imbibing the right culture, being disciplined, mature, and developing right mental attitude to work. It also speaks of accountability, sense of duty, patriotism, altruism, industry etc.

However, it is painful to note that these qualities that confer morality or development on people do not reflect on the Nigerian society, seemingly suggesting that they are lacking in the vast majority of Nigerians. We initially outlined the Nigerian national values as stated in the constitution. But the reality is that it is the direct opposite that is obtainable or prevalent in Nigeria. Our current practices are diametrically opposed to the national ethics theoretically stated in the constitution. And this reality has become the bane of development in Nigeria.

The problematic is the fact that it is not only the ordinary citizens that are guilty of these vices but that they are rather more pronounced among the leadership in the country. Chinua Achebe pinpoints this cankerworm when he argues that "the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There's nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or air or anything else" (1984:1). Although, we do not totally agree with Achebe's position here in that he attributes all the problems bedeviling Nigeria to the failure of leadership. Notwithstanding, we agree with him that failure of leadership is a major part of the problem. Achebe argues further that "the Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership" (1984:1). Although, we do not completely agree with him that the problem of Nigeria entirely rest on the ineptitude and immorality of our leaders, we however consent to the fact that the leadership of Nigeria has contributed immeasurably to the problems of underdevelopment bedevilling Nigeria as a nation-state. B. O. Eboh recognising the level of destruction that Nigerian politicians and leaders have caused the country dubbed them as 'power hawks'. He describes them as a group of people compulsively seeking after political power with total disregard or rejection of morality. In his words "they [power hawk] consider themselves as the measure of everything. In short, it can be said that their ideology stems from godless materialism and naked power which aims at life detached from morality" (2015:237). He further argues that these power hawks who are essentially egocentric operate on what he called "the morality of the market." What does this mean? For him:

It is a morality of no morality. It is a morality akin to Machiavelli's principle that the end justifies the means. It is a morality of getting to one's end at all cost without looking to the right or to the left. It is morality of getting to where one wants to be without recourse to any moral principle of right or wrong good or evil. It is like what happens in the open market where prices are not fixed and people buy whatever they want at whatever cost (2015:237).

Nigeria has become a place where all sort of vices thrives; the neglect of true moral values which engenders all manner of social vices has become a cankerworm that has eaten very deep into the fabrics of the Nigerian state and has brought about noxious and destructive consequences to every sector of the society. Achebe affirming this submits that indiscipline pervades our lives today to the extent that one may be justified to call it the condition par

excellence of contemporary Nigerian society. He posits that we see and hear and read about indiscipline in every nook and cranny of the society including the home, school, public, private sector, government, legislative assemblies etc. (1984:27). The ordinary citizen has lost trust in the judicial system, armed forces and entire leadership of the state. Most Nigerian leaders are egocentric, egoistic and self-centred. They operate on the philosophy of "me, myself and I." People who do not have the interest of their people at heart but connive with foreigners to perpetually subjugate their own people. They are group of individuals who do not have a proper understanding of what it means to be in public service. They pursue political power with the primary aim of enriching themselves, their families and ethnic blocs. Accountability or fiduciary duties are concepts absolutely strange to them; they are in fact non-existent in the vocabularies of the most of them. Omoregbe aptly captures these cancerous practices prevalent among Nigerian leaders when he avows that:

> Yes, corruption is the bane of Nigeria, the cankerous disease eating of the nation in every sector, from government circles, government institutions, parastatals, to the private sector. Embezzlement of public funds by those to whom the funds are entrusted for the common good, fraudulent ideals by contractors handling government projects fake 'contracts', over-inflated contracts with 'kickback' accruing to the government officials who awarded or signed the contract (2003:342).

Omoregbe further points, without mincing words, that naked greed, dishonesty, stealing government or public funds, ability to become a millionaire overnight when in government, and other vices are not just common but have become a norm. He decries this unfortunate reality stating that:

> The situation has degenerated to such a level that anybody who finds himself in a position to enrich himself through corrupt practices but refuses to do so is regarded as a fool who has missed or wasted an opportunity to help himself. Such a person is scorned by his friends and relations (Omoregbe, 2003:342).

Maintaining the same line of thought with Omoregbe is Olatunji Oyeshile who avers that corruption does not only thrive in only the political setting, that is, the government but also in every sector of the society. In his words, he argues that "the situation we have in Nigeria is a full institutionalisation of corruption. Corruption is now a way of life. In fact one begins to wonder whether corruption is not a Nigerian" (2015:55).

What about the ordinary citizens? Majority of the citizens in Nigeria have thrown away their moral consciousness or value. Majority of the people do not have any good sense of moral value; they are bad followers; some of whom are ready to shed the blood of fellow compatriots for the sake of transient monetary value. Individuals plagued by inconceivable level of ignorance, visually impaired by short-sightedness, acutely parochial in thought & compulsively driven by their unchecked desires for immediate and transient pleasure. For most Nigerians, essential ideals that should characterise every good citizen such as honesty, hard work, patriotism, respect for the sanctity of human life, accountability, among others are seen as foreign and unprofitable. They rather revel in all manner of social vices. In fact, the ability to perform certain heinous acts without being caught is highly celebrated or applauded by majority of the people. Uduigwomen is down to earth in his observation submitting that:

> Various shades of vices ranging from indiscipline, tribalism, licentiousness, ethno-religious violence, armed robbery, thuggery, cultism, ritual killing, hired assassination, abortion, bribery and corruption, embezzlement of public funds, apathy to work… have

become regular features in our national life. Most of these vices have been institutionalized by both the ordinary citizens and those in the corridors of power (2006:181).

The foregoing points out to the fact that the root cause of underdevelopment in Nigeria lies with the people (both the leaders and the led) of the Nigerian society. This problem is essentially the problem of lack of right personal and social values. The people are morally bankrupt and as such, do not have the value to jump start let alone to sustain development in its structural or socio-political dimension. Hence, if the dream of Nigeria to develop like her counterparts in the West and other parts of the globe must be achieved, we contend that there is need for her to focus on the moral development of the individuals in her state.

It is the conglomeration or sum total of values held by the individuals that overtime pervade the entire social, political, cultural & economic framework of the society. Hence, when we talk about national values in Nigeria, we are invariably talking about the values of the individuals of the Nigerian state. This implies that if the individuals who constitute the epicentre or fulcrum of the society become an embodiment of immorality or depravity then such a society is doomed. Ebikisei Udisi seems to understand this, thus he argues:

> It is therefore worthy to submit that the basic moral agent is the individual whose reflective thoughts and action can gradually influence society. Society consists generally of individual moral agents whose collective ideas and actions make up the social values prevailing in an epoch. The individual is therefore enjoined to understand and consider that his moral convictions are what sums up the general social value system and should therefore act at all times with the knowledge and understanding spelt out by Immanuel Kant… (2017:244). Kant holds that everyone should act in such a way that his action can be applied in every circumstance and shall serve as universal moral laws or principle.

Philosophy, Values and National Development

At this juncture, it is vital to briefly do a conceptual clarification of the concept of philosophy and point out its very branch that is relevant for the re-evaluation of our values. H. S. Staniland defines philosophy as "the criticism of the ideas we live by" (1979:3). Philosophy is known to raise critical questions about fundamental ideas or principles underlying human thoughts, conducts and experience. Philosophy is essentially a reflective investigation into human, personal and social experiences (Omoregbe, 1998:3). Philosophy, by its very nature, subject the practices, beliefs, ideas, principles, norms, cultures and 'weltanschauung' of people to rigorous and critical analysis. It helps to unveil the basic foundation upon which they are based and judge if they are worthwhile. This essence of philosophy is captured in the popular Socratic dictum: "the unexamined life is not worth living." Socrates stressed the need for every individual to examine the principles, beliefs, ideas etc. by which they live their lives critically. What can be deduced from the above is that the philosophical appraisal of a people's values would undoubtedly help to unveil their strengths and weaknesses and this will in turn help the people to make informed decisions about the need to retain it or review it and ultimately transform their values if necessary.

Ethics is the major branch of philosophy that is essentially concerned with the evaluation of the conducts, behaviours, actions and activities of the human person. Etymologically, the word ethics is derived from the Greek word 'ethikos' or 'ethos' which means custom, habit, character or disposition. Ethics has been conceived as a discipline which studies the morality of human conduct. It is also seen as a branch of philosophy essentially

concerned with the studies of the basic principles of moral behaviour. Put differently, it deals with how men ought to behave and why it is wrong to behave in certain ways and right to behave in certain other ways (Omoregbe 2003:347).

From the above, we see Ethics as that branch of philosophy which essentially concerns itself with the investigation into the rightness and wrongness of an action and the best way people should conduct themselves. This implies that ethics is not only concerned with what is but what ought to be. Ethics also refers to a set of moral principles that help to distinguish right actions from wrong actions. This implies that ethics has a crucial role to play in every society that desires to birth true, genuine and wholesome development. This is because ethics is concerned with regulating the actions, decisions and conduct of the individual who in turn is the fulcrum and the epicentre of the society. Before now we established that morality of the individual is a necessary prerequisite for the entire well-being and national development of any nation or country.

The knowledge of ethics and the conformity to moral principles by individuals in the state will help them to inculcate the kind of values and disposition that are requisite to birth, facilitate and sustain development both at the individual and national levels. In other words, being exposed to the nature of ethics and principles of human conduct is an avenue through which the individuals in the state or nation who are saddled with the responsibility of ensuring national development would acquire the necessary skills, abilities and competences, required to actualise the goal of national development (Maduka, 2006:239).

It is only when the individual in the society, that is, inclusive of both the rulers and the ruled imbibe ethical principles and subject their actions, decisions lifestyles, behaviours etc. to philosophical and ethical analysis that the plethora of moral problems manifested in the form social vices can be taken care of. The aforementioned moral deficiencies are the bane of the developmental process of the Nigerian State. Recognising this, Adekeye citing Adedeji argues thus:

> If Africa is to achieve the goal of economic recovery and sustainable development, then there is need for transformation of social values such as human rights and dignity, respect for personal and community right, public accountability and transparency, democratization of the developmental process, justice, equity and fair-play (2015:207).

People who are conscious of ethical values will necessarily develop the right values upon which their lives will be conducted and once the individual in the society personally possesses the right mental attitude and live by good moral values, issues such as egocentrism (egoism) and its multifaceted manifestations will give room for proper development in the society. Hence, Elechi aptly argues that:

> Development is a process by which human personality is enhanced in a creative, organized and disciplined fashion. It is this enhanced personality that is the driving force behind the material transformation of any society. This simply means that development does not start with goods or material things; it begins with the people – their orientation, beliefs, values, attitudes, organizations, confidence and more importantly, self-discipline (2014:137).

Here, it has also been emphasised that moral development of the individual is a condictio-sine-qua-non to material or structural development and this can only be achieved through philosophical evaluation and purely ethical analysis of our current and prevailing negative and cancerous values that have penetrated the fabrics of the Nigerian society as destructive cankerworms.

Education, Values and National Development

In this section, we recommend that educational institutions of all levels become major stakeholders in the fight against moral depravity and negative values that have devastating effects on the Nigerian State. This is because the educational institutions whether at primary, secondary, or tertiary levels deal directly with majority of the nation's population at least in contemporary times. Besides, it is a major agent of socialisation in the development process of most children and adults.

It is a truism in the Nigerian situation, that citizens including the youths and young adults have compromised the core values that essentially characterise traditional African cultures such as respect for elders, respect for the sanctity of human life, honesty, industry, accountability etc. Notwithstanding, the educational institutions can be so organised and designed to reorient, transform, and inculcate desired values on her members and this will ultimately birth the desired national development. D. B. Enu and A. E. Esu, reiterating our position avow that the school is a worthy platform for the restoration of our cherished values, and at the same time deployed to transform our orientation. They state explicitly that:

> The school being an agent of social reproduction and transformation is expected to assist the society in its attempt to socialize the people. It has the responsibility of examining carefully and classifying those values that are permanent to the society.... the school should be able to change the orientation of the youths under its care. It is the responsibility of the school to shape the lives of the young ones and equip them with the right values (2011:149).

By the above, Enu and Esu are of the opinion that it is by equipping the youths with the right values that we can make them become responsible and productive members of the society. Omoregbe, lending his voice to the indisputable and indispensable role of the education of citizens as a means to engendering development in a state posits that civil society, education, and morality have a common denominator and this is the human nature. By human nature, Omoregbe means the rational and social nature of man. Hence, he argues that the three cannot be separated from each other (1993:150). Thus, he strongly contends that:

> Any education that is devoid of morality is incomplete and useless. Such education is even harmful both to the individual who acquires it and a society in which he lives. It must be imbued with morality in a very high degree, otherwise it will do more harm than good to the society (1993:151).

The people who are only educated to be experts in one area of knowledge or the other will inevitably become threat to national development and societal well-being if morality is not imbued in such education. Elechi lends support to this when he stresses "that the moral and spiritual development of an individual keeps him on course and stands in a good stead throughout life" (2014:141). He further opines that, "there cannot be development in a nation where the financial or material capital of a people is richer than their moral and spiritual capital". He adds that in such a circumstance, development cannot stand the test of time in that it will be confronted by incessant vandalism and destruction (2014:141-142).

Therefore, it becomes vital to argue that Nigerian educational system should build into its curricula at all levels high degree of value education. It is only through this that our educational institutions will produce responsible people with desired and needed values that can catalyse the process of development and sustain such. It is regrettable that most graduates from different institutions of higher learning in Nigeria are peddlers of negative values. Most of our political leaders who themselves are embodiment of immoral values also went through

this educational system. Omoregbe would say they are merely trained people; they were never educated.

In a bid to avert the ailing and current deplorable state of Nigeria, the schools should consciously teach values to those under them. The strength of values lies in the fact that they build character and this in turn produces behaviours that are beneficial not only to the individuals but also to others and the community. Values therefore enhance the well-being of all, and prevent harm to both the individual and the society (Enu and Esu, 2011:151). All schools at all levels and other allied social setups have the capacity to engender value education and as such they should be committed to facilitating, promoting and encouraging the cultivation of right moral values. If this is consciously and strategically carried out and the citizens are given new orientation and imbibe new and better value system, national development can be easily achieved and sustained.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, we have argued that the individuals in the society form the fulcrum or epicentre of any society and that it is only when these individuals are morally and intellectually developed that the society can attain and sustain true, genuine and wholesome development. Hence, we posit that one of the major ways with which to combat the current and prevalent moral bankruptcy in the Nigerian State which has resulted into gross level of underdevelopment is to philosophically re-evaluate our values and reorient the citizens. In addition, we aver that the educational system at all levels should be imbued with value education and that in so doing we shall ultimately inculcate the right values into the members of the society which will eventually create room for rapid development and its sustenance.

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A RE-EXAMINATION OF ARISTOTLE'S VIEWS ON GENDER INEQUALITY

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Abstract

This paper re-examined Aristotle's View on Gender Inequality. There are canons of heated debate regarding Aristotle's view of women. Some readers and scholars over the years have misinterpreted Aristotle's comment on women in his *Politics* as chauvinistic and grossly insensitive. As an Athenian, his postulations were made in tandem with the trend of the city, by showing the differences in the nature, role and proficiency of women in the development of the society. He endorsed complementary roles between the men and the women. However, regardless of his profound philosophical writings, the 21st century has been bombarded with different types of movements, initiatives and theories; ideologies have been put forward as a response to the issues of gender inequality. From relativism to secularism and one of the most pressing of them today is the wave of feminism, hence, this paper aims at re-examining Aristotle's notion of gender inequality. The hermeneutic and analytic methods were used in order to capture the true motive of Aristotle's postulations on gender differences. It is no doubt that this research would serve as an eyeopener; first to the radical feminists who believes that the human society is wholly patriarchal, then the academicians as well as researchers in the field of Philosophy. The paper concludes that women are the companion of men, gifted with equal mental capacities; equal in status but not identical. They are complimentary to one another, so that without one, the existence of the other cannot be conceived.

Keywords: Gender, Inequality, Patriarchy, Partnership. Complementary

Introduction

Throughout history, the concept of gender inequality has remained highly debatable as much as played an important role in the development of human societies. Gender inequality is rooted in power dynamics and social relationships, where women historically have been dominated by men in various spheres of life. A contrast concept of inequality is 'equality'. The notion of equality is, essentially, *treating every single person exactly the same,* where each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities. Before expounding on Aristotle's views on gender inequality which is going to be the main focus of this chapter,

it will be plausible to clarify, first; that issues surrounding gender inequality does not always border on girls/women alone but that both gender tend to suffer gender inequality through times and places, second; that Aristotle's notions on gender inequality have not only been highly debatable but has far more been misconstrued over the years. This erroneous misinterpretation has created a wide gap in gender bias and also patriarchal domination in the face of human society, as a means for belittlement and a subjugation tool against the "female" gender. Prior to Aristotle's view, one can wonder whether it will seem tenable to trace the challenge of gender inequality from the time of creation (Genesis 3:16) where the right to rulership over the woman (female) was bagged on the man (male) as a natural right. Following this course historically, humanity has built its ethical, political, as well as cultural systems on a manly (Patriarchal) standpoint.

Aristotle in his tends to hold a naturalistic view in his description of gender. In his *Politics* Aristotle tries to explain the subordinate position of women in society through a natural justification for women's natural confinement to domesticity, thus women are unable to reach true eudaimonia and participate in the politics for the common good. On this premise Aristotle in his *Politics* book 1 stated that:

> The ruler possesses virtue of character to its fullest extent—for any   work, taken absolutely, belongs to the master-craftsman, and reason is a master-craftsman, but each of the others [slaves, women, and children] have just as much as is appropriate to them (17).

From the above assertion, it can be deduced that women's deliberative capacities are limited by comparison with those of the natural rulers (men), and these limitations are what justifies gender inequality in Aristotle's view. Regarding the issue of women's psychological capacities, Aristotle does not tell us as much as we would like. It is not clear, for example, what Aristotle means when he says that women's deliberative faculty is unauthoritative (akuron), and so the main aim of this chapter will be to get some clarity on these issues. By doing so, we can begin to understand the specific motivational and evaluative notions of Aristotle on; Patriarchy, Gender spheres of activities, Gender Subordination, and Sexual differentiation, would be critically evaluated in subsequent text below, to enable our readers to gain a satisfiable compose of Aristotle's most misinterpreted ideas on gender inequality.

Aristotle's Biological View on Gender

The word gender comes from both Greek and Latin word. In Greek word it means "gendere" meaning "to produce", in Latin, it means "genus", meaning "kind or type", and in English, it is a grammatical word that "talks of person of masculine and feminine". Therefore, gender can be defined as a relationship between man and woman both perceptual and material. Genders is not necessarily determined biologically as a result of sexual characteristics of either women or men but is constructed. There have been canons of heated debate regarding Aristotle's view of women. Aristotle was the great man of all time, but regardless of this brief appreciation, one can't excuse Aristotle for his biased episteme where he made misogynistic comments about women. As such, this work seeks to re-examine his opinion regarding gender differences and inequality, the way he portrays women as an essential part of society and at what position he kept women in politics.

In the *Politics* Aristotle ascribes very different social functions and characteristics to both men and women. Most importantly, men are said to have a rational capacity that in women is somehow deficient, and this has significant consequences for the sorts of social activities that men and women can respectively perform. At the same time, the distinctions Aristotle draws in his scientific treatises between men and women of the human species, and

between males and females of other species (with which he is equally concerned)-what is now called 'sex' -are very slight and often precarious. For instance, in *Generation of Animal* book 2, Aristotle says that male and female are different because they produce unlike reproductive fluids-semen and menstruation (108). The female and the menstruation, as Aristotle portrays them, are much more related to earth or the earthy matter. The Earth, for example, is called mother and its nature is said to be something female in the mythology. Aristotle further explain that the female menstruation is not yet a full potentiality for it lacks the sentient soul, without of which the potential body existing in the female menstruation is said only to be a potential dead body (108). For Aristotle, the female menstruation can only get its full potentiality by mixing with the male seed, which is "the factor that produces the sentient soul" (109). His answer to how sexual difference is possible consists in a norm-defect theory of sexual difference whereby the male of the species is understood to exemplify the norm or perfect type, and the female is a defective or mutilated instance of the same type. In consonants to this view, Aristotle clearly stated:

> The female is, as it were, a mutilated male, and the catamenia are semen, only
> not pure; for there is only one thing they have not in them, the principle of soul
> (112).

Thus, gender for Aristotle is not justified or explained by sex in Aristotle, as it has so often been in other eras. Indeed, given the limited differentiation between male and female in the biological treatises, it would have been difficult for Aristotle to make such sex-gender connections to his political claims about the social functions of men and women. From Aristotle's perspective, gender connects with function, hence form, while sex pertains to matter, and Aristotle prioritizes form over matter. Perhaps Aristotle would see gender (the functions of men and women in the polis) as more fundamental than sex (the male-female dichotomy). To further buttress this notion, In *Politics* book 1, Aristotle argues that;

> Women, like slaves, are 'natural subjects', while (free) men are 'natural rulers'
> because (free) men have a deliberative faculty that in women 'lacks authority'
> and in slaves is entirely absent (28).

Since in males the rational part of the soul rules (or is at least capable of ruling) the irrational, community life in which the female is made to obey the male will have the irrational ruled by the rational capacity. Fortunately for advocates of this interpretation, women are described in all species, from the Laconian breed of dogs to the human, as easily-tamed, easily-trained, and obedient. The irrational part of the female soul cannot be overpowered by the rational part of her *own* soul but can be easily submitted to the rational control of (free) men. Such an understanding that men are rational and intellectual whereas women are irrational and emotional, is supported by assorted statements Aristotle makes elsewhere regarding the characteristics of men and women and male and female animals of other species. For instance, in his *Parts of Animals* book IV, Aristotle argues that thick-blooded animals are more passionate than thin- blooded animals, having already stated that females are thick-blooded in comparison to males (142). This notion without much doubt one can say, correlates with natural gender dichotomy as women are quicker to shed tears, and become more compassionate, as compared to the male who are more active, firm and less compassionate.

Aristotle's Patriarchal Views on Gender

Patriarchy describes the institutionalized system of male dominance. In its wider definition, it means the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in

general. Aristotle's idea of patriarchy in *Politics* can be defined as an association of human beings. He opines that it is not possible for human beings to live without other human beings; they are naturally bound to live in a community or association. Under the umbrella of human association, Aristotle distinguished two types of communities: political communities (polis) and household communities. (Oikos) The political community, as an association, is established for the sake of an individual's good and collectively for the welfare of the community at large. Another community, he named – household, which is smaller in size. Though the household association is subordinate to the political community, the importance of the household, for Aristotle, lies in the fact that "...it liberates free men from concern with daily needs and provides them with the leisure to devote their time and energy to politics" (Millet, 29). In book V of *Politics*, Aristotle suggests that "the smaller associations of society must live in cooperation, and states that the roles that men, women, and slaves play in household perfectly harmonizes with their natural tendencies" (252). Since, individually, they can live a peaceful life.

Aristotle emphasizes the associations that collectively work for the highest good, for him "It is, therefore, the state evident that, while all partnerships aim at some good, the partnership that is the most supreme of all and includes all the others does so most of all and aims at the most supreme of all goods, and this is the partnership entitled the state, the political association" (253). Therefore, Aristotle's patriarchal framework asserts that the origin of the household can be attributed to the family unit, which he considers as the fundamental component of the state. According to Aristotle, this familial structure, is contingent upon the essential union of husband and wife. Crucially, this alliance is not simply a matter of individual preference; instead, it is an essential characteristic of human beings. In addition, Aristotle attributes a natural and teleological importance to this marital bond. Aristotle's teleological reasoning emphasizes the crucial role of this union in fostering virtue and ensuring the smooth functioning of the household. A husband and wife's reciprocal assistance and cooperation, guided by their own values, are crucial elements in upbringing the generations and maintaining a prosperous household. Aristotle's understanding of the household as emerging from the family emphasizes the interdependence of these social entities and their enormous impact in shaping the fabric of society. His patriarchal view on gender records a clear and fair intention against the popular understanding of some scholars who have misconstrued Aristotle's gender philosophy as being a foundational tool for the subjugation of women in societies.

Aristotle's Notion on Spheres of Activity

Gender is constantly being defined—it is a combination of conscious and unconscious social and cultural construction. In ancient times, Plato and Aristotle provided us with two examples of gender theory. Aristotle's notion of natural order pre-elects a woman's role through recourse to her nature as natural subject—women are then the natural and biological inferiors of the patriarchal male, as Aristotle succinctly in the *Nicomachean Ethics* book VII opines that:

> The husband's rule depends on his worth or merit, and the sphere of his rule is that which is proper to a man. Whatever is mere suited to a woman he turns over to his wife. But whenever a husband takes the authority over all matters into his hand, he transforms the association into an oligarchy, since in doing so he violates the principle of merit and does not rule by virtue of his superiority. Sometimes the wife rules because she is an heiress. But of course, this kind of rule is not in terms of excellence or virtue, but is based on wealth and power, just as in oligarchies (376).

Aristotle in certain respects acknowledges positive attributes that are special to women and distributes them some, although very little, power and authority in the household.

Aristotle's teleological principle, which claims that everything in the world has a purpose to fulfill, aids in the recognition of women and their roles in society but solely from a reproductive basis. In Kraut's view, these necessary virtues of care and affection are apparent in women from their natural purpose of being a mother, for they allow the good care-taking of the offspring and enable an essential learning environment where they can practice the virtues of friendship, love, and affection (43). Moreover, these virtues that are necessary to be learned for eudaimonia are passed down from mother to child in a household setting. It is apparent that women have positive attributes that are special to them and these virtues are required to reach flourishing; however, women are confined to the borders of domesticity within the polis because they are thought to have no natural capacity to obtain other virtues. Aristotle argues that flourishing is enabled through learning and practicing virtues, however, dictating only a domestic role for women, resists women's contribution to the state to reach eudaimonia.

This then poses an argument against Aristotle's exclusion of women from the political sphere, for if women are reasonable enough to be trusted with some autonomy in the household, there is no solid barrier disabling them from pursuing political activity. Overall, women inherently have virtues such as affection and care which puts them at an advantage for reaching eudaimonia, and they are given some authority over the household to preserve it. Both of these aspects enable women to participate in politics instead of disabling them. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* book VII Aristotle structures the women's place solely inside the household and justifies the exclusion of women from the political realm. Firstly, Aristotle compares between male and female that "the former by nature is superior and ruler, the latter inferior and subject" (378). Using naturalism to understand the working of the world, Aristotle conveys the existence of dualities that govern one another. The soul has governance over the body, and reason has domination over the soul. Through this natural hierarchy, Aristotle concludes that women are inferior beings who cannot participate in political activity because of their shortcomings in reason. He believes that the "deliberative faculty in the soul" is present in a female "but ineffective" (379), thus not qualified for politics that requires reasoning and virtues. However, as argued above, women have some decision-making responsibilities to preserve the household which shows women's reasoning and rational thinking to participate in the decision-making process for the common good. As a matter of fact, the world which is increasingly becoming more hostile and self-centered would be better off with the inclusion and representation of virtues such as care and nurture. In Werner's opinion, when women are included in political activity, it is possible to see a heightened sense of interconnectedness in society, leading to "better treatment of others and increase of the living standards of all, with lessened dangers of separation and segregation (16). With a sense of responsibility and care over others, people will act more in the interest of the common than pure self. Therefore, women should not be coerced into domesticity because of these virtues but should be encouraged to participate in politics.

Aristotle's View on Gender Subordination

Every human society has a social organization, that is, it has its modus Vivendi (mode of living/culture) and modus operandi (mode of operation) by which the task necessarily for its continuing existence is distributed among its member. Men and women comprise the human society. As such they are assigned different roles, responsibilities, obligation, rights, and so on, according to their ages, classes, sexes, creeds, local customs, traditions and mental capacities. Biologically, women are different from men and as a result, women have been interiorized, subsumed, subordinated to men and relegated to the background in some parts of the society.

They are seen as the weaker sex; physically, mentally, sexually, spiritually and otherwise. The questions become; Is Aristotle's misogynic in his gender subordination philosophy?

Aristotle deals with relations between men and women in two distinct contexts. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* the context is that of personal bonding and parenthood; in the *Politics* the context is economic, and master/slave relations are taken up at the same time. The latter passage is generally misunderstood nowadays because its readers/researchers come from urban backgrounds and read according to the prevailing thoughts of his society, when in the real sense, it is not. It deals with the family as opposed to the city. The polis in Aristotle's conception is an independent social and economic unit. According to the key passage in *Politics I*, there are within this unit three relationships: man/wife, master/slave, parent/ child. Since the polity is a policy-making and policy-following entity, its members, as they enter into its constitutive relations, are differentiated by the way their policy-making ("deliberative") function operates. In the slave, it is not operative: the slave as such has no say in how the farm is run. In the child, it has not developed yet, is not yet operative: the child will help run the place on maturity. In the wife, it is complete but lacks authority- not in control. That leaves the patriarch (man) to make the decisions.

And so, the main contention for the point above is what "authority" means here. In what sense is the wife's deliberative faculty "not in control"? The prevailing view, is that it is not in control because women are ruled by their emotions. However, this is quite wrong, for three reasons. First, no Aristotelian text supports the view that woman are ruled by their emotions. Second, several texts tell against it. And third, that is not how Aristotle uses the word 'authority' elsewhere. On the first point, one can readily understand that supporting quotations are always from other authors, and not all of them have Greek interpretation. In other words, one must be careful in reading Aristotle, to distinguish between what he is saving and what he is rejecting in subverting traditions from within. The second point is easier to support. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* book II, Aristotle says that children and animals cannot have eudaimonia, and that young people cannot profitably study ethics, because they cannot frame and follow policies (*109*). He does not say that women cannot be happy. Again, Aristotle says of human pair-bonding that women and men come together for sex and stay together; a). because of the children, b). to divide the chores, the partners having their own spheres of responsibility, and, c). "because of virtue", out of mutual liking and respect (116). Nothing is said of any supposed dependence or incapacity of the female; on the contrary, each is a responsible contributor to the partnership.

The foregoing suggests that the difference in authority between man and women in the household depends on the functions they fulfill in the household. But then, why should those functions call for the female to play the subordinate part. The complementariness of function in the homestead is matched by a complementariness of virtues. And this is very important, for to be better is simply to excel in virtue. To say that men are better than women is to say that they excel women in human virtues. And so, the idea that Aristotle holds that women's intellectual faculties are somehow either defective or at the mercy of their feelings in a way that is not true of men is mere moonshine. All he is saying is that, in the household, wives do not make the policy decisions but defer to their husbands. All this may still leave us wondering why men should be the decision-makers. The fact that as males they are more active and bossier may suggest that they are likely to take the lead, but not necessarily that it is better that they should do so.

Aristotle's Biology and the Significance of Sexual Differentiation

Telos has been an important concept in Aristotle's ethics for several decades. Aristotle's concept of telos may be defined as the end or goal for which a being aims. Clearer understanding of it may be gained from the close reading of Aristotle's primary texts on animals. Aristotle observed and classified animals informally in daily life and through planned evidence gathering and collection development. During this work he theorized his concept of telos, which includes species flourishing and a good life, and drew on extensive and detailed assessments of animal physiology, diet and behavior. Aristotle believed that animals, like humans, have purpose, and that telos is natural and unchanging. Aristotle's work *On the Generation of Animals* analyzes the roles of male and female in sexual reproduction. His ideas about women in this work were conventional for his time and have been criticized as sexist. The tools of modern science and scientific experimentation were not available to the Greeks during Aristotle's time and that, consequently, Aristotle had relied not only on empirical observations when writing about living organisms but also on a fair amount of speculation. And so, in an attempt to evaluate Aristotle's notion of sexual differentiation, in what precise respect does Aristotle say that women are inferior to men? People often say that the inferiority is physiological; but this is misleading, because it sounds as if women were organically defective (e.g. as lacking male's reproductive organ). The inferiority Aristotle speaks of is indeed inferiority of the body, but it is a matter of chemistry. The essential difference between male and female lies in what they contribute to the offspring they generate: it is the difference between the female's blood, which provides the matter, and the male's seminal fluid, which provides the form.

This sexual differentiation in reproduction is found in all well-developed species of living things. But why? Aristotle gives one of his annoying non-answers: because it is better to have the matter-supplier and the form-bearer separate (This sexual differentiation in reproduction is found in all well-developed species of living things. But why? Aristotle gives one of his annoying non-answers: "because it is better to have the matter-supplier and the form-bearer separate" (365). As to why it is better, we are given no hint; perhaps we should supply one from the remark in the *Politics* about why wife and slave should not be the same in the household: nature generally uses different things for different purpose (125*). But once the differentiation is allowed, everything else follows. The child has to grow where the matter is, in the mother and later with the mother. All physiological differences between the sexes either result from this fact or follow directly from the male being better cooked. In most animal species, as expounded in *Parts of Animal* book 1, the female is larger, slower, softer; the male is smaller, more active, more aggressive, and tougher in the sense that it is more likely to have large horns, tusks and other hard bits *(66).* The same chemical difference that makes the female the matter-supplier makes it less mobile and hence more apt to stick around with the young ones; so everything fits. It is obvious from this that females are not going to be flightier or more emotional than males. We might rather expect the opposite. But Aristotle does not say that either. What he does say is that in most species there are typical differences in temperament between the sexes; that these tend to follow a common pattern; and that these become more marked to the extent that a species has character traits or personality. It follows that the typical differences between male and female will be more clearly marked in humans than in any other species. Aristotle's description of the differences in question is indeed male-oriented in the precise sense that women are described by their differences from men and men are not described at all. But the differences are not in the direction of greater flightiness as Aristotle stated in his *History of Animals book* IX that:

> Woman is more compassionate than man» more easily moved to tears, ...more jealous, more querulous, more apt to scold and to strike. The female is also more despondent and despairing than the male, more shameless and more given to falsehood, more easily deceived and of more retentive memory. She is also more wakeful and more shrinking. And in general, the female is less quick to take action than the male and needs less food (508).

Aristotle's hierarchical understanding of living things provides an extremely useful and underused tool for understanding sexual difference. That is, it seems that Aristotle must explain precisely how men and women are different since each belongs to the same genus (animal) with the same specific difference (rational). How, in other words, are they to be further differentiated without making them a different species or essence? Though a technical concern, this is not a minor one. After all, for ancients and moderns alike, a distinction between men and women, male and female, is arguably one of the first things given in experience and a primary lens through which we interpret our experience of nature.

Conclusion

From our research so far, Aristotle was primarily concerned with examining different communities in order to determine which form of rule is to be considered as good in each of them. In *Politics* book II, he assumes that the individual communities presided over by the free Greek man in his various functions for example, as a statesman or head of the household, differ in their nature (125). In each community, the man rules over people with different qualities and therefore they must be ruled in their own way. Each community demands its own form of rule, whether it is made up of husband and wife, of master and slaves, of father and children within the house, or it is a community of rulers and the ruled in differently-ordered states. What might be appropriate for a tyrant is not suitable for ensuring the stability of an oligarchy; what seems appropriate to do to a slave is misplaced where citizens alternate between ruling and being ruled as equals, as in a democracy. This in itself is an important observation about gender relations in the ethical and political writings of Aristotle: The relationship between man and woman is seen here as a relationship of domination and the sphere of control are attributed to man, in the same way as the perspective of the lord and citizen is the guiding principle in the Politics. Aristotle is not a misogynist as some scholars perceives, but the misinterpretation of his texts with regards to his views on; his patriarchal ideologies, gender hierarchy, his gender spheres of activities, has not been misconstrued over the years, hence the need for a re-examination of his gender philosophy. Those who dismiss the charge of misogyny on grounds that Aristotle covertly advocates women's non-participation in civic affairs tend to obscure the leading thesis of the *Politics,* namely, that polis and household differ in kind, not merely in number. It is argued that Aristotle condones the exclusion of women from civic affairs because this practice conforms to the natural complementarity of the sexes and because it fortifies the naturally pluralistic structure of society. By securing these underpinnings, Aristotle frames a constitution that best supports women and men in their pursuit of human excellence rather than a permissive tool for the subjugation of women in this case, and vice versa. Therefore, Aristotle's gender philosophy is akin to that of complementarity. This philosophy of complementarity seeks to reassert that a man is not better than a woman and a woman is not better than the man, but rather they complement each other as a result of the differences in their individual, logical, physiological and psychological structure tailored and made so that the one realizes that there is need for the other.

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AN EXAMINATION OF DAVID HUME'S CONCEPT OF CAUSALITY AND THE IBIBIO TRADITIONAL BELIEF

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Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between Hume's notion of causality and the Ibibio belief system, and how each interprets cause and effect. Hume believes our belief in causation arises from habit and custom, rather than any empirical verification of a necessary connection. This contrasts with the Ibibio worldview, where causation is seen as an active influence of supernatural agents which are the ancestors, deities, and spirits within both the natural and moral realms. In the Ibibio belief system, unseen forces play a direct role in shaping life events, communal health, and individual actions, with moral causation deeply involved in their cultural understanding. This paper aims to understand how Hume's empiricism about causation can engage with the metaphysical and spiritual aspects of the Ibibio worldview. To achieve this, it employs comparative and analytic methods of philosophical enquiry. Through textual analysis and cross-cultural comparison, this study shows how each system explains causation's role in understanding the natural and moral world. Though there are points of convergence, particularly in the emphasis that both framework place on custom and habitual belief, this paper contends that both the empirical view of Hume and the metaphysical view of the Ibibio worldview all constitute and explain the true nature of our world. It concludes that David Hume's notion of causality and the Ibibio belief system offer two contrasting frameworks for understanding causation, with Hume focusing on scepticism and empirical observation, while the Ibibio integrate spiritual and moral elements into their worldview.

Keywords: Causality, Ibibio, Belief system, David Hume, Ibibio belief system

Introduction

David Hume's notion of causality represents a foundational shift in the theory of knowledge and metaphysics. Hume argued that causation is not an observable, necessary connection between two events but rather a habitual association formed in the human mind. For him, our belief in causation arises not from rational proof or empirical observation of one event producing another, but from patterns we repeatedly witness and mentally link together. His ideas have since challenged philosophical and scientific fields alike, particularly on questions of how we understand and verify relationships between events in the natural world.

In contrast, the Ibibio belief system approaches causation from a metaphysical and spiritual perspective. For the Ibibio people, causation is fundamentally intertwined with the actions of supernatural agents, deities, ancestors, and spirits who exert influence over both the natural and moral realms. In this worldview, events do not merely happen due to chance or habit; rather, they are believed to be outcomes of divine will, spiritual intentions, or moral actions that invoke the intervention of these supernatural forces.

The contrasting approaches of Hume's empirical scepticism and the Ibibio's supernatural causation raise important questions about the nature of knowledge, belief, and metaphysics. This work explores these differences, examines how two seemingly incompatible systems interpret causation, and seeks to understand if and how Hume's framework can be reconciled with or can illuminate aspects of Ibibio thought. By investigating how these two systems define, interpret, and apply causality, this work aims to enrich our understanding of causation as a cultural and philosophical concept, offering insights into the ways diverse societies make sense of cause and effect, moral consequence, and the unseen forces that shape existence.

Causality

Causality is a fundamental concept in philosophy and science that addresses the relationship between cause and effect. Causality is the idea that one thing (a cause) brings about another thing (an effect). It is the relationship between events where one event (the cause) is understood to make another event (the effect) happen. Hume presents the ontological and the epistemological definitions of causality. For him,

> An object precedent and contiguous to another, and where all the objects resembling the former are placed in like relations of precedency and contiguity to those objects, that resemble the latter… A cause is an object precedent and contiguous to another, and is so united with it, that the idea of the one determines the mind to form the idea of the other, and the impressions of the one to form a livelier idea of the other (1739: p102).

Causality is the study of how and why things are the cause of other things. It is one of the core foundations of science, religion and everyday thinking. Let us take for instance if I strike a match, and then it burst into flame; we say the striking caused the fire. The first thing which was to strike the match led to the second thing which is the flame. This is what causality means.

Ibibio Belief System

The Ibibio belief system is a traditional African worldview held by the Ibibio people of South-South region of Nigeria, primarily characterized by its emphasis on spiritual causation, ancestor reverence, and the moral influence of supernatural agents on everyday life. The Ibibio people believe that unseen forces, such as deities, ancestors, and spirits, play an active role in shaping events, moral outcomes, and community well-being. According to Ekong, "this belief system integrates cosmology, morality, and social order, with the supernatural seen as both a cause and a moral guide in the natural world" (1988: p30). These spiritual agents are believed to influence aspects of life from health and fertility to social harmony, often through the practice of rituals, sacrifices, and taboos aimed at maintaining favour and harmony with the spiritual realm.

Additionally, the Ibibio hold that misfortunes or illnesses often have spiritual or moral causes, which necessitates rituals to appease the spirits or deities who may be offended (Ekong, 1988: p32). This reflects a worldview where causation is not merely physical or empirical but

is deeply embedded in spiritual and moral dimensions. The Ibibio belief system is a holistic framework that connects the natural, spiritual, and moral realms, creating a structure where causality is rooted in the dynamic interactions between the physical and metaphysical, often mediated by ancestral and divine beings.

David Hume's Causality

David Hume (1711-1776) was a prominent Scottish philosopher. His first major work, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, was published anonymously in three volumes between 1739 and 1740. Hume's inquiry into causality begins with his commitment to empiricism, the view that all ideas and knowledge are ultimately derived from sensory impressions. According to Hume, the human mind consists of "impressions" (the immediate data of experience) and "ideas" (the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning) (1748: p70). He argues that every meaningful idea must be traceable to an original impression, which leads him to examine the idea of causality.

However, central to Hume's analysis is the problem of induction. Hume observes that our belief in causality is not a product of reason but rather of habit or custom. He argues that when we observe two events repeatedly occurring in succession (e.g., striking a match and seeing it ignite), we come to expect the second event (the flame) to follow the first (the striking). According to Hume, this expectation is not grounded in any rational or logical necessity. Instead, it is the result of the mind's habit of associating events that have been consistently conjoined in our experience. Hume famously critiques the assumption that the future will resemble the past, which underlies all inductive reasoning. He points out that there is no rational basis for believing that just because two events have been conjoined in the past, they will continue to be conjoined in the future. This leads to what is known as "Hume's problem of induction," which raises doubts about the justification of all knowledge based on empirical observation (Hume, 1748: p77).

Hume's most significant contribution to the concept of causality lies in his analysis of the idea of "necessary connection." Traditionally, causality was thought to involve a necessary connection between cause and effect, where the cause brings about the effect by some inherent power or force. Hume challenges this notion by arguing that our idea of necessary connection is not derived from any direct observation of such a connection in the world. Hume's examination of necessary connection challenges traditional metaphysical views and has had a lasting impact on subsequent philosophical thought. He questions the validity of this assumption by asking: How do we come to know that one event necessarily causes another?

Hume argues that our belief in causality does not arise from reason or any rational insight into the nature of the world. Instead, he posits that it is derived from the habits and customs of the human mind. When we repeatedly observe one event following another, our minds develop an expectation that the sequence will continue in the same way in the future. This expectation is what Hume refers to as the principle of custom or habit. Hume asserts that "when we observe a cause-and-effect relationship, we do not perceive any necessary connection between the two events. We only see that one event follows another. For example, when we see a billiard ball strike another, we observe the motion of the first ball and then the motion of the second. However, we do not observe any inherent power or necessity in the first ball that compels the second ball to move. The idea of necessary connection, is not something we directly observe in the world but rather something our mind adds to the events we observe" (Hume, 1748: p80).

Hume's analysis of necessary connection has profound implications for metaphysics and the philosophy of science. It leads to the problem of induction. Inductive reasoning refers

to making generalizations based on specific observations. For example, observing that the sun has risen every day of one's life leads to the generalization that the sun will rise tomorrow. However, Hume questioned the justification of such generalizations, ultimately suggesting that they lack a rational foundation. Induction involves drawing general conclusions from particular instances.

Hume pointed out that in deductive reasoning, conclusions are logically entailed by their premises. However, in inductive reasoning, the leap from particular observations to general conclusions is not logically certain. The problem arises when we ask why we should believe that the future will resemble the past or that unobserved instances will follow the pattern of observed ones. Hume's problem of induction challenges the assumption that past experiences provide a rational basis for predicting future events. He argued that "all inductive reasoning is founded on the principle of the uniformity of nature, which assumes that the future will resemble the past. However, this principle itself cannot be justified by inductive reasoning without falling into circular reasoning" (1748: p82).

To illustrate, consider the statement, "The sun will rise tomorrow because it has risen every day in the past." This reasoning assumes that the future will mirror the past a principle that cannot be independently justified without relying on the very assumption in question. Hume argued that we have no rational grounds for believing in the uniformity of nature, other than our psychological habit of expecting the future to resemble the past. Hume contended that our belief in induction is not the result of rational deduction but rather a product of custom or habit. We have become accustomed to associating certain events with certain outcomes due to repeated experience, and this habitual association leads us to expect similar outcomes in the future. However, Hume emphasized that this expectation is not grounded in reason but in human psychology.

Kant responded to Hume by proposing that causality is a fundamental category of the human mind, essential for organizing our experiences. He contended that while Hume correctly identified that causality could not be derived from experience alone, he failed to recognize its role as a precondition for experience. Kant introduced the concept of the synthetic a priori judgment, which is knowledge that is both informed by experience and necessarily true before experience. Causality, according to Kant, is one such synthetic a priori concept, enabling us to perceive and understand the world in a coherent manner (1781: p288). Kant's revolutionary idea was that the mind actively structures experience using innate categories, with causality being crucial for the possibility of objective knowledge. This response not only addressed Hume's scepticism but also laid the groundwork for subsequent developments in epistemology and metaphysics.

On the other hand, Thomas Reid, a Scottish philosopher and contemporary of David Hume, strongly criticized Hume's sceptical approach to causality. He argued that this common-sense perception of causality is essential for human knowledge and action. Without it, we could not trust our experiences or conduct scientific inquiry effectively. He posited that "our belief in causality is a basic principle of human cognition, which does not require empirical evidence or rational justification beyond its self-evident nature" (Reid, 1785: p305). However, Hegel acknowledged Hume's contribution to highlighting the empirical nature of human cognition but critiqued his conclusions for their sceptical implications. Hegel argued that Hume's reduction of causality to mere habit fails to account for the rational structure underlying reality. According to Hegel (1812), "causality is not just a psychological habit but an intrinsic aspect of the logical process through which the world unfolds" (1812: p66). He believed that reality is a dynamic, interconnected whole, where cause and effect are comprehended through the dialectical method, revealing the rational necessity in the progression of concepts and events.

Hegel saw Hume's scepticism as an essential phase in the evolution of thought, one that must be surpassed to achieve a higher understanding.

From the above, we have seen that Hume's theory of causality presents a critical examination of how we understand cause-and-effect relationships, showing significant limitations in empirical knowledge. By asserting that causation is a product of mental habit rather than direct observation of necessary connections, Hume fundamentally challenges the validity of inductive reasoning and the certainty of scientific inquiry.

An Analysis of the Ibibio Belief System

The Ibibio people are an ethnic group primarily located in South-South region of Nigeria, particularly in Akwa Ibom State and parts of Cross River State. They are one of Nigeria's oldest ethnic groups, known for a rich cultural heritage and historical presence in the region. Ibibio society is structured through extended families and communities, and they speak the Ibibio language, which belongs to the Benue-Congo branch of the Niger-Congo language family (Essien, 1990: p222).

The Ibibio belief system is a complex and rich spiritual framework deeply woven into the cultural fabric of the Ibibio people in South-South region of Nigeria. This belief system is rooted in traditional African religion, where nature, ancestors, and deities play central roles. Ekong holds that despite the influence of Christianity, which gained prominence during the colonial period, traditional beliefs still hold significant value in Ibibio communities (2001: p40). In the Ibibio cosmology, Abasi is the supreme deity, often regarded as the creator of the universe. Abasi is viewed as the ultimate source of life, holding control over the elements and natural forces. The Ibibio believe that Abasi created the world and remains a distant but overarching presence, delegating many day-to-day functions of the universe to other lesser spirits and deities. Due to Abasi's elevated status, direct communication is rare; instead, priests and intermediaries often act on behalf of individuals and communities (Noah, 1988: p420).

An essential component of the Ibibio belief system is ancestor veneration, which forms the basis of their spiritual practice and social life. Through rituals and offerings, descendants honor these ancestors, seeking blessings, protection, and sometimes forgiveness. Forde and Jones hold that maintaining a good relationship with one's ancestors is crucial, as they are thought to influence various aspects of life, including health, fertility, and success. When societal norms are broken, it is believed that the ancestors may express their displeasure through illness or misfortune, underscoring the importance of ritual practices and moral behaviour (Forde and Jones, 1950: p281).

The Ibibio belief system includes various deities associated with natural forces, social order, and specific areas of life. These deities are often honoured and appeased through community ceremonies and sacrifices. Two prominent spiritual societies within the Ibibio culture, the Ekpe and Ekpo, play vital roles in enforcing social laws, resolving conflicts, and maintaining order (Offiong, 1984: p55). The Ekpo society, for example, is a secretive organization that holds both spiritual and judicial authority. Members often wear distinctive masks to embody spirits, representing ancestors who return to communicate with the living or to ensure societal norms are followed. Through ritual performances and symbolic acts, the Ekpo society keeps balance within the community and protects against external threats.

Additionally, among the Ibibio, the concept of *mbiam* also represents an oath or a spiritual pledge. This is both a sacred practice and a protective mechanism. When individuals swear by *mbiam*, they invoke ancestral spirits to witness their vows, with severe repercussions believed to befall those who break these oaths. *Mbiam* is often used in legal matters, dispute resolution, and declarations of truth, as it is seen as an infallible way of ensuring honesty (Noah,

1988: p354). The use of oracles, often consulted by priests or community leaders, is another aspect of Ibibio spirituality. Oracles are believed to serve as intermediaries between the physical and spiritual realms, providing guidance on pressing issues ranging from health matters to community conflicts.

Human beings occupy a unique position in the Ibibio hierarchy of forces. Although humans are subject to the influence of all higher forces Abasi, lesser deities, nature spirits, ancestors, and spiritual societies they also have the capacity for agency and moral responsibility. Humans are viewed as part of the cosmic order and are bound by spiritual, moral, and social obligations to maintain harmony within their community and with the natural world. In the Ibibio worldview according to Essien, human life is a sacred trust given by Abasi and protected by ancestors and spirits. Each individual is expected to contribute positively to the social fabric, uphold family and communal values, and show respect for spiritual entities. Failure to respect these obligations, especially through moral transgressions, can disrupt harmony and lead to spiritual consequences, such as illness, misfortune, or ancestral punishment (Essien, 1990: p150).

Taboos are another integral aspect of Ibibio customs and play a significant role in understanding cause and effect. In Ibibio culture, certain actions, objects, or behaviours are considered sacred or prohibited based on spiritual beliefs. These taboos dictate what is permissible and what is forbidden, guiding individuals in their daily lives and establishing a framework of consequences for violating spiritual or social norms. These taboos are seen as directly influencing the balance of the universe and the course of human affairs.

Ekong holds that taboos in the Ibibio community serve to protect sacred spaces and maintain order. For example, the taboo against eating certain foods or entering sacred forests or rivers is meant to avoid angering spirits or disturbing the balance of nature. Violating these taboos is believed to invite spiritual retribution, which can manifest as illness, death, or misfortune (Ekong, 2001: p106). Such taboos serve as a concrete representation of the principle of cause and effect, where breaking the established norms leads to tangible negative outcomes.

Magic and divination are also key aspects of Ibibio spirituality, with priests and diviners playing vital roles in interpreting messages from the spiritual world. Essien reports that the Ibibio use various forms of divination to seek guidance or answer questions about the future. Oracles, often viewed as mouthpieces of the spirits, are consulted for a wide range of issues, from personal health concerns to community disputes (1990: p152). Aside this, there is a strong reverence for nature spirits and other deities associated with natural elements, such as rivers, forests, and mountains. These spirits are believed to inhabit certain sacred spaces, including groves, rivers, and rocks, and are often thought to have a direct impact on the environment and human well-being. For Essien, rituals involving offerings and sacrifices are typically conducted to honour these spirits and ensure favourable conditions for agricultural activities, hunting, and fishing (1990: p154).

Hume's Causality and its Implications for Ibibio Belief System

The philosophical implications of Hume's notion of causality and the Ibibio belief system remind us of how we understand causation, knowledge, and reality. Hume's notion of causality has major implications for science and its methodology. Hume's argument undermines the rational justification for inductive reasoning, which is foundational to scientific practice. If causation is simply a mental habit without logical necessity, then the scientific method's reliance on cause and effect to predict future events is called into question. This opens philosophical debates about the validity of scientific laws and theories and has influenced areas

such as philosophy of science, where philosophers like Karl Popper have sought alternative ways to validate scientific knowledge, such as through falsifiability rather than inductive proof.

However, for the Ibibio, causation covers a spiritual dimension that complements rather than contradicts empirical observation. Their belief system illustrates that scientific and religious views on causation do not have to be mutually exclusive. The Ibibio perspective shows how religious or spiritual interpretations of causality can coexist with empirical observations, each offering a different but compatible understanding of why events happen. This has implications for the dialogue between science and religion, suggesting that causation can be understood in multiple, non-contradictory ways that respect both empirical and spiritual dimensions of human experience.

Comparing Hume's causality with the Ibibio belief system reveals how knowledge and understanding of causation are influenced by cultural contexts. Hume's scepticism reflects the Enlightenment emphasis on rationality and empiricism, which values logical analysis and distrusts unobservable forces. In contrast, the Ibibio belief system emphasizes interconnectedness with the spiritual realm, showing that causation is not purely a matter of observable relationships but also of relationships with spiritual entities. This cultural relativity has broader implications for philosophy, anthropology, and epistemology, as it shows that different cultures can have entirely different frameworks for understanding the world. It raises questions about the universality of knowledge and whether concepts like causation have the same meaning across cultures. It also suggests that understanding causation is not only a philosophical inquiry but an anthropological one, highlighting the need to respect cultural diversity in interpretations of fundamental concepts.

Hume's notion of causality focuses primarily on observation and psychological habit, without necessarily connecting causation to ethical or moral implications. The Ibibio, on the other hand, understand causation as tied to social and spiritual harmony, with consequences for communal behaviour, justice, and morality. In the Ibibio worldview according to Udo Etuk, "causation is not just about what happens but about what should happen according to spiritual and moral principles" (2003: p35). By examining this ethical dimension of causation, one can contribute to a more expansive view of causality in moral philosophy. Such a view would argue that understanding causation should include ethical considerations, how actions impact individuals and communities and how responsibility is attributed. This has implications for social ethics, suggesting that causation is not only about cause-and-effect but also about accountability, relationships, and moral responsibility. This perspective can enrich philosophical discussions on causation by integrating ethical and relational dimensions.

Finally, the comparison of Hume's scepticism with the Ibibio belief system points to the roles of faith and rationality in human understanding. Hume's perspective is sceptical, grounded in rational inquiry, and cautious about accepting any unseen causal forces. This approach is valuable in questioning assumptions and seeking evidence but can lead to a worldview that denies meaning or purpose in causality. In contrast, the Ibibio belief system accepts unseen forces as integral to causation, representing a form of faith that makes causality meaningful and actionable. For the Ibibio, faith in spiritual causation provides a coherent framework for understanding life's events, particularly those with ethical or social significance. This highlights how faith and rationality can each provide insight into human experience, suggesting that a balanced approach that respects both can enrich philosophical and anthropological perspectives on causation.

Hume's scepticism encourages caution about assuming causal links where none may exist, while the Ibibio belief system reminds us that causation can have moral and spiritual dimensions that give it practical meaning. Together, these perspectives reveal causation as a

multifaceted concept shaped by both empirical observations and cultural beliefs, challenging us to consider the role of context, faith, and reason in understanding causality and the human experience.

Conclusion

Conclusively, David Hume's notion of causality and the Ibibio belief system offer two contrasting frameworks for understanding causation, with Hume focusing on skepticism and empirical observation, while the Ibibio integrate spiritual and moral elements into their worldview. Hume argues that causation is a mental construct based on habitual observation, questioning our certainty in cause-and-effect relationships, which poses implications for scientific methods and our understanding of reality. The Ibibio, on the other hand, view causation as influenced by spiritual and relational factors, involving ancestors, deities, and ethical responsibilities, suggesting that causation is deeply linked with moral and social obligations.

This raises questions about the limits of human knowledge, the subjectivity of causation, and the ethical and cultural dimensions of cause and effect. The comparison also shows the relativity of knowledge, as Hume's empiricism reflects Western scepticism, while the Ibibio emphasize a spiritual and interconnected understanding of life events. This synthesis offers valuable insights for global ethics, education, and interdisciplinary research.

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MAN - A BEING FOR THE OTHER IN BUBER'S I-THOU PHILOSOPHY: A PARADIGM FOR MUTUAL COLLABORATION AMONG THE ETHNIC GROUPS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This work advances the argument that coexistence and national unity cannot be effectively attained in a multiethnic and socio-cultural nation like Nigeria without addressing the issues of unhealthy rivalry, legacy of tension and geographical imbalance among its component parts. The quest for unity which seems to elude many parts of our country demands a relational approach that will enhance a functional and existential peaceful coexistence. There must be a way of resolving the hostility and marginalization which has intensified ethnic conflicts and separatist agitations at various levels. It is at the backdrop of this, that this work is proposing the I-Thou philosophy of Martin Buber which promotes dialogue, mutual recognition and affirmation of each other within the circle of intersubjective relationship and interaction. It will facilitate cross-ethnic affiliation and collaboration without neglecting the uniqueness of each component unit. The paper, while adopting the method of textual and contextual analysis, is recommending a model of interactive atmosphere that regards every component unit as an integral part of our collective existence as Nigerians. A system that will respect every person on the principles of equity and recognition.

Keywords: Man, I-Thou, Mutual Collaboration, Ethnicity.

Introduction

One of the most persistent problems in philosophy is the question about the nature and position of man in te hierarchy of beings. The question "What is Man?" remains a supreme question for man. This noble question has always been posed to philosophy and to which philosophers have given numerous responses. As a philosopher, Martin Buber delves into this onerous and noble question by observing and investigating human life and experience as it is lived, beginning with man's own particular experience. Buber begins this quest by asserting that man only becomes a problem to himself and asks "what is man" in periods of social and cosmic homelessness. In order for man to find who he is, Buber argues that, man must

overcome solitude and the whole way of conceiving knowledge and reality that is based on solitude. Buber argues that man is the being who faces an "Other", while a human home is built from relations of mutual confirmation. He therefore, locates realization in relationship between creatures.

In the view of this twentieth century Anthropologist, Martin Buber, the human being must be considered a subjective entity and not an object. In his *I and Thou,* he insists that a person must acknowledge that his existence is presupposed by the existence of the other. By this, Buber makes a light-hearted reference to Gabriel Marcel's idea of inter-subjectivity. It is worth saying that Buber discourages all forms of deification, depersonification and objectification.

As a result of this, Buber uses some specific concepts that really gave insight into his understanding of intersubjective relationships. Such concepts include; I-Thou relationship, inter-personality, interpersonal dialogue, and otherness. He explores these concepts to show how importantly they affect the human person in his interaction with the other, either in the I-Thou mode or the I-It mode of relation.

It is against this background that this paper discusses Buber's I-Thou philosophy as a paradigm for mutual collaboration among the respective ethnic groups in Nigeria to promote and enhance a peaceful coexistence. This work will therefore explore a logical analysis and explanation of these concepts to avoid any form of ambiguity as to facilitate a distinct understanding of the subject matter of this article. It is the contention of this work that the perennial ethnic rivalries among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria could be ameliorated if the I-Thou philosophy of Buber is partly incorporated.

Brief Demographics of Nigeria

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and multicultural society. It is composed of nationalities, sub-nationalities, and various conglomerations of people with differing population size and potentials, with particular cultural identities, social structures, traditions, values, hopes, and aspirations. According to *World Central Intelligence Agency*, Nigeria is a home to over 250 ethnic groups with over 500 languages. The variety of customs and traditions gives our country a great cultural diversity. The three largest ethnic groups are the Hausa, who make up the 25% of the population; the Yoruba, who make up 21%, and the Igbo, who make up 18% (Vanguard News, May 10th, 2017). The three main religious groups are Muslims (estimated about 45% of the population), Christians (estimated at 45%), and adherents of indigenous religions (estimated at 10%) *(World Central Intelligence Agency*, April 10th, 2018). Persons of different ethnic backgrounds most commonly communicate in English while Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba are the mostly used Nigerian languages.

Against this diverse background, many ethnic problems abound in Nigeria, which arise principally from the hostility that derives from competition between ethnically different peoples for wealth and power while distrust and disagreements fill our most cherished diversified nature. It must be noted that the amalgamation of 1914 did not result in the unification of Nigerian peoples or even their administrations. This was because the amalgamation preserved the differences among the peoples and their administrations. This was to have an adverse effect on the evolving nation-state because groups as well as their administrations quite often looked at the national issues in terms of their local interest (Toyin and Abdullahi 9). Closely related to this was the unhealthy rivalry which developed between the respective administrations as they struggled for different group which they represented. Thus, the way in which the amalgamation was implemented left the legacy of tension and geographical imbalance among the component parts of Nigeria. Implicitly, the respective

Nigerian groups did not have much that could bring them together to discuss the affairs of their country. A certain level of separateness was nurtured among the different groups.

Today, there exists a common impression among many Nigerians that identification is easier at both family and ethnic levels. The adverse effect of this is that majority of the Nigerian citizens may never develop a proper concept of a nation. Consequently, this kind of lopsided ethnic group relation signifies a negative dimension that will undermine the Nigerian socio-cultural character.

There has also been an intensification of ethnic conflicts at various levels over issues of religion, culture and domination leading to separatist agitations while the minority groups go on the offensive to protest their economic and political marginalization. There were also isolated clashes among members of different minority while at the intra-group level; there was an unprecedented increase in the inter-communal clashes mostly over issues of land ownership. This has plunged our society into the state of unrealistic expectations. Though, the weakness of the amalgamation cannot continue to be the excuse for the failure of the Nigerian leaders and peoples to build a strong and united nation. To address the internecine socio-ethnic intolerance threatening the unity of the Nigerian peoples, this paper argues on the need to adopt and adjust to Buber's I-thou philosophy.

In his I-Thou philosophy, Buber proposes a relational approach that will facilitate a functional and existential peaceful coexistence. He further classifies the I-Thou as a relationship of subject to subject in which human beings are aware of each other as having unity of being rather than perceiving each other as consisting of specific qualities. I-Thou relation gives preference to act of "Love" which enables "I" and "Thou" share a sense of caring, respect, commitment and responsibility. According to Buber, "in the beginning is relation" (Buber 88). This further makes Buber relevant to our society as he engenders the feeling of tolerance and love which helps to abolish the practice of violent culture that threatens the unity and socio-economic development of our country. Thus, Buber says:

> The central subject of this science of man is not the isolated individual but man with man. The essence of man which is special to him can be directly known only in a living relation. I and Thou exist in our world because man exists, and the "I" exists only through the relation to the "Thou". Thus, only man with man provides a full image of human dignity; only man with man is a completely outlined form. It is only in considering man with man that one sees the dynamics of human life. The world is in twofold, the giver and the receiver, he who does and he who endures, the attacking force and the defending force, and always both together, complementing one another in mutual contribution, and together showing forth man (Buber 69).

Living in a multi-ethnic and multi-socio-cultural nation like Nigeria, we ought to know that the judgmental fact of human existence is man with man. What are peculiarly characteristics of the human world is that something takes place between one being and another, the like of which can be found nowhere in nature. Man's life is rooted in one being turning to another as another. This is the reality that provides the starting-point for the philosophical science of man.

By adopting the right attitude, the I-Thou mentality will help the Nigerian people in proposing a platform for a relationship that is characterized by an intense meeting and encounter grounded in mutual respect and appreciation of each other. If adequately implemented would become a viable option towards encountering and accepting ourselves in our respective particularity in order to bring about mutuality of purpose. This, in no little sense, will lay the necessary groundwork for a genuine and authentic coexistence in Nigeria as a multi

ethnic nation. Hence, we need each other to foster national development and individual growth because we are directly or indirectly related to each other. This is why Buber would argue that, the development of a man's soul is connected indissolubly with his craving for meeting with the "Thou" (*Buber 52*). This implies that, as Nigerians, our growth and development, both physically and interactively depends on our innate ability and potentials to respond and relate with one another by exploring a more cordial and accommodating approach.

Hence, The I-Thou philosophy, if well prioritized, will help to checkmate the factor of ethnicity that is much reflected in socio-economic and political activities in Nigeria especially in areas of voting, distribution of political offices, employment and government general patronage of the citizens.

The individual is a fact of existence in so far as he steps into a living relation with other individuals. On the other hand, the aggregate is a fact of existence in so far as it is built up of living units of being (Buber 38). In other words, the fundamental fact of human existence is man for man. Man is made man by interaction. This interaction is rooted in one being turning to another as another in order to communicate with it in a sphere which is common to them. This common sphere according to Buber is called the "between" (Buber 39). The "between" is the primal category of human reality where the genuine interaction begins while language is only a sign and means of it. It is the ontological ground of all relations. As a multi ethnic nation, dialogue can emerge out of this "Betweenness" especially when the ethnic groups turn to each other in communication. Hence, Buber says that it is in the "Betweenness" that we learn about the other, and feel the Thou of other's soul within (Buber 71).

Just as Buber reminds his readers of the advantages of relational encounters, the respective ethnic groups can begin to make efforts to see each other as a relevant source of our collective existence and unity. The ethnic groups can arrive at this awareness by harnessing a critical study and overview of the histories of their respective positions on issues of national interest. By going through this process, we might discover concrete and relevant examples of cultural tolerance and respect that will help in solving our ethnic differences. This will help the groups to have a broader understanding of their uniqueness. It will also help them to be quick in making sure that no one is robbed completely of its own uniqueness in the relational encounter with each other. Therefore, to enhance Buber's I-Thou philosophy in Nigerian as a multi-ethnic nation, a new cordial and fraternal way of engagement that reflects the ideals of mutual encounter is imperative, and to which Buber is inviting humanity to embrace.

Inter-Personal Dialogue

This is another aspect of Buber's philosophy that remains pivotal in addressing the socio-political and ethnic problems facing Nigeria. Hence, the need for inclusive dialogue remains a pre-requisite for social cohesion, sustainable development, and coexistence in Nigeria as a multi-cultural entity. Dialogue should be considered as a powerful impulse in our inter-ethnic existence that will contribute significantly in shaping the political, economic and socio-cultural lives of millions of people in Nigeria. It has become so imperative to improving relations between the Nigerians of various cultural values and faith beliefs. It is on this note that Buber sees dialogue as a means which enables an individual to know himself and the surrounding world…a means through which a person makes his appearance by entering into relation with others (Buber 130-131). According to Buber, to foster dialogue among members of a community, a new mode of interaction, which originates from a shared human reality, needs to be pursued with all sincerity through the process of inter-personal dialogue.

He therefore, identifies three kinds of dialogue as genuine dialogue, technical dialogue, and monologue (Buber 19-20). In genuine dialogue (whether spoken or silent), each of the

participants turns to each other with the intention of establishing a living mutual relation among themselves. There is technical dialogue which is prompted by the need for objective understanding. And the third is monologue, though disguised as monologue, but is solely motivated and prompted by the desire for self-reliance and gratification. The nature of dialogue may change with the nature of relationship in which the dialogue is happening. To this effect, Buber proposes two concepts that make various kinds of dialogic relation different. These concepts are "Mutuality" and "Inclusion" (Buber 16). Mutuality occurs when partners turn to each other in wholeness. On the other hand, "Inclusion" is that which makes it possible to meet and know each other in his concrete uniqueness. Therefore, in a genuine dialogue between friends there must be complete mutuality and complete inclusion.

This implies that the genuineness of our collective existence as Nigerians ought to be dependent upon bringing all our separate spheres of activities into the life of "genuine dialogue" which is marked by openness, mutuality and inclusion (Buber 17). Consequently, in upholding "dialogue" the Nigerian government must introduce the act of "inclusion" which makes it possible for people to meet and know each other in their concrete uniqueness and not just as a content of their own experience (Buber 13). This will help to identify and examine critically the true causes of ethnic and tribal conflict in order to promote peace-building process among the socio-ethnic groups in Nigeria.

Furthermore, while ethnicity and controversy have been the norms in our diverse and conflicted society, we need to collaborate with one another in order to survive and share our multi-cultural values as one nation. Many forward- thinking citizens of our country must realize that in order to create just and humane societies, all kinds of individuals and groups need to come together to talk about the important and controversial matters that affect our survival and progress as Nigerians. Nigerians must also be aware that how we talk is important while exploring dialogue to sustain the issues of unity and equity. As Nigerians, dialogue will help to bring about the acceptance of the otherness of the "other" while objectification of the other should be considered as violence to the other's otherness. Thus, Buber says:

> Dialogue is like the lover who loves his beloved in her otherness, her independence, her reality, without any attempt to either assimilate her in his being or to make her self-same. He acknowledges it as a "fact" that she is the "other". This acknowledgement of the other is there even in the contradiction or conflict with her (Buber 8).

This implies that, Buber's dialogic philosophy opens avenues for encounter in which people could engage with each other fully through dialogue. To Buber, all real life is encounter that is driven by dialogue which involves all kinds of relation to self, to others and to all forms of created things.

Conclusion

Nothing in Nigeria's political history captures her problem of national integration more graphically than the chequered fortune of the word "ethnicity". Prejudice against "Outsiders" and "Strangers" is an attitude one finds everywhere.

Though, tribe and tongue may differ, we must try to promote a Nigeria in which everyone stands in brotherhood. Nigeria in which an Easterner might aspire to be a governor in the West and a Northerner might aspire to become a Mayor of Enugu. Although, we may not be able to legislate bigotry and prejudice out of the hearts and minds of individual citizens, the state itself and all its institutions must not practice, endorse or condone such habits. We must not forget our declared ambition to an advanced nation in the shortest possible time. This is why preference and priority must be given to the philosophy of mutual recognition and

affirmation of each other which Buber extensively recommended in his most renowned "I-Thou" mode of relation. Everyone must be the "I" that realizes his/her concrete existence in the "Thou" through the process of inter-subjective interaction at the expense of violent confrontation.

However, to ensure and enhance national growth and peaceful coexistence, unalloyed emphasis must be made to recognize and respect the cultural diversity of Nigeria at the expense of ethnicity, cultural biases, discrimination, and exploitation.

Every Nigerian ought to respect the most commonly enunciated Nigerian ideal which is unity. It is so important that it stands inscribed on our coat-of-arms as an absolute good. It suffices to say that our ontology or life of coexistence as Nigerians should revolve around a concept of relation as opined by Buber who regards interaction and communion between human beings as essential to both individual and collective growth of the community. The development and nurturance of genuine dialogical relationship must be central in our geographical space as a multi-ethnic nation. We must remember that no modern state can lend its support to sectionalism and ethnicity without undermining its own progress and civilization. It is on this note that Buber sees persons or things as entities that exist only in relation to other things or persons. Thus, he says:

> In the beginning is relation; every human being is born with a given disposition of world historical origin, that is, inherited from the riches of the whole human race, and that he is born into a given situation of world historical origin, that is, produced from the riches of the world's event (Buber 57).

As Buber maintains that all life experience is a dream of unification, Nigerians must see our multi-cultural existence as a fulfilled unification while our inter-tribal relationship remains the foundation of our existence as a nation. The Nigerian government should set out the primary responsibility of establishing conditions which are necessarily conducive to the development of interpersonal dialogical relationships as the basic movement of life. This will significantly set in motion the process of evolving a unifying relationship of community among Nigerians in order to promote national integration.

Recommendations

To actualize peaceful and harmonious coexistence it is recommended that: (i) The Federal constitution in Nigeria should reflect its socio-political history; (ii) The Constitutional distribution of powers should reflect Nigeria's experiences; (iii) The logic of the constitutional distribution of powers and responsibilities should be considered very essential in building a strong federation, which does not suffocate component units. It must be able to keep the complex nation together. (iv) The Federal Character must be observed and respected in the future distribution of powers and responsibilities among the component units of the federation without necessarily making the federal government weak. Implicitly, the government ought to recognize and respect the component units and their differences, and be willing to connect and tolerate each other. (v) Groups should be allowed to express their uncertainties and dilemmas, make their assumptions explicit, listen to one another without judgment, develop new shared meanings, and co-construct institutions to facilitate the process of sustaining true nationhood.

Buber's dialogic philosophy illustrates the lessons of forgiveness, reconciliation and mutual acceptance. It stresses the need to settle our differences, drop our ethnic and tribal weapons in order to embrace peaceful coexistence. Through Buber's philosophy of acceptance and mutual recognition of each other, we can learn how to destroy the chain of resentment and then navigate victoriously through our society that is hostile and unfair. We can only grow and

develop once we have learned to live in true relation with others and avoid been enslaved by the victim mentality.

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND ETHICAL BOUNDARIES: A DEONTOLOGICAL CRITIQUE OF DATA PRIVACY VIOLATIONS

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Abstract

The widespread use of artificial intelligence (AI) in data processing has raised ethical concerns, particularly regarding data privacy violations. AI-driven technologies often collect and exploit personal data without informed consent, infringing on individual autonomy. While existing ethical frameworks focus on consequentialist approaches, a duty-based moral evaluation is needed to assess AI's role in data privacy. This paper applies Kantian ethics to critique AI-driven privacy breaches, examining their violation of moral duties and the inadequacies of current AI governance. The paper adopts a philosophical-ethical analysis research method. Findings reveal that AI's intrusion into personal data fundamentally violates the Kantian principle that individuals should never be treated merely as a means to an end. AI systems often prioritize efficiency and profit over autonomy, informed consent, and moral duty. Existing AI regulations rely on utilitarian reasoning, which can justify privacy violations in pursuit of broader benefits. The paper argues for a shift toward a duty-based ethical framework in AI governance to uphold privacy protections. Recommendations include embedding privacy by design in AI systems, enforcing stricter regulatory policies based on deontological ethics, increasing transparency in AI decision-making, and holding AI developers accountable for privacy breaches. A global ethical framework grounded in Kantian ethics is essential to ensure AI development that respects human dignity and autonomy.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Data privacy, Deontological ethics, Kantian ethics, AI Governance, Ethical AI.

Introduction

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into various sectors has revolutionized data collection and analysis, offering unprecedented capabilities in processing vast amounts of information. From personalized recommendations to predictive analytics, AI systems have become integral to modern decision-making processes (Devineni, 2024). However, this technological advancement has raised significant ethical concerns, particularly regarding the privacy of personal data. The potential for AI to infringe upon individual privacy rights

necessitates a critical examination through ethical frameworks, notably deontological ethics, to delineate the moral boundaries of AI applications (Hoxhaj *et al*., 2023).

AI's ability to process and analyse large datasets has led to its widespread adoption across various industries. In healthcare, AI algorithms assist in diagnosing diseases by analysing patient data, while in finance, they predict market trends by scrutinizing transaction records (Giordani, 2024). Social media platforms utilize AI to curate content based on user interactions, enhancing engagement through personalized experiences. This pervasive use of AI underscores its role in efficiently handling complex data-driven tasks (Ali, 2024).

However, the efficacy of AI systems hinges on access to extensive datasets, often comprising personal information. The collection, storage, and analysis of such data raise concerns about consent, security, and potential misuse (Ali, 2024). The ethical concerns surrounding AI and data privacy are multifaceted. On one hand, AI-driven data practices enable efficiencies and innovations, such as early disease detection, fraud prevention, and targeted marketing. On the other hand, these practices often involve the unauthorized collection, storage, and exploitation of personal data, leading to mass surveillance, algorithmic profiling, and the erosion of individual autonomy (Forti, 2021). For instance, the Cambridge Analytica scandal revealed how personal data harvested from social media platforms could be weaponized to manipulate voter behaviour, underscoring the ethical risks of unchecked AI systems (Khan *et al.,* 2024). Such incidents highlight the urgent need for a robust ethical framework to address the moral implications of AI-driven data privacy violations.

While various ethical frameworks such as utilitarianism, virtue ethics, and rights-based approaches have been applied to AI ethics, deontological ethics offers a particularly compelling lens for critiquing data privacy violations. Rooted in Immanuel Kant's moral philosophy, deontological ethics emphasizes the intrinsic value of individuals, the duty to respect their autonomy, and the impermissibility of treating them merely as a means to an end (Kant, 1785/1998). Unlike utilitarian approach, which may justify privacy violations for the sake of greater societal benefits, deontological ethics provides an absolute moral constraint against actions that undermine human dignity and autonomy (Raza, 2024). This paper is an attempt to apply a deontological ethical framework to AI-driven data privacy violations, arguing that such practices often fail to respect individuals as ends in themselves. It seeks to illuminate the moral imperatives that should guide the development and governance of AI systems.

Deontological Ethics

Deontological ethics, derived from the Greek word *deon* meaning "duty," is a normative ethical framework that evaluates the morality of actions based on their adherence to universal moral principles or duties, rather than their consequences (Larry & Moore, 2021). Immanuel Kant, one of the most influential deontological philosophers, argued that morality is grounded in rationality and the intrinsic worth of individuals. According to Kant, ethical actions are those performed out of a sense of duty and in accordance with universal moral laws, irrespective of the outcomes they produce (Kant, 1785/1998).

Deontological ethics emphasizes moral principles and obligations, asserting that AI systems must uphold privacy as a fundamental right, regardless of technological advancements. This approach underscores the necessity of protecting privacy without compromise, even in the pursuit of innovation. The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into various facets of society necessitates a robust ethical framework to guide its development and application. Deontological ethics, particularly as articulated by Immanuel Kant, offers a principled approach to evaluating the morality of actions, emphasizing duties and adherence to moral laws.

AI governance

AI governance involves a combination of regulations, methodologies, policies, and technological mechanisms designed to align an organization's AI development and deployment practices with its overarching strategies, principles, and objectives. AI governance lies at the intersection of compliance and ethics. While compliance entails monitoring risks and addressing their symptoms, ethics demands a proactive approach, fixing the underlying issues before they escalate (Dafoe, 2018) Governance is essential for fostering public trust in AI, necessitating a standardized framework that extends beyond individual compliance (Taeihagh, 2021). The goal is to optimize AI governance by balancing efficiency, value prioritization, accountability, and confidentiality while aligning with regulatory objectives.

AI governance currently faces three key challenges: structural, procedural, and relational (Papagiannidis, *et al.,* 2023). Structurally, organizations must establish clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and decision-making authority in AI deployment. A primary concern is the ambiguity surrounding accountability for algorithmic decisions. Procedural challenges, closely linked to structural issues, arise in various forms. Hierarchical structures often contribute to a lack of transparency in decision-making, while organizations struggle with the procedural implications of allocating decision-making power. The expansive nature of AI governance underscores a broader concern, the absence of clear guidelines on regulatory compliance and tax frameworks (Cihon, 2019).

A critical procedural consideration, particularly in the AI era, is determining how to involve and assess stakeholder interests in decision-making. The influence of power dynamics, including the potential imposition of external interests—an issue that AI technologies could exacerbate- must be carefully managed. Moreover, the introduction of AI inherently necessitates both organizational and individual adaptation. As a result, AI ethics plays a crucial role in building trust and mitigating resistance to change (Cihon, 2019).

Understanding AI and Data Privacy Violations

The history of artificial intelligence (AI) extends far back, encompassing early efforts to create human-like robots and ancient philosophical discussions. The origins of AI can be traced to early philosophers such as Aristotle, who explored syllogisms and structured reasoning. Later thinkers, including René Descartes and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, likened human cognition to mathematical principles, such as algebra, and envisioned the possibility of programming computers to replicate human thought processes (Alexandre *et al.,* 2020). Literary works, such as Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, also hinted at the idea of robots augmenting human intelligence.

Significant progress in AI emerged in the 20th century, particularly after Karel Čapek introduced the term *"robot"* in his play, igniting widespread interest in constructing mechanical beings (Alexandre *et al.,* 2020). The latter half of the century witnessed a rapid expansion of AI research and development. In 1950, Alan Turing introduced the *Turing Test* to assess the similarities between human and machine intelligence. The creation of early AI systems and the development of programming languages such as *Lisp* reflected a growing commitment to designing intelligent computers. The introduction of early conversational AI models and John McCarthy's coining of the term *"artificial intelligence"* further cemented AI's place in scientific discourse.

Artificial Intelligence (AI), refers to a machine's capability to perform cognitive functions traditionally associated with human intelligence, such as perception, reasoning, learning, environmental interaction, problem-solving, and even creativity (McKinsey & Company, 2023). Its applications extend beyond conventional computing environments, as AI

is now embedded in affordable smart devices, making it accessible to the general public. These devices feature cutting-edge computing for complex computations, cloud-based services for collaborative problem-solving, access to vast open and proprietary datasets, and agile network connectivity (Alam, 2021).

Okpo In his 2023 paper, *Public Good Against Personal Interest: An Ethics of Duty Approach to Public Administration in Nigeria*, examined the application of deontological ethics to resolve conflicts of interest in Nigerian public administration. He argues that public administrators should act under laws, codes of conduct, regulations, and ethics for the public good, which will enable them to be ethical, effective, and efficient, ultimately leading to social, economic, and political development in the nation (okpo,2023)

While Okpo has not directly addressed data privacy within a deontological framework, his emphasis on duty and adherence to ethical codes suggests that he would advocate for strict adherence to privacy laws and regulations in the handling of personal data. From a deontological perspective, the duty to respect individuals' privacy rights would take precedence over potential benefits derived from data utilization.

Common AI-Related Data Privacy Violations

At its core, privacy is the right to remain unobserved. People naturally take measures to enhance their privacy, such as closing doors, wearing sunglasses, or choosing less revealing clothing—subtle yet deliberate ways to regulate their personal boundaries (Benyahya *et al.,* 2022). Privacy holds significant value for various reasons. It enables individuals to make independent, non-coerced decisions, strategically navigate social interactions, and act in ways that may not conform to societal norms without fear of judgment or repercussion.

The collection of personal data has become significantly easier with the advent of key technologies such as smartphones, surveillance cameras, and, most notably, the Internet. Today, it is theoretically possible to track users' every movement and every restaurant they visit. People frequently take photographs of their meals and share them online. Within the framework of the Self-Optimisation movement, individuals diligently gather personal data in an effort to improve their lives. A substantial portion of this data is now being stored on cloud servers, which has greatly increased the potential for tracking private information (Kathuria *et al.,* 2024).

Also, social media users voluntarily share highly personal data, often disregarding the fact that by uploading such content, they frequently transfer copyright ownership to the platform providers. Companies like Facebook not only retain this data but also utilize it for various purposes, including selling it to third parties. One of the reasons behind Google's effectiveness in collecting personal data is that users inevitably reveal their interests while searching for information. Although many individuals may wish to keep sensitive topics private, they cannot research such subjects without entering relevant keywords into the search bar (Shahriar *et al.,* 2023)

From a privacy standpoint, AI's ability to mimic individuals has become a serious threat. In 2016, Adobe unveiled its VoCo system, capable of replicating a person's voice after analysing just 20 minutes of recorded conversation. However, AI has progressed beyond audio manipulation. Video alterations, particularly face-swapping technology, have introduced new risks, amplifying concerns about revenge porn. Malicious actors can superimpose an individual's face onto explicit content and distribute it online. These so-called "deepfakes" rely on neutral networks to manipulate video content (Prabha & Saluja, 2024).

Another critical issue arising from large-scale data collection is the lack of awareness among users regarding the agreements they enter when signing up for online services. Social

media platforms, for instance, present Terms and Conditions that are often complex and difficult to interpret. Yet, the implications of these agreements are far-reaching. As previously noted, platforms such as Facebook and Google retain ownership over uploaded photos, messages, and videos—and they do not hesitate to sell this data to third parties (Shahriar *et al.,* 2023)

Privacy violations and restrictions can have varying impacts on vulnerable populations. In particular, data collected from individuals receiving medical care raises heightened privacy concerns. Such data is not only used to diagnose and treat medical conditions but can also reveal insights into a person's family genetics, physical and mental health limitations, and, in some cases, even predict life expectancy (Binns, 2018). Due to these sensitivities, additional laws and regulations govern health-related data.

Artificial intelligence technologies complicate these concerns by generating data that would typically remain private or utilizing information in unprecedented ways. For instance, a person's gait (movement) can be passively recorded through camera surveillance (Binns, 2018). In some scenarios, this data could theoretically be analyzed to predict an older adult's mortality. In a more troubling scenario, private entities or businesses could monitor large groups of elderly individuals, anticipate their declining health, and exploit this information to aggressively market funeral services based on their data.

A Deontological Critique of AI-Driven Data Privacy Violations

One of the most significant ethical concerns surrounding AI-driven data practices is their frequent violation of individual autonomy and informed consent. Autonomy, a central tenet of deontological ethics, refers to the capacity of individuals to make rational and informed decisions about their lives, free from coercion or manipulation (O'Neill, 2002). Informed consent, as an extension of autonomy, requires that individuals be fully aware of how their data will be used and have the opportunity to voluntarily agree or decline without adverse consequences (Cihon, 2019).

However, many AI systems operate in ways that undermine these principles. For instance, the complexity and opacity of AI algorithms often make it difficult for individuals to understand how their data is being collected, processed, and utilized (Cihon, 2019). This lack of transparency deprives individuals of the knowledge necessary to make informed decisions, effectively rendering their consent meaningless. Moreover, the pervasive use of "take-it-or-leave-it" privacy policies, where users must accept invasive data practices to access essential services, further erodes autonomy by creating coercive conditions.

A striking example of this violation is the use of AI in targeted advertising. Platforms like Facebook and Google collect vast amounts of personal data to create detailed user profiles, which are then used to deliver personalized ads. While these practices are often justified as enhancing user experience, they frequently occur without meaningful consent or awareness, reducing individuals to passive subjects of algorithmic manipulation (Lu *et al.*, 2024). From a deontological perspective, such practices are morally impermissible because they fail to respect individuals as autonomous agents capable of making informed choices about their data.

A core principle of Kantian ethics is the imperative to treat individuals as ends in themselves, never merely as means to an end (Kant, 1785/1998). This principle underscores the intrinsic value of individuals and their right to dignity and respect. However, many AI-driven data practices violate this principle by exploiting personal data for profit, surveillance, or control, effectively treating individuals as mere resources to be mined and manipulated. For example, the business models of many tech companies rely on the commodification of personal data, where users' information is harvested, analyzed, and sold to advertisers or other third

parties (Lu *et al.*, 2024). In such cases, individuals are reduced to data points in a larger economic system, valued not for their inherent worth but for their utility in generating revenue. This instrumentalization of individuals is a clear violation of the Kantian principle of respect for persons.

Similarly, AI-powered surveillance systems, such as facial recognition technologies, treat individuals as mere means to achieve security or efficiency goals. These systems often operate without consent, collecting and analyzing biometric data in ways that infringe on privacy and autonomy (Lu *et al.*, 2024). By prioritizing organizational or societal benefits over individual rights, such practices exemplify the ethical failures of treating persons as means rather than ends.

The Kantian concept of universalizability, as articulated in the first formulation of the categorical imperative, provides another lens for critiquing AI-driven data privacy violations. According to this principle, an action is morally permissible only if its underlying maxim can be universally applied without contradiction (Kant, 1785/1998). When applied to AI data practices, this principle reveals the inherent ethical flaws of privacy violations.
Consider the maxim "collect and exploit personal data without consent." If this maxim were universalized, it would lead to a society where privacy is systematically violated, trust is eroded, and individuals are constantly subjected to surveillance and manipulation. Such a society would be fundamentally unsustainable, as it would undermine the very conditions necessary for autonomy and human flourishing. Thus, the maxim fails the test of universalizability and is morally impermissible.

This critique is particularly relevant in the context of mass data collection and surveillance. For instance, the widespread use of AI in predictive policing, where historical crime data is used to forecast criminal activity, often relies on opaque and biased algorithms that disproportionately target marginalized communities (Abdul-Al 2024). If the maxim underlying such practices were universalized, it would exacerbate social inequalities and perpetuate systemic injustice, further demonstrating their ethical untenability.

Ethical and Policy Implications
The deontological critique of AI-driven data privacy violations underscores the urgent need for ethical and policy reforms that prioritize human dignity, autonomy, and respect for persons. Current regulatory frameworks for AI and data privacy often fall short of addressing the ethical challenges posed by AI systems. While laws such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the European Union and the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) in the United States provide important safeguards, they are primarily focused on procedural compliance rather than substantive ethical principles (Abdul-Al 2024). A deontological approach to AI regulation emphasizes the moral duties that must underpin data practices, ensuring that individuals are treated as ends in themselves rather than as mere means.

Duty-based regulations would require AI systems to adhere to universal moral principles, such as respect for autonomy, transparency, and accountability. For example, regulations could mandate that AI developers obtain explicit and informed consent for data collection and processing, ensuring that individuals have meaningful control over their personal information (Abdul-Al 2024). Also, duty-based frameworks could impose strict limitations on the use of AI for surveillance, profiling, and other practices that undermine human dignity. Such regulations would also address the problem of algorithmic opacity, requiring AI systems to be transparent and explainable. This would enable individuals to understand how their data is being used and hold organizations accountable for ethical breaches (Floridi et al., 2018). By grounding AI regulations in deontological principles, policymakers

can create a legal framework that prioritizes ethical integrity over economic or technological expediency.

AI developers play a critical role in shaping the ethical landscape of data practices. As the architects of AI systems, they have a moral duty to ensure that their technologies respect individual autonomy and dignity. This duty extends beyond mere compliance with legal requirements to a proactive commitment to ethical design and deployment. Developers should integrate deontological principles into the design of AI systems, ensuring that respect for persons is a core feature of their technologies. This includes designing systems that prioritize transparency, fairness, and user control. For example, developers could create user-friendly interfaces that clearly explain data practices and provide meaningful options for consent (Binns, 2018).

AI developers have a duty to identify and mitigate biases in their algorithms, ensuring that their systems do not perpetuate discrimination or harm marginalized groups. This requires ongoing testing, auditing, and refinement of AI models to address ethical concerns (Binns, 2018). For instance, developers of facial recognition technologies must address racial and gender biases that lead to misidentification and harm.

Developers should establish mechanisms for accountability and oversight, enabling individuals to challenge unethical data practices and seek redress. This could include creating independent ethics boards or adopting third-party audits to ensure compliance with ethical standards (Floridi et al., 2018).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) has fundamentally transformed data processing and personal information management, raising profound ethical concerns. This article has explored the ethical boundaries of AI-driven data privacy violations through a deontological lens, particularly Kantian ethics. It has established that AI often breaches fundamental moral duties by violating individual autonomy, exploiting personal data without informed consent, and treating individuals as mere means to an end.

A deontological critique highlights the inadequacy of consequentialist justifications for AI-driven privacy intrusions, emphasizing that ethical principles should not be compromised for economic or technological gains. The discussion has also underscored the necessity of duty-based AI regulations that prioritize user autonomy, transparency, and accountability. Ethical obligations should extend to AI developers, corporations, and policymakers, ensuring that privacy protections are embedded in AI systems by design.

AI represents one of the most powerful and disruptive technological advancements of the modern era, but its ethical implications cannot be ignored. If AI development continues without a strong ethical foundation, the risks to privacy, autonomy, and human dignity will only intensify. By adopting a deontological framework, we can ensure that AI operates within justifiable ethical boundaries, upholding moral duties rather than prioritizing efficiency or profit. The future of AI governance must be shaped by ethical responsibility rather than reactive regulation. Upholding deontological principles in AI development and data privacy protections is not merely an option but a moral imperative. As AI continues to evolve, the ethical choices we make today will determine whether technology serves humanity or undermines its fundamental rights. Thus, the call for responsible AI development is not just a theoretical proposition—it is a necessary step toward a just and equitable digital future.

Policy Recommendations

To address the ethical challenges posed by AI-driven data privacy violations, policymakers must adopt a deontological approach that emphasizes duty, respect, and universalizability. The following recommendations provide a roadmap for creating a regulatory framework that aligns with these principles:

a) **Strengthening Informed Consent Requirements**:
Policies should mandate that AI systems obtain explicit and informed consent for data collection and processing. This includes providing clear and accessible information about how data will be used, ensuring that consent is freely given, and allowing individuals to withdraw consent without penalty.

b) **Prohibiting Coercive Data Practices**
Regulations should prohibit practices that coerce individuals into surrendering their privacy, such as "take-it-or-leave-it" privacy policies or the denial of services for refusing data collection. This would ensure that individuals are not forced to trade their autonomy for access to essential services

c) **Limiting Surveillance and Profiling**:
Policymakers should impose strict limitations on the use of AI for mass surveillance and algorithmic profiling. This includes banning the use of facial recognition technologies in public spaces and prohibiting the use of predictive policing algorithms that disproportionately target marginalized communities

d) **Promoting Transparency and Explainability**:
Regulations should require AI systems to be transparent and explainable, enabling individuals to understand how their data is being used and challenging unethical practices. This could include mandating the use of interpretable algorithms and providing accessible explanations of AI decision-making processes (Floridi et al., 2018).

e) **Encouraging Ethical Innovation**
Governments should incentivize the development of AI technologies that prioritize ethical principles, such as privacy-preserving algorithms and user-centric design. This could include funding research, offering tax incentives, and recognizing organizations that demonstrate ethical leadership.

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VALIDATING TESTIMONIAL KNOWLEDGE WITH KRIPKE'S EPISTEMIC-MODAL LOGIC

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Abstract

Knowledge is an essential imperative for human existence and instrumental to the development of human society. Arguably, a basic source of human knowledge is testimony. Testimony involves the transmission of information from the speaker to the listener with the aim of conveying information which can be passed as knowledge. However, in recent times, testimonial knowledge has become a subject of heated debates among epistemologists. At the heart of the debates is the contention about the reliability and validity of testimonial knowledge. This paper seeks to contributes to the debate, arguing in favour of the reliability and validity of testimonial knowledge. Drawing upon the philosophical insights and logical framework of Saul Kripke's Epistemic-Modal Logic, the paper demonstrates how testimonial knowledge can be justified and validated as source of human knowledge. It concludes that although some speakers may deliberately intend to deceive and mislead their hearers with their testimonies, yet, a careful application of the logical framework such as Kripke's, can be helpful in identifying and avoiding such epistemic error.

Keywords: Krikpe, Epistemic-Logic, Testimonial Knowledge, Modal Operations, Axioms.

Introduction

Recent years have seen an explosion of interests in the epistemology of testimony. Testimony or knowledge a hearer purports to gain from a speaker, is often regarded by some epistemologists as "an invaluable source of knowledge" (Lackey, 2005: 2). According to Stephen Wright, "most of what we take ourselves to know about the world comes from testimony we have received" (2001: 43). David Hume submits that "there is no species of reasoning more common, more useful and even more necessary to human life than that which is derived from the testimony of men, and from the reports of eyewitnesses and spectators" (1978: 74). In any case of testimony, the speaker extends an invitation to the hearer to understand and believe him. That is, the primary speech-act of testimony is a speaker saying,

telling or asserting something as true. On the other hand, for the hearer to trust the speaker's word is for the hearer to ascribe epistemic authority to the speaker: the hearer takes the speaker to be in a position to transmit knowledge and so, he seeks the speaker's testimony.

Be that as it may, the question is: Can the reliability and validity of testimonial knowledge be justified by appeal to its source? Given that some speakers sometimes assert falsehood or fail to be sincere in their testimonies, is the speaker's testimony sufficient for knowledge? Under what conditions, if any, is the speaker's word sufficient to justify the belief the hearer acquires from his assertions? These questions, which centres on the reliability and validity of testimonial knowledge, is at the heart of the epistemological problem about testimony. Although there have been several approaches towards addressing it by epistemologists, it does not seem, however, that the problem is any closer to being resolved. This paper is an attempt to contribute towards resolving it. It seeks to justify testimonial knowledge using the philosophical insights and logical framework of Saul Kripke's Epistemic-Modal Logic. However, before proceeding, an understanding of the concepts of Modal and Epistemic Modal Logic would be in order.

Modal Logic

Modal logic is that branch of logic concerned with arguments, reasoning or inference about necessity, possibility, obligation and so on. It provides a powerful framework for analysing metaphysical, epistemological, ethical claims and so on. It comprises of various system of logics such as: Alethic Modal Logic, Deontic Modal Logic, Temporal Modal Logic, Dynamic Modal Logic, Doxastic Modal Logic, And Epistemic Modal Logic (Cook, 2009:191-192).

Epistemic modal logic is a branch of modal logic that is concerned with the logical analysis of modal propositions about knowledge and its properties. It is the main vehicle of speaking and reasoning about knowledge (Hintikka, 1987:17). It is basically concerned with the reasoning about knowledge, uncertainty and belief. It is conceived as that aspect of modal logic that studies binary modal operators like "it is known that p" and "it is knowable that p" both of which are formalized as Kp (Cook, 2009:106). Epistemic modal logic, as a logical analysis of propositions about knowledge, gives a formal framework for representing and analysing epistemic concepts with the use of epistemic modal operators such as Kp which implies that an epistemic agent knows p, $-Kp$ which implies that an epistemic agent does not know p or Ip which implies that an epistemic agent is ignorant of p, Up which implies that an epistemic agent is uncertain about the truth of p, as well as Bp which implies that an epistemic agent believes that p is true.

As earlier indicated, one of the pertinent concerns in modern day epistemology is the reliability of testimonial knowledge. Testimony involves the transmission of information from the speaker to the listener with the aim of conveying information which can be passed as knowledge. It is argued that testimony is fundamental to epistemology because epistemology is concerned with the study of human knowledge; and much of what we know or can claim to know of are arrived at through the transmission of information from others. However, given that the speaker is capable of lies, error, deception, ambiguous or misleading expressions, the question is: Is the speaker's word or testimony sufficient for knowledge? When hearers are epistemologically entitled to accept the speaker's assertion, is the entitlement due to the testimony itself or instead to other source? Is the entitlement conferred *a priori* or is it to be justified *a posteriori?* Lackey had this in mind when she posits that ""the central focus in the epistemology of testimony is not on the nature of testimony itself, but instead on how justified belief or knowledge is acquired on the basis of what other people tell us" (2011:71).

The quest for answers to this basic question about the reliability and validity of testimony, has controversially divided epistemologist into the two opposing camps of the Reductionist and the Anti-reductionists. Whereas the Reductionists believe that testimony cannot be a reliable source of knowledge because information gained from testimony rely on other sources of knowledge such as perception, memory or inferences for their justification; the anti-reductionists argues that the justification of knowledge derived from testimony does not need to be reduced to the justification from other sources of knowledge (Etuk, 2018: 24). They are of the opinion that "testimony as a basic source of justification is on an epistemic par with sense perception, memory, inferences and the like" (Lacker, 2011:73). They maintain that insofar as there is no contradiction or reason to doubt the testimony of the speaker, the listener is justified to accept the testimony as knowledge. In line with this view, Burge Tyler posits that "a person is entitled to accept as true something that is presented as true and that is intelligible to him, unless there are stronger reasons not to do so" (1997:33). This simply implies that testimony can easily be accepted as knowledge insofar as the listener trusts the testimony of the speaker.

This argument of the Anti-reductionists has strong implications for logic and becomes worrisome for epistemic-modal logicians. An epistemic-modal logician believes that knowledge should follow a model that is consistently coherent and intuitive through a rigorous logical examination. The intention of this paper is to show that the controversy associated with testimonial knowledge can be resolved if subjected to a rigorous logical analysis through the use of fundamental epistemic-logical tools like modal operators, epistemic operators, semantics, axioms and logical rules. It employs Saul Kripke's S5 system of logic as a formal framework to develop a logical structure that is useful in analysing testimonial knowledge.

Kripke's S5 System of Logic

Saul Kripke (1940–2022) was an American philosopher and logician, widely regarded as one of the most important analytic philosophers of the 20th century. He made groundbreaking contributions to modal logic, the philosophy of language, and metaphysics. Kripke is best known for his work Naming and Necessity (1980), where he challenged descriptivist theories of reference and introduced the causal theory of names. He also developed "Kripke semantics" for modal logic, which became foundational in formal logic, especially his S5 system of logic. Saul Kripke's S5 System of logic is one of the most influential systems of logic in modern modal logic. It is arguable that Kripke S5 system set the foundation for a proper study of modal logic. Kripke's S5 system is a modification of C. I. Lewis S5 system of modal logic. Prior to Kripke's S5 system, Lewis had introduced the S5 as part of his modal logical framework which was focused on axioms and abstract formal systems. The aim of his S5 was to formalize reasoning about *necessity* and *possibility* from a purely syntactic standpoint. This S5 made no reference to possible worlds semantics. It was Saul Kripke who redefined modal logic by introducing a *semantical* approach to the S5 system of modal logic.

In his work, *Semantical Analysis of Modal Logic 1: Normal Modal Proposition Calculi,* Kripke writes, "we shall show below (completeness and consistent theorems) that a formula is valid if and only if it is provable in an appreciate system" (1963: 68). Kripke carries out this task and first discusses it in his groundbreaking paper titled, *A Completeness Theorem in Modal Logic.* In this paper, Kripke posits that "the present paper attempts to state and prove the completeness theorem for the system S5... supplemented by first-order suppliers and the sign of equality" (1). To demonstrate this, Kripke (1959:1), states that:

> For our formalization of S5 with quantifier and equality, we first take any
> formalization adequate for the classical first-order predicate calculus with

equality... We supplement this system by the following axiom schemes and rules of inferences:

A1: □A A
A2: ~ □A □ ~ □A
A3: □(AB), , □A □B
B1: If ⊦A and ⊦A B, ⊦B,
B2: If ⊦A, ⊦ □A.

After arriving at this formalization, Kripke maintains that "the basis of this informal analysis which motivated these definitions is that a proposition is necessary if and only if it is true in all possible worlds" (1959:2). From the following assertion, Kripke introduced the concept of possible worlds semantics to his S5. Kripke's S5 system is one of the most intuitive and most used systems of modal logic. This system is characterized by his unique use of modal operators, some modal logical axioms as well as his semantics. Below is how he employed them in the formulation of his S5 system:

Modal Operators of S5

Kripke system focused on reasoning about the modal concepts of necessity and possibility. In the context of his S5 system, Kripke gave a new approach to necessity and possibility such that both are inter-definable such that:

"$\Box p \equiv \text{-} \blacklozenge \text{-} p$" implies that p is necessary if and only if it is not possible that p is false

"$\blacklozenge p \equiv \text{-} \Box \text{-} p$," which implies that p is possible if and only if it is not necessary that p is false.

For instance, consider the statement: Emmanuel is intelligent as p

From inter-defining necessity from possibility, it follows that "Emmanuel is intelligent" is necessary if and only if it is not possible that "Emmanuel is intelligent" is false. The impossibility of the proposition to be false in all possible worlds accessible by the agent makes the proposition a necessary truth.

Key Axioms of S5 System

S5 system of logic makes use of many axioms to ascertain its consistency and completeness theorem. These axioms include distributive axiom, Tautology axiom, positive introspection of S4, S5 axiom, and Brouwer's axiom. Distributive axioms ensure the logical distribution of the modal operator of necessity over implication, so as to ensure consistency in reasoning about necessity. Tautology axiom ensures that all propositions that are tautologous in nature are valid within a modal framework. It holds that necessity implies truth. S4 axiom states that if a proposition is necessary then it follows that a proposition is necessarily necessary. S5 axiom is a key axiom in Kripke's modal logic. It emphasizes the logical rule of equivalence which is very important to formalization and reasoning about modal operators of necessity and possibility. Brouwer's axiom will be added to the list of axioms that are conceived as key axioms in Kripke's S5 system.

Brouwer's axiom is an axiom developed by Kripke, alongside the S4 and S5 axioms in his work, Semantical Analysis of Modal Logic 1: Normal Modal Proposition Calculi. This axiom states that if p is true then it is necessary that p is possible. It is symbolized as "p →□♦p". This axiom asserts that truth implies possibility. For instance, consider the statement: Emmanuel is intelligent. If "Emmanuel is intelligent" is true, then it is necessary that the statement "Emmanuel is intelligent" is possible.

Semantics of S5 System

Kripke's S5 System is grounded on his semantics of accessibility relation between worlds. In the context of his S5 system, the accessibility relation takes a universal relation through his introduction of quantifiers and equality where he believes that all worlds are accessible from each other. His usage of the properties of accessibility relation maintains their requirements and they are very important to his S5 system.

It is arguable that Kripke's S5 system is the most fundamental and groundbreaking system suitable for the formation and reasoning about knowledge. Kripke sees his S5 as a complete and consistent system that is sufficient for reasoning about modal operators of necessity and possibility as well as knowledge. His S5 system of modal logic is employed as a formal framework for interpreting and reasoning about knowledge. This implies that the basis of epistemic-logic are traceable to his usage of operators, axioms as well as semantics in the S5 system.

In epistemic context, his usage of modal operators of necessity and possibility are replaced with epistemic concepts of knowledge for necessity, and the possibility to know for possibility where: Necessary ($\Box$)p becomes an epistemic agent knows p
Possible ($\blacklozenge$)p becomes it is epistemically possible that p (p is consistent with what the agent knows.

Just like in his S5 system of modal logic, the operators in epistemic-logic are also inter-definable such that:

"$\blacklozenge p \equiv -\Box -p$" implies a proposition is epistemically possible if and only if it is not known that p is false.
In the S5 system as it applies to epistemic-logic, Kripke's interpretation of the axioms takes an epistemic form. For instance:

Distributive axioms distribute knowledge. It follows the reasoning that if an agent knows that p implies q, and if the agent knows p, the knowledge of p can be distributed to q, which now implies that the agent knows q.

Truth axiom asserts that knowledge implies truth. It follows the reasoning that if an epistemic agent knows p, then p is true.

The S4 axiom of positive introspection holds that knowledge involves the awareness of the knower. This axiom is of the view that if an agent knows p then the agent knows that he knows p.

The S5 axiom on the other hand is fundamental to the S5 system. This states that if p is epistemically possible, the epistemic agent knows that p is epistemically possible. Brouwer's axiom asserts that truth implies necessary possibility. It states that if p is true then the agent knows that p is possible.

The place of Kripke's semantics in S5 consists of the properties of accessibility relation between possible worlds to reason about necessity and possibility. In the context of epistemic-logic, Kripke's possible worlds analysis consists of a set of possible worlds W and accessibility relation R that shows worlds that are accessible to the epistemic agent. He made all accessible world identity to the epistemic agent. For instance: The property of reflexivity which states that every world is accessible to itself implies that the knowledge of an epistemic agent is accessible from his world. The properties of transitivity and symmetry state that all worlds are accessible from each other. This implies that there is no epistemic distinction between worlds and knowledge of the agent.

Kripke's S5 system, gives a solid foundation for a symbolized kind of reasoning about knowledge. His S5 system of modal logic serves as a formal framework for the formation of epistemic-logic. The epistemic-logical implication of his modal logic serves as the basis upon

which various systems of epistemic-logic have been established. This is possible because Kripke's S5 system serves as a formal framework for reasoning about knowledge. It is for this reason that this research adopts the epistemic version of Kripke's modal logic, specifically his S5 system as a formal framework, to assess the validity of testimonial knowledge.

Kripke's S5 System of Logic and Testimonial Knowledge

Evidently, the epistemic debate surrounding testimonial knowledge revolves around the problem of its justification, reliability, trust and validity. Despite the attempts and theories formulated to tackle these issues from an epistemic approach, the problem remains due to the epistemic weaknesses in these approaches. For this reason, there is the need to adopt a new approach, namely, Kripke's S5 system of modal logic in evaluating testimonial knowledge in view of determining its validity. From our analysis above, it is obvious that Kripke's S5 system of logic is a composite of modal operators, possible worlds semantics, accessibility relation as well as logical axioms. This system is essential for reasoning about knowledge and belief and it provides a more complete, consistent, rigorous and axiomatic framework for interpreting logical truth such that the knowledge derived from the system can be said to be objective and necessary.

Kripke's S5 system of logic begins with his analysis of modal operators. The system distinguishes between possible and necessary truths. In the context of testimony, this distinction can be used to analyze the strength of a testimonial claim. A necessary truth, which is true in all possible worlds, would be considered stronger evidence than a merely possible truth. Kripke's S5 system provides a framework for replacing modal operators with epistemic operators by representing different epistemic modalities, such as knowledge, belief, and certainty in a modal form. In testimonial knowledge, these modalities are crucial in understanding the relationship between the speaker, the hearer, and the proposition being communicated.

Kripke employs modal operator "□" to represent necessity and "♦" to represent possibility. In the context of knowledge, the system allows for "□" to represent knowledge and "♦" to represent believe in a knowledge claim and are interpreted as "it is known that p (□p)" and it is possible that p (♦p) respectively. Analyzing testimonial knowledge in line with this logical conceptualization, it is pertinent to know that the truth-value of the testimony can be of necessity or possibility. That is to say that the proposition p is true, can be true by necessity (□p), or can be true by possibility (♦p). If the proposition is necessarily true then the proposition is known to be knowledge, but if the proposition is possibly true, then the truth-value of the proposition can be reached through verification. To this end, it is correct to say that some testimonies provide knowledge that is necessary because of their nature. For instance, an office receptionist, after guiding a new staff through registration, makes the following testimonies:

1. The name of the new staff is Emmanuel
2. The new staff is intelligent

Representing the two propositions with *p* and *q* respectively, it is easier for the listener to accept and develop knowledge of *p* as true on the grounds that it is necessary for the new staff to register their actual personal information. As such the listener (whom we may call A) can generate knowledge from *p* and profess that they know *p* hence □*ap* is true. For the second proposition *q*, it is not that easy for the listener to accept and develop knowledge of *q* as true because such knowledge needs proper verification to ascertain its truth-value. In addition, it is worth noting that out of trust and credibility (from past testimony), the listener will be convinced to believe that the proposition "q" is true, however what the listener has accepted and developed here is not knowledge but true-belief which create room for the possibility for

q to be true. That is to say, A's knowledge of q can only be possible but not necessary, hence ♦Aq.

It is seen that testimonies that are necessarily true by the virtue of their essence or nature may not need rules or axioms to verify their truth-value, but those testimonies that their truth-values are only possible on the basis of trust and credibility will have to be subjected to further analysis for verification. S5 gives a formal framework using Kripke model, which consist of a set of possible worlds and an accessibility relation between them. In the epistemic interpretation, the accessibility relation represents the agent's uncertainty about the actual world. If two worlds are accessible from each other, the agent considers them indistinguishable based on their current information. By adopting and employing this principle to our analysis, it will imply that in the process of verifying the truth-value of q, we can consider some possible worlds (these are scenario which represent the agent uncertainty), accessible to A. If q is true in all possible worlds accessible to A (instances of testing the truth-value of q by A), then it follows that q is true and *A* knows that q is true, as such, q is accepted and developed as knowledge by *A*. But if on the contrary, q is false in, at least, one possible world accessible to *A* then it follows that q is false.

From the above analysis that proves the justification of testimonial information as knowledge, it is observable that the problem of trust and reliability play basic roles in the formulation of true-belief which can be transformed to knowledge. It is also pertinent to note that to resolve the problem of reliability and trust, formalizing and analyzing these concepts can be of great help. Since Kripke's S5 system allows for the formulation of epistemic operators, these operators will be adopted to formalize the properties of testimonial knowledge. To this end, we will formalize trust and reliability by representing trust with "T" and reliability with "R". Given any proposition p, Tp will therefore mean "it is trusted that p" or "p trust" while Rp will mean that "it is reliable that p" or "p is reliable". This allows us to express the listener's trust in the speaker's testimony and how reliable it is in the knowledge formation of the listener.

How then can these trusts in the speaker's testimony affects the epistemic state of the listener? How can trust determine knowledge? How do we connect trust with knowledge? This is possible if we adopt and apply axioms and rules from Kripke's S5 system. These axioms and rules can be defined to link trust with the hearer's epistemic state. For instance:

- If a speaker is trusted to know p, and the speaker testifies that p, then the listener can justifiably believe p. This can be formalized as: Tp → (S says p → Blp), where "S says p" represents the speaker's testimony and "Blp" represents the listener's belief in p.
- If a speaker is not trusted to know p, then the listener cannot justifiably believe p based solely on the speaker's testimony. This can be formalized as: -Tp → -(S says p → Blp).

Formalizing the reliability of the speaker's testimony in the formation of the listener's body of knowledge takes the same process. This can be represented as follows:

- If a speaker's testimony is seen as being reliable to know p, and the speaker testifies that p, then the listener can justifiably believe p. This can be formalized as: Rp → (S says p → Blp), where "S says p" represents the speaker's testimony and "Blp" represents the listener's belief in p.
- If a speaker's testimony is not seen as being reliable to know p, then the hearer cannot justifiably believe p based solely on the speaker's testimony. This can be formalized as: -Rp → -(S says p → Blp).

In the same sense, we can analyze the impact of deception and misinformation in the formation of testimonial knowledge so as to tackle the problem of deception and misinformation as it concerns the subject. We can formalize modal operators for Deception and Misinformation as

"D" and "M" respectively. Where "Dp" would mean "it is deceptive that p," and "Mp" would mean "it is misinformation that p. When employed to capture the relationship between deception, misinformation, trust, and the hearer's epistemic state, it is represented as follows:

- If something is deceptive, it is not true. This can be formalized as: Dp → -p
- If something is misinformation, it is not true. This can be formalized as: Mp → -p
- If the speaker is known to be deceptive, their testimony should not be trusted. This can be formalized as: □Ds → -Tp, where "□Ds" means "it is known that the speaker is deceptive."

If the speaker is known to be a source of misinformation, their testimony should not be trusted. This can be formalized as: □Ms → -Tp, where "□Ms" means "it is known that the speaker is a source of misinformation."

From our analysis, this logical structure that is founded on Kripke's S5 system of logic provides a logical framework for analyzing how trust and reliability influence the acceptance and justification of testimonial knowledge. It also allows us to investigate the reliability of the speaker's testimony and how it can impact the listener's epistemic state when receiving testimony. It is also useful for analyzing how deception and misinformation can undermine the reliability of testimonial knowledge.

Conclusion

Kripke's S5 system of logic has been proven to be foundational for the establishment of epistemic-modal logic. As a system that is characterized with modal operators, possible worlds semantics, accessibility relation, as well as logical axioms, it is arguably a complete, correct, rigorous and consistent system of logic. This system is sufficient to produce a formal framework that is useful for reasoning about knowledge and its properties, such that, the outcome of the reasoning will be a kind of knowledge that is complete, correct and consistent. Adopting this modal reasoning as a formal framework for analyzing and evaluating the epistemic significance of testimonial knowledge, this paper demonstrates that the validity of testimonial knowledge is dependent on the nature of the testimony. While some testimonies can necessarily lead to knowledge, others can only create avenue for the possibility to know by providing the listener with a true-belief which is formulated on trust and can possibly become knowledge. This possibility to know is determined by the verification of its truth-value in other worlds accessible from the actual world. However, it is pertinent to note that true-belief does not imply knowledge; it only implies the possibility to know. Therefore, any testimonial knowledge formulated on the basis of trust and credibility alone, cannot be said to be valid until its validity has been logically proven from all possible worlds accessible from the actual world. Hence, while it is correct to say that we can derive valid knowledge that is correct, complete, and consistent from the testimony of others, we should also know that some speakers may deliberately want to deceive and mislead us with their testimony. However, a careful application of the logical framework as seen in this research will help us avoid such error.

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A CRITIQUE OF FRANCES KAMM'S DEFENSE OF EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH

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Abstract

This paper evaluates and critiques Frances Kamm's moral defence of embryonic stem cell research, paying apt attention on her non-consequentialist method and use of moral parallels to justify the destruction of embryos for scientific benefit. She posits that the destruction of human embryos can be justified by the potential benefits of the research. This paper argues that Kamm's reasoning fails to acknowledge the intrinsic moral worth of human embryos and neglects ethically viable alternatives like induced pluripotent stem cell which gives similar medical assurance without the moral chaos of embryo destruction. Central to this debate is the ethical obligation of the medical and scientific communities to uphold the principle to "do no harm," as enshrined in the Hippocratic Oath. This core medical ethic emphasizes the importance of medical care and progress that aims to protect and sustain life at all stages. By evaluating Kamm's arguments against these diverse and absolute ethical concern, this paper argues for a more robust, uplifting structure in bioethical dialogue.

Introduction

The wellbeing and general happiness of every person is mostly determined by the state of an individual's health. When there is a favourable physical condition that leads to a sound mind and body, it is mostly the case that no one is in dire need of a physician or doctor, but when the human body is restricted from engaging in various activities due to a poor health status, then the most plausible consideration is to seek medical help. Among many other problems, our present world is held down by the challenge of poor health conditions which continues to threaten human existence. A rapid response to this terminal health challenge, especially those involving degenerative illness and organ failures, embryonic stem cell research has emerged as promising scientific research aimed at restoring health and sustain life.

Embryonic stem cell research has been a subject of intense ethical debate since the first successful isolation of human embryonic stem cells in 1998. These cells possess two unique properties which are: an indefinite self-renewal capacity pluripotency, meaning they have the ability to develop into any cell type in the human body, which makes them incredibly valuable for medical research and the potential treatment of various diseases, including Parkinson's disease, diabetes, and spinal cord injuries (Thomson & Odorico, 2000). However, the process

of obtaining these cells involves the destruction of human embryos, raising significant ethical concerns regarding the moral status of the embryo and the permissibility of such research.

However, the ethical controversy surrounding the destruction of human embryos has ignited significant moral debates. Frances Kamm's defence of embryonic stem cell research is one of the prominent ethical justifications, arguing that the potential benefits outweigh the ethical concerns. Nevertheless, the ethical dilemma remains unresolved, highlighting a gap in achieving a universally accepted resolution. The emergence of induced pluripotent stem cell research presents a promising alternative, offering some similar scientific capabilities without ethical issues related to the destruction of human embryos. Induced pluripotent stem cells are derived from reprogramming adult somatic cells, thus bypassing the moral controversy of destroying human embryos. This advancement challenges or call into question the necessity and moral justification for the continuation of destroying human embryos.

The problem this paper addresses is the question of the ethical justification of destruction of human embryos during embryonic stem cell research in the light of the availability of induced pluripotent stem cells. It seeks to critically evaluate Kamm's defence of embryonic stem cell research positing that induced pluripotent stem Cells represent a scientifically and ethically superior alternative. This paper will explore whether the continued reliance on embryonic stem cell research is justified or if induced pluripotent stem cells offer a more morally acceptable and equally effective solution. The resolution of this problem has significant implications for the future of stem cell research and the ethical framework, for carrying out such research.

Kamm's defence of Embryonic Stem Cell Research

One of the most ethically or morally challenged areas in contemporary bioethics, is embryonic stem cell research, because it raises a fundamental question about the moral status of human embryos, the boundaries of scientific progress, and the respect due to new human life. In as much as the potential medical benefits of embryonic stem cell research are important ranging from regenerative medicines to treatments for life threatening diseases, the experiment is often criticized for involving the destruction of human embryos, which many regard as morally impermissible. Frances Kamm, a well-known moral ethicist, put forward a thoughtful and rigorously reasoned defence of embryonic stem cel research. Her ethical stand does not rest on utilitarianism versus harm but instead investigate whether, and under what conditions, the destruction of embryos can be morally permissible. Through principles such as proportionality, moral intent, and the distinction between persons and non-persons, Kamm offers a structure that works to balance the ethical obligation to respect human life with the duty to reduce human suffering through scientific research.

The essential principal of her argument is the principle of proportionality, which gives room for morally permissible harm when the good to be achieved is paramount. She applies this principle to give justification to the use of remains of embryos from in vitro fertilization (IVF) in stem cell research, since the destruction of embryos is not the primary goal but a side effect of pursuing life-saving medical research (Kamm, 2007). However, she offers a delicate position on the moral status of human embryos, mostly in relation to embryonic stem cell research. Kamm, avers that while embryos are human organisms, they do not have qualities to be qualified as persons because they lack morally significant features such as consciousness, feelings, or interests. Kamm argues that full moral status should not be attributed to an embryo that does not yet have experiences, desires, or consciousness" (Kamm, 2008,).

Furthermore, she also introduces a differentiation between potential and actual persons. According to Kamm early-stage embryos, though biologically human, do not yet possess the

characteristics that would ground full moral rights. So, they may be treated differently in moral perspective than actual persons. She affirms that though embryos deserve a measure of respect, this does not mean an absolute prohibition against their use in research. For her, moral respect does not preclude embryo destruction when a very serious need arises, such as the potential to alleviate human suffering or cure a terminal disease (Kamm, 2007,). Her approaches towards the nature of human life, posits that the mere possession of biological human life is not sufficient enough to ascertain that the human embryo has a full moral status or personhood. Instead, she brought in distinctions between biologically human and being a person, where personhood entails the presence of morally relevant characteristics such as consciousness, sentience, and the capacity for experiences (Kamm, 2007).

She avers that while all human life may be valuable, not all human life carries equal moral significance. This distinction becomes particularly important in the context of discussion about the status of embryos, the severely cognitively impaired, or those in persistent vegetative states. In Intricate Ethics, she writes that "biological humanity alone does not suffice for full moral status" (Kamm, 2007). The moral weight we assign to a human being, she argues, depends on the presence of certain psychological or rational capacities. This her stand contests traditional concepts that consider the sacredness of human life from conception onward. Her structure permits a more graded approach to moral status, wherein embryos may warrant a form of respect, but not the same rights or moral protections as a full human. This give permission to practices such as embryonic stem cell research or the withdrawal of life support from permanently unconscious patients, provided certain moral principles such as proportionality, intent, and respect, are upheld. Kamm's illustration also emphasizes the intention and the context in which life is treated. Destroying human life is not automatically impermissible; rather, its justification depends on what is intended and what good can be derived without going against moral constraints. She writes "Respect for life does not entail an absolute prohibition on its destruction, but it does place significant moral limits on when and how life may be ended" (Kamm, 2007).

More so, in the context of embryonic stem cell research, she argues that the availability of morally less problematic alternatives such as induced pluripotent stem cells can play an important role in determining whether certain research practices involving embryos are morally permissible. She applies the principle of necessity, which state that morally chaotic actions, such as the destruction of human embryos, must be carried out, only when no ethically acceptable alternatives exist to achieve the same beneficial outcome. She posits that, "If an action causes harm or uses questionable means, we must consider whether the same good could be achieved by other means with fewer moral costs" (Kamm, 2007). In cases where alternative sources such as induced pluripotent stem cell can offer equivalent scientific and therapeutic benefits, Kamm suggests that continuing to use human embryos becomes increasingly difficult to justify. However, Kamm warn that the availability of an alternative therapy does not automatically make embryonic research non-ethical. She recognizes that induced pluripotent stem cell researches, while promising, may also have scientific limitations, such as concerns about genomic instability or tumorigenicity, especially in their early stages of development. Therefore, she argues that moral evaluation must consider both the ethical and scientific adequacy of the alternatives (Kamm, 2007).

Noteworthily, she stresses that when alternatives become practically capable of living and scientifically the same, the moral concern alter. Continuing with embryo-based research under those conditions could be considered morally disproportionate, as it would involve avoidable harm. Hence, she concludes that when morally preferable alternatives are available and equally effective, choosing the more harmful method is no longer justified (Kamm, 2007).

These perspectives align her with a broader ethical consensus that supports scientific innovation aimed at reducing moral conflicts, and it places a burden of justification on researchers to demonstrate why embryonic sources are still necessary. Her school of thought upholds both the principle of respect for life and the value of scientific progress, provided the chosen methods reflect moral restraint.

Concerning a moral defence of embryonic stem cell research, she offers a rigorous defence grounded in deontological ethics and the principles of moral proportionality, intent, and respect for human life. As a moral philosopher, she does not rely on utilitarian justifications that focus solely on outcomes. Instead, she explores whether the actions themselves particularly the destruction of human embryos can be morally justified under specific ethical conditions. At the centre of her defence is the argument that human embryos lack the morally relevant characteristics necessary for full moral status. These characteristics include consciousness, sentience, self-awareness, and the capacity for interests. She posits that biological humanity alone does not suffice for full moral status, and thus, embryos do not enjoy the same rights as persons (Kamm, 2007). Consequently, she holds that the destruction of human embryos for valuable medical research may be morally permissible if it meets strict ethical standards. She writes, if the embryo is not a person and will not survive regardless, using it to promote healing may be the most respectful course (Kamm, 2007). In, her emphasis on moral intent, she distinguishes between directly intending harm and merely foreseeing it as a side effect. In the case of embryonic stem cell research, the primary intent is to advance human health, not to destroy embryos per se. Therefore, the harm involved can be morally permissible under the doctrine of double effect, provided no better alternative exists (Kamm, 2007).

However, her position has faced considerable criticism from scholars rooted in natural law theory and Catholic bioethics. These critics assert that human life possesses inviolable dignity from the moment of conception, regardless of its developmental stage. From their perspective, the embryo is already a bearer of moral rights, and its deliberate destruction, even for therapeutic purposes, is ethically indefensible. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith insists that "the use of human embryos or foetuses as an object of experimentation constitutes a crime against their dignity as human beings" (CDF, 2008, 34). From this perspective, Kamm's defence is rejected as insufficiently respectful of the sacredness of nascent human life. Additionally, virtue ethicists argue that allowing embryo destruction may erode respect for human life and foster a utilitarian mindset that treats early human life as a means to an end (Annas, 2001).

Critiques of Frances Kamm's Defence of Embryonic Stem Cell Research

Frances Kamm's defence of embryonic stem cell research, particularly in essays such as "Is There a Problem with Enhancement?" (2016:p 19-36) and her contributions to the ethics of life and death, rests on moral analogies, the distinction between actual and potential persons, and the permissibility of harm under strict conditions. While intellectually rigorous, Kamm's arguments have drawn extensive critique from scholars across bioethical, religious, and philosophical traditions. The critiques not only question the validity of her reasoning but also challenge her foundational assumptions concerning the moral status of human embryos.

Robert P. George and Patrick Lee: These scholars further a natural law mental view which directly challenges Kamm's denial of full moral status to human embryos. They posits that from the moment of conception, the human embryo possesses an intrinsic capacity for rational thought and moral agency, making it a bearer of full moral status, (2004, 36–38). Kamm's effort to differentiate between actual and potential persons is seen by them as arbitrary and inconsistent. They argue that to destroy an embryo for research purposes is to commit an

act equivalent to killing an innocent human being, regardless of developmental stage, (2004, p. 47). Furthermore, Laurie Zoloth, criticises Frances Kamm's work as overly abstract and lacking sensitivity to the real-world ethical, communal, and narrative dimensions of biomedical research. Writing from a Jewish bioethical framework, she emphasizes the necessity of context, religious insight, and the historical dimensions of moral decisions. Zoloth contends that Kamm's analytic detachment diminishes the ethical gravity of embryo destruction and fails to engage with the broader societal and spiritual implications of embryonic stem cell research (2002, 55–58).

More so, Leon Kass, a leading figure in the bio-conservative movement, criticizes the permissiveness of Kamm's framework, warning that it fosters a utilitarian attitude that can erode human dignity. He underscores the importance of maintaining a reverent stance toward human life at all stages, arguing that embryonic stem cell research especially under moral rationalizations like Kamm's risks treating human life as a mere means to an end (2002, 84–87). He argues that such moral reasoning could ultimately open the door to widespread commodification and instrumentalization of human beings. However, Michael J. Sandel, does not directly address Kamm, his critique of liberal bioethics is relevant. In The Case Against Perfection, he warns against moral structures that fail to recognize the giftedness of human life. Sandel challenges the reduction of moral decisions to calculations of harm and benefit, as seen in Kamm's moral logic. He cautions that unchecked human manipulation of nature, such as through embryonic stem cell research, undermines humility and respect for human limits (2007, 45–52).

Additionally, Paul Lauritzen, raises questions about the adequacy of Kamm's analogical reasoning. While he acknowledges the intellectual sophistication of her method, he argues that the analogy-based reasoning fails to fully capture the existential and emotional depth of the ethical issues at stake. He further emphasizes that the destruction of embryos involves a moral seriousness that cannot be easily abstracted into hypothetical scenarios, (2005, 27–29). And, William Hurlbut, a physician and bioethicist, critiques the moral necessity of Kamm's defence by offering scientific alternatives such as Altered Nuclear Transfer. He argues that if pluripotent stem cells can be derived without destroying human embryos, as in Altered Nuclear Transfer or induced pluripotent stem cells, then there is no moral justification for practices like embryonic stem cell research that require embryo destruction. He challenges the premise that moral compromises are necessary for scientific progress and sees alternatives as a way to bypass the ethical conflicts altogether, (2005,30–33).

In light of the disparate and substantial critiques presented, Frances Kamm's moral defence of embryonic stem cell research appears ethically insufficient and philosophically vulnerable. Her reliance on abstract moral analogies and the distinction between actual and potential persons fails to address the foundational moral status attributed to human embryos by natural law theorists, religious ethicists, and proponents of human dignity. Additionally, the availability of scientifically viable and ethically sound alternatives, such as induced pluripotent stem cell technology, undermines the necessity of Kamm's defence. The meeting of objections from varied intellectual traditions underscores the need for a more holistic, context-sensitive, and ethically robust framework that upholds both scientific advancement and the inviolability of early human life.

The Hippocratic Oath

The Hippocratic Oath is one of the oldest and most widely known codes of ethics. The original text is attributed to Hippocrates, a Greek physician commonly credited with beginning the practice of medicine as a rational science. Hippocrates differed from some of his

contemporaries and the practitioners who came before him in taking a holistic view of medicine, effectively beginning the practice of whole-person care. Like modern codes of medical ethics, the classical Hippocratic Oath included a pledge to practice medicine to the best of the individual's ability and judgement and to defer to the expertise of trained surgeons where necessary. The oath also included the promise of patient confidentiality, perhaps the first of such for professional practice committed to writing.

However, contrary to popular belief, "first do no harm" was not included in the original Hippocratic Oath (Miles, 2004). Rather, classical doctors reciting the pledge promised to abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous, to give no deadly medicine to any one if asked, and to abstain from every voluntary act of mischief and corruption. It is likely that the misconception of "first do no harm" came from a motto found elsewhere in Hippocrates' writings: "The physician must have two special objectives in view with regard to disease, namely to do good or to do no harm", (Miles, 2004).

Hippocratic Oath in Contemporary Era
Since the 20th century, many updated versions of the Hippocratic Oath have been published, and it is these rather than Hippocrates' original that medical students commonly swear upon graduation. Widely known modern versions include the Declaration of Geneva, adopted by the World Medical Association in 1948 and periodically updated to today. This version incorporates Hippocrates' general principles as well as a pledges not to use medical knowledge to violate human rights or civil liberties and to practice medicine without discrimination or bias. Another well-known version, is the 1964 oath written by Louis Lasagna, then the Dean of the Tufts University School of Medicine, includes pledges to avoid overtreatment and to pursue disease prevention. However, though some aspects of the Hippocratic Oath are not directly applicable to modern practice, such as swearing by the Greek gods who were believed to oversee medicine, much of the oath is still important for nurses and others on the medical care team. The overarching theme of the Hippocratic Oath and of its modern descendants is the idea that the individual reciting the pledge is making a personal dedication to ethical and committed care (Albert et al, 2023:p.276).

The purpose of medical care is to benefit the ill. A patient's needs should be considered above all else including the need for privacy. Though the recitation of the Hippocratic Oath may be symbolic, modern-day practitioners adhere to these tenets on a daily basis when following more modern codes such as Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Another key theme that the Hippocratic Oath and the modern versions share is the idea that medical professionals should promote health knowledge and skills between one another and between the care team and patients. This aspect of the oath is particularly significant because in the centuries since the oath was first written, medicine has developed into a much more complex and diversified science.

In Hippocrates' time, a distinction was made between doctors as general practitioners and surgeons who were most typically barbers, not necessarily medically trained professionals. Today there are primary, general practice care teams as well as secondary care teams in various specialties and treatment modalities. This has increased, rather than reduced, the need for nurses, doctors, and patients to communicate regularly on all aspects of patient care. The classical Hippocratic Oath is the foundation of modern medicine, promoting the practice of integrative care and codifying ethical behaviour for medical professionals. Significantly, the oath and all modern versions that are in wide use also underline the importance of respect between practitioners and patients.

The Hippocratic Oath, a foundational ethical guide in medical practice, emphasizes the principle of non-maleficence and underscores a reverence for life in all its stages (Miles, 2004:).The oath is a cornerstone of medical ethics, which has evolved to reflect contemporary values while maintaining its foundational principles. Louis Lasagna's (1964) revision emphasizes a physician's commitment to "utmost respect for human life from its beginning," underscoring the ethical imperative and a solemn commitment to uphold life and avoid harm:

> I will apply, for the benefit of the sick, all measures that are required, avoiding those twin traps of overtreatment and therapeutic nihilism.
>
> I will remember that there is art to medicine as well as science, and that warmth, sympathy, and understanding may outweigh the surgeon's knife or the chemist's drug.
>
> I will not be ashamed to say 'I know not,' nor will I fail to call in my colleagues when the skills of another are needed for a patient's recovery.
>
> I will respect the privacy of my patients, for their problems are not disclosed to me that the world may know.
>
> Most especially must I tread with care in matters of life and death. If it is given me to save a life, all thanks. But it may also be within my power to take a life; this awesome responsibility must be faced with great humbleness and awareness of my own frailty.
>
> Above all, I must not play at God.
>
> I will remember that I remain a member of society, with special obligations to all my fellow human beings, those sound of mind and body as well as the infirm.
> (Lasagna, 1964:).

This principle can serve as a moral lens through which to assess the ethical validity of embryonic stem cell research. It also affirms an ethical framework grounded in beneficence, humility, and reverence for life. Frances Kamm's deontological defence of embryonic stem cell research, which permits embryo destruction for medical advancement, directly challenges these principles. While Kamm holds that embryos lack full moral status and that the benefits of embryonic stem cell research justify their destruction, the Hippocratic ethic resists any utilitarian rationale that treats nascent human life as expendable even for noble ends. Hence, the Hippocratic Oath particularly in its modern interpretation offers a robust ethical critique of embryonic stem cell research, which demand that the pursuit of healing does not come at all cost even to the extent of violating core ethical principles, mostly when alternatives like induced pluripotent stem cell research provides a viable, life-respecting pathways.

However, the advancement of induced pluripotent stem cells, which provide similar research potentials without necessitating embryo destruction, the moral justification for embryonic stem cell use is now untenable under Hippocratic scrutiny. The oath warns that physicians and researchers must not play at God, a warning that resonates when considering interventions that end early human life in the name of potential cure gain. Today the oath is seen as an ideal for the practice of medicine with the guiding light of putting the patient first. Though it is not binding, it serves as a reminder for doctors, nurses, and other medical practitioners that the modern practice of medicine is part of a meaningful and long tradition of patient-centric care.

Towards an alternative Embryonic Stem Cell Research: Adult Stem Cell (Induced Pluripotent Stem Cell)

Pluripotent stem cells are referred to as a class of stem cells that are derived from adult tissues and possess the ability to differentiate into multiple, though not always all, cell types of the body. Unlike embryonic stem cells, these cells are not obtained from embryos and therefore avoid the ethical controversies associated with embryo destruction. Sincerely speaking, most adult stem cells are multipotent, meaning they are typically restricted to differentiating into a limited range of cell types relevant to their tissue of origin (e.g., hematopoietic stem cells give rise to various blood cells).

However, some studies have identified adult stem cells with broader, even pluripotent-like capabilities, under certain conditions. These are sometimes referred to as adult-derived pluripotent stem cells, though their true pluripotency remains a matter of scientific investigation and debate. As defined by Razavi and Shayegh in Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine, "adult stem cells reside in specialized niches in postnatal tissues and possess self-renewal capacity with the potential to differentiate into various lineages, including under certain conditions, a broader spectrum of tissues than previously assumed" (2017, p. 105).

Induced Pluripotent Stem Cells have been touted as ethically uncomplicated alternatives to Embryonic Stem Cells, so the ethics surrounding induced pluripotent stem cells are largely evaluated in comparison to those involving Embryonic Stem Cells. The recent development of induced pluripotent stem cells and related technologies has caught the attention of scientists, activists, politicians, and ethicists alike. Induced Pluripotent Stem Cells gained immediate international attention for their apparent similarity to embryonic stem cells after their successful creation in 2006 by Shinya Yamanaka, and, in 2007 by James Thompson and others. Induced pluripotent stem cells solve the controversy over the destruction of embryos in embryonic stem cell research by involving only the genetic reprogramming of somatic cells, further analysis of the new technique and its subsequent ethical issues will potentially lessen some ethical advantages induced pluripotent stem cells seemingly hold over embryonic stem cells.

Induced Pluripotent Stem Cell has turned out to be a useful alternative to Embryonic Stem Cell research, they will avoid the most significant concerns in feminist ethics surrounding the issue. Because no eggs are needed for Induced Pluripotent Stem cells, there is no unequal burden on women for supplying the necessary cells for the technology (Brind'Amour, 2009:). The egg donation process is often the most worrisome aspect of Emb ryonic Stem Cell research due to concerns for the women's health during and after the invasive surgery, controversy over appropriate compensation for a sometimes painful and considerable health risk; and ethical disagreement over what essentially becomes the purchase of parts of the human body, or commodification. The use of induced pluripotent stem cell as an alternative to embryonic Stem cells will eliminate both the health risks to the donor and the issues of appropriate compensation, as individuals would typically donate cells through a non-invasive procedure for research leading to the donor's own therapeutic use.

One major ethical catch in the production of patient-specific therapies and personalized medicine, however, is its cost. Concerns over the distribution of new and expensive, but ideally life-saving, patient-specific therapies revolve around the lack of equal access to the treatment based on socioeconomic status and quality of health care. Previously, most potential patient-specific therapies would have justified the common fear that only the rich could afford such care; however, because induced pluripotent stem cells are more easily obtained than embryonic stem cells owing to fewer research restrictions and greater ease of production, induced

pluripotent stem cells will in time provide feasible and affordable options for mass production and regular clinical use of patient-specific therapies (Holm, 2008:). If this becomes the case, induced pluripotent stem cells potentially remove some of the ethical concerns over the unequal distribution of medical therapies based on wealth.

Induced pluripotent stem cells have the ability to differentiate into any type of cell, making them a valuable tool for regenerating damaged tissues and organs. From generating neurons to repair spinal cord injuries to creating new cardiac tissue after a heart attack, induced pluripotent stem cell could offer solutions for conditions that were once considered untreatable. Since Induced pluripotent stem cell can be derived from a patient's own cells, they also reduce the risk of immune rejection a common issue with organ transplants (Arifa, 2024:).

Induced pluripotent stem cell have proven useful for studying diseases in the lab. By creating patient-specific Induced pluripotent stem cell that carry genetic mutations linked to specific diseases, researchers can develop "disease-in-adish", (Arifa, 2024:). models that mimic human pathology. This allows scientists to study disease mechanisms more accurately and test new drugs in a lab setting. Induced pluripotent stem cell have been particularly valuable for researching complex diseases like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and diabetes.

One of the most exciting possibilities for induced pluripotent stem cells lies in personalized medicine. By reprogramming a patient's own cells into induced pluripotent stem cells, scientists can create genetically identical tissues for drug testing or regenerative therapies. This individualized approach could lead to more effective treatments with fewer side effects, as therapies are tailored to the unique genetic makeup of each patient.

Many moral frameworks such as Kantian deontology and natural law oppose embryonic stem cell on the grounds that the research treats human life as a means to an end. Every human being including the embryo, according to Kantian ethics, possesses intrinsic worth and must never be used as merely an end or a tool for achieving other objectives (Kant, 1785/1996:). Hence, from this perspective embryonic stem cell research is morally impermissible because its goes against categorical imperatives which intends respect for persons as ends in themselves. Induced pluripotent stem cell are generated by reprogramming or manipulating adult somatic cells, such as blood or skin cells, into a pluripotent state, which eliminates the need to destroy embryos. This aspect of research upholds human dignity while serving the purpose of the research, including pluripotency and application in regenerative medicine, disease modelling and drugs discovery.

Advanced scientific research proves that right from the moment of fertilization, there is a complete human embryo, which is a self-arranged substance with an innate ability to transform into a mature human being when the right conditions are met. Hence, fertilization or conception is not a moment or instantaneous but instead it is a complex, multi- stage biological process according to embryology, reproductive biology and developmental science.

Kamm argued that early embryos lack important moral status and this seems to undermine the fact by science that embryos are not merely clusters of undifferentiated cells but living organisms at an early stage of human life. Thus, embryonic destruction complicates ethical justification, since, embryos are living organisms, distinct and are self-directed developmental process, which may make their moral status higher than how Kamm assumes.

Furthermore, the inherent risk associated with embryonic stem cell research, shows that embryonic stem cell has the tendency of regeneration and multiplying which can lead to uncontrolled replication of cells and can form teratomas tumours, which comprises multiple tissue types when it is introduced into a new human bod. There is another clinical effect which is histocompatibility. There is bound to be incompatibility when a strange cell, tissue or an organ is taken from another living organism to another. Therefore, the greater good argument

posed by Frances Kamm is questioned by this clinical risk, since the scientific application of embryonic stem cell is full of dangerous side effect, then her moral justification becomes less considered. Therefore, in scientific advancement, embryology and regenerative medicine particularly refutes Kamm's defence of embryonic stem cell research. The clinical harm associated with embryonic stem cell research generally challenges the moral permissibility of the destruction of embryo.

Conclusion

Embryonic stem cell research sparked intense ethical debate since the first successful isolation of human embryonic stem cells in 1998. These pluripotent cells, capable of developing into any cell type in the human body, hold great promise for treating diseases such as Parkinson's, diabetes, and spinal cord injuries. Nonetheless, their extraction involves destroying human embryos, raising profound moral concerns about the embryo's status and the ethical acceptability of such research. This paper set out to critically evaluate Frances Kamm's moral defence of embryonic stem cell research in light of the development of induced pluripotent stem cell research as a scientifically viable and ethically preferable alternative. Grounded in the moral philosophy of permissible harm and deontological reasoning, Kamm argues for the ethical permissibility of destroying embryos for the sake of medical advancement. However, this position raises fundamental ethical concerns, particularly regarding the moral status of the human embryo and the limits of scientific utilitarianism.

The problem addressed in this paper arises from the tension between the pursuit of scientific progress and the protection of human dignity. While embryonic stem cell research offers potential medical breakthroughs, it also involves the destruction of human embryos raising serious moral objections, especially from natural law theorists, and scholars who advocate for the inviolability of life from conception. The objective of this paper was to critically evaluate Kamm's arguments and assess whether the emergence of induced pluripotent stem cell research technology effectively challenges the ethical necessity of embryonic stem cell research. Through an interdisciplinary analysis involving philosophy, bioethics, theology, and scientific literature, the study has demonstrated that induced pluripotent stem cell research not only offer comparable scientific potential but also eliminate the moral controversies surrounding embryo destruction. Since the healthcare coverage once promised by embryonic stem cell can be achieved via induced pluripotent stem cell research without altering the human embryo, the basis of justifying the destruction of embryos becomes morally and scientifically outdated.

However, while Frances Kamm's defence of embryonic stem cell research remains influential in philosophical discourse, the scientific progress represented by induced pluripotent stem cell research and the ethical imperative to protect human life argue strongly for a reorientation of research priorities. A morally responsible scientific enterprise must be guided not only by innovation but also by an unwavering commitment to ethical integrity.

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT: A BENTHAMIAN ETHICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract
This paper examines the intersection between Jeremy Bentham's hedonistic calculus and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the context of human development. Bentham's utilitarian principle is focused on the maximisation of happiness and the minimisation of pain. He sees pain and pleasure as opposites. For him, pain must be avoided while pleasure, pursued. This idea of Bentham offers a philosophical lens through which the ethical implications of AI can be evaluated. AI is increasingly influencing healthcare, education, industry, and social governance; its potential to promote the utilitarian principle of "greatest happiness for the greatest number" becomes both promising and problematic. The paper explores how AI can enhance human well-being, but it also interrogates ethical challenges such as algorithmic bias, job displacement, surveillance, and inequality. Drawing on scholarly perspectives, the paper argues that the ethical deployment of AI must be guided by principles rooted in Bentham's calculus, particularly those related to certainty, extent, and purity of pleasure. It argues for the development of inclusive regulatory frameworks, continuous ethical evaluation of AI systems, and a global commitment to equitable access and human-centred innovation. It concludes that for AI to serve as a true force for human development, it must not only be technologically advanced but also ethically grounded in a utilitarian commitment to collective well-being.

Keywords: Utilitarianism, Hedonistic calculus, Artificial intelligence (AI), Human development

Introduction

The 21st century has witnessed rapid advancements in technology, most notably in the development and application of artificial intelligence (AI) across various sectors. From healthcare and education to industrial production and governance, AI has become an essential tool for enhancing efficiency and accelerating human progress. These innovations have significantly reshaped human interactions, lifestyles, and expectations, providing mechanisms that simplify tasks, reduce human effort, and offer new avenues for solving complex societal

problems. While these changes have brought about measurable improvements in quality of life, they also raise ethical questions regarding their implications for human well-being.

In philosophical discourse, Jeremy Bentham's hedonistic calculus provides a framework for evaluating actions based on their capacity to produce pleasure or happiness. As a principle of utilitarian ethics, Bentham's calculus assesses the moral rightness of actions by measuring the extent to which they contribute to the greatest happiness for the greatest number (Bentham, 2007). The elements of this calculus, such as intensity, duration, certainty, and extent, offer a systematic approach to evaluating whether specific actions or innovations align with the broader aim of human satisfaction.

This paper explores the intersection between Bentham's hedonistic calculus and the contemporary development of artificial intelligence, with particular focus on AI's role in human development. It investigates how AI technologies, when assessed through the lens of utilitarian ethics, can either promote or hinder human flourishing. The study aims to examine whether AI systems are fulfilling Bentham's criterion of promoting the greatest good and whether they truly serve the interests of the majority. The inquiry is motivated by the need to reflect on the moral foundation of technological advancement and to ensure that the tools developed to aid humanity are aligned with ethical standards of collective well-being.

Jeremy Bentham's Hedonistic Calculus: A Philosophical Overview

Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) was a prominent English philosopher, legal theorist, and social reformer known for his foundational role in utilitarian thought. At the heart of Bentham's philosophy lies the principle of utility, which posits that the rightness or wrongness of an action is determined by its tendency to produce pleasure or prevent pain. He believed that moral and legislative decisions should be guided by the goal of achieving "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" (Bentham, 2007, p. 393). In his work titled *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Bentham proposed his utilitarian principle which says that "it is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong", which he calls "a fundamental axiom" (2007, p.13) adding that the tendency of an object or action to increase or decrease overall happiness is a utility. By happiness, Bentham meant that property in any object, whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasures, good or happiness or to prevent the happenings of mischief, pain, evil or unhappiness to the party whose interest is considered (Umotong, 2023). From this perspective, it implies that the moral worth of an action is determined only by its resulting consequences. He wrote:

> Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do (Bentham, 2007, p. 11).

Bentham's utilitarianism is grounded in what he called the "hedonistic calculus". This hedonistic calculus a method developed by Bentham for measuring the pleasure and pain generated by actions to determine their overall moral worth. Therefore, every human action could, and should, be evaluated by the amount of pleasure or pain it produces.

The hedonistic calculus comprises seven key criteria for evaluating the moral impact of an action:

- **Intensity** – How strong is the pleasure or pain?
- **Duration** – How long will the pleasure or pain last?
- **Certainty or Uncertainty** – How likely is it that the pleasure or pain will occur?
- **Propinquity or Remoteness** – How soon will the pleasure or pain occur?

- **Fecundity** – What is the probability that the pleasure will lead to more pleasures?
- **Purity** – What is the probability that the pleasure will not be followed by pain?
- **Extent** – How many people are affected by the pleasure or pain?

Bentham (2007) outlined these in detail, stating, "to a person considered by himself, the value of a pleasure or pain... will be greater or less, according to the seven following circumstances..." (p. 29). The emphasis on quantifying moral outcomes in such a systematic way was groundbreaking for its time and aimed to provide an empirical basis for ethics and public policy.

Deriving from the above, the Hedonic Calculus helps to differentiate his hedonism from Folk Hedonism. As Harrison has it:

> Folk Hedonists rarely consider how likely their actions are to lead to future pleasure or pain, focusing instead on the pursuit of immediate pleasure and the avoidance of immediate pain. So, while Folk Hedonists would be unlikely to study for an exam, anyone using Bentham's Hedonic Calculus would consider the future happiness benefits to themselves (and possibly others) of passing the exam and then promptly begin studying (2000, p.14).

Most importantly for Bentham's Hedonic Calculus, the pleasure from different sources is always measured against these criteria in the same way, that is to say that no additional value is afforded to pleasures from particularly moral, clean, or culturally-sophisticated sources. Bentham's hedonistic calculus has been criticised despite its popularity. According to some scholars, it oversimplifies the nuanced nature of moral judgements and human experiences. Others doubt that it is possible to measure and compare pleasures and sufferings with any degree of accuracy. A major criticism is that Bentham's hedonistic calculus proves impractical in real-life scenarios. The calculus requires individuals to consider factors such as intensity, duration, certainty, and extent of pleasure and pain before making a moral decision (Bentham, 2007). However, it is arguably true that such calculations are overly complex and unrealistic. While theoretically comprehensive, this approach proves impractical in real-life decision-making due to its complexity and the unrealistic expectation that individuals can objectively measure these factors before acting. In everyday moral dilemmas, people rarely engage in such meticulous calculations. Instead, decisions are often influenced by immediate emotions, cultural or religious values, societal expectations, and personal experiences. For instance, a doctor making a life-or-death decision in an emergency room does not have the luxury of systematically analysing the pleasure and pain outcomes for every stakeholder; rather, they act based on medical ethics, professional instincts, and urgency. Similarly, in personal relationships, individuals do not weigh every action against a moral calculus but rely on empathy, trust, and moral intuitions. The impracticality of Bentham's hedonistic calculus thus renders it less applicable to the spontaneous and emotionally driven nature of human decision-making, making it more of a theoretical framework than a functional guide for moral behaviour.

Furthermore, Bentham treats all pleasures as equal, evaluating them only in terms of their quantity. This approach has been challenged, most notably by John Stuart Mill, who introduces a qualitative distinction between pleasures. Mill argues that intellectual and moral pleasures are superior to mere physical pleasures, stating, "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied" (1863, p.12). By failing to recognise the qualitative differences in pleasures, Bentham's utilitarian hedonism appears crude and unrefined, as it does not account for the higher aspirations of human nature.

However, Bentham's paradigm is still a crucial point of reference in applied ethics and moral philosophy, especially when talking about laws, policy, and, more recently, artificial

intelligence. Therefore, with the integration of the idea of calculable pleasure into moral reasoning, Bentham laid the groundwork for evaluating technological interventions, such as artificial intelligence, based on their consequences for human well-being. As this paper argues, the principles of the hedonistic calculus can serve as a lens through which to assess whether modern technological advancements lay the groundwork for evaluating technological interventions, such as artificial intelligence, based on their effectiveness to genuinely promote collective happiness.

Understanding Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Machines that are made to think, learn, reason, and carry out tasks that normally require human cognition are said to simulate human intelligence, or artificial intelligence (AI). Thus, artificial intelligence refers to machines that exhibit or simulate human intelligence (Ukanga and Udofia, 2024). From basic rule-based systems to sophisticated machine learning algorithms with the ability to make decisions on their own, it covers a broad spectrum of technical advancements. AI is now a reality that affects many facets of human life rather than scientific idea.

Historically, the term "artificial intelligence" was first coined in 1956 during the Dartmouth Conference, where pioneers like John McCarthy envisioned creating machines that could mimic human reasoning and problem-solving. Over the decades, AI has evolved significantly, thanks to advances in computing power, data availability, and algorithmic sophistication. Modern AI systems can process vast datasets, recognize patterns, translate languages, diagnose medical conditions, and even engage in predictive analytics (Haenlein and Kaplan, 2019).

There are generally two major classifications of AI: narrow (or weak) AI and general (or strong) AI. Narrow AI refers to systems designed to perform specific tasks, such as voice recognition or facial detection. These systems operate within limited parameters and do not possess consciousness or self-awareness. On the other hand, general AI aims to replicate human intelligence in a broader sense, though it remains largely theoretical at this stage (Russell and Norvig, 2021).

Several subfields exist within AI, including:

- **Machine Learning (ML):** Algorithms that allow systems to learn from data and improve over time.
- **Natural Language Processing (NLP):** Enables machines to understand and interact using human language.
- **Computer Vision:** Allows machines to interpret and process visual information.
- **Robotics:** Involves physical machines performing tasks in the real world.

The practical applications of AI are already widespread. In healthcare, AI is used to analyse diagnostic images, predict patient outcomes, and personalise treatment plans. In education, AI-powered platforms facilitate adaptive learning tailored to individual student needs. In finance, AI algorithms assist with fraud detection, credit scoring, and market predictions. Furthermore, in governance and public administration, AI enhances service delivery and data management efficiency (Broussard, 2018).

AI is not without its difficulties, despite its revolutionary potential. There is ongoing discussion about ethical issues such algorithmic bias, employment displacement, monitoring, and the loss of human agency. These problems show how important it is to create AI systems responsibly and ethically. Thus, it becomes more and more crucial to evaluate its contributions from a philosophical perspective, particularly one that takes into account how it affects human progress and happiness, like Bentham's utilitarian calculus.

The Interface Between Hedonistic Calculus and Artificial Intelligence

The intersection of Jeremy Bentham's hedonistic calculus and artificial intelligence (AI) presents a compelling framework for examining how emerging technologies affect human well-being. Bentham's utilitarian principle, which holds that actions are right if they promote "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" (Bentham, 2007, p. 393), can serve as a moral compass for guiding AI development and deployment. As AI increasingly governs decision-making processes in critical areas such as healthcare, justice, education, and public policy, applying a utilitarian lens to its operation becomes essential.

One of the core appeals of AI is its potential to enhance the quality of life by solving complex problems more efficiently than humans can. For instance, in the healthcare sector, AI systems assist in early diagnosis, thereby saving lives and reducing long-term treatment costs. From a utilitarian perspective, such benefits align with Bentham's calculus by generating greater pleasure (health, relief, longevity) and reducing pain (suffering, death, and financial strain). Bentham argued that "the value of a lot of pleasure or pain is to be estimated by taking an account of seven circumstances" (Bentham, 2007, p. 29), and AI interventions can often be assessed across each of these metrics. For example, intensity and duration of pleasure, which are two elements of the calculus, are evident in AI's capacity to make lasting improvements in education through personalised learning platforms. The certainty and propinquity of pleasure are also significant, particularly given that AI often produces immediate and predictable results, especially in sectors like logistics or finance. Moreover, the extent of AI's impact on the question of how many people benefits is vast; often touching millions simultaneously, as seen in global access to AI-driven mobile health apps and translation tools. Yet, the utilitarian implications of AI are not always straightforward.

The assumption that AI technologies will produce more pleasure than pain depends on how these systems are designed and who benefits from them. A machine learning model trained on biased data may, for example, unfairly deny mortgage loans to people of certain backgrounds, thereby increasing social inequality and psychological distress. In such a case, the calculus would reveal that the purity and fecundity of the action are flawed, since the initial benefit may be tainted by long-term harm or unintended consequences. Bentham did not shy away from the complexity of such calculations, acknowledging that "in the estimation of a lot of pleasure or pain, not only the number of persons but also the intensity and consequences must be taken into account" (Bentham, 2007, p. 30). This aspect becomes vital in the context of AI ethics, where the initial benefit of a decision might seem beneficial to a majority, but its ripple effects like job losses, surveillance abuse, psychological harm, etc., may outweigh those short-term pleasures.

Furthermore, AI poses a unique philosophical challenge to Bentham's theory because of its autonomy in decision-making. If a machine is programmed to maximise utility, does it do so with genuine moral reasoning, or is it simply executing a human-coded algorithm? Can AI be said to have moral agency if it produces outcomes that align with the hedonistic calculus? These questions complicate the utilitarian view, which traditionally assumes a human agent making conscious decisions. As AI becomes more autonomous, the boundaries between tool and moral actor blurs.

Nevertheless, utilitarianism, and specifically Bentham's calculus, remains a useful evaluative tool. If developers and policymakers consciously programme AI systems to consider the elements of the calculus, especially extent (how many are affected) and purity (freedom from resulting pain), AI can be ethically steered toward greater social benefit. The challenge is ensuring that these moral calculations are embedded into the very logic of technological design,

rather than treated as an afterthought. Bentham's hedonistic calculus offers not only a way to justify the use of AI but also a standard by which to hold it accountable. As Bentham puts it: The community is a fictitious body, composed of the individual persons who are considered as constituting, as it were its members... the interest of the community then is, what? – the sum of the interests of the several members who compose it" (Bentham, 2007, p. 12).

This vision aligns with the goal of inclusive, ethical AI that genuinely serves human development by advancing happiness, fairness, and collective flourishing.

Artificial Intelligence and Human Development Through the Lens of Hedonistic Calculus

AI is continuously transforming human progress by providing innovative solutions in the fields of healthcare, education, government, and the economy. The utility of artificial intelligence can be critically evaluated when viewed through the philosophical lens of Jeremy Bentham's hedonistic calculus, which assesses the morality of an action by the pleasure it generates and the suffering it alleviates (Bentham, 2007). Factors such as intensity, duration, certainty, fecundity, purity, and extent of pleasure or pain are all crucial for determining the societal value of AI advancements, and this utilitarian framework highlights them.

Healthcare is a crucial sector where AI is making a significant impact. Robotic-assisted surgery, predictive algorithms, and diagnostic imaging tools are examples of AI technologies that have enhanced therapeutic effectiveness and diagnostic accuracy. According to Obermeyer and Emanuel (2016), AI-driven systems can surpass human physicians in identifying patterns within complex datasets, thus improving early detection of diseases such as cancer and diabetes. This advancement aligns with Bentham's calculus by intensifying and prolonging the pleasure derived from good health and alleviating suffering. The certainty and proximity of the resulting pleasure are evident in the immediacy and reliability of AI-assisted healthcare interventions.

Education is another sector where AI contributes meaningfully to human development. AI-enabled personalised learning systems can tailor content to the learner's needs, enabling more effective and inclusive education. Holmes et al. (2019) argue that AI-powered educational technologies not only enhance learning outcomes but also improve student engagement and access across socio-economic barriers. According to Bentham, the degree of pleasure, that is, the number of beneficiaries, is essential. AI satisfies the utilitarian need of reaching a larger population with observable beneficial results by enabling global access to high-quality learning resources.

Moreover, in the economic and industrial sectors, AI-driven automation has increased productivity, streamlined workflows, and opened up new opportunities for innovation. Chui et al. (2016) note that AI has the potential to add up to $15.7 trillion to the global economy by 2030, largely through improvements in efficiency and decision-making. These contributions demonstrate fecundity, as the initial benefits (e.g., time-saving and cost-efficiency) generate further advantages such as economic growth, innovation, and improved standards of living. However, these economic gains must be weighed against possible pains, such as job displacement, a concern that challenges the purity of AI-generated pleasures. However, this should not be seen as a vice, but rather as a call for individuals to up their game and be technologically aware by upskilling to remain relevant in a world where AI has a continuously growing influence. One thing is certain - AI cannot displace humans. Humans will always be at the helm of affairs, coordinating the workings of AI.

AI's use in governance and public administration also reflects a utilitarian alignment. Governments increasingly rely on AI to improve service delivery, optimise urban planning, and enhance security systems. According to Eubanks (2018), however, the uncritical adoption of

AI in governance, particularly in welfare and law enforcement, can entrench systemic biases and marginalise vulnerable populations. Such outcomes undermine the utilitarian goal of promoting happiness for the greatest number and instead produce avoidable harm. This ethical dilemma underscores Bentham's call for a comprehensive estimation of both pleasures and pains when evaluating the morality of an action (Bentham, 2007, p. 29).

Scholars such as Binns (2018) advocate for embedding ethical principles into AI development to ensure that these technologies contribute positively to human welfare. Binns proposes that algorithmic systems be regularly evaluated using moral frameworks like utilitarianism to ensure that they do not disproportionately benefit a privileged few. This idea reinforces the utilitarian criterion of extent, which mandates that actions produce good outcomes for the greatest number of people. However, not everyone profits equally from AI. Socioeconomic and geopolitical disparities frequently restrict access to AI-driven technologies. A large number of the world's population may not benefit from the AI. According to Floridi et al. (2018), if the digital divide and ethical inequities are not addressed, AI may worsen rather than lessen already-existing inequalities. From a Benthamite perspective, these worries are crucial because they suggest that if a sizable section of humanity is denied the advantages of AI, the total amount of pleasure it produces may be distorted or jeopardised.

From the above, it is deducible that AI's contributions to human development are substantial and, when properly directed, align with Bentham's utilitarian philosophy. As noted by Ignatius et al (2024, p.272), "science and technological advancement is a double-edged sword. Its application has both merit and demerit. But most often, people fail to see their demerits and only focus on the merits". This is the case with artificial intelligence. If humans are not cautious about their creations such as AI, they will become enslaved to them. It is against this backdrop that Bentham's hedonistic calculus comes in.

The hedonistic calculus provides a normative framework for evaluating these contributions, urging a careful assessment of both the pleasures and pains AI generates. Integrating scholars' ethical insights and Bentham's principles can guide AI design and implementation towards more equitable, beneficial, and morally defensible outcomes for humanity at large. For example, in the healthcare sector, AI algorithms used for diagnosing diseases can be ethically designed to prioritise accuracy, accessibility, and non-discrimination. Drawing from Bentham's calculus, such systems would aim to maximise *certainty* (of correct diagnoses), *extent* (benefiting a large and diverse patient population), and *intensity* (improving quality of life). Scholars like Floridi et al. (2018) advocate for "beneficence" and "justice" in AI ethics, which align with Bentham's emphasis on outcomes that promote the greatest happiness. A real-world case is IBM's Watson for Oncology, which was initially developed to assist doctors in recommending treatment options. However, concerns arose when the system reportedly provided unsafe recommendations due to biased data inputs. This underscores the need for integrating ethical scrutiny throughout AI development—a lesson that supports Bentham's view that actions (or technologies) are only right if they produce genuine, widespread happiness without excessive harm.

Conclusion

This paper has critically examined the intersection between Jeremy Bentham's hedonistic calculus and Artificial Intelligence (AI), evaluating how contemporary technological advancements can be morally assessed through a utilitarian framework. Bentham's moral philosophy, centred on the principle of utility, provides a timeless and adaptable method for evaluating the consequences of actions by measuring pleasure against pain across multiple criteria - intensity, duration, certainty, fecundity, purity, and extent. The

strategy is to sum up the numbers expressive of the degrees of good tendency which an act has with respect to each individual concerned, do the same with regard to its bad tendency, then calculate the balance with respect to the total number or community of individuals concerned. Through the lens of this calculus, it becomes clear that AI has the capacity to significantly enhance human development. In healthcare, education, industry, and governance, AI has facilitated problem-solving, improved quality of life, and generated economic and social advantages. These benefits reflect utilitarian ideals when they are widespread, certain, and sustained.

However, as the analysis has shown, AI also poses ethical challenges that may offset its perceived utility. Issues such as algorithmic bias, job displacement, loss of privacy, and unequal access have introduced new forms of harm that must be measured and mitigated. These concerns bring into sharp focus Bentham's caution that not all seemingly beneficial actions result in net happiness if the pleasure produced is impure, short-lived, or unevenly distributed. It reinforces the need to ensure that technological progress does not compromise core human values. Policies, therefore, must be shaped by a commitment to human welfare, incorporating Bentham's utilitarian calculus not as an abstract ideal, but as a practical tool for ethical governance.

In conclusion, Artificial Intelligence, when critically aligned with Bentham's hedonistic calculus, holds the potential to be a profound force for good. Yet its moral legitimacy depends on the willingness of societies to prioritise ethical foresight over expedient innovation. Therefore, as humanity increasingly entrusts machines with decisions that affect human lives, Bentham's call for rational, happiness-driven action becomes more urgent and more relevant than ever.

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AI AND EXISTENTIALISM: THE WAY OF BLAISE PASCAL

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Abstract
Artificial Intelligence (AI) is something that has come to be part of human history, not only as a product of human culture, but also as that which is already shaping the future of such a culture. However, there are existential concerns which are very important and cannot be ignored, especially with regards to human suffering. Through the lens of Blaise Paschal, philosophical reflections can be carried out, examining the profound impact of AI on human existence, highlighting how AI-driven technologies have reshaped social interactions, human identity, and the interpretation of suffering. It is true that AI offers convenience, connection, ease of doing things and can help foster human relationships. However, it is also true that it also risks diminishing the value of physical presence and poses a challenge to human authenticity. This doubled face value, that is, benefits and risks, become a springboard for critical reflection on humanity's evolving relationship with AI, where it is argued that an unmitigated obsession with overpraising or discrediting AI obscures the deeper concern of humans adopting artificial traits and losing their innate humanity or using AI to better human existential conditions, especially that of suffering.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Existentialism, Loneliness, Pascal, Philosophical Reflections

Introduction

Over the past five decades, there have been extensive development and research in the fields of AI. To an extent, one could say that AI has become a "part" of the human existence. AI driven gadgets[23] are so handy that it seems safer to check google maps for direction than to ask a neighbour about it. And in lonely moments, it appears more practical to run to Netflix than to have a chat with a neighbour within the same vicinity. What then can we say is the impact of AI on Humanity? Although through AI-driven gadgets people could connect from far distances this is always at the detriment of the physical presence. This has affected humanity to such an extent that rather than emphasize physical distancing during the different waves of Covid-19, the world emphasized social distancing forgetting that social can now be achieved

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[23] I have chosen to use AI driven gadgets or machines in general in recognition of the distinction between Artificial Narrow Intelligence (ANI) and Artificial General Intelligence (AGI)- Searle's Weak AI and Strong AI. Now, there is no AI that is capable of general human tasks. Every task of AI is narrowed to a specified field. In other words, an AI optimized for a chess game cannot cook. There is therefore no way to use AI in a personal form without running into the risks of misrepresentation. (For ANI and AGI, see, B. GOERTZEL – C. PENNACHIN, *Artificial General Intelligence*, Springer, Berlin Heidelberg, 2007. J. SEARLE, *Chinese room argument*, in *Scholarpedia*, 4/8, 3100, 2009 [doi:10.4249/scholarpedia.3100]).

from a distance because the neighbours of today are not fellow citizens, but netizens and Facebook has a population that is competing with the largest country in Asia! If existential identities stem from the alterity of an "I"- "you" relationship, then, when AI takes the place of a "you" it is possible that the "I" becomes reducible to a digit or a code.

How then can we confront this reality from an existential standpoint? The general tone of the argument is that of suspicion as to whether AI will overtake humanity. However, our aim is to call attention to a humanity that is fast being lost in the quest to either build AI or discredit it. Rather than worrying about AI, our worry should be that humans are fast becoming artificial and are losing their humanity. Through Pascal we come to discover that all the obsessions about AI and the existential crisis it has provoked may be stemmed from one source, namely, that man cannot sit quietly in his room alone (Pascal 139). Here too, we consider the relevance of Pascal thoughts by confronting the theme of suffering with the promises of artificial science and technology. Here, the use of the word artificial as against natural is implicitly elaborated within a framework where the hypothesis is that if we leave the theme of suffering to the functions of technology, we could be losing that fundamental part which makes us human. Within the framework where technology is used to confront the problem of suffering, artificial intelligence is subjected to natural intelligence. In other words, nature is prior to the products of artificial intelligence. Hence, AI is considered in relation to suffering not from the medical perspective of palliative but from the existential standpoint. Where pain is part of humanity's interpretation of its reality and story through the medium of signification, the growing impact of AI on the facticity of human existence does not go unobserved, given the questions it raises. What, if possible, is the existential relation of humanity to AI

The Man – Machine Argument

The definition of intelligence in the field of AI is basically seen in terms of functions or programmed performances. Put simply, it has to do with what a thing can do and not what a thing is. A machine, for example, is defined by the function it performs. In their 2003 work, Russell and Norvig set the pace for the definition of intelligence that is adequate for discussions on AI today. For them, if an agent acts in order to maximize the expected value of a performance measure based on available data (past and present), then such an agent is intelligent (Russell and Norvig 4-5,32, 35-6, 56). It is the argument of some experts such as J. Kurzweil that the accelerated rate of development in AI has opened up the universe to an era of human machine-integration (Kurzweil 2006). Some have also thought advances in AI to be the fourth revolution after the industrial revolution of 1760 (Tao Feng 1). M. Tegmark programmatically describes this era as life 3.0. This is the argument that forms the focal point of his work, *Life 3.0: Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*. Here, he argues that the software and hardware of life are no longer based on evolution but are designed. In the contemporary period of philosophy, the questions regarding AI have caused philosophy to expand itself to consider subjects such as the Logic of AI, Ethical AI, Aesthetics of AI and AI Language. In a dialectical manner, such that provokes more critical reflection, Philip Larrey introduces his book, *Artificial Humanity*, thus:

> Speculation about artificial intelligence (AI) has reached a feverous pitch over the past ten years. Never before has such a technological theme captured the attention and imagination of a generation. How many articles in the popular press deal with this subject every day? How many movies have been produced by Hollywood provoking us and scaring us about the future of machines and AI? How many specialist conferences around the world deal with this issue? And finally, how much time, energy and money is being invested in this research, not only from the tech giants, but also governments? (Larrey 5)

If not taken far out of concerns, Larrey's questions represent an existential concern that seeks to philosophically probe, above other things, the status of man's relationship with machines. This probe, which for convenience can be referred to as man-machine arguments, have been engaged from two easily identifiable angles (Larrey 6-7). The first attempts to place machine side by side with man as if on an equilibrium. This category includes those that tend to treat machines as humans, propose the advance of machines beyond human intelligence and even propose a man-machine integration as a convenient intertwining of two distinct entities of equal values. This is the camp of excessive anthropomorphizing of AI. This is subsequently referred to as the technological thinking on AI. The second is of those who consider the existence of machine as a threat to the human existence.[24] Here, machines are limited because they cannot think or reason. This view dates to the Cartesian definition of machines as that which is constituted only of matter and lacking sentience (Descartes 229-30). This reasoning has been fuelled by presuppositions that AI poses an existential threat to humanity at present (Bostrom), and in the future (Larrey 24-28). Approaching AI from and with presuppositions is the mainstay of a philosophical reasoning which shall be viewed subsequently. But there could be a third way, where technological thinking could be harmonized with philosophical reasoning. Even though he does not propose this as a middle way more than it is an admonition, the obligation for this third approach is supported by practical reason because for Larrey, "Instead of resorting to 'scare tactics and 'hype' in the media, we should continue the conversation about human-machine interactions, because, whether we like it or not, the machines are here to stay" (Larrey 28).

However, we could examine this argument based on the angle of autonomy. In 2009, a group of scientists and technologists noted that some machines may have acquired some forms of semi-autonomy like being able to find its power source. Of course, today we have cleaning robots that connect back to their source after doing their jobs. But this does not mean that robots have been trained to travel from cities to the power grids if there is a power failure caused by terrorists (Markoff). However, we know that machines need energy. It is possible as presumed that AI driven technologies consume power that is almost the size of Austria. Even if Robots were to know how to manufacture energy for their own use, it is doubtable that in the future, such form of energy will not be considered as unhealthy for the climate as carbon was ditched in favour of silicon. If AI- driven technologies are machines, it is impossible, at least in the meantime, to say that robots can be capable of handling their own power source. Up till now, the hypothesis of a perpetual motion machine remain an impossibility as it will violate the second law of thermodynamics. Machines that derive energy from finite source cannot operate indefinitely (Derry 58). As far as this is concerned, machine-autonomy is a phantom of a daydream. And in the case where automated military weapons malfunctions, what does it take to restore it to order? How do we know a machine has malfunctioned when it is already autonomous? The crux of the matter is that machines will always depend on man for its full functionality. Since machines function at the instance of the human person, the moral imperative is therefore attributable to man who exists and not to machine that functions. This

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[24] An existential threat, in a personal estimation, is a threat that can eliminate humanity, or a large part of it without leaving sufficient resources to build. In times past there have been threats such as Super volcanoes, nuclear war, biotechnology. Recently, AI has been added to the list. But it also depends on which angle humanity is viewed. It depends whether it views in physical terms such as the human race or from the spiritual sense- a sort of Spinoza's quiddity. Either way, our concern is more in the latter than in the former. In the end, the question of an existential threat is an unfounded fear. If no one has complained that a forklift can outlift them or that a car can outrun them, then there is nothing to be afraid of. Maybe in centuries to come, being smart may no longer be an attractive idea not more than owning a plantation was in 1700s.

strengthens the reason why our existential concern about AI is of the man who creates and uses AI and not the tool itself.

Human Suffering and the Problem of Loneliness

Pascal begins by noting the condition of man as sorrowful and filled with suffering. Amid his innumerable sufferings, man seeks to distract himself. It is understandable and quickly supported by reason to say that the cause of man's distraction is the pain and suffering he encounters. Distractions allow the individual to turn away from the discomforts of his human condition. They provide a safe but seemingly brief haven for man's escape from pain. At times, it is the only relief from sorrows that man's fragility occasions and announces. With them, persons seem to be immune from the effects of their misery just as pain killers impede the neurons from sending pain sensations to the brain. The distractions do not only reveal the human condition, but they also indicate the frightening ambience which enables the awareness of this misery. The argument goes that if man were not in pains, perhaps, he would not like to be distracted. In other words, he is distracted because he is turning away from his pain. But if on an epistemological level, he was not aware of his pain, he would not seek to be distracted. In this way, distraction becomes only a step removed from the ambience by which man comes to discover his condition. However, no one seems to be a fan of pain except a sadomasochist. Therefore, it becomes possible, in this current thinking, that apart from seeking distraction from pain and the perils of the human passions, man will also seek to distract himself from the very clime that evokes the awareness of this condition. This ambience is the solitude, the loneliness or the 'being-alone' that reveals man to himself in a rather frightening manner. In fact, for Pascal, the conflict that revolves around the attempt to dodge this ambience and yet the ever-inescapable nature of this being-alone is the origin of man's misfortune. Man seeks peace. He is supposed to find peace in the stillness and tranquillity of an undisturbed soul, since the nature of peace is calm. Yet this same man is unable to enjoy a tranquil state since some revelations might accrue from the process. According to Pascal:

> When I have occasionally set myself to consider the different distractions of men, the pains and perils to which they expose themselves at court or in war, whence arise so many quarrels, passions, bold and often bad ventures, etc., I have discovered that all the unhappiness of men arises from one single fact, that they cannot stay quietly in their own chamber. A man who has enough to live on, if he knew how to stay with pleasure at home, would not leave it to go to sea or to besiege a town. A commission in the army would not be bought so dearly, but that it is found insufferable not to budge from the town; and men only seek conversation and entering games, because they cannot remain with pleasure at home (Pascal 139).

Pascal further adds that staying without doing anything is man's greatest form of suffering (131). "Hence," Pascal continues,

> Hence it comes that play and the society of women, war, and high posts, are so sought after. Not that there is in fact any happiness in them, or that men imagine true bliss to consist in money won at play, or in the hare which they hunt; we would not take these as a gift. We do not seek that easy and peaceful lot which permits us to think of our unhappy condition, nor the dangers of war, nor the labour of office, but the bustle which averts these thoughts of ours, and amuses us. As men who naturally understand their own condition avoid nothing so much as rest, so there is nothing they leave undone in seeking turmoil. Not that they have an instinctive knowledge of true happiness ... (131)

Rereading and interpreting Paschal within the contemporary context, it becomes obvious that the problem is not with AI but in the obsession about it to the extent that human persons tend to forget about their own very human nature. "So, we are wrong in blaming them", Pascal writes of those who search for distractions. "Their error does not lie in seeking excitement, if they seek it only as a diversion; the evil is that they seek it as if the possession of the objects of their quest would make them really happy. In this respect it is right to call their quest a vain one. Hence, in all this both the censurers and the censured do not understand man's true nature" (131). The tragic fact is not that these people see entertainment as a diversion but find in it an alternative to thought. To this extent, as Pascal concludes the fragment, no amusement can solve the problem of suffering forever, because when people are "in disgrace and sent back to their country houses, where they lack neither wealth nor servants to help them on occasion, they do not fail to be wretched and desolate, because no one prevents them from thinking of themselves" (131).

AI and the Problem of the Human Condition

After looking at Pascal's diagnosis of human problem, we are now ready to confront the question of technology and its gadgets – with all the comforts they bring– can be the new face of what makes the human person feel safe from suffering. The New media is the social communication trend that find people online as a means of diverting attention from inner wounds There is no longer any doubt that the unrestricted use of technology or technology without limits is bad news for humanity. But then, its proper use is beneficial to human progress. Through it, people have also come to learn more about their existential conditions (Minsky).

The point here is that rather than find substance to fill the basic emptiness that comes with loneliness or the misery of suffering, man discovers that some distractions are occasions for more sorrows. For example, internet fatigue and migraine are direct consequences of a continuous stare at the computer or phones. However, the more problematic issue is the lack of embodiment that characterizes the social media. The physical distance created by attachment to AI-driven gadgets also occasions cyberbullying. But apart from cyberbullying, there is an obnoxious way people speak to each other through the online media. The anonymity of the man/woman behind the other screen/device has also thwarted the effect of empathy while encouraging people to act with impunity. This could even be obvious from the use of cryptic usernames. It is only natural that people act with impunity when their identity will not be revealed or is hidden. This kind of habit was already prefigured in Plato's *Republic*, where Gyges' invisible ring allows him to do whatever he wants.

The art of touch and physical closeness of a significant other have been known to be fruitful gestures in therapy. Touching gives some confidence and some reassurances. In the *Phenomenology of Ideas* and therefrom to many phenomenological concerns, tactile gestures are very essential in the recognition of the human essence (Husserl 139; Caman 207). This tactile effect is what renders the online surfing and addiction as worsening elements to the experience of suffering. Apart from the fact that the *divertissements* do not last more than they are programmed to, this diversion could leave the individual more vulnerable than was before. It must be added that there is nothing intrinsic that makes online experience so cruel. Rather, the lack of embodied presence in being online robs one of empathy and that human companionship which can only be gotten in a physical way. Internet habitués lack this but seek to compensate for it in a rather bizarre manner. When there is an embodied presence, the sight or smell of one could move or arouse some empathic feelings. Same could have been said from pictures on internet if they were devoid of graphics manipulations and cyber-fraud.

By now, it must have become clear that the problem is not with the internet itself nor with AI. The problem, through the lens of Paschal, is the inability to confront the self in moments of existential loneliness and sadness or bear the pains of the human condition with a hope that seeks for transformation only in love. The problem can be approached in two ways: first is from the habit that forms an undetectable attachment to modern technology. So, the problem here lies with internet users. In the past, people were also obsessed with books as long as those literatures could take away the sense of boredom. The reactions against technology today may have been of the same height with the reactions to the printed books a century after the printing press was invented. But this technology of printed books changed life and made study easy. However, this does not prevent books from forming part of diversion if man turns to them as an escape latch from the confrontation of the human condition. However, the exact difference between a printed book and a piece of gadget inspires the second approach to the diversions of modern technology. Whereas books could serve as a diversion, we do not read them while driving to fill up the emptiness of living alone, neither do books send notifications which do not respect the sacrality of silence. For this reason, rather than discounting and abolishing modern technologies as the cause of the problem, we may note that before, in the diversions, man was active. However, with smartphones and the AI that powers them, man becomes passive. They seem toxic, cause accidents and corrode spontaneity. Unlike in the past when whatever filled up the empty spaces of our lonely moments/suffering had the power to make us active; a lot has been programmed into our telephones and other AI-powered gadgets that all we need to do is to sit there and allow the endless and trivial notifications come in. There are also times when smartphones cuts people off from being attentive in social gatherings or cause anxieties in those endless moments where one would hold on to a phone expecting a phone call, a video chat or a text message. Nonetheless, both approaches commonly agree that it is the loneliness and sadness that are caused by human misery that prompts man to seek out diversion. If man were able to overcome the misfortune of loneliness, then he could avoid being slaves to machines. Loneliness and silence are part of being human and sadly enough, they have no efficient substitutes. With this recognition, it appears that it is immature to seek the effluvium of pleasure as a remedy to an aspect of humanity that is not itself a disease. Accepting pain as a condition present to our human senses is the only way to free the self from the slavery of *divertissements* (Frankl 22, 33, 99-100).

A study from the University of New South Wales shows that AI can generate relatively compelling answers to queries and even deep philosophical questions. For example, through Natural Language Processing (NLP), CTRL (Conditional Transformer Language) has learned enough to speak safely about life's fundamental enigmas (*Studyonline.unsw.edu*). At this rate, AI performs marvellously well. But these answers depend on data that has been processed over a period of time. More than this, it depends on accessible data, which is highly controlled. The quality of output invariably depends on the quality of input. And what about the millions of information that forms the input, even when maliciously altered or composed? AI uses artificial neural networks. Through this system it learns and refines itself autonomously from new data and novel patterns (machine learning). In the end, it produces a distribution of text tailored to a particular domain.

With regards to the efficiency of AI in the third way we have proposed, the arguments are generally segmented into two. first, there are those who predict that AI will amplify human efficiency, overtake human intelligence, and handle complex issues such as decision making, reasoning and sophisticated analysis. More so, smart systems save money and time and gives opportunities to individuals to enjoy more. AI has been particularly helpful in diagnosis and treatments, increase in life span and rapid changes in formal and informal education. The

second is of those who suggest that too much of AI is bad news for human existence. But the existential worries are not about healthcare nor education. They strike basically at the core of being human. For example, when AI makes decisions based on codes, it denies humanity the opportunity of exercising the will in the control of choices. Once this opportunity is ceded to machines, then individuals will not have control over their lives again. This is verifiable when algorithm sends a sacking letter to a pizza delivery who could not complete his tasks because of some weather difficulties. When a machine decides for a person what to eat or what to wear, then such a person has lost the ability insert herself as an active agent in her very own life and takes on the passive form of receiving and acting only on instructions from an inanimate material (Defoe – Rusell).

It is possible that technology can offer the illusion that man can grasp what is real, when he can only grasp some aspects of reality and the gadgets that are product of this knowledge, give comforts instead of contentment (Kreeft 49). It must even be noted as Goldmann does, that it was the rise of scientific thought, in seventeenth-century France and eighteenth-century Germany, "and its inevitable concomitant of greater technological efficiency, together with the rise of rationalism and of individualistic morality" that "produced the alarum cry of Pascal's *Pensees*" (Goldmann 46). The inefficiency of AI to solve human problem is further espoused by Peter Kreeft. For him, "The modern mind was born when Bacon trumpeted 'man's conquest of nature' as the new *summum bonum.* Nearly everyone hopped on this bandwagon…. man's conquest of nature by science and technology, despite its success, has not made us wiser and has not made us holier. It has not even made us more powerful; the individual feels a far greater sense of impotence today than ever before" (Kreeft 126). There is a question of, if there will ever be a limit to interests in AI even if it destroys humanity. For Pascal, the answer is no. If the gambler "experiences winning, he is not happy for long; but if he plays with the hope of winning, he can be happy for a long time by being both diverted (by playing) and deluded (believing he'd be truly happy if he won.... we are happy only climbing the mountain, not staying peacefully on the summit; only chasing fox, not catching it; only courting, not marrying…" (Kreeft 181). Certainly, if AI destroys humanity, there will be no more human interests because no humanity would be left.

Confronting an Ai Provoked Existential Crisis

Our aim is to confront AI as philosophers not as social scientists or psychologists. This means that we must ask fundamental questions regarding the core, the essence, the origin and the purpose and therefore make evaluations (not judgements) on how this essence, origin and purpose are fulfilling their functions in the human sphere alongside their dangers in the present, the accidents and the rapport with the overall betterment of the human condition. This will help philosophers to project into the future based on current emergences from the reflections of the past and the present. This will help to determine if AI is profitable, not to the capitalist market, but to the condition of human existence. In other words, the aim of philosophy is to present people with options after asking the fundamental questions and arriving at some key reflections in the attempt to answer these questions.

An example of this confrontation is the argument between Alan Turing and John Searle, which we can say is an argument between technical/machine thinking[25] and philosophical

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[25] Whereas the technical approach obtains values based on functions, results and efficiencies, the existential approach evaluates life with an aesthetic mind that connects images with thoughts in order to arrive at the tripartite maxim of beauty, goodness and truth. To achieve this, dialectics are used in order to transcend nature through reflection into the realm of meaning. AI can help in this regard by providing the facility for man such as the tools of art but remains incapable of aesthetic appreciation. As such AI cannot say to be alive for to live is to appreciate the beauty of life, the relationship between nature, man and things, between truth, beauty and goodness.

thinking. Turing, in his article, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence," raises the question as to whether machines can think like human beings. Turing thinks yes. Hence machines can be intelligent. In response, Searle wrote the article, "Can Computer Think?" Here, Searle raises the argument that machines cannot essentially think, because they cannot generate mind and language intentionality. Thus, for Searle, machines cannot be said to be intelligent. Whereas Turing confronts the philosophical problems of AI outside-in, Searle on the other hand considers it inside-out. Turing proposes that we follow the functions of machines in order to categorize their existence, while Searle's proposition is that we consider their existence which will show that machines only functions but do not live (Searle 28-42). It must be noted that the difference between Turing's approach and Searle's is the difference between what is technical and what is philosophical. Searle's approach is philosophical, and it is based on a priori principles (Turing 446). But whether technical or philosophical, the principle of AI is man-principle, meaning cause. And the cause cannot but be greater than the effect.

Each approach above has its use and benefits. For instance, from the technical approach, one could say that AI can help man to reach higher capabilities. Larrey argues that "For centuries, human beings have used machines in order to extend the reach of our senses (especially the sense of sight, but also that of sound). This use of technology to extend our senses will only increase in the future (Larrey 70). An example of this is the recent solution to one of biology's grand challenges, namely, the problem of protein folding. DeepMind's AI has successfully predicted how proteins curl up from a linear chain of amino acids into 3D shapes that allow them to carry out life's tasks. This breakthrough will help researchers to achieve the higher aim of identifying protein-based targets for novel medications (Service). However, the philosophical approach as indicated by Searle, reminds AI users that, the work of machines is the work of man who has created the machines to help in perfecting his own work. And as such they (machines) do not replace or are equal to the Human Spirit, but as held by authors such as Vittorio Gallese, reflect the spirit of human culture (Freedberg – Gallese 331-351). Even if one argues that AI can recreate[26] itself, through a secondary computerization of algorithms, the fact remains that there is a cause which sets this ball in motion.

Conclusion

If we review the problem of Pascal's pain and loneliness in the light of the foregoing, we may reach certain conclusions. The first is that by a diligent use of AI the person can come to a greater enhancement of human capabilities. Just as the social media can be a distraction, there are also devices that can help man to improve meditation skills and help the individual to gain more concentration. Through AI driven means, friends and family can connect to

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This is more than a thing on the surface. It is achieved through the rational faculty of the soul. With this thinking, it is existentially worrying to have super AI technologies such as Gene Editing that threaten the beauty of human existence or diminish the goodness of living (wellbeing). Hence, T. Walsh was prompted in 2015 to propose the abandonment of the development of automatic weapons. Of course, automatic weapons or any other AI does not have autonomy as they will still rely on human agents to compute targets. The implication is that for the beauty of human existence to be enhanced rather than destroyed, there must be a rallying point between technical reasoning and philosophical reflections. It will be hypocritical for philosophers to criticize AI using AI-powered means, just as it will be insincere for technologists to degrade human excellence in order to promote AI which is a work of the human culture. (See. T. WALSH, *It's Alive. Artificial Intelligence from the Logic Piano to Killer Robots*, Black Inc, Australia, 2017; see also. TAO FENG 2019 *IOP Materials Science and Engineering*).

[26] I consider the word create to be malapropism and a contradiction to machines. Machines (AI included) are mainly products of technology. Technology is gotten from the Greek *tekne* meaning to make. To make is to change forms of an already existing set of materials. This is different from creation which is to bring into existence from nothing. From the standpoint of both Christian philosophy and theology, creation is only the prerogative of God.

themselves and share experiences or have meetings in real life. The implication of this is that AI can strengthen social cohesion. However, Pascal reminds us that although the machines can help in the problem of pain and loneliness, it can only perform a machine's task. The emptiness after the phone call, the headache after staring at screens for so long, the frustration of not getting desired response from machines and absence of reciprocated empathic feelings show that AI cannot function substantively in the *I* and *thou* relationship which is the key definition of human existence (Buber). In other words, AI cannot be a *thou* that relates with an *I* because it does not have a status of a person even if it is programmed with the purpose of the programmer who is a person. For Pascal, the only redemption to the human condition is an exchange of love that exists between the I and thou. In the argument of Hans Moravec, AI is not capable of love (qtd in Crevier 266). This is not just because it is a machine and only simulates emotion. "To begin with," writes Larrey, "robots do not *perceive* the way human beings do, and it would be a mistake to attribute human-like perception to robots" (40). The very nature of love must be natural and not artificial! Love is of nature and a grace infused into the soul (Aquinas I-IIq60). AI does not have a soul.

Again, if the redeeming quality of man's condition for Pascal is love between Buber's I and thou, it means that AI cannot redeem humanity. Rather it can only help man to redeem humanity. Here, we are beckoned by the obligation to transcend beyond machines to live meaningfully, nonetheless with/through the use of machines. In this way, AI becomes an auxiliary. This leads to the second implication, namely that AI is palliative in the realization of the purpose of human existence. As such the argument that machines can replace man can only function, not in the absolute, but in a limited technological and economic sense. The difference stems from the fact that the value of life cannot be attributed to machines. Human beings live but machines function to improve human life. Only in this way can the existential crisis provoked by the advent of AI be confronted without diminishing the intelligence and effort of the fabrication of AI or devaluing the beauty of human existence.

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AN EXAMINATION OF ZIKISM AS A DECOLONISING FACTOR FOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AMONG NIGERIAN YOUTHS.

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Abstract
This work "An Examination of Zikism as a Decolonising Factor for Political Participation of Nigerian Youths" examines the role of Zikism as a decolonising factor in enhancing political participation among Nigerian youths. Zikism is a political and ideological philosophy developed by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe which emphasizes mental emancipation, political resurgence, economic determinism, spiritual balance, and social regeneration as pathways to African self-determination and decolonization. The problem addressed in this research is the low level of political engagement among young Nigerians, which is partly due to the lingering effects of colonialism that have left behind hierarchical and exclusionary political structures. Zikism, inspired by the ideas of Nnamdi Azikiwe, offers a decolonised framework that challenges these colonial legacies by promoting national pride, self-determination, and inclusive governance. This study aims to examine how Zikism can serve as a decolonizing framework to enhance political participation among Nigerian youths. The research employs the analytic and critical approach. The study reveals that Zikism significantly influence youth political attitudes and provides a framework for challenging colonial legacies. The study recommends integrating Zikist principles into educational curricula, creating youth-centered political platforms, and fostering mentorship programs to enhance political participation.

Keywords: Zikism, Decolonising, Political Participation, Youth Activism and National Consciousness.

Introduction

The political landscape in Nigeria has been shaped significantly by a legacy of colonialism, post-colonial governance, and socio-economic challenges. Indigenous political ideologies have often been overshadowed by colonial legacies, leaving a complex scenario where the youth, who represent a significant proportion of the population, grapple with a political system infused with neo-colonial characteristics.

During the 19th century, the scramble for territories by European powers took a new turn as they began to make significant advances to tropical Africa. By 1913, European powers had divided the African continent into a patchwork that showed little or no regard for ethnic

and linguistic boundaries. This opened the African version of colonialism. The human and natural resources of Africa were exploited, independent African communities lost their political liberty, and Africa suffered a crisis of self-confidence, creating a lasting sense of inferiority and subjugation that builds a barrier to growth and innovation. In the face of these exploitative and ideological devaluation of the black race, emerged an interesting package to the development of African political ideology. Many Africans began the search for an ideological project of self-affirmation and assertive cultural nationalism. Among these were Nnamdi Azikiwe, the Pilot of Nigerian Independence, Leopold Senghor, appraised as an apostle of negritude, Kwame Nkrumah, a radical nationalist and a proponent of Pan-Africanism, Obafemi Awolowo, a socialist oriented nationalist, Julius Nyerere, the father of Ujamaa Socialism.

Colonial rule in Nigeria officially began in the late 19th century and lasted until 1960, with significant repercussions on the socio-political landscape. The British colonial administration employed a method of indirect rule, which entrenched certain traditional authorities and marginalized others, leading to a fractured political identity amongst the populace (Afigbo, 1987). The imposition of foreign governance structures and practices created a disconnect between the citizens and their governance system, instilling political apathy among the populace, particularly the youth (Osaghae, 1998). Post-independence Nigeria has grappled with a series of military regimes and democratic governance challenges, marked by corruption, ethnic conflicts, and the inability of the political system to address the aspirations of the youth effectively. The frustration with political disillusionment has motivated the youth towards alternative forms of political engagement, some adopting radical approaches, while others espouse reformed orthodoxies (Ezeani, 2015).

Zikism, derived from the principles and political activism of Nnamdi Azikiwe, centers on nationalism, self-determination, and socio-political development rooted in African culture (Ikpe, 2011). Zikism aimed at the decolonization of the minds of young Africans, in preparation for a battle against the old Africa, brainwashed by their colonial masters. At a time when the chiefs supported British hegemony and were used to fight the liberal intelligentsia of Africa, Zik developed his philosophy as a reformist ideology. He stressed that Africa could only be emancipated by those who believed in the concept of a renascent Africa. The realization of a new Africa must not be through bloodshed or disorder. The spirit of cooperation, respect and honour for the old Africa must abound. Zikism began when Zik returned to Nigeria in the mid-1930s and formed the NCNC. There was a huge mobilization of people, which created a ground for national consciousness. For this consciousness to be sustained, the development of an ideology was inevitable. This ideology took into consideration the basic views of its believers. These believers were called "agitators" by Zik. Since it was an ideology that spoke to their situation, the believers spread the ideology and organised people around it, thus transforming the ideology into a motivating instrument of organised political action. As such, the realisation of a new Africa must not be through bloodshed or disorder, but through cooperation, respect, and honour for traditional African values while embracing progressive change.

Azikiwe advocated for a system that sought to reconcile indigenous governance traditions with the aspirations of modern governance. His emphasis on education, political awareness, and civic responsibility resonates with the current political climate in Nigeria, where youths are increasingly active in demanding accountability from their leaders (Eke, 2019). Azikiwe's philosophical framework provides a counter-narrative to the prevailing colonial legacies and contemporary governance challenges. It emphasizes the importance of the youth as agents of change, calling upon them to champion their course within the political system rather than merely being passive observers (Adeleke, 2016). The ideological grounding

of Zikism thus becomes pivotal not only in understanding the political aspirations of Nigerian youths but also in stimulating their involvement in the governance process

The demographic profile of Nigeria reveals a staggering youth population, with approximately 60% of the populace under the age of 25 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021). This youth demography holds significant potential for transformative political action, yet their active participation in politics remains critically low due to disillusionment and systemic barriers (Omotola, 2010). Factors contributing to this include economic marginalization, lack of access to political education, and widespread corruption. However, recent years have witnessed a rekindling of interest in political participation among the youth, particularly following the rise of social media as a tool for mobilization and advocacy. Campaigns such as EndSARS, which focused on police brutality and governance issues have galvanized youths across the nation, revealing a strong desire for change and accountability (Adesina, 2020). Such movements align with the ideological underpinning of Zikism, as they emphasize collective action, civic engagement, and the pursuit of self-determination.

Zikism

Zikism is a comprehensive political and ideological theory propounded by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe which is characterised into five core principles: spiritual balance (religious tolerance and unity), social regeneration (eliminating oppressive systems), economic determinism (economic self-reliance and empowerment), mental emancipation (intellectual liberation from colonial indoctrination), and political resurgence (active resistance against colonial and neo-colonial structures). As a decolonising theory, Zikism seeks to restore African agency, promote self-determination, and provide an indigenous framework for political and social development.

Zik established his philosophy as a reformist ideology during a period when the chiefs were used to combat the liberal intelligentsia of Africa and supported by British power. He emphasized that only those who supported the idea of a resurgent Africa could free the continent. According to Zik, the realisation of Africa was not going to be through conflict or bloodshed, but through cooperation and respect for the old African spirit. When Zik founded the NCNC after returning to Nigeria in the mid-1930s, Zikism began to it propagation. People were mobilized in large numbers, which paved the way for a sense of national identity. Zik viewed a new Africa from the perspective where you have people whose thinking has evolved beyond the primary stage and who allow reason to control their thoughts; where you have people who appreciate their common affinity and live in a cooperative spirit; where you have people who are economically secure; individually and collectively, where you have people who are creative in the social and material cultures of mankind, you cannot keep them politically subservient in definitely (Azikiwe 1970:230).

Zikism entails freedom from mental, economic, social, and political domination by the white race or any imperial race. Building on Azikiwe's comprehensive vision for African liberation, it is essential to understand how Zikism functions as a decolonizing factor. The concept of decolonization extends beyond political independence to encompass mental, economic, and social liberation from colonial and neo-colonial influences. In this context, several key factors emerge:

- **Decolonising Factor:** A concept referring to processes and ideas that challenge and dismantle colonial legacies, promoting autonomy and self-governance. In this study, it denotes how Zikism can help Nigerian youths reclaim their political agency and contribute to fostering a post-colonial identity.

- **Political Participation:** The involvement of citizens in political processes, including voting, activism, and engagement in governance. For this study, it focuses on the active role of Nigerian youths in shaping policies and holding leaders accountable.
- **Youth Activism:** The engagement of young people in social and political movements aimed at enacting change and addressing societal issues. It reflects the desire of youths to influence policies that affect their lives and communities.
- **Political Participation:** The involvement of citizens in political processes, including voting, activism, and engagement in governance. For this study, it focuses on the active role of Nigerian youths in shaping policies and holding leaders accountable.

Zikism, a political and ideological philosophy attributed to Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, the first President of Nigeria, encapsulates five key principles: spiritual balance, social regeneration, economic determinism, mental emancipation, and political resurgence (Azikiwe, 1961). These tenets were designed to promote national unity, self-reliance, and Pan-Africanism in Nigeria and across Africa. Youth perspectives on Zikism today vary significantly, reflecting their evolving socio-political contexts and aspirations. Zikism emerged during the colonial era as a response to imperialism and the need for African self-determination. However, contemporary youths often reinterpret these principles based on current realities. For instance, the focus on "economic determinism" resonates strongly with young Nigerians who face high unemployment and economic instability. Many youths view Zikism as a call for economic empowerment through entrepreneurship and innovation, aligning with modern trends in digital economy and technology (Ake, 1996). Similarly, the principle of "political resurgence" is viewed by young people as a mandate to actively engage in governance and policy advocacy. With movements like EndSARS in Nigeria, youth have demonstrated their desire for transparent leadership and accountability, echoing Azikiwe's emphasis on good governance and anti-colonial resistance (Okereke, 2020).

Youth perspectives on Zikism are shaped by both admiration for Azikiwe's legacy and critical evaluations of its relevance today. Youths often connect spiritual balance with the need for religious tolerance and coexistence in a multi-religious society like Nigeria. However, many are critical of the persistent ethnic and religious divisions that challenge national unity, viewing these as barriers to realizing Azikiwe's vision (Eze, 2018). The economic struggles faced by many young Nigerians amplify the relevance of economic determinism. Azikiwe's advocacy for education and mental emancipation resonates with youth who see education as a pathway to economic mobility. Nevertheless, there is disillusionment with the limited opportunities available for graduates, leading to debates about the effectiveness of Zikist ideals in addressing systemic failures (Adesina, 2011). Youth activism today often draws inspiration from Zikism, especially in advocating for social justice and equity. However, contemporary movements emphasize intersectionality, addressing issues such as gender equality, which were less prominent in Azikiwe's era.

Despite the enduring appeal of Zikism, several factors complicate its adoption among youth. Many young Nigerians are not familiar with Zikism due to gaps in historical education and civic awareness. The perceived failure of post-independence leaders, including Azikiwe's generation, to fulfill their promises has led some to question the practical value of Zikist principles (Falola & Heaton, 2008). Youth are increasingly influenced by global ideologies, which sometimes conflict with nationalist and Pan-African ideals central to Zikism. To revitalize Zikism among youth, there must be a deliberate effort to integrate its principles into modern educational curricula, political discourse, and youth empowerment initiatives. Digital platforms can be used to disseminate Zikist ideologies and connect them with contemporary issues such as climate change, digital innovation, and global equity. Moreover, reinterpreting

Zikism through the lens of contemporary challenges can help make it more relevant. For instance, political resurgence can emphasize not just anti-colonialism but also combating neo-colonial influences in economic policies. Youth perspectives on Zikism reflect a mix of reverence for its ideals and critical reassessment of its relevance. While the principles of Zikism remain foundational for understanding Nigeria's path to independence and self-determination, their application must evolve to address modern challenges. By engaging with Zikism through education, activism, and policy innovation, Nigerian youths can ensure that its legacy remains a living philosophy for nation-building.

The Role of Zikism in Shaping Political Awareness among Nigerian Youth
Azikiwe, fondly referred to as "Zik of Africa," advocated for political freedom, self-determination, and African unity, inspiring a generation to engage actively in the quest for Nigerian independence and political development (Nwachukwu, 2008). This essay explores the tenets of Zikism, its impact on the political consciousness of Nigerian youths, and its legacy in contemporary political discourse.

Zikism is rooted in five major principles articulated by Dr Azikiwe, which includes: spiritual balance, social regeneration, economic determinism, mental emancipation, and political resurgence (Azikiwe, 1937). These principles formed the ideological framework for mobilising Nigerian youths towards nationalism and political activism through organised efforts by individuals or groups to promote, impede, or direct social, political, or environmental change through various forms of engagement; including protests, advocacy, community organising, and policy reform initiatives.

- **Spiritual Balance:** This called for religious tolerance and the rejection of sectarianism, fostering unity among diverse Nigerian ethnic and religious groups.
- **Social Regeneration:** Zikism emphasized social justice and the elimination of oppressive colonial policies, urging the youths to challenge societal inequalities.
- **Economic Determinism:** Economic empowerment and independence were highlighted as prerequisites for true political freedom.
- **Mental Emancipation**: Zikism encouraged intellectual growth and the rejection of colonial propaganda that portrayed Africans as inferior.
- **Political Resurgence:** The ideology advocated for active participation in governance and the struggle for self-determination.

Through these principles, Zikism sought to cultivate a politically conscious and united youth population committed to the liberation and development of Nigeria (Okeke, 2012). Zikism played a critical role in mobilizing Nigerian youth to demand independence from colonial rule. The establishment of youth-oriented organizations such as the Zikist Movement in 1946 provided a platform for young people to engage in political activism. Members of the movement, inspired by Zik's speeches and writings, organized protests, strikes, and public lectures to challenge colonial authorities and raise awareness about the need for self-governance (Ekechi, 1983). Zikism emphasized the importance of political education as a tool for empowerment. Through newspapers like the *West African Pilot*, established by Azikiwe, Nigerian youth were exposed to anti-colonial ideas, the importance of civic participation, and the concept of Pan-Africanism. These publications inspired a generation of politically aware youths who later became key figures in Nigeria's independence movement (Falola & Heaton, 2008).

Zikism sought to bridge ethnic and religious divides among Nigerian youths. By promoting the idea of a united Nigeria, the ideology encouraged young people to prioritize national interests over sectional loyalties. This message of unity was crucial in building a

collective identity that transcended ethnic affiliations, thus strengthening the nationalist movement. Through political mentoring and organizational involvement, Zikism nurtured a generation of youth leaders who later played significant roles in Nigeria's political development. Figures like Anthony Enahoro and Mokwugo Okoye, influenced by Zikism, became prominent advocates for independence and post-independence governance reforms (Nwachukwu, 2008).

The influence of Zikism extends beyond the independence era. Its principles continue to resonate in contemporary political discourse, particularly in youth advocacy for good governance, social justice, and economic reforms. Modern youth movements, such as the EndSARS protests, reflect the enduring legacy of Zikism by emphasizing unity, civic participation, and resistance against oppression (Adebayo, 2021). Additionally, the emphasis on mental emancipation and political resurgence has inspired initiatives aimed at increasing youth participation in politics. The Not Too Young to Run campaign, for instance, aligns with Zikism's vision of empowering young Nigerians to take active roles in governance.

Despite its contributions, Zikism faced challenges in achieving its ideals. The ideology's emphasis on unity sometimes clashed with the realities of Nigeria's ethnic and religious diversity, leading to skepticism about its applicability in addressing regional inequalities. Moreover, the decline of youth-led political movements after independence has raised questions about the sustainability of Zikism-inspired activism (Okeke, 2012). Zikism remains a pivotal ideological force in the history of Nigerian nationalism, particularly in mobilizing youth for political awareness and activism. Its principles of spiritual balance, social regeneration, economic determinism, mental emancipation, and political resurgence provided a foundation for challenging colonial rule and advocating for self-governance. Although the ideology has faced challenges, its legacy endures in contemporary youth movements and efforts to promote political participation and national unity. By revisiting and adapting Zikism's principles, Nigerian youths can continue to drive positive change in the nation's political landscape. Lastly, Political Resurgence: Called for active resistance and political organization to dismantle colonial structures (Azikiwe, 1937).

Zikism was instrumental in fostering a consciousness of resistance among Africans. By emphasizing mental emancipation, Azikiwe challenged the colonial narrative that portrayed Africans as inferior. His philosophy inspired leaders and movements across the continent, including Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana and Jomo Kenyatta in Kenya. Through his publications such as the "West African Pilot", Azikiwe disseminated nationalist ideas that motivated Africans to demand self-rule (Coleman, 1958).

Azikiwe's leadership in the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) and later the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) demonstrated how Zikism served as a framework for organized resistance. His philosophy provided ideological cohesion to various anti-colonial movements, fostering collaboration among ethnic groups and political factions in Nigeria (Crowder, 1978).

Zikism's emphasis on political resurgence played a crucial role in mobilizing Africans against colonial powers. Azikiwe and his contemporaries utilized newspapers, public speeches, and political organizations to galvanize support for independence. The "West African Pilot" became a significant tool for political education and mass mobilization, highlighting colonial injustices and advocating for African unity (Afigbo, 1991). Moreover, Zikism inspired the establishment of educational institutions and programs aimed at nurturing a new generation of African leaders. Azikiwe believed that education was critical for equipping Africans with the skills and knowledge necessary for self-governance. Institutions such as the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, were products of this vision (Okoye, 1964).

Although Zikism was most prominent during the colonial era, its principles continued to influence post-independence governance and pan-Africanism. The emphasis on unity, economic self-reliance, and intellectual emancipation remains relevant in addressing contemporary challenges such as neo-colonialism and underdevelopment. Azikiwe's philosophy also laid the groundwork for the African Union (AU) and other regional organizations, which embody the principles of African solidarity and collective progress. However, the practical application of Zikism in governance has been uneven, with many African nations grappling with issues of corruption, ethnic divisions, and dependency on foreign aid.

Zikism was a powerful catalyst for decolonization and political mobilization in Africa. By advocating for mental emancipation, economic self-determination, and political resurgence, Azikiwe provided a philosophical framework that united Africans in the struggle against colonial rule. The enduring relevance of Zikism lies in its principles, which continue to inspire efforts toward African unity, self-reliance, and socio-political development.

Conclusion

The examination of Zikism as a decolonising factor for the political participation of Nigerian youths underscores its enduring relevance in addressing the challenges of marginalization and apathy among the country's young population. Zikism, with its focus on mental emancipation, political resurgence, and national unity, offers a framework through which Nigerian youths can assert their agency, resist systemic barriers, and actively contribute to governance and nation-building. In an era marked by widespread political disillusionment, the principles of Zikism serve as a beacon of hope, calling for the awakening of a politically conscious and united generation.

A key takeaway from Zikism is its emphasis on mental emancipation, which highlights the need to unlearn colonial indoctrination and embrace critical thinking. This principle is particularly relevant today, as many Nigerian youths remain disempowered due to the lingering effects of colonialism and neocolonial structures. By fostering intellectual independence, Zikism encourages young Nigerians to challenge oppressive systems and advocate for progressive reforms. Additionally, Azikiwe's call for political resurgence resonates with contemporary demands for increased youth representation in governance. Despite being a majority demographic, Nigerian youths continue to face exclusion from meaningful participation in political decision-making. Zikism addresses this imbalance by urging young people to take leadership roles and push for systemic changes that reflect their aspirations and potential.

Furthermore, Zikism's focus on national unity is indispensable in a multi-ethnic society like Nigeria, where divisions often hinder collective progress. By promoting a sense of shared identity and purpose, Zikism seeks to eliminate the divisive politics that undermine youth participation and development. This unity-oriented approach aligns with ongoing efforts to build a cohesive political environment that values inclusivity and equity.

However, the implementation of Zikist ideals in contemporary Nigeria faces significant challenges, including systemic corruption, the dominance of money politics, and the lack of effective platforms for youth engagement. To address these obstacles, deliberate actions are necessary, such as integrating Zikist principles into educational curricula, reforming policies to encourage youth participation, and establishing mentorship programs that empower young leaders.

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