

IJIVIE

**International Journal of Intercultural Values and
Indigenous Ecoethics**

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 1, JANUARY 2024



Published by:

The International Association
for the Study of Intercultural
Values and Indigenous Ecoethics

*c/o Professor M O Ikeke,
Department of Religious
Studies and Philosophy,
Delta State University,
Abraka, Nigeria.*

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
OF INTERCULTURAL VALUES
AND INDIGENOUS ECOETHICS
(IJIVIE)**

VOL. 3 No. 1, Jan. 2024

Published by
The International Association
for the Study of Intercultural
Values and Indigenous Ecoethics
(IASIVIE)

c/o Professor M. O. Ikeke
Department of Religious Studies & Philosophy,
Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria

© 2024, . The International Association
for the Study of Intercultural
Values and Indigenous Ecoethics
(IASIVIE)

Printed by:
Ignaraph Ventures
08023084867

All rights reserved: no part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise except for private study, research purpose, review or criticism without the prior permission of the author(s) or publisher.

About the Journal

International Journal of Intercultural Values and Indigenous Ecoethics (IJIVIE) is an interdisciplinary journal concerned with researching, exploring, and propagating ethical values found in world indigenous cultures and among indigenous people. It is particularly interested in environmental ethical values and values that affirm human welfare and wellbeing across all human cultures. It emphasizes dialogue of ideas and practices among planetary cultures to promote global understanding and ecological harmony.

It is a peer-reviewed journal published by the International Association for the Study of Intercultural Values & Indigenous Ethics (IASIVIE). This journal is an avenue for academics, researchers, scholars, and others to make available their research findings to the global community and thus contribute to the dialogue of civilizations.

Guidelines:

1. Manuscripts should be written in the English Language, in MS-Word, Times New Roman, 12 font, single line spacing, and should be between 3,000-7,000 words including references.
2. Manuscripts should contain an abstract of not more than 250 words, a concise title, and keywords. The manuscript should use the current APA . Be consistent in the APA style you use.

The submission has not been previously published, nor is it before another journal for consideration (or an explanation has been provided in Comments to the Editor).

The submission file is in OpenOffice, Microsoft Word, or RTF document file format.

Where available, URLs for the references have been provided.

3. Contributors should indicate their names, affiliations, status, phone numbers, and email addresses.
4. All manuscripts should be submitted electronically as an attachment to: gasivie@yahoo.com
5. A peer-review assessment fee of N5,000 should be paid
6. A publication fee of N25,000 only will be charged for the online publication of accepted papers and to defray the cost of hosting the journal website.
7. Inquiries can be addressed to Prof M O Ikeke, Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria through the journal email

Announcements:

IJIVIE is published twice a year in January and July. And there are Special Editions when necessary. You can send your papers anytime in the year. Papers received at least a month before publication that come out successfully from peer review will be considered for the next publication. See the guidelines section for other information.

Call for membership.

Those interested in becoming members of this association should send their request to the email of the association: gasivie@yahoo.com

Submission Preparation Checklist

As part of the submission process, authors must check off their submission's compliance with all of the following items, and submissions may be returned to authors who do not adhere to these guidelines.

Editorial Team

Editor-in-Chief	Prof M O Ikeke
Editors	Dr. K Emina Dr. J I Ukutsemuya Dr R Nwobodo Dr. F Ejegbavwo
Editorial Secretaries	Toma Brume Dr Monday Osebor

Editorial Consultants

Prof Olatunji Oyeshile (Department of Philosophy,
University of Ibadan, Nigeria)

Prof Maduabuchi Dukor (Department of Philosophy,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria)

Prof Kingsley Ufuoma Omoyibo (Department of
Sociology and Anthropology, University of Benin, Nigeria)

Prof Jack Aigbodioh (Department of Philosophy,
Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma, Nigeria)

Prof Sunny Awhefeada (Department of English and
Literary Studies, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria)

Professor Macaulay Mowarin Department of English and
Literary Studies, (Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria)

Prof Emma Mordi (Department of English and Literary
Studies, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria)

Prof Anthony Ikechukwu Kanu (Department of
Religious Studies and Philosophy, Department of Religious
Studies and Philosophy, Tansian University, Umunya,
Nigeria)

Prof Ejajite Ojaruega (Department of English and
Literary Studies, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria)

Prof Godwin Idjakpo (Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria)

Prof Nduka Otiona (Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada)

Prof Chinelo Nwokolo (Directorate of General Studies, Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun, Nigeria)

Assoc Prof Money Udi (Directorate of General Studies, Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun, Nigeria)

Note:

The views and positions expressed in the papers in the journal are not necessarily the views of the journal editors nor of IASIVIE. Authors are responsible to ensure they have not infringed on any copyright and that their works are free from plagiarism following global best practices and their institutional guidelines.

Table of Contents

1	Authenticity and Freedom of Expression Among Nigerian Youths in the Era of Social Media Dr. Ratzinger E. E. Nwobodo (Ph.D).....	1
2	Philosophical Analysis of Darah's "The Niger Delta: Resource Control and the Quest for Justice." Mark Omorovie Ikeke.....	21
3	Feyerabend's Epistemological Anarchism: Validation of Indigenous Medicine in the Fight against Disease and Sickness Toma, Brume.....	41
4	Arne Naess's Deep Ecology and Its Implications for Ecological Balance in the Niger Delta Donald Emayomi, Msc.....	71
5	The Pastoral-Theological Implications of Environmental Waste in John 6:12: An Eco-Solidarity Perspective Andrew Ugochukwu Anah.....	89
6	African Traditional Deities and Their Resilience in the 21 st Century Juliet E Akpoduado & Prof J Enuwosa.....	103
7	Conflict Prevention and Peace-Building: An Imperative for National Development Ojighoro, Reuben Edafenene (Ph.D).....	117
8	Political Leadership, Insecurity And Migration In Africa In The Light Of Matthew 2:13-23 Rev. Anyanwu, Charles Anozie, PhD; Mrs Kokey Grace Chinedu, PhD; and Ven Agoha Emmanuel Chijoike, PhD.....	139

Authenticity and Freedom of Expression Among Nigerian Youths in the Era of Social Media

Dr. Ratzinger E. E. Nwobodo (Ph.D)
Department of Philosophy
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Anambra State.
Email: ratzingerjunior2020@gmail.com

Abstract

The advent of social media platforms has revolutionized the way Nigerian youths connect and express themselves, allowing diverse voices to be heard. It has democratized access to information and has allowed them to share their unique experiences, participate in national and global debates, and contribute to the shaping of public opinion. However, the authenticity of these expressions by youths of this demography and the growing misuse of the freedom allowed by these online platforms have become recent subjects of debate. Questions arise regarding the framing of online identities to meet societal expectations, fake news, hate speech, harassment, and other morally reprehensible acts which are common in the Nigerian digital environment. How genuine is this voice and how impactful has the freedom allowed by these platforms been to the Nigerian youths is the subject matter of this study. By examining the factors that shape their online identities and exploring the tensions between self-expression and societal expectations. This study sheds light on the complexities and implications of authenticity and freedom of expression in the Nigerian digital landscape. Emphases are laid on the importance of self-reflection, digital literacy education, and empathy, as these are crucial in fostering a better digital environment for Nigerian youths.

KEYWORDS: Social Media, Authenticity, Freedom of Expression, Nigerian Youth

Introduction

Since the remarkable emergence of ICT or digitalization in our contemporary world, social media has become an effective channel for communication, providing a digital space for Nigerian youths, and indeed everyone around the world, to express themselves and share their unique experiences. According to Data Reportal (2023), those under 18 years using social media in Nigeria at the beginning of 2023 were 28.20 million. Nigerian youths have embraced social media platforms as avenues for self-expression, enabling them to transcend geographical boundaries and participate in global conversations. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp have become integral to their lives influencing how they present themselves, interact, and express their thoughts and opinions.

With the advent of social media, the right to self-expression which is allowed by the Nigerian constitution (as well as international instruments) but has continually been infringed upon, has now found a new outlet, allowing youths of this demography a voice to speak their truths, share their stories and opinions about public and private matters without censorship and repression (Etuk & Daramola, 2022). This has revolutionized their interest and participation in social and political matters in the country. It has provided them with a platform for activism and social change. A typical example is the #EndSars movement which was engineered and promoted by Nigerian youths through social media protesting against police brutality. Through various social media platforms, these youths were able to reach out and organize massive movements calling out to thousands of Nigerians to action and holding Nigerian authorities to account, at the same time, catching the attention of the international communities in support for the #EndSARS campaigns (Ajisafe et al, 2021).

Undoubtedly, social media has positively impacted

the Nigerian youths' authenticity and freedom of expression in a way that is quite unprecedented. To a high extent, it has allowed them to express themselves free from the external pressures of the Nigerian political class which has long before “caged” them, and has amplified their voices in so many ways. However, there is another form of external pressure which is more of our concern in this study and that is social pressure. As a result of the virtual nature of social media, there is a tendency for Nigerian youths to craft carefully curated profiles and images, presenting an idealized version of themselves to others. This pressure to maintain a desirable online image and gain validation or popularity can lead to a sense of inauthenticity and the creation of a facade that may not accurately reflect their true selves. Similarly, the freedom for self-expression and anonymity which social media platforms allow enables Nigerian youths to promote and engage in morally reprehensible acts such as, defamation, misinformation, hate speech, etc. (Erhiguetke, 2022; Etuk & Daramola, 2022).

Authenticity is inseparable from freedom, as one cannot truly be authentic if they are not free. Authenticity lies then in the fact that one is free to choose their identity, which way to speak, dress, eat, laugh, cry, which way to live. Hence to speak of Nigerian youths' authenticity on social media is ipso facto to speak of their freedom for authentic self-expression. The question of authenticity which this paper focuses on lies in how they utilize this freedom in their interactions with others, whether they stay true to themselves, or they, by trying to be like others, project a false image of themselves. Similarly, this study will also examine the moral outcomes of this freedom of expression as enabled by social media platforms. When the drawbacks are considered together with the benefits, we have a balanced view and are better positioned to seek lasting solutions that will mitigate the risks associated with social media usage and create a more genuine digital environment for the Nigerian youths.

Conceptual Clarifications

Social Media

The term “Social Media” has been defined in different ways by scholars. Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) describe social media as internet-based applications rooted in technological and ideological foundations that help exchange and creation of content generated by users (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 60). It includes web-based and mobile based technologies that are used to turn communication into interactive dialogue among individuals, organizations, and communities. Typical examples of social media platforms are YouTube, Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, and others. These instruments are referred to as media because they are tools that can also be used for the storage and dissemination of information. The new media enable interactions (Adekunle Ajisebiyawo, 2022).

Social media is a powerful platform for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Asemah (2011) says social media are interactive media in digital form using the web. They are elements of the new media technologies that provide the fastest means of communication to users; an online community that supports one-on-one social interaction. According to Sambe (2014), social media means new technology in ICT. communication patterns by way of providing instant feedback, viral content, popular accessibility and availability.

While there is continued dispute amongst scholars and writers as to what really constitutes social media, in this study it is intended to mean all online (or internet) technologies and applications that facilitate expression and social interaction, and they include, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, You Tube, LinkedIn, Snapchat, blogs, among many others.

Authenticity

According to Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,

the term 'authentic' is used in one of two ways; either in the strong sense where it means being “of undisputed origin or authorship”, or in a weaker sense, where it means “being faithful to an original” or “ a reliable, accurate representation”. Something is said to be authentic when that thing is what it professes itself to be, or what it is reputed to be, in origin or authorship (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2014). This definition stresses on an important aspect of authenticity which is “originality”. Existentialist philosophers grapple with the issue of authenticity, but their approach is to explain authenticity by focusing on its opposite concepts, that is, they discuss what is inauthentic instead of focusing on what is authentic (Mozaffaripour & Hamrah, 2015). Existentialists are critical of people's ingrained tendency to conform to the norms and expectations of the society because it prevents them from being authentic or true to themselves. The German existentialist philosopher, Martin Heidegger, writing on the inauthenticity of people opines that in our everyday attitude, we fall away from authentic being; rather than stay true to oneself, we try to construct a self-image that is fake in order to meet societal expectation. At the end there is no difference between one and others, as the individual is swallowed up by the "they" (Heidegger, 1962).

Heidegger's contention here stresses originality and advertently suggests the meaning of authenticity thus; staying true to oneself, and not trying to see or do things like others do, but like we do. According to Mozaffaripour & Hamrah (2015), authenticity literally implies the concepts such as credibility, accuracy, and validity. In the aspect of credibility, authenticity implies "original" which means being with a historical existence. In the aspect of accuracy, authenticity implies "real" as the opposite of the concepts such as artificial. That is, when something is called "authentic", it comes from the supposedly original source. In other words, authenticity means having certain and specific source. In the aspect of validity, they define authenticity with personal

identity where authentic means honest, sincere and consistent (Mozaffaripour& Hamrah, 2015)

Authenticity literally implies the concepts such as credibility, accuracy, and validity. Bialystok]1[believes that this term primarily implies "original" which means being with a historical existence. On the second level, the word authenticity implies "real" as the opposite of the concepts such as artificial. That is when something is called as "authentic"; it is originated from the supposedly original source. In other words, authenticity means having certain and specific source. On the third level, authenticity is defined with personal identity where authentic means honest, sincere, and consistent. In this sense, authentic implies homogeneity between what has the being and what claims to have the being.

By the virtue of these definitions, authenticity could be understood to mean the state or quality of being genuine, true to oneself, and aligned with one's values, beliefs, and personal identity. More precisely, in the context of this work, it refers to the genuine representation of an individual's beliefs, values, and identity through their online activities.

Freedom of Expression

Freedom of expression is mostly used interchangeably with freedom of speech as speaking (speech) both in oral and written forms is the most popular and commonest form of expression. However, besides speech, there are other forms or ways through which people can express themselves to make known their ideas, opinions, feelings, etc. For instance, signs, gestures, postures, drawings, painting, carving, even silence, among others are forms of expression (Etuk & Daramola, 2022). Suffice it to say that while expression includes all forms of speech, speech does not cover all forms of expression.

Freedom of expression is intended in this study to

mean the ability of individuals to communicate their ideas, beliefs, opinions, feelings and conviction, in verbal or non-verbal ways, without any form of censorship, repression, or repercussion. It is the foundation and pillar of a democratic system; the mother of democracy (van Vollenhoven, 2015). It is one of the human fundamental rights that are universally recognized and protected (Udofa, 2011) as there are national, regional, and international legal instruments and documents that articulate, guarantee and protect this right (the right to freedom of expression). For instance, the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (As Amended) by Section 39 (1) provides that people are entitled to freedom of expression.

From the above constitutional stipulations, it is evident that the right to freedom of speech and expression gives every Nigerian citizen the liberty to communicate via any means of communication or expression of which social media is a part. However, it is commonly said that one's right stops where others' right starts. Hence, just like most rights, the right to freedom of speech and expression is not absolute as there are some restrictions and checks on the right—one of which is the law of defamation (Udofa, 2011). It is crucial to mention that the mode of expression of this right has evolved over the years from traditional presentation through words, print media, and broadcast stations to social media tools such as blogs, podcasts, memes, websites, etc. This paper will be considering the meaning and implications of freedom of expression as revolutionized in the social media era.

Nigerian Youth

There seems to be no standard definition for a youth. Youth is a term used to refer to a period in one's life, when he or she is young and full of energy. It is usually the period in life, between childhood and adulthood. According to the United Nations (2013), the word “Youth” is portrayed as the period of transitioning from the dependence of childhood to

the independence of adulthood, and a consciousness of the interdependence that exists between members of the community. The Common Wealth (2023) however gave specific age bracket for a youth. It sees youths as people who fall between the ages of 15 - 29 years. The Nigerian National Youth Policy (2009) defined a Youth as a person between the ages of 15 - 35. For the purpose of this research, and considering the Nigerian youths as its case study, youths in the context of this work will refer to all Nigerians, whether male or female, who fall within the age bracket of 15 - 35.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the Uses and Gratification theory as propounded by Jay Bulmer and Elihu Katz in 1974. This theory presents a user-centered approach that focuses on how people use media for their own personal objectives and gratification. Diverging from other media effect theories that ask "what does media do to people (the audience)?" this theory instead focuses on "what do people do with media?" (Elihu Katz et al, 1974). It is recognized as a communication research paradigm that aims to explain problems based on the audience's subjective account of the media experiences and the purposes a specific sort of information serves in specific situations (Orewere, 2006, as cited in Omoye, 2023). It discusses how users purposefully select media to meet specific needs such as knowledge enhancement, relaxation, personal identity, social interactions/companionship, escape from routine or problems. It is assumed by the theory that audience members are not passive media consumers. Rather, the audience has control over their media consumption and actively participates in interpreting and integrating media into their own lives. Elaborating on this theory, McQuail (2010) states that - the central question posed is: why do people use the media, and what do they use them for? These questions, and this theory in general is central to our discussion in this study. Nigerian youths will be viewed in light of this theory, not only as an active audience who seeks

out information on social media for specific individual purposes, but as content creators who utilize social media for the purposes of authentic self-expression. Authenticity literally implies the concepts such as credibility, accuracy, and validity. Bialystok writes that authenticity means original.

Nigerian Youths And Authentic Self-expression On Social Media: Opportunities And Challenges

Media of communication and freedom of expression are an age- long inseparable duo, especially as communication or expression cannot be done in a vacuum—a medium or means is always needed (Etuk & Daramola, 2022). Social media has provided a means for Nigerian youths to express their authentic selves and share their unique experiences. It has allowed them to showcase their talents, share their passions, and connect with like-minded individuals who appreciate their authenticity. Through these platforms, they break free from traditional societal norms, express their individuality, and find communities that resonate with their true identities. Furthermore, social media has enabled Nigerian youths to challenge dominant narratives and amplify marginalized voices. They can use platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube to speak out against injustices, share their stories, and advocate for social change. Etuk & Daramola (2022) captures this impact of social media on freedom of expression in the Nigerian society well: the new communication is the social media fostering freedom of expression and speech, and also giving voice to the common man (Etuk & Daramola, 2022: 98).

Social media has democratized the ability to have a voice and has provided Nigerian youths with an opportunity to express their authentic perspectives and share their unique stories and experiences. Through texts, pictures, audios, videos, they construct and reveal their identities, and also communicate their true feelings on matters of private and

public importance. Udemeobong Sunday Reuben, an ardent social media user affirms strongly that platforms like Twitter and Facebook helps us express feelings, and opinions about issues easily. Through Twitter you can easily send a message to the Nigerian president (Udemeobong Sunday Reuben, Cited in Etuk & Daramola, 2022:98).

Undoubtedly many Nigerian youths on social media would share in Udemeobong's testimony. Social media has provided them with an opportunity for citizens-state interaction in the public sphere. It has provided higher levels of activity and participation in public matters and has allowed them a voice to demand for accountability and mobilize for social change. A popular example of this voice in use is with the #EndSars protest, where Nigerian youths, in their numbers, called for the dissolution of Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), an infamous police unit accused of extortion, extrajudicial killings, rape and torture, for two weeks. Adekunle Ajisebiyawo (2022) submits that while this was not the first time Nigerians had made such a demand, it was however, by far, the first time their calls garnered such widespread support and international media coverage – thanks, largely, to the prominent role of social media in spreading the word. Looking back in hindsight at the protest, one could argue that it would not have happened, or at least generated so much massive attention as it did, were it not for the social media platforms. Ajisafe et. al (2021) submits in clear terms that the power of social media was exhibited in the EndSARs campaign #EndSARs# campaigns (Ajisafe et al., 2021: 5).

To this extent, it is evident that social media has revolutionized freedom of expression for the Nigerian youths. It is now easier and safer for them to be seen and to be heard. It has enabled their authenticity not only in the individual level, where they share genuine private information about themselves with their online audience, but more, in a public

level, allowing them to participate in national and global debates, criticize leaders and demand for positive change.

Despite all these positives, however, it is always an issue with social media platforms that, as a result of its virtual nature, it is difficult for one to discern between what is fake and what is genuine. As a result, people tend to create and project an unrealistic version of themselves that does not reflect their true identities. This is usually in order to gain validation and/or attention in the form of likes, comments, etc. Meg Jay an American Clinical Psychologist captures this tendency for inauthenticity, thus: Facebook makes dreams look like realit (Meg Jay, 2022: 47).

This social pressure is crucial if we must have a balanced look at the issue of Nigerian youths' authenticity and self-expression on social media. As viewers can hardly tell between what is actually real and not real on these platforms, many Nigerian youths readily take advantage to exaggerate their lives, creating a façade that does not reflect their true selves. Others, due to social comparison, try as much as possible to conform their lives to these illusions which they see, hence turning the social media space into a place for inauthentic living and pretense. According to Sarah Abraham (2022), most Nigerian youths feel as though they are in a competition with others online. This has given rise to a “make it or fake it mentality” amongst them where they struggle to portray an exaggerated version of their lives in order to gain validation or popularity. In fact, displaying one's success has become a pivotal factor in garnering followers and earning respect in some cases. Some even go as far as borrowing jewelries, cars, snapping in front of beautiful houses that they know nothing about, just to give the impression that they have made it to their followers (Hallow, 2021). All of these mounts enormous pressure on other youths to also follow this path, thereby turning the online environment into a cinema where everyone is on stage pretending to be who they are not.

Nollywood actor, Mike Ezuruonye, as cited in PM News concurs that the coming of social media puts pressure on the youths as people are pressured to be like others and so people give false impressions (Mike Ezuruonye, Sept. 17, 2018).

A young Nigerian with the username Onismate, cited on Nairaland Forum, also shares his opinion on the issue of inauthenticity on social media and the unhealthy social comparison which it promotes amongst Nigerian youths, thus as young people put up pretentious lives on Facebook((*Onismate, Feb. 25, 2017*).

There is nothing wrong with seeking attention, likes, follows or comments on social media. However, as the end does not justify the means, the way in which one attains this objective is very important. As studies have it, when Nigerian youths continuously compare themselves to others and perceive that they fall short in terms of accomplishments, appearance, or lifestyle, it can lead to feelings of inadequacy, inferiority, and low self-esteem (Kross et al., 2013). In addition to self-esteem, these platforms can also negatively impact Nigerian youths' self-perception. According to Vogel et al., (2019), individuals often construct their online identities and self-perceptions based on social interactions and feedback received through social media. However, the idealized and curated nature of social media can distort individuals' perceptions of themselves and create unrealistic expectations. So, the constant exposure to carefully curated images and experiences of others, coupled with the feeling of falling short in comparison, can exacerbate depressive symptoms and increase feelings of loneliness, worthlessness, and hopelessness amongst Nigerian youths. (Ofuebe, et al, 2022).

People take advantage of the fact that they hide behind their gadgets to insult, bully, and troll individuals. People take advantage of the fact that they hide behind their gadgets to insult, bully, and troll individuals.

People take advantage of the fact that they hide behind their gadgets to insult, bully, and troll individuals.

Similar to the challenge of inauthentic self-presentation is the problem of misinformation. As social media has democratized access to information and significantly reduced dependence on traditional media, Nigerian youths have become newscasters in their own right. Unfortunately, they often abuse this opportunity to share and spread fake news. As it is difficult to verify the authenticity of information been shared, anyone can decide to mislead the public at will. Zeenat O. Sambo on Premium Times writes: people creates parodies in social media to promote fake news (Zeenat O. Sambo, May 27, 2022).

In addition to this, Nigerian youths also abuse their freedom of expression enabled through social media sites to engage in condemnable acts such as cyber-bullying, hate speech, harassment etc. They take advantage of the fact that they hide behind their gadgets to insult, bully, and troll individuals (Oloyede et al, 2022). This together with other abuses, raise questions as to the importance of censoring or repression of the right to freedom of expressed as utilized on social media platforms. There is a common saying that one's right stops where others' right starts. This encapsulates the moral and legal given that freedom of expression is in fact not absolute, and hence must not be ill-used. Live and let live philosophy also comes to mind here; Nigerian youths ought to tolerate the opinions, beliefs, convictions of others, even when they do not share in them instead of resorting to insults, bullying, and other forms of derogatory speeches. These acts and others alike trample on others' freedom of expression and sometimes can force them into inauthentic living as they now try to conform to societal expectations in order to feel welcome or among.

According to J. S. Mill (2001), an individual should be free to act unless they are harming someone else. Nigerian

youths must recognize where the line is drawn on their freedom of expression- injuring others- and not attempt to cross it. Freedom of expression is no doubt an important human right which is essential for the Nigerian society to be democratic and for individuals to genuinely express their unique selves. It enables the free exchange of ideas, opinions and information and thus allows Nigerian youths to form their own opinions on issues of public or private importance. However, it must not be used to engage in acts which are harmful to others such as misinformation, defamation, hate speech, obscenity, all of which are unfortunately common in the Nigerian social media space.

Conclusion & Recommendation

Social media, like most technological innovations, is like a double-edged sword which can be used for good or bad. While it presents Nigerian youths with unprecedented opportunities for authentic self-expression, it also poses great identity and ethical challenges for them. This is not necessarily as a result of social media per se, but as a result of its use by the youths of this demography. Having said this, there are certain measures that can be put in place by the Nigerian youths and the government to ensure a healthy use of these platforms so as to monitor and mitigate their negative effects.

1). Digital Literacy Education. Nigerian youths should be provided with comprehensive digital literacy education that equips them with the necessary skills to critically evaluate information, identify fake news, and navigate the online landscape for authentic self-expression. Educational institutions and relevant stakeholders should collaborate to develop age-appropriate curricula that teach media literacy, digital citizenship, and online safety.

2). Self-reflection and Authenticity. Nigerian youths should be encouraged to engage in self-reflection and

cultivate authenticity in their online interactions. They should be encouraged to present their genuine selves, resist the pressure to conform to societal expectations, and critically evaluate the impact of social media on their self-esteem, identity formation, and overall social interactions.

3). Digital Empathy and Respectful Communication. Nigerian youths should be encouraged to cultivate empathy and practice respectful communication in their online interactions. They should be made to understand that there are real people behind the screens, and the impact of words and actions in the virtual world can have real consequences.

4). Critical Thinking and Fact-Checking. Nigerian youths should be taught to question the veracity of information they encounter on social media. They should be empowered to fact-check and verify information from multiple reliable sources before accepting it as true. Emphasis should be laid on critical thinking skills and a culture of skepticism should be promoted towards information shared on social media platforms.

5). Engage in Positive and Meaningful Content Creation. Nigerian youths should be encouraged to use social media as a platform for positive and meaningful content creation. Support should be given to their efforts to showcase their talents, creativity, and ideas that contribute to their personal growth and the betterment of society.

6). Collaborate with Social Media Platforms. Both individual users and the government should collaborate with social media platforms to implement measures that promote responsible usage and user well-being. This can include features that combat cyberbullying, promote digital well-being, and provide reliable sources of information.

7). Establish Supportive Networks. Supportive

networks comprising parents, educators, and mentors who can guide Nigerian youths in their social media usage should be created. This network should foster open lines of communication where young people can seek advice, share concerns, and discuss their experiences on social media.

It is important for Nigerian youths to engage with social media authentically, responsibly, practice digital literacy skills, and be conscious of potential risks. As Socrates says, 'an unexamined life is not worth living'. (Socrates, as cited in Thomas G. West, 1979). It is crucial that Nigerian youths, policy makers, and creators of these platforms take time to reflect on the use of this technology so as to ensure a safe and genuine digital environment for all users.

REFERENCES

- Abraham Sarah, (2022). "Make it or Fake it: Social Media Exposure and Personality Perception Among Youths in Delta State."
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/364358124_make_it_or_fake_it_social_media_exposure_and_personality_perception_among_youths_in_delta_state.
 Accessed July 27, 2023
- Adekunle Ajisebiyawo, (2022). "Social Media Influence and the EndSARS Protests". African Scholar Journal of Arts and Sociological Research. Vol 24(6), 63-85
- Ajisafe Dickson, Tinuade Adekunbi Ojo, & Margaret Monyani, (2021). "The Impacts of Social Media on the #EndSARs# Youth Protests in Nigeria." Proceedings of the ICTeSSH 2021 Conference.
<https://doi.org/10.21428/7a45813f.638ef816>.
- Alexander Walsh Erhiguetke, Chinyere C. Esimone, Iruoma
- A. Ugoo-Okonkwo (2022). "Social Media and its Influence on 21st Century Nigerian Youths: The Popular Music Reality." Nigeria International Journal of

- Research in Humanities and Social Studies. Vol 9 (5), 15-22
- Asemah, E. S., (2011). *Mass Media in the Contemporary Society*. Jos: Jos University Press Limited
- Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999.
- DataReportal. "Digital 2023: Nigeria".
<https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-nigeria#:~:text=Meanwhile%2C%20data%20published%20in%20the,and%20above%20at%20that%20time>. Accessed July 15, 2023
- Erin A. Vogel, Jason P. Rose, Lindsay R. Roberts, & Katheryn Eckles, (2014). "Social Comparison, Social Media, and Self-Esteem", *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, Vol. 3(4), 206 –222, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000047>
- Etuk Akaninyene & Daramola Folashade, (2022). "Democracy in Nigeria and Freedom of Speech in a Social Media Age." *Kaduna Journal of Historical Studies*. Vol 11(2), 86-102.
- Ezuruonye, M. (Sept. 17, 2018). "Social media, internet increase fake-lifestyles." *PM News*, .
<https://pmnewsnigeria.com/2018/09/17/social-media-internet-increased-fake-lifestyles-mike-ezuruonye/>, Accessed July 21, 2023)
- Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development, "National Youth Policy" <https://www.prb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Nigeria-National-Youth-Policy-2019-2023.pdf>, Accessed July 18, 2023
- Hallow, S., (2021). 'Social Media and Social Movements: Facebook and an online Guatemalan justice movement that moved offline.' *New Media & Society*, Vol 14(2), 225–243.
 DOI:10.1177/1461444811410408
- John Stuart Mill, 2001. *On Liberty*. Kitchener: Batoche Books.
- Kaplan, A. M & Haenlein Michael, (2010). "Users of the World, Unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media." *Business Horizons*, Vol 53(1), 59-68
- Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1973). "Uses

- and gratifications research”, *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol 37(4), 509-523.
- Kross E, Verduyn P, Demiralp E, Park J, Lee DS, Lin N, et al. (2013) “Facebook Use Predicts Declines in Subjective Well-Being in Young Adults.” *PLoS ONE*, Vol 8(8): e69841.
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0069841>
- Martin Heidegger, (1962). *Being and Time*. Translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd
- McQuail, D., (2010). *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory*. New York: Sage Publications.
- Meg Jay, (2021). *The Defining Decade: Why Your Twenties Matter and How to Make Most of Them*. New York: Grand Central Publishing
- Mozaffari pour Roohollah & Hamrah Saeid Zarghami (2015). “The Concept of Authenticity in Philosophy of Sartre and Implications for Using Internet as Educational Technology.” *International Journal of Advanced Networking and Applications*. Vol 7(2), 2658-2665
- Ofuebe Justina Ifeoma, Nweke Prince Onyemaechi & Ferdinand Uzochukwu Agu (2022). “Social Media Use on The Mental Health of Undergraduate Students with Depression: Sociological Implications” *Journal of Youth Studies*. Vol 4(1), 768-783.
- Oloyede, Mukhtar & Oloyede, Ganiyat (2022). “Effects of Social Media on Morality of Youths in Nigeria and the role of Religion.” *Accra Bespoke Multidisciplinary Innovations Conference (ABMIC) DOI: 10.22624/AIMS/ABMIC2022P12*.
- Omoye Isah Mary, (2023). “Influence of Social Media on Peer Pressure among Nigerian Youths”. *Himalayan Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies*, Vol 4(1), 20- 28.
- Onismate, (Feb. 25, 2017). “The Too Many Lies and Fake Lives Being Lived on Social Media: My Experience” *Nairaland Forum*,
<https://www.nairaland.com/3649253/too-many-lies->

- fake-lives. Accessed July 21, 2023.
- Sambe, S. A., (2014). A Guide to Newspaper Production. Makurdi: Samphill Communications Limited.
- Sambo, Z. O. (May 27, 2022). "Curbing fake news and the excesses of social media." Premium Times, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/opinion/532734-curbing-fake-news-and-the-excesses-of-social-media-by-zeenat-o-sambo.html?tztc=1>. Accessed July 27, 2023.
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Authenticity", <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/authenticity/>. Accessed July 19, 2023
- The Commonwealth, "Youth", <https://thecommonwealth.org/our-work/youth#:~:text=1.5%20billion%20people%20aged%20between%2015%20and%2029%20live%20in%20C%20ommonwealth%20countries>, Accessed July 15, 2023
- Thomas G. West, (1979). Plato's Apology of Socrates: An Interpretation, with a New Translation, New York: Cornell University Press
- Udofa, I. J. (2011). "Right to Freedom of Expression and the Law of Defamation in Nigeria." International Journal of Advanced Legal Studies and Governance. Vol 2(1), 75- 84.
- UN, "Definition of Youth", <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf>. Accessed July 15, 2023
- Van Vollenhoven, W. J. (2015). "The right to freedom of expression: The mother of democracy." PER/PELJ (Online) 18.6: 2299-2327. DOI:10.4314/pelj.v18i6.08. Accessed July 21, 2023.

Philosophical Analysis of Darah's “The Niger Delta: Resource Control and the Quest for Justice.”

Mark Omorovie Ikeke
Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy
Delta State University, Abraka
drikeke@delsu.edu.ng

Abstract

The Niger Delta of Nigeria occupies a special place in Nigeria's political economy. Without the Niger Delta, Nigeria will be bereft of the much-needed income that can be used for development. Though the Niger Delta has produced much wealth, the region is massively underdeveloped and the people and environment of the region are undergoing great pain and suffering. The people of the region recognizing how they have been deprived of much of the benefits that come from oil and gas resources have called for the control of their resources and justice to remediate the sufferings that they have experienced. Darah takes up these issues and advocates for justice and resource control in the region. This paper examines one of Darah's works using the critical philosophic analytic method. The paper finds and concludes that he makes a vital contribution to the struggle of the region's people for socioeconomic and environmental justice.

Keywords: Darah, Niger Delta, resource control, justice, and rights.

Introduction

In terms of political economy, the Niger Delta is the most important area in Nigeria. Nigeria's national revenue mainly comes from the crude oil and gas resources found in

the Niger Delta. This is why among other things anything that happens to the Niger Delta affects deeply the Nigerian state. When for instance there is restiveness and serious militancy in the Niger Delta it affects the production of oil and in consequence, Nigeria's national revenue dwindles. Right from the advent of British merchants and colonialists into the Niger Delta, the land and people of the Niger Delta have greatly suffered from oppression and exploitation.

It is important to note that the Niger Delta question is a serious question and issue. If the Niger Delta question is not resolved the Nigerian question cannot be resolved. Many scholars and authors have written on the issues bedeviling the Niger Delta and how they can be resolved. Authors and scholars who have written on the Niger Delta include Oronto Douglas, Ibaba Samuel Ibaba, Ukowa O Ukiwo, Cyril Obi, Victor Ojakorotu, and G G Darah. Among those authors, Darah's thought on the question of justice in the region is truly incisive and penetrating. It is Darah's thoughts on the issues of justice about socio-economic and environmental justice that this work x-rays. It is imperative to note that all of Darah's writings and statements about the issues of justice cannot be examined in this paper. The main focus shall be his work: "The Niger Delta: Resource Control and the Quest for Justice." This does not exclude citing from his other works to buttress the issues raised in this book. The paper shall be selective in highlighting only some of his thoughts in the said book. The purpose here is not to do a textual analysis of the book, a review, or a summary. It is simply some key themes from the book that will be examined and analyzed. The perspective here is philosophical analysis, breaking open issues to understand and impart wisdom. To do this, it is proper to do some analyses of the keywords in the title of this paper. Thereafter key issues from the book are examined. This is followed by an appraisal and concluding reflection.

Conceptual Analysis

The concepts that hallmark this paper are philosophical analysis, resource control, justice, and the Niger Delta. This work aims to do a philosophical analysis. Philosophy is the critical quest into all of human reality. It probes and questions the essence of being and existence. An important tool of philosophy is analysis. To analyze is to break open and dissect. It is to unveil and unravel into the heart of things and their quintessential. This is done for proper understanding. Philosophy constantly questions. Any truth arrived at in philosophy is tentative. It accepts nothing as dogmatic or sacrosanct. Omoregbe cites the following philosophers on their viewpoints on philosophy: for Plato, the philosopher has a passion for truth, for Aristotle, it is the quest for knowledge, for Epicurus it is a quest for happiness through argumentation, for William James it is a man thinking on generalities, for John Dewey it is thinking which is now conscious of that process of thinking, the task of philosophy for Wittgenstein is thought clarification, for Martin Heidegger it studies being, for Jacques Maritain it studies first principles, and for Alfred J Ayer it is an activity of analysis (*Knowing Philosophy* 1-2). It is practically difficult to give all the definitions of philosophy here. It suffices to note further that it is a rational and serious critical inquiry into issues that affect human existence and the cosmos. While some scholars may not be professional philosophers in the sense of doing an academic study or practicing it in the classroom and other forms, the fact is that there is a philosophic dimension to the works of critical scholars such as Daraa who from a postcolonial and Marxian paradigm have radically advocated for the liberation of the Niger Delta people from internal colonialism. What follows through this work is analysis and probing for clarification.

Justice is a contested term in both the social sciences and humanities. The key reason why it is contested is that it is difficult to define what justice is or what it is not. It is easier to

mention cases of injustice. It is clear in the minds of many that oppression of women, children, and even men; armed robbery, violation of the human rights of peoples, depriving workers of their wages, sexual exploitation, abuse of migrants, etc are all forms of injustice. But what is justice then? Omoregbe (45) in *Social-Political Philosophy and International Relations* propounds that:

It is giving everybody his due, or treating equals equally. The foundation of justice is the fundamental equality of all men. The equality in question here is ontological equality, not social equality or any other kind of equality. We know that all men are not equal socially, educationally, financially, in height, in size, in weight, etc.

Justice implies that nobody should be mistreated or denied their fundamental human rights or have their human dignity denied. Justice includes the welfare and well-being of the people. For Plato, justice is harmony among the various parts of the state (Omoregbe, *Social-Political Philosophy* 45). Plato divided the state into three groups, the rulers, the soldiers, and the artisans (Omoregbe, *Social-Political Philosophy* 45). When each carries out their duties without interfering with that of the other there is justice in the state (Omoregbe, *Social-Political Philosophy* 45). For the sophist philosopher Trasymarchus justice is the interest of the stronger (Omoregbe, *Social-Political Philosophy* 45). For Aristotle, justice means fairness to all (Omoregbe, *Social-Political Philosophy* 45-46). For John Rawls justice is enabling people to have equal rights (Omoregbe, *Social-Political Philosophy* 55). The debate on what is justice will remain a continuous one in the humanities and social sciences. But at the core of the idea is that it has to do with “equal and continuous enhanced treatments and opportunities for individual human beings and groups, both in law and socioeconomic and political questions....” (Igwe 216).

In the particular work that is the subject of analysis here, Darah never defines justice, but it is implied. It means the betterment, improvement, and advancement of the people of the Niger Delta from degradation, poverty, and injustice, to a higher level of life. It is access to the basic amenities of life such as good social infrastructure, health care facilities, good roads, the well-being of women, children, and all adults, etc. Justice implies the people of the Niger Delta having control and ownership of their resources and administering them justly while paying taxes to the federal government. Justice implies overthrowing unjust and obnoxious laws.

As noted in the previous paragraph the people's right to resource control is justice. What then is resource control? Ako interprets resource control as “essentially based on the claims of ownership, access, and equity, and refers to the desire that the region be left to manage its natural resources, particularly its oil, and pay taxes and/or royalties to the federal government” (42). He notes further that the notion “is grounded in the historical struggles of the people of the Niger Delta for self-determination and local autonomy, particularly in reversing decades of perceived federal marginalization in the distribution of power, and from the benefits accruing from the exploitation of the natural resources in the region” (Ako 42). Ako cites Sagay and Douglas who see it as gaining principal control of natural resources of the region; and Adesopo and Asaju who see it as increased derivation (43). Darah agrees with the fact that resource control has to do with complete ownership and control and usage of natural resources of the region by the people while paying agreed taxes to the federal government

What then is the Niger Delta? This region,
***...occupies an area of 75,000 sq. Km located in
Southern Nigeria. It stretches from the
Nigerian-Cameroon boundary in the East;
bounded by Ondo-Ogun boundaries in the West;***

by Enugu, Ebonyi, Anambra, Kogi and Ekiti States to the North and the Atlantic Ocean forming the general boundary in the south. It is Africa's and the world's third largest mangrove forest: one of the most expansive fresh water swamps in western and central Africa and Nigeria's major concentration of high biodiversity. (Okaba 28-29)

The Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria describes the Niger Delta as “the oil producing...region of Nigeria” and traditionally it was made up of Bayelsa, Rivers, and Delta States, but the law creating the Niger Delta Development Commission added the six states of Ondo, Imo, Edo, Cross-Rivers, Akwa-Ibom and Abia (114). As a result of the discovery of oil and gas resources and their exploitation, the region is inundated with a lot of mining activities for oil and related enterprises. Gas flaring, oil spillage, and seismic activities; have greatly endangered the people and environment of the region. While enormous wealth is drained from the region by oil multinational companies, the region is deeply neglected in terms of massive development. The following includes some of the things that the region suffers from: neglected rural settlements, high rate of poverty, youth restiveness, environmental degradation, abuse of human rights, internal displacement of peoples, etc (Okaba 29-31). “The Niger Delta: Resource Control and the Quest for Justice”

This is a 61-page book created from the First Dr. Alex Uruemu Ibru Memorial Lecture held on 12 May 2012 at the University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt. This little but powerful work published in 2014 by Kraft Books Limited, Ibadan begins with an introduction and tribute to Alex Ibru. It is followed by the following sections: Oil and Local Colonialism in the Niger Delta, Military Regimes and Anti-Federal Policies, the Perils of the Pipeline Economy, Popular

Resistance and Quest for Justice, the June 12 1993 Interlude, Derivation and Resource Control, Violent Repression of Protests, Women and Children in the Vanguard, Millennium of Militancy, From Kaiama to Odi Massacre, NDDC: Like OMPADEC, the Presidential Amnesty Programme, Resource Control Dividends, the Future of Niger Delta Children, Children and the Millennium Development Goals, Free Healthcare for Children, Access to Education and Free Medical Incentive, Children and Mass Transit Schemes, and Conclusion: Radical Imperative for Change, and References. As noted previously the challenge is not to do a book review but to interrogate some salient issues from the work from a philosophic analytic angle.

Darah as a social emancipator and deeply informed by Marxist analysis is deeply concerned about the plight of the people of the Niger Delta, especially his Urhobo people. His concern is not just for the people, but also for their cultures, literature, and environment. When he writes on the question of the Niger Delta he sees it as a crusade for “economic justice and freedom” (Darah, *The Niger Delta* 9). It is imperative to state right away why there is a need for this quest for socio-economic freedom and justice. It is because the natural resources that nature endowed the Niger Delta with have been unjustly exploited and the bulk of the benefits of that exploitation have not been communicated to the people of the region. Rather they have been allowed to suffer from environmental degradation and the destruction of their indigenous cultures. It is worrisome for instance that the devastation caused to the Niger Delta as a result of oil exploration includes oil spillage, health hazards, pollution of the environment, and disruption and destruction of farming and fishing activities. When the natural resources of the Niger Delta are spoken of they include: “land, waterways, wetlands, minerals, forests, grasslands, and other features generated by the forces of evolution, geology, and geography” (Darah, *The Niger Delta* 9).

For Darah, the injustice against the Niger Delta in a federal Nigeria came in the major assault in the Petroleum Decree 51 of 1969 (now Petroleum Act) that vested the ownership of all land and petroleum in the Nigerian state. With such a law the Federal Government can at any time and without consultation, and without concern for the rights of the indigenous peoples under whose land the petroleum is found confiscate, hijack, and exploit the resources (Darah, *The Niger Delta* 11). Another law that has heightened the injustice against the people of the Niger Delta is the Minerals and Mining Act of 1999 (Darah, *The Niger Delta* 14). Under section 2, number 34 of that Act: “Lands in which minerals have been found....shall be acquired by the government of the Federation by the provision of the Land Use Act” (Darah, *The Niger Delta* 14). In critiquing the Nigerian state for the injustice that it has meted on the people and cultures of the Niger Delta, Darah also mentions the National Inland Waterways Authority Act that enunciates that all inland waterways are properties of the Federal government (Darah, *The Niger Delta* 14-15). He painfully notes that even though the unjust laws that have strangled the peoples of the Niger Delta were enacted during military dictatorships, civilian governments have continued to implement them and used violent and terroristic means to force compliance to continue to receive oil dollars to fuel the engine of the Nigerian state (Darah 19). The government is not interested in the welfare of the citizens as often they meet the genuine agitations and protests of the people with brutal military and police force (Darah, *The Niger Delta* 19). At the same time, “the government never employs similar hard tactics against the oil companies even when they commit atrocities against the communities and the environment. The companies are never held to account for their actions that cause wanton abuse of human rights” (Darah, *The Niger Delta* 19). You see this as evident in the brutal killing of Ijaw youths at Kaiama and the Odi massacre of 1999 (Darah, *The Niger Delta* 19).

Darah is clear in relating that the quest for justice and redemption of the rights of the peoples of the Niger Delta has been championed by great revolutionaries such as Chief MukoroMowoe, Dr. Udo Udoma, Dr OkoiArikpo, Chief DappaBiriye, Wennike Briggs, Adaka Boro, Ken Saro-Wiwa, Chief Anthony Enahoro, and many others (Darah, *The Niger Delta* 19-23). It is enough to only relate these figures in passing without discussing their biographies and the movements that they led.

Another key theme in Darah's thought on socio-economic and environmental justice in the Niger Delta is that justice in the region requires resource control. The people must own and control their resources in true federalism. There can be no justice in a region in which the people lack control of their resources. There can be no justice in a land in which peaceful protest is met with brutality. There can be no justice when the creeks and lands of the region are neglected in terms of development and massive infrastructure. It is this neglect that has led to the militancy in the Niger Delta. While it is true that OMPADEC, NDDC, the Presidential Amnesty Programme, and various Oil Producing Mineral Development Commissions in various states of the region had produced some positive dividends, as Darah notes, there is still much to be done to ameliorate and end injustice in the Niger Delta (Darah, *The Niger Delta* 37-42). Darah is pained to continuously remark as in some of his works that Nigeria's pipeline economy had devastated the people and the environment. He describes a pipeline economy thus:

The petroleum pipeline economy contrasts sharply with the agricultural commodity one before the dominance of crude oil. In the era of British colonial rule (1885-1960), the industry of palm oil produce, rubber, and timber resources ensured some relative prosperity for Urhobo farmers and merchants. Rural households were involved in the production of these commodities

and this created opportunities for jobs and enhanced income. The Urhobo merchants that operated in the urban centres employed Urhobo personnel and reinvested their profits in promoting the local industries. The economy of crude oil and gas that developed in the 1960s is completely different. Once an oil well is drilled, the crude is transported via plants and thence to export facilities along the Atlantic coast. The organization of this economy does not leave room for the participation of the local population. Thus, the Urhobo and other oil-rich communities in the Niger Delta region are reduced to the position of stupefied spectators as the majors and the Nigerian government dominate the economic environment (Darah, Discourse on National Identity 56-57).

In the piece on “Philosophy and National Development,” it is rightly noted that issues of development are related intricately to social justice, and that when social development is spoken of it should include: “the place and welfare of children, the place and welfare of women, the quality and access to education, the quality and access to health care, the quality and access to housing, and the quality of leisure hours” (Efemini 89-90). Justice in the region includes a whole lot of things and issues. It is interesting to note that in discussing resource control and the quest for justice in the Niger Delta, Darah does not fail to discuss the future of Niger Delta children. The children of the Niger Delta are suffering premature death as a result of poor medical facilities, undernourishment, child labour, etc (Darah, *The Niger Delta* 45-50). He argues further:

The bleak prospects that await the children of Niger Delta region can be gauged from the debilitating situation described in the foregoing sections. Oil and gas constitute the mainstay of

the Nigerian economy. These strategic resources have been taken over by the government at the centre. The revenue that accrues from these resources is diverted to fund the development of all areas of the country. Only a small percentage comes to the oil-producing states by way of 13%.... The overall improvement of the population has more devastating consequences on the children whose fate is dependent on the condition of their parents and guardians. (Darah, The Niger Delta 44-45)

Among the proposals that Darah has for remediating and ensuring social, economic, and environmental justice in the Niger Delta he advocates for radical change in laws and social structures. He writes as follows:

The transformation of the social conditions of adults and children in the Niger Delta cannot be achieved unless and until some fundamental laws and policies are changed. It is the oppressive and exploitative structures of the Nigerian government and the economy that need to be tackled in order for a more equitable, just, and caring federal system to emerge. The proposed changes in the laws of resource ownership and exploitation will enable all the federating units in the country to earn the revenue they need to fund their development. (Darah, The Niger Delta 56-57)

He also proposes an amendment to the 1999 Constitution in section 44(3) so that ownership and exploitation of resources should be vested in the federating units as this will encourage healthy competition among the federating units (Darah, *The Niger Delta* 57). All the obnoxious laws mentioned above have also to be abolished (Darah, *The Niger Delta* 57). He has also proposed that the

Exclusive Legislative List of the 1999 Constitution also needs to be amended and apart from defense, foreign affairs, immigration, census, and meteorology, all other areas should be in the concurrent list (Darah, *The Niger Delta* 57).

Appraisal of Darah's Thought

Land is an important factor in the life of Africans. The land is not simply a commodity to be bought and sold. Land is part of the African community and Africans who are alive hold the land in honour of their ancestors from whom they got the land. About cultural and religious philosophies on land in many African communities, it would suffice here to assert that:

Aside from the fact that land is sacred, it is conceived of as a special gift from God that must be religiously guarded with respect and dignity. Land is also depicted in a feminine attribute of mother (mother land or mother-Earth), and compared to motherhood from the standpoint of fecundity. (Ejeh 215)

Any law then that violates the indigenous African understanding of the land is unjust and un-African. It is right that the people of the region take ownership of their resources not just for the exploitation of those resources but so that they can use those resources in consonance with the viable aspects of their ancestral traditions. Darah is deeply and painfully concerned about the land, resources, and people of the Niger Delta. Their lands have been confiscated through various unjust laws and regulations. A fundamental injustice that has been done to the people of the Niger Delta as seen by Darah is the many obnoxious laws that have suffocated the people of the Niger Delta. If justice must be done and seen to be done, it should begin here. These unjust laws have to be reversed for as he notes, "In the opinions of scholars on federalism, the laws that vest all major economic assets in the central government are a violation of the doctrine of federal

governance” (Darah, *The Niger Delta* 15). The socio-economic and cultural rights of the people have also been trampled upon. The pollution of the land, atmosphere, oceans, farmlands, and ancestral sites of the people has been seriously damaged by oil excavation, oil spillage, gas flaring, and oil-related activities. Constant conflicts between oil-bearing communities and oil multinationals have led to the destruction of lives and properties and the destruction of biodiversity. The people's right to food, clean water, clean air, free movement, and religious practices in their ancestral sites have all been impeded by oil activities. Ownership of resources means the people must not only own but also direct the usage of their resources following their authentic indigenous values. As revealed in some of his other works such as *Battle of Songs: Udje Tradition of the Urhobo* (Darah 1-238), *Discourse on National Identity and Resistance in the Popular Music of the Urhobo People of the Niger Delta* (Darah 53-78), Darah has deep and enormous critical veneration for the traditions of his peoples. These cultural values such as those coming from Urhobo songs, dance, and stories are in decline as a result of the commoditization of culture, the influx of foreign values from oil multinationals, etc. Take for instance the following statement of Darah (*Battles of Songs* 100):

Notwithstanding the attempts at a convergence of the satirical and panegyric tempers described above, the dilemma of the artist who wishes to be faithful to the spirit of Udje remains unresolved. Already the loss of the public arena and a guaranteed audience has robbed the potential Udje artist of a great deal of his Ombudsman's privilege. There is the factor of the dominant ideology of cash economy which demands that all vocations bring pecuniary rewards. If the Udje artist is to reach the large audience now dispersed outside the former rural Udje territory and at the same time get some material reward

for his endeavours, he will be required to go commercial like his panegyric counterpart. Such an Udje artist will have to prune his Udjeofowin plumage and also blunt the sharp edge of his tongue. After those compromises have been made, what will remain of his Udje songs may still be good poetry; but it is doubtful if it will still be an effective weapon in the battles of songs.

The dominant ideology of a cash economy that he speaks about is mainly informed by Western capitalist values that see all things only in terms of cash and profit. In the capitalist economy, land and resources are only valuable if they are profitable. There is no place for wilderness and preservation for the biotic good. There is no doubt that the coming of global capital, oil multinationals, and foreign workers into the Niger Delta has seriously impacted the values of the people. As he argues in *Dance as an Agent of Social Mobilization in Urhobo*, “Since independence, neo-colonial capitalism in Nigeria has caused such distortion and material decline that the arts have been virtually abandoned” (Darah 149). This too is injustice for the people to be constrained to abandon their cherished cultural values and ways of resisting a capitalist economy. The recovery of the dignity and *peoplehood* of the people of the Niger Delta must be a total recovery of all areas of life for all things are interconnected. There is a vital point that is made in Darah's writings that the musical and oral-cultural heritages of his people among many others can contribute to the emancipation of people. He argues elsewhere:

Viewed from the prism of artistic and socio-political engagement, the songs of the Urhobo popular musicians represent a radical discourse on the production and reproduction of identity and knowledge in the postcolonial setting of Nigeria. ..The dialectical and philosophical

acuteness exhibited by the popular musicians is indicative of how the ideas of freedom and counter-hegemonic consciousness have permeated the ranks of the masses of the region. The radical responses of the musicians are shared by the social justice movements and other armed groups that have sustained the self-determination agendas of the exploited oil-rich region. (Discourse on National Identity 76)

This paper argues that true development, resource control, and attainment of justice should not just be in terms of physical structures and control of material resources, it should include cultural, social, religious, and development of the arts and culture of the people. All these are aspects of the cultural rights of the people in the Niger Delta. One of the most outstanding achievements of the United Nations is the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In article 31 (1), it is proclaimed:

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions, as well as manifestations of their sciences, technologies, and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts.

The debate on whether the ethnic peoples of Nigeria are indigenous people will not be entered into here. This paper affirms that the peoples of the Niger Delta are indigenous to their land and are entitled to the rights proclaimed in that declaration. Darah can be rightly called a cultural activist and crusader for the authentic indigenous values of his people. The point that is being made is that

justice for Darah is inclusive of cultural emancipation and authentic cultural praxis. Resource control is inclusive of total control of the people's culture, education, social institutions, etc. It is regrettable to state that oil multinational forces care little or nothing about the traditional heritages of the people of the Niger Delta. Nwaomah (91) rightly avers that: "...there are many sacred sites and/or areas for the people in the Delta region. But the absolute authority to determine what constitutes sacredness and which area(s) are sacred lies with the government and not the people." Government and oil companies only think of economic gain as they drill into residential, farmlands, and religious sites (Nwaomah 91). Spaces and places where people used to practice their traditional sports, games, arts, etc have been seriously damaged and jeopardized by oil activities and oil spillage. True justice should include cultural justice and emancipation for the people. They must regain free access to their cherished traditional sites and spaces. That resource control is inclusive of cultural autonomy is supported by the declarations of various people in the Niger Delta. The Ogoni Bill of Rights declares that they desire full control of their language, culture, territory, religious freedom, and the right to protect their environment (no. 20). The Oron Bills of Rights demanded 100% control of resources in Oron land and culture.

The idea of resource control is necessary for justice to be done to the people of the Niger Delta. However, there is still a problem with the concept. The image of resources as material things to be controlled can be troubling and even lead to environmental degradation. Natural resources are not simply there to be owned and controlled. Following Leopoldian *Land Ethic*, the land, soil, water, plants, and animals are to be considered as part of the community; and by implication "the land is to be loved and respected" (Leopold par. 1 and 4). In many aboriginal cultures, including that of the Native Americans and even in some African cosmologies, the land is

seen as kin. A better image needs to be developed of human relationship with the land and its resources. A better image could be that of “ecosolidarity.” Ecosolidarity is an amalgamation of the two words, ecology and solidarity. What is this ecosolidarity? It “celebrates biodiversity, cultural diversity, religious diversity, etc. It also recognizes the necessary interplay, interaction, and inter-connection of all things....the indivisible mutual bond of inter-relationality and inter-web-ness of all life forms both humans and non-humans” (Ikeke 167-168). People under whose resources are found have a right to use those resources but this is a limited and not absolute right. The resources are not simply for the welfare of humans but for the entire biotic and comic good. Humans are to live in a relationship of symbiosis with the land and protect it from harm. In this light, the idea of environmental justice, environmental security, environmental conservation, and even environmental racism need to be brought more to the forefront in discussing justice in the Niger Delta so that it is not just a sideline in the discussion of justice in the Niger Delta.

Conclusion

This paper has examined analytically some salient issues raised in “The Niger Delta: Resource Control and the Quest for Justice.” This examination revealed Darah's passion and social love for the people of the Niger Delta. It was shown that the Niger Delta has suffered from obnoxious unjust laws and decades of oil exploration. Oil wealth has not made the Niger Delta better compared to other regions in the world where oil is produced. Not only is there a great need to reverse those obnoxious laws, but the government also need to massively invest to develop the infrastructure of the Niger Delta and greatly improve the lives of the peoples in all areas. Indeed authentic justice must be done to the people of the Niger Delta.

A clarion call of Darah in most of his works can be

summarized as that of justice for the Niger Delta. Deeply influenced by Marxian themes he does not hesitate in critiquing a capitalist pipeline economy and cash economy that has devalued the cultures of the people of the region. This paper concurs that there is indeed a need for resource control for the people of the region. Natural resources should now be envisioned more in terms of solidarity, symbiosis, and human kinship with the non-human world. This will produce a better image of human responsibility to take care of natural resources and sustainably use them. With this, a better Niger Delta will be created.

WORKS CITED

- Ako, Rhuks. "The Struggle for Resource Control and Violence in the Niger Delta." *Oil and Insurgency in the Niger Delta: Managing the Complex Politics of Petro-Violence*. Ed. Cyril Obi and Siri Aas Rustad. London: Zed Books, 2011. 42-54. Print.
- Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria. *Nigeria: Travesty of Oil and Gas Wealth*. Lagos: Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, 2006. Print.
- Darah, G. G. *Battles of Songs: Udje Tradition of the Urhobo*. Lagos: Malthouse Press Limited, 2005. Print.
- "Dance as an Agent of Social Mobilization in Urhobo." *Studies in Art, Religion and Culture among the Urhobo People*. Ed. G. G. Darah, E.S. Ekama, and J.T. Agberia. Port Harcourt, 2003. 149-159.
- "Discourse on National Identity and Resistance in the Popular Music of the Urhobo People of the Niger Delta." *Aridon 1* (2014): 53-77. Print.
- *The Niger Delta: Resource Control and the Quest for Justice*. Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited, 2014. Print.
- Efemini, Andrew. "Philosophy and National Development." *Readings in General Studies: Philosophy and Human Existence*. Ed. Andrew O Efemini. Abraka: University Printing Press, 2011. 83-100.

- Ejeh, Ameh A. *Scientific Evolution, Creation Theologies, and African Cosmogonies in Dialogue: Towards a Christian Theology of Evolution*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Corporation, 2008. Print.
- Ikeke, Mark Omorovie. *Redesigning an Ecosolidarity and Indigenously-Informed Education*. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Pro Quest Information and Learning Company, 2005.
- Leopold, Aldo. "The Land Ethic." www.aldoleopold.org/AldoLeopold/landethic.shtml.
- Nwaomah, Sampson M. "Eschatology of Environmental Bliss in Romans 8:18-22 and the Imperative of Present Environmental Sustainability from a Nigerian Perspective." *Placing Nature on the Borders of Religion, Philosophy and Ethics*. Ed. Forrest Clingerman and Mark H Dixon. Surrey: Ashgate, 2011. 78-94. Print.
- Okaba, Benjamin. "Petrodollar, the Nigerian State and the Crises of Development in the Nigeria Delta: Trends, Challenges and the Way Forward." *International Conference on the Nigerian State, Oil Industry and the Niger Delta*. Ed. The Department of Political Science, Niger Delta University, Yenogoa. Port Harcourt, Harey Publications Company, 2008. 21-39. Print.
- Ogoni People. "Ogoni Bills of Rights." www.waado.org/nigerdelta/Rightsdeclarations/Ogoni.html, 1990. Web.
- Oron People. "Oron Bills of Rights." www.waado.org/nigerdelta/Rightsdeclarations/Oron.html, 1999. Web.
- Omeregbe, Joseph. *Knowing Philosophy*. Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Limited, 2005. Print.
- Social-Political Philosophy and International Relations: A Systematic and Historical Study (Volume One). Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers

Limited, 200. Print.
United Nations. "The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples." *Reflections on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Ed. Stephen Allen and Alexandra Xanthaki. Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2011. 585-596. Print.

Feyerabend Epistemological Anarchism: Validation of Indigenous Medicine in the Fight against Disease and Sickness.

Toma Brume
tomabrume@gmail.com

Abstract

We live in a world that is bedevilled with many abnormalities, even from the creedal of human civilization the survival of the human species hinges on its ability to overcome socio-political, economic, and cultural challenges his existence and survival. One such threat to the existence and survival of mankind is the ever-resurfacing and spread of contagious sickness and viral diseases that have resulted in the breakdown of socialism causing social annihilation, social distancing and circumventing the pursuit of life's ultimate purpose (happiness) and at worst has led to nihilism and even death. Although modern science and modern medicine has made immense contribution to the fight against this existential threat, but the lapses in its method, its practices provoke moral interrogation, the genuineness of its motive and the limitation of its knowledge has become a thing of grave concern, if not properly address can become a clog on the wheel in the fight against this existential threat. Thus, the paper attempt to explore Paul Feyerabend's anarchistic position as a model that encourages other possible epistemological position and methodological inquiring in the expansion of knowledge and search for truth for possibly every socio-political, religious, economic, and existential question that has bordered the human person. In an attempt to address this very problem, the researcher suggests the need to

explore indigenous medicine with all its potential and acumen of knowledge in medicine and argues for the need for modern science and medicine to work in sync with indigenous medicine in the fight against the spread of disease and sickness. This synergy in the researcher's findings and preposition will not only offer profound help against this monstrous enemy, but it will also help the medical field to break new grounds, increase the frontier of knowledge on human health, and create new experiences. The work takes a critical look at the issues raised and gives a philosophical analysis of the subject matter to bring to the limelight the significance of the discourse.

Keywords: Epistemological, Anarchism, Disease, Indigenous medicine, modern medicine

Introduction

As the world becomes a global village nations often find themselves in synergy and see the need to ally with one another. Over the years nations across the globe have conscientiously formed various organizations with common goals or interests and have harnessed their economic, military, intellectual, scientific, and technological resources to combat the various challenges facing the globe today. Whether it is the problem of poverty in third world countries, local and international terrorism, human rights issues, environmental problems, challenges on the impact of modern-day technology and artificial intelligence in society and social structure, health issues, medicine, and the outbreak of contagious diseases, there is a noble global call to fight any common enemy that threatens the peace and existence of humans all over the world.

One of such enemy that often threatens society and humanity is sickness, disease, and the spread of disease. Since the dawn of civilization especially in the last decades,

societies all across the globe have become exposed to different kinds of ailments, health complications, and various outbreaks of deadly viruses and diseases that have spread from one nation to another and killed millions of people. Many have become devastated, hopeless, and just waiting for death because of their health challenge or are simply suffering from one chronic, incurable terminal disease. Besides the danger of world power nations unleashing the threat of nuclear bombs against the rest of the world. Like America destroyed the Japanese city of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with the detonation of nuclear bombs¹. arguably one can say that another possible threat that can destroy our world today swiftly is the widespread of deadly, contagious, and incurable diseases and sickness. The existential problem of contagious viruses and deadly diseases ravaging lives in their millions and spreading all over the globe today is a fundamental problem that threatens the core of human existence and often interferes with our social life. This is because whenever there is an outbreak of disease and people are infected they are subjected to critical quarantine and unfavourable conditions and badly stigmatised. These terminal sicknesses and diseases afflicting societies and damaging public and human health come in various forms, they include, all the variances of malaria, polio, flu, measles, monkey pox, ebola fever, kidney and heart diseases, various cancerous growths, fibroids, HIV/A, diabetes, etcetera.

This existential threat to human and public health no doubt calls for the cooperation of all people irrespective of race and nationality, to address and curb this menace destroying human life and societies. There is an urgent need to explore every idea and potential knowledge and expand our scope for solutions beyond modern science and also critically look at the prospect of indigenous medicine as a plausible alternative means in the fight against the spread of

deadly diseases and viruses. This becomes even more significant because some of these diseases have been confirmed to be incurable by modern medicine or have become resilient to modern medication.

Clarification of terms

Epistemological: The term epistemological is coined from the Greek word for "knowledge" that is *episteme*, and epistemology is the branch of philosophy that considers how you know things how, for instance, your senses determine what you can know about the world around you. It is alleged that when truth and belief intersect, one finds knowledge (traditional definition of knowledge)². Thus the term epistemological suggests the philosophical analysis of the nature of knowledge and the conditions required for a belief or any prerequisites for knowing to constitute knowledge, such as truth, belief, and justification, which also include the potential sources of knowledge and justified belief, such as perception, reason, memory, and testimony. All these constitute an epistemological view. Thus epistemological is a view or claim that is based on philosophical analysis of the requirements for knowledge or knowing. The Cambridge Dictionary defines the term epistemological as relating to the part of philosophy that is about the study of how we know things³. Thus epistemological is not itself knowledge but constitutes that which formulates, constitute, and underlines the process of what knowledge itself is.

Anarchism: The etymological origin of *anarchism* is from the Ancient Greek *anarkhia*, meaning "without a ruler". Early English usages emphasised a sense of disorder. Many revolutionaries of the 19th century such as William Godwin (1756–1836) and Wilhelm Weitling (1808–1871) would contribute to the anarchist doctrines of the next generation but did not use *anarchist* or *anarchism* in describing

themselves or their beliefs⁵. The term anarchism has political roots. According to Chomsky “Anarchism” is originally a political movement that is skeptical of all justifications for authority and seeks to abolish the institutions it claims maintain unnecessary coercion and hierarchy, typically including nation-states, and capitalism⁶. Anarchism advocates for the replacement of the state with stateless societies and voluntary free associations. Historically, anarchism is placed on the farthest left of the political spectrum, usually described as the libertarian wing of the socialist movement. Anarchism in its philosophical usage, however, implies skepticism against standardized theories, methods, and established paradigms with the view of giving liberty and freedom to voices of reasoning and self-expression. Thus Anarchism in this sense does not carry the political totalitarian facet with it but suggests the need for diversity, inclusiveness, libertarianism, and democratic traits of self-expression and the ability to pursue one interest without intimidation or fear of censorship, cancel culture and giving in to the gimmicks of postmodern practice of political correctness.

Epistemological anarchism is, therefore, the rejection of any form of standardized or universalized method of knowing and conceptualizing knowledge. It is a skeptical approach to the established paradigm on how we know and acquire knowledge, especially the scientific method of inquiring and investigation. Agidigbi in her work *An Appraisal of Paul Feyerabend's Methodological Anarchism* observes that the epistemological anarchism or post-enlightenment anarchism is its faith in the natural reason of the human race⁷. She avers that epistemological anarchism also differs from political anarchism in the sense that while the hallmark of political anarchism is its opposition to the established order, authority, practice, or a certain way of life, epistemological anarchist may even want to defend it in

certain ways, for it is not entirely focus on destroying any institution, ideology and establish methods but only rejects and refuse to confine to any rigid and dogmatic acclaimed sacrosanct epistemological methods of inquiring⁸ and subscribe to the opinion that scientific progress can only strive on the wheel of free thinking and inclusivity of diverse epistemological methods of inquiring.

Disease: There is no generally accepted definition for the term disease even among medical scientists and medical researchers. This is because over the years among medical researchers, practitioners, and recognised institutes of medicine there has been a heated debate as to what condition(s) in an organism can be agreed as diseased. Studies in medical anthropology and sociology have shown that whether people believe themselves to be ill varies with class, gender, ethnic group, and less obvious factors such as proximity to support from family members⁹. What counts as disease also changes over historical time, partly as a result of increasing expectations of health, and due to changes in diagnostic ability, but mostly for a mixture of social and economic reasons. For example, osteoporosis, which after being officially confirmed as a disease by the WHO in 1994 switched from being a disease to a necessary part of ageing condition. Homosexuality also over the years has assumed one status or the other due to socio-political changes. After it was initially assumed to be an action or act, later became human moral lapses, and was redefined during the nineteenth century as a state of mind, in the first half of the twentieth-century homosexuality was viewed as an endocrine disturbance requiring hormone treatment. Later its pathological identity changed as it was re-categorized as an organic mental disorder treatable by electroshock and sometimes neurosurgery; and finally, in 1974 it was officially de-pathologized when the American Psychiatric Association removed it from the listed disease states in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV and currently refers to as one among

other genders¹⁰. The *Online Biology Dictionary* defines disease as an abnormal condition of an organism that interrupts the normal bodily functions that often leads to feelings of pain and weakness, and is usually associated with symptoms and signs or a pathologic condition in which the normal functioning of an organism or body is impaired or disrupted resulting in extreme pain, dysfunction, distress, or death¹¹. For the purpose of this study and to avoid ambiguity we will confine our scope and application of the term to the above definition.

Modern medicine: According to Singh “Modern medicine is a field of science that deals with health and healing. It covers diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of disease, medical research, and many other aspects of health”¹². Modern medicine approves, complies with strict adherence, and promotes medical practices that are formally recognized by medical schools or health institutions and organizations, and have the legal prerogative and necessary professionalism in medicine, and can certify those under its tutelage as qualified medical practitioners after meeting all required standards demanded by that recognize medical institution. Thus modern science requires a formal education in the field or any branch of medical science. At present, the award of a certificate and the license to practice are strict requirements for practicing modern medicine. Thus modern medicine requires special training under a recognised medical institution, certification and license to practice, and strict adherence to the code of practice. Jegede avers that modern medicine is nothing but Western medicine and Western medical practices that were promoted and spread across the globe under the embers of globalization, colonialism, and westernization¹³.

Indigenous Medicine: Indigenous medicine (also known as traditional medicine or folk medicine) comprises medical

aspects of traditional knowledge that developed over generations within the folk beliefs of various societies, including indigenous peoples, before the era of modern medicine. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines traditional medicine as "the sum total of the knowledge, skills, and practices based on the theories, beliefs, and experiences indigenous to different cultures, whether explicable or not, used in the maintenance of health as well as in the prevention, diagnosis, improvement or treatment of physical and mental illness"¹⁴. Indigenous medicine is often contrasted with scientific or modern medicine.

Epistemological Anarchism in the view of Paul Feyerabend

The discoveries, inventions, and innovations achieved by science over time have placed science in a class of its own. In modern times the field of science has achieved a feat that past generations can only refer to as '*figment of imagination*'. Scientists often acknowledge the scientific method of inquiry and investigation as the anchor behind the success of science. This scientific method according to Newton Smith helps scientists to generate valid logic for justification for scientific inquiring¹⁵. Agidigbicompares the scientific method to the unique technicality of a carpenter. Just as the carpenter or bricklayer produces certain objects through definite and definable ways of using his instruments, similarly the scientist applies the scientific method to achieve desirable result¹⁶. This suggests that the scientific method provides the scientist with a logic of discovery, which guides the scientist in discovering novel theories, pursuing truth, finding knowledge, and giving a reasonable explanation for certain occurrences in our world.

It is accurate to assert that the achievement of science has bestowed on it the image of perfectionism and absolutism, conveying that the scientific method is flawless

and should be an all-time point of reference, especially in the pursuit of knowledge, truth, and explaining occurrences in our planets. However, the contemporary philosopher of science Paul Feyerabend was among the few contemporary scholars who challenged this traditional view of science and its method as *par excellence* in the pursuit of truth and knowledge. Feyerabend in his Magnus opus *Against Method* opines that the history of science does not reveal perfectionism in its method but a series of falsifications and refutations, coupled with chaotic desperate attempts to manage and solve the immediate problem confronting society and humanity in general. It is a desperate attempt in society that brings about the evolution of the scientific method. Feyerabend succinctly pinpoints its argument in the following deposition:

Science is to be treated as one tradition among many, not as a standard for judging what is and what is not, what can and what cannot be accepted...Democratic societies should give all traditions equal rights and not equal opportunities¹⁷.

For Feyerabend, there is a need to unseat the stringent and restrictive approach of the “scientific method” as the only sacrosanct method of epistemological inquiring. Rather it's better to adopt an *anarchistic method* according to which 'anything goes'¹⁸. For Feyerabend, anarchism is a democratic initiative since it encourages the diversity of opinions, ideas, methods, and propositions that are best suitable for handling peculiar challenges or problems in a multi-polar world. In his book *Against Method* Feyerabend was quick to point out and elucidate the difference and connection between political anarchism and his epistemological or methodological anarchism:

The hallmark of political anarchism is its opposition to the established order of

things...which...must be destroyed so that human spontaneity may come to the fore and exercise its right of freely initiating action, of freely choosing what he thinks is best... violence, whether spiritual or political plays an important role in this form anarchism... one of the remarkable characteristics of post-enlightenment anarchism (epistemological anarchism) is its faith in the 'natural reason' of the human race and its respect for science... Unpleasant in appearance, and untrustworthy in its results science has ceased to be an ally of human freedom and pursuit of truth¹⁹ (emphasis mine)

This suggests that a core tenet of post-enlightenment anarchism that is epistemological anarchism is its confidence in the intelligibility and rationality of the human person and its respect for the great prospects science is capable of achieving. Science, however, has changed from an enlightenment endeavour to being a strict hindrance to human freedom, intelligibility, and by extension creativity and the human ability for novelty all in the name of its standardized method of investigation and verification. Further elucidating the difference between political and epistemological anarchism Feyerabend writes:

While... the political anarchist wants to remove a certain form of life, the epistemological anarchist may want to defend it, for he has no everlasting aversion against any institution or any ideology. Like the Dadaist, whom he resembles much more than he resembles the political anarchist, he... is against all programs, though he will on occasion be the most vociferous defender of the status quo of his opponent... there is no view... he refuses to

consider or act upon and no method is regarded as indispensable. The one thing he opposes positively and absolutely is universal standards, universal laws, and universal ideas²⁰

The basic features of political anarchism therefore include opposition to the established order of things and the use of violence, while epistemological anarchism opposes, violence and unequivocally rejects the established scientific method of inquiring. Thus in the view of Feyerabend the scientific method is not a flawless and absolutely reliable source of scientific investigation, knowledge acquisition, and the search for truth. In the words of Feyerabend, “I do not object to rules, standards, and arguments. I only object to rules, standards, and arguments of a certain kind. I object to rules, standards, and arguments which are general and independent of the situation in which they applied”²¹. So for Feyerabend, the growth of knowledge and the pursuit of humanism at its best cannot be achieved if the methods with which we seek knowledge is not dynamic, sophisticated and remain inapplicable to special and relative phenomena like a straight jacket suit.

Given the complexity of any realistic situation within science and the unpredictability of the future, as far as the development of science is concerned, it is irrational to hope for a methodology that dictates that: given some situation, a rational scientist must adopt some theory “A” to theory “B” such stringent theories or rules must be rejected for the pursuit of knowledge and truth²². Thus, for Feyerabend, if the growth of knowledge is to be achieved by following any rule or methodology at all, it must be a method or paradigm, which is both flexible and undogmatic. This is the core tenet of Feyerabend's epistemological and methodological anarchism. It is simply and primarily an advocacy for freedom in the pursuit for knowledge and truth especially concerning

methodologies. For him, any necessary method goes.

Moral Inquiring into the Practices of Modern Medicine

The medical profession with its various practices and departments has immensely helped humanity to overcome challenges relating to human health, biology, and the general well-being of the human race. However, over the years modern medicine has ventured into questionable practices that raise doubt about its ethical code of practice and suspension regarding the motive of modern medicine.

For some decades now, medical practices such as euthanasia, surrogacy, genetic modification, abortion, human cloning, IVF(in vitro fertilization), sperm banking, micro-chips, and steroid implantation have raised ethical debate regarding what is morally conducive and extreme or abhorrent to the practice of medicine or against consensus and conventional morality. Practices such as the mutilation of vital organs and body parts in humans, animals, and plants or the injection of steroids to transform the natural state of beings either bio-chemical or physical to attain particular results and advance knowledge in modern medicine are worrisome. Practices such as cloning, manufacturing fake vaccines, drugs, and pharmaceutical products that have caused health complication and even the death of patients in some cases has raised social concern among nations all over the world. These practices create a skeptical outlook toward the true motive of modern medicine and raise fundamental moral questions. Chukwu makes this observation in his article when he opines that the widespread use of illicit drugs and the success of the drug trafficking business is a taint and a blemish on the nobility of modern medicine²³. Chukwu's opinion can be insinuated to mean that she agrees to the conspiracy theory which modern medicine is accused of. Some of the very popular conspiracy theories in the medical field that are strongly believed to be true by significant

members of medical profession are HIV/AIDS denialism, Vaccine hesitancy, Big pharm conspiracy theory, VernonColeman, COVID 19 misinformation, lancet MMR autism fraud, oral polio vaccine AIDS hypothesis, SARS conspiracy theory, plandemic and medical racism also refer to as (the new apartheid)²⁴.

The certainty of these theories is debatable, but there are studies in support of their claims. This indeed creates serious doubt about the practice of modern medicine and a need to question the moral and ethical justification for such obnoxious practices in the field of modern medicine. Commenting on the conspiracy theory of medical racism Williams and Rucker contend that “racial discrimination permeates the healthcare system of many countries...this has negative consequences for both patients and healthcare workers, leading to high risk of illness and low standard of health care among people of color”²⁵. President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa also highlights racial discriminatory practice in modern medicine during the COVID-19 pandemic when he caption that:

During the COVID-19 pandemic Africans were treated like beggars when it came to making vaccines available and were refused to be supplied vaccines. The Northern hemisphere countries bought all the vaccines and were hurdling them, while the virus was spreading and Africans were contracting and dying of the virus. Even the attempt to manufacture alternative vaccines in Africa was enormously rejected and criticized. This raises the question of what is more important: life or profit by big pharmaceutical companies? Is life in the West more important than life in the global south?²⁶

This deposition by Ramaphosa paints a malevolent

picture of what modern medicine has evolved into, the level of ethical and moral decadence, the commercialization and profitability-driven motive at the expense of saving lives and preserving human health, the discriminatory and suppressive attitude towards people of colour and indigenous medicine is reprehensible. Negudum makes a similar observation when he noted that the lack of adequate availability of vaccines to Africans during the Covid 19 has less to do with the supply chain and more to do with racism, colonialism, and capitalist greed²⁷.

Perhaps, the worst conspiracy theory is the (pandemic) this theory claims that there is a world conspiracy seeking to control humanity through Modern medicine and to make money for the putative conspirators, the Covid 19 pandemic is described as a key moment in the agenda of these conspirators. Mikki Willis who is a major proponent of this theory claims to have worked with seven thousand professional medical doctors and Attorney²⁸. Observing the perilous trend of the pandemic Prof. Kihumbu Thairu, Director of the Kenya Aids Watch Institute, rightly asserts that the pandemic can exterminate Africans, particularly the black race²⁹. He contends that if Africans fail to control the pandemic and other diseases that are spreading around the continent, they may surrender the continent to those better organized and determined to conquer the forces of nature

There are two salient points we should underline from the above argument: Firstly, if indeed there is an iota of truth in some of these conspiracy theories in modern medicine. It will imply that: modern medicine has lost its moral compass and if allowed to operate in the following trend and manner, there is bound to be a proliferation of modern medicine and by extension a breakdown of civilization in human society. This is because any institution that fails to imbibe the core values, culture, ideas, and morality practices that bind us as humans

and as social beings in any given society is on a clear route of degradation and absolute collapse. Secondly, Prof Kihumbu observation suggests that Africans and people of colour must develop a pragmatic and efficient health system or plan that best works for them on preventing, healing, treating, and curtailing the spread of contagious diseases and viruses in the continent. Failure to have an Afrocentric plan on how best to address the lapses of modern medicine such as extreme profitability, unethical practices, and human experimentation and to always rely on foreign aid and support at every point in time will spell doom for African Society and indigenous people.

The Spread and Harm of Fake Drugs and Vaccines in Africa

Over the years we have seen cases of Western nations giving medical aid and financial aid to Africans, while in reality, the motive of these aids to Africa is becoming questionable and suspicious because these aids over the years have yielded zero sustainable human and capital development in the continent. The lack of sustainable development resulting from the numerous aids granted to Africa can be blamed on several factors. But in Reynar opinion, there seems to be a plan to keep Africa in a perpetual state of dependency and the best way to achieve this in his opinion is to give Africa grants, aid, and other financial assistance in the form of loans with stringent conditions that are difficult to meet, imposing of outrageous socio-cultural and moral values on Africa and when this happen Africa becomes vulnerable and in a condition of servitude to its master and colonizers once again³⁰. Reynar opines that the World Trade Organization, and International Monetary Fund IMF were not formed originally with the interest of Africa or underdeveloped nations. Africa and other underdeveloped nation only became member states with the emergence and spread of globalization, however, the inclusion of African nation as members of these group have not in any way

changed their Eurocentric interests³¹. This state of victimhood and vulnerability suffered by African states suggests that Africa has little or no say in the decision-making process in these organizations that can promote fair play in the global space. The unfairness and inequality in these international and global organizations are so strategic and politicized to the point that African and underdeveloped nations find it difficult to make laws, formulate policies, and implement decisions that may even benefit their people without facing the threat of bans and sanctions from big wings nations that control the global theatre especially if such decision taken by smaller or African nations are inimical to their interest and agenda. This unfair play in the global market has opened Africa and third-world countries to a range of failures, be it political or economic. This explicate why most of these underdeveloped nations have ineffective lawsthat has weakened the political, economic, social, and democratic pillars and institution of these nations and haveopened the state to an unimaginable magnitude of corruption.

The unfair and unequal relationship that exists between big-wing countries and their African counterparts has led to weak foreign policies, poor economic policies, weak and devalued currencies, widespread corruption, weak borders, poor healthcare system, hunger, impoverishment, and the eroding of social values. An aspect of this social apocalypse that is of grave concern is the porous border across the African continent. This problem is largely responsible for the widespread illegal circulation of fake and substandard drugs and vaccines across the continent. The effect of substandard drugs on African's health and life expectancy has been injurious. Ejibuwa laments that Africa has become a dumping ground for fake drugs and contraband products which often are camouflaged under the pretense of medical aid to polio, HIV/AIDS, and Malaria patients in

Africa. Commenting on the devastating effect of fake drugs in Africa the Guardian affirms that:

New cases of polio linked to the oral vaccine have been reported in four African countries and more children are now being paralysed by vaccine-derived viruses than those infected by viruses in the wild, according to global health numbers. The World Health Organization (WHO) and its partners identified nine new cases caused by the vaccine in Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, and Angola... In Afghanistan and Pakistan, polio remains endemic, and in Pakistan, officials have been accused of covering up vaccine-related cases³³.

The reason behind the spread of vaccines and drug-related diseases and sickness across the continent is not far-fetched. It appears that big-wing pharmaceutical drug companies are interested in experimenting and testing their pharmaceutical products, vaccines, and drugs and Africa seems to be a suitable guinea pig due to its porous border, open market, inefficient food and drug agencies, and corrupt government. Michael highlights the disastrous effect that recurs from testing and experimenting with medical and chemical weapons on the African continent. Commenting on the Sahara bomb test in Algeria he observes that “between 1960 and 1966, the French colonial regime detonated seventeen nuclear bombs in colonized Algeria Sahara and tested other nuclear technologies and weapons, spreading radioactive fallout across Africa and the Mediterranean... and causing irreversible contamination³⁴. The harmful effect of such scientific tests perpetuated in the African environmental space is irreversible and observe that such technological pride and pursuit often come with the destruction of human, animal, and vegetal lives and the

toxification of hundreds and thousands of kilometers of natural, living and built environments in Algeria (Africa) and elsewhere where such tests are conducted. This is a testament to how much of humanity and morality that modern science and medicine is ready to sacrifice all in the name of invention and innovation.

Due to the alert made by Interpol, the South African police force seized hundreds of fake COVID-19 vaccines in circulation and arrested those suspected to be responsible for peddling and circulating the fake vaccines³⁵. A similar case was also recorded in Zambia where over four hundred ampoules equivalent to around thousand and four hundred doses- containing the fake vaccines were found at a warehouse in Germiston, Gauteng, and arrest three Chinese nationals and a Zambian³⁶. In Nigeria the Guardian report that according to the World Health Organization (WHO) there has been a spread and circulation of falsified version of COVISHIELD in Nigeria ever since the country rolled out phase two of the vaccination programme³⁷. One must aptly note that the effect of fake drugs and vaccines on individual and public health is devastating because such fake pharmaceutical products heighten the risk of being vulnerable to other infections and non-responsive to treatment, there are even severe cases of patients who are vaccinated or treated with such drugs suffering from health complication in some cases, other suffers serious symptomatic effect and some have even lost their lives.

The fight against fake medicine and drugs is even more challenging when we are confronted with the fact that Africa imports nearly 90% of its pharmaceuticals, this makes the continent even more susceptible to the peddling of fake drugs and vaccines³⁸. Fake and substandard medicines poses real health problem for the people of Africa. Studies have shown that nearly 60% of the medicines sold in

underdeveloped countries especially are of inferior quality or are simply falsified³⁹ said Dr Idi Illiassou Mainassara Niger's health minister. It is likely that any medicine that enters a country through an irregular circuit and is smuggled through is more likely to be fake or inferior medicine. This is simply because those peddling such drugs do not want to be caught and face the consequences of the law for peddling and trafficking fake drugs.

Another contributing factor that has made drug peddling in the continent susceptible is the alarming rate of poverty and economic hardship. Thus, the illicit and harmful act of fake drug trafficking has become a multimillion lucrative business. The Paris-based Institute de Recherche Anti-Counterfeiting de Médicaments estimates that “\$1,000 invested can bring in up to \$500,000. From \$80bn in 2010, the trafficking of fake medicines now represents \$200bn worldwide”⁴⁰. This proves that the financial return is greater than most legal and genuine business enterprises in some societies, and the risks to the traffickers are almost nil, due to poor security networks, immigration laws, and poor border control, coupled with corrupt government agencies that sometimes are conspirators to the drug cartel. In some cases, profits made from this illicit drug-peddling business are sometimes used to sponsor militia, terrorist groups, and political agendas. This practice is not far-fetched and it is done with the interest of creating a wider network and influence in the drug trafficking business and government bureaucracy.

In a region that is still bedeviled with economic hardship and suffering from years of political conflict and violence, colonialism, and slavery the rise of drug trafficking indeed poses an overwhelming threat to the healthcare system and public health, and every initiative to better Africa. The addiction to drugs by young and vibrant Africans and the death toll resulting from fake drugs and vaccines are

disheartening. It is estimated that around 100,000 people die each year on the continent from fake medicines. It is clear that modern medicine has been helpful in providing medical aids in preventing, curing, healing, and restoring humans and public health. However, The commercialization of the pharmaceutical industries with the interest of making money, the widespread of fake medicine especially when we consider the harmful effects of such pharmaceutical products, the limited knowledge of modern medicine, and the inability to proffer solutions to some health challenges, sickness and disease coupled with the fact that modern medicine continues to violate and engage in a medical experiment and practices that undermine traditional moral values and the certainty of life have caused a lot of backlash and criticism against modern medicine. There is also the issue of medical racism also known as the (new apartheid) that is also witnessed in modern medical practices. Such practices raise questions such as: Is making profit more important than human lives? Or are the lives of white people or one particular race more valuable than the lives of black people? These questions expose the discriminatory manner African nations are treated by Western countries during the pandemic, (COVID-19) and are directed toward probing the intention and professionalism of modern medicine. While western countries were given preferential treatment and attention over African countries during the provision of vaccines and other health facilities and were strongly opposed and refused from manufacturing their vaccine by the WTO to save South Africans' lives⁴¹. This unfair and discriminatory treatment of Africans and the abandonment they are dealt with in such desperate times, like during the pandemic and the seeming attitude to suppress indigenous medicine create a surging need to develop, reform promote, and invest in alternative or indigenous medicine that will better improvise take care of the health-related issues of indigenous people. This assertion is succinctly lauded by President Emmanuel Macron of

France who avers that France (Europe) is not the one to solve Nigeria's problem or to save Africa ⁴². Therefore, it is the responsibility of African and indigenous people to formulate initiatives best related to their worldview that can help them address their socio-political and economic problems, as over-reliance on foreign Europe and foreign aid can only be to their detriment in the long run.

The Need for Alternative or Indigenous Medicine

While, the notion of scientific progress and development- modern medicine in particular is incontestable. However, the deification, dogmatism, and the manifestation of authoritarianism in the scientific method have been antithetical to scientific progress and human progress in particular. Thus, there is a need for the scientific method to be loosened up in its approach to the justification of knowledge. We must aptly, note that the discourse and search for knowledge is beyond the scope of a particular discipline and methodology. Considering the need to proffer answers and solutions to the challenges confronting modern medicine modern science and its methodology need to step out of its dogmatic shell and embrace a liberal approach in its method of investigation and inquiring. This will imply that the consideration of alternative or indigenous medicine as a prospective body of knowledge may just be the breakthrough and missing link between modern medicine and the wide range of questions that are left unanswered in modern medicine. The efficiency of indigenous medicine in healing and curing afflictions right from time immemorial is indisputable. Indigenous people have always resorted to the use of traditional herbal healing methods when there is an endemic disease or sickness. Thus, the efficiency of indigenous or alternative medicine has never been the problem, even though its methodology and ways of practice have been criticized. But, we should aptly state that advancement and progress in knowledge is not necessarily a

product of method as experience has shown that there can be different methodological approach to reality. Negudu subscribes to this view when he avers that over time history has shown that progress and advancement in knowledge come to the limelight when there are contradictory or opposing approaches to a problem⁴³, as such situations are likely to necessitate the birth of new ideas. This framework is what underlines the Marxian philosophical axiom of '*thesis antithesis and synthesis*'. If modern science can adopt this philosophical and existential approach in interrogating its method of inquiring and research, scientism will better position itself for advancement in knowledge and also play a vital role in socio-cultural engineering.

Although, indigenous medicine has a prospect with great potential and can contribute meaningfully to the breakthrough of modern medicine. However, one must note that its progress has been slow and even at times faces repression from modern medicine, colonialism, and Westernization. Even among indigenous people, we often see indigenous medicine and other traditional practices being demonized and wrongly identified with sorcery, witchcraft, and magical practices. This outlook towards indigenous medicine has contributed to its negligence and the lack of patronage from the global space. Speaking on the potency of indigenous medicine Oshadare and Akanmudi deposit that traditional medicine is so sophisticated to the degree that in almost every African society there are traditional medical remedies that can even be used to cure mental illness and many other sicknesses of different nature and causes⁴⁴. Khamalwa subscribes to the above argument when he avers that “traditional healers have been proven to be better at dealing with mental patients than their modern medical counterparts; indeed there is something the latter could learn from the former”⁴⁵ Khamalwa believes this to be true and his justification is that most mental issue in African tradition is

understood relatively to be caused by socio-cultural, and socio-religious factors and these are areas that traditional healers are more at home with and knowledgeable in due to their deep exposure in cultural knowledge⁴⁶. Thus, traditional medical specialty is not an invention born out of trial by error or ignorance, but by careful examination and application of indigenous understanding of nature, the environment, indigenous creativity, and knowledge of indigenous people that is derived from a keen observation and experimenting with the meta-natural reality that surrounds the existence of traditional people.

One of the popular criticisms leveled against indigenous medicine is that it lacks scientific proof and precise dosage and its potent remedies often constitute hundreds of chemical substances. Aslem Adodo counters this criticism, in the following deposition:

The medicament present in indigenous medical remedies is in the form of alkaloids, essential oils, enzymes, spices, and elements of ingestible minerals. Once absorbed they are assimilated only in the quantity needed by the body... The right indigenous herbal remedy, taken at the first physical symptoms, manifestations, or signs of a disorder, helps the body's own healing mechanism. Since these are alternative medicine, excess of any kind is excreted⁴⁷.

In their defense of traditional medication Oshadare and Akanmidu draw a comparative similarity between traditional remedies and modern medicine when they posit that:

Traditional doctors use different elements for the treatment of various illnesses... herbs, leaves, roots, stems, seeds, flowers, fruits, bud sap, juice of trees, and plants, water, and various power

and liquid substances and similar things are used to produce modern drugs, vaccines and different pharmaceutical products⁴⁸

The business of saving lives, protecting human welfare, and building human civilization should essentially be the concern of every field of knowledge, irrespective of its methods and approach. If the goal of building human civilization and preserving life is not safeguarded but rather jeopardized as we have seen in some practices by modern science- modern medicine. Tentatively one can say that, in that context, the role of modern medicine has been defeated. It, therefore, means that the methods and practices of modern medicine must be interrogated. Scientific research especially in modern medicine must weigh the moral and social ramifications of their experiment and invention and should be reoriented that genuine medicine is not all about inventing and experimenting and in the process destroying lives but essentially it is about saving and preserving and should be humblenough to admit that knowledge in its entirety is beyond the scope and method of her investigation and should be ready to consider, interrogate, experiment and apply the provision from other field of knowledge in the fight for human and public health considering the fact that its own method have not be able to answer or provide solution to some of the deadliest threat to human and public health. Thus, there is need to refine, modernise, research into, invest and repackage tradi-medical practice and remedy in every possible way as this will improve its efficacy and bring about its patronage and public acceptance.

Concluding Remark

The widespread of disease and sickness, such as HIV/AIDS, COVID-19, malaria, polio, sickle cell disease, and other endemic sickness has been one of the most serious threats to human existence. And attempt to tackle these

ailments has led to exhaustion of resources. Disease and sickness have destroyed families, and rendered most people poor. Pandemic such as COVID-19, and Ebola virus, has caused people to abandon their home. Thus, the social stigma inflicted on victims of terminal ailments can be overbearing on the individual, family, and community and can pose an existential threat to the entire society in the cases of pandemics. There is a need to adopt drastic measures, which call for the expansion of the method and boundaries of modern medicine to include and consider the provision of alternative or indigenous medicine, which should be researched into reformed, and invested upon since the knowledge it improvises have help in promoting human and public health in crucial life-saving cases. The fight for the sustenance and preservation of human and public health is crucial and any methods or relevant knowledge that provide significant ideas is needed and needful and should not be discarded on the grounds of not meeting the requirement of a particular setasidestandard and method. Thus Feyerabend adherently supports the view that any method can go⁴⁹. In the words of Wotsuma Khamalwa sickness, diseases, and terminal ailment are not only medical challenges but have also spread their contagious tentacles to infect other aspects of society and life. Diseases and sicknesses do not just infect the human body but also impact the social well-being of people and society as it continue to infect and affect all and sundry as its ripple effect is seen in social life as a result of the stigma it creates.

There has been a shared rivalry between indigenous medicine and the modern healthcare system and in the case of outright failure of modern medicine to provide cures to the numerous terminal diseases destroying human and public health all over the globe any claim of superiority on its part will be deemed ignoramus. There should rather be collaboration; joint research conducted shared ideas,

findings, and results, and dependent consultation to improve knowledge and be in a better position to combat this common enemy that has become an existential threat to life.

ENDNOTES

- 1). Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. “*atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.*” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, December7, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/event/atomicbombings-of-Hiroshima-and-Nagasaki>.(May 2021):2, <http://www.britannica.com/event/atomic/bombings-of-Hiroshima-and-Nagasaki>.
- 2). Paul Moser, *The Oxford Handbook of Epistemology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 32.
- 3).Cambridge Dictionary (September 2022):104, <https://www.google.com/dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/epistemological>.
- 4). Dirlik, A. , Rosemont, . Franklin , Woodcock, . George and Miller, . Martin A.. "anarchism." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, (October 2023), 76. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/anarchism>.
- 5). Noam Chomsky, *On Anarchism*, (March 2005): 21,the [newpress.com/books/ on-anarchism](http://newpress.com/books/on-anarchism).
- 6). Ibid.,24.
- 7). Blessing O. Agidigbi, “Paul Feyerabend's Methodological Anarchism”, *Knowledge Review: A Multidisciplinary Journal* 13, 8(2006), 129-130.
8. Ibid.,132.
- 9).Jackie L. Scully, *National Library of Medicine*,(July 2004):1. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC.1299105/ . doi 10.1038/sj.embor.7400195.
- 10). Ronald Bayer & Robert Spitzer, eds. “Correspondence on the Status of Homosexuality in DSM”, *Journal of the History of the Behavioural Sciences* 18,1 (August2020): 42,[https://doi.org/10.1002/1520-6696\(198201\)18:1<32:AIDS-](https://doi.org/10.1002/1520-6696(198201)18:1<32:AIDS-)

- JHBS2300180105>3.0;2-0.
- 11). *Online Dictionary of Biology*, (September 2001):54,
<https://www.biologyonline.com/dictionary>.
 - 12). Singh R. Ajai, *Modern Medicine: Towards Prevention, Cure, Wellbeing and Longevity* 8, 1 (December 2010): 17-19, doi 10.4103/0973-2229.58817.
 - 13). Olugbemiro Jegede, "Science Education in Non Western Cultures: Towards a Theory of Collateral Learning", in *What is Indigenous Knowledge?*, eds. Ladislaus M. Semali & Joe L Khcheloe (New York: Falmers Press, 1999), 120.
 - 14). "Traditional Medicine," *World Health Organization Africa Region*, (September 2020):3,
www.afro.who.int/health-topics/traditional-medicine.
 - 15). Smith W.H. Newton, *The Rationality of Science*, (New York: Routledge, 1981), 56.
 - 16). Blessing O. Agidigbi, "Paul Feyerabend's Methodological Anarchism", *Knowledge Review: A Multidisciplinary Journal* 13, no.8(2006): 136.
 - 17). Paul K. Feyerabend, *Against Method: An Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge*, (New York: New Left Books, 1975), 39-40.
 - 18). John P. Searle, "Contemporary Philosophy in the United States", in *The Blackwell Companion to Philosophy*, eds. Nicholas Bunnin & Tsui-James (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2003), 18.
 - 19). Paul K. Feyerabend, *Against Method: An Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge*, (New York: New Left Books, 1975), 187-188.
 - 20). Ibid., 189.
 - 21). Ibid., 192.
 - 22). Ibid., 204.
 - 23). Cletus N. Chukwu, "A philosophical Appraisal of the Problem of HIV/AIDS", in *Footprints in Philosophy*, ed. Akanmidu, R. A. (Ibadan: Hope Publication Limited, 2005), 169-171.

- 24). David R. Williams & Toni D. Rucker,
“Understanding and Addressing Racial Disparities
in Health Care”, *National Library of Medicine*, (June
2000):54,
- 25). Ibid., 56.
www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/pmc4194634/.
- 26). *New Global Financial PACT Summit in Paris*, (February 2020),
<https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/988264579>.
- 27). Isaiah Negudu, “Scientific Progress and Postmodern Culture: The Africa Experience”, in *FILOSPFIA THEORETICA: Journal of Africa Philosophy, Culture and Religions*, (Calabar: The Calabar School of Philosophy, 2014): 82.
- 28). Mikki Willis, *Plandemic: Fear is the Virus Truth is the Cure*, (New York: Skyhorse 2021), 77.
- 29). George E. Simpson, *Yoruba Religion & Medicine in Ibadan*. (Ibadan: University Press, 1980), 34.
- 30). Rodney, Reyner, “Indigenous People's Knowledge and Education: A tool for Development”, in *What is Indigenous Knowledge?* eds. Ladislaus M Semali & Joe L. Kincheloe (New York: Falmer Press, 1999), 288.
- 31). Ibid., 291.
- 32). T. Ejubuwa, “Africa values and the Quest for Social Reconstruction”, in *Footprints in Philosophy*, ed. Akanmidu, R. A., (Ibadan: Hope Publications Limited, 2006), 143-144.
- 33). “The Guardian”, *Nigeria Unlikely to Reach Impossible 40% Covid Vaccine Target*, (November 2021):1, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/nov/08/Nigeria-unlikely-to-reach-impossible-covid-vaccine-target>.
- 34). Spencer S. Michael, *Scientism and Postmodern Civilization*, (London: Penguin 2003), 67.
- 35). *Africanews*, (May 2021): 11,

- www.Africanews.com/2021/03/03/thousands-of-fake-coronavirus-vaccines-seized-in-south-africa.
- 36). *Transparency International Zambia*, (September 2021): 9, <https://tizambia..org.zm>.
 - 37). “Nigeria Records 35 New Cases of COVID 19 Infection”, *The Guardian Nigeria News*, (January 2023): 7, .
 - 38). Aissatou Diallo, *The Africa Report*, (January 2020): 2, www.theafricareport.com/22697/from-counterfeit-vaccines-to-antibiotics-to-antimalarials-africa-istackling-the-danger-offake-medicines/.
 - 39). Ibid., 4.
 - 40). Ibid., 6.
 - 41). *New Global Financial PACT Summit in Paris*, (August 2023): 4, <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/988264579>
 - 42). *The Cable*, (July 2018): 3, <https://www.thecable.ng/france-cant-solve-nigerias-insecurity-problem-says-macron/>
 - 43). Isaiah Negudu, “Scientific Progress and Postmodern Culture: The Africa Experience”, in *FILOSOFIA THEORETICA: Journal of Africa Philosophy, Culture and Religions*, (2014): 86.
 - 44). Oshadare Akanmidu, “Traditional Methods of Curing Mental Illness Among the Owe People of Kogi State” in *History of Indigenous Science and Technology Nigeria* Nigeria, ed. R. A. Olaoye (Ibadan: Cresthill Publishers Limited, 2009), 233-234.
 - 45). Wotsuna Khamalwa, “Religion, Traditional Healers and the AID Pandemic in Uganda”, in *Religion and Health in Africa*, ed. Adam K. ArapChepkwonyi, (Nairobi: Paulines Publication Africa, 2006), 95.
 - 46). Ibid., 97.
 - 47). Anslem Adodo, *Herbal Medicine and the Revival of Africa Civilization*, (Ewu-Esan: Pax Herbal Publications, 2010), 139-140.

- 48). Oshadare Akanmidu, “Traditional Methods of Curing Mental Illness Among the Owe People of Kogi State in Nigeria”, in *History of Indigenous Science and Technology in Nigeria*, ed. R. A. Olaoye, (Ibadan: Cresthill Publishers Limited, 2009), 235.
- 49). Paul K. Feyerabend, *Against Method: An Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge*, (New York: New Left Books, 1975), 200.
- 50). Wotsuna Khamalwa, “Religion, Traditional Healers and the AID Pandemic in Uganda”, in *Religion and Health in Africa*, ed. Adam K. ArapChepkwonyi, (Nairobi: Paulines Publication Africa, 2006), 98.

Arne Naess's Deep Ecology and Its Implications for Ecological Balance in the Niger Delta

Donald Emayomi
Postgraduate MA Student,
Department of Philosophy, University of Port Harcourt
mudiakijesu@gmail.com

Abstract

The Niger Delta region is endowed and known for its rich biodiversity and natural resources. However, the region has been perennially plagued by degradation due to oil exploration and exploitation activities. This article explores the philosophy of deep ecology, developed by Arne Næss, and its implications for fostering ecological balance in the Niger Delta. Deep ecology is an ecocentric or biocentric theory that emphasizes the inherent value in the existence, diversity, and interrelatedness of life forms. It is a holistic and radical approach that challenges the anthropocentric and utilitarian worldview of modern society and advocates for profound respect and care for all forms of life. Unlike conventional anthropocentric environmental theories, deep ecology offers a framework for examining the Niger Delta context in the search for ecological equilibrium and sustainability. The critical search for ecological balance in the Niger Delta is important because of the extent of environmental destruction in the form of biodiversity loss, pollution, and economic disruptions. Deep ecology principles promote the value and validity of biodiversity, respect and identification with nature, taming interference with nature, and prioritizing environmental care. When applied to the Niger Delta context, deep ecology offers a substantial vision and path for taming degradation and advancing the harmonious existence of human and non-

human forms in the Niger Delta environment. This article argues that deep ecology can provide a pathway to ecological equilibrium for the people of the Niger Delta who have suffered from the negative impacts of oil activities on their health, livelihoods, culture, and identity. Deep ecology can be a source of hope and empowerment for the Niger Delta.

Introduction

Arne Naess, a professor of Philosophy who taught and studied at the University of Oslo in Norway, became a disruptive and influential figure in the field of environmental ethics. Arne Naess was disruptive in the sense that he turned away from the dominant anthropocentric worldview in environmental ethics theory. He was influential in the sense that he developed ecocentrism in the form of “deep ecology” and led a school of philosophers and activists to toe the line of ecocentrism. The ecocentric philosophy propagated by Arne Naess-deep ecology- developed as a reaction to the “shallow” anthropocentric worldview in environmental theory. This shallow ethical perspective glorified human interests and economic utility at the expense of non-human entities in the environment.

According to Naess, shallow ecology views nature primarily as a resource for human use and considers environmental protection important only for the benefit of humans. According to Naess, shallow ecology fails to question the underlying values and assumptions that lead to environmental degradation. This anthropocentric stance was also viewed by Naess to be shallow because it offered superficial, material, piecemeal solutions to the environmental crisis that was ravaging the world in the 1950s and 1960s with the frantic growth and deployment of technology. For Naess, dominant anthropocentric ecology had no solution for stemming worsening environmental destruction. This necessitated the evolvement of a major shifting consciousness and the understanding of the

relationship of human beings with the natural world.

Naess calls this shift in consciousness, “deep ecology”. For him, human beings should be one with nature, ecological self.” Human beings are not nature's center and all things such as plants, animals, birds, and stones all have equal status. They equally all have a right to existence.

Naess's call for a shift in global values and attitudes towards the environment is the cornerstone of his deep ecology philosophy. He argues that modern human society has become too focused on economic growth and technological progress, neglecting the intrinsic value of nature and other non-human forms of life. This anthropocentric view is not only detrimental to the environment, but it also poses a threat to the future of human society as well. Naess emphasizes the need for a fundamental change in our values and attitudes towards nature, one that recognizes the Earth as a living organism, not simply a resource for human exploitation.

He promotes his deep ecology theory, which is a holistic approach to environmental ethics, one that recognizes the interconnectedness of all life forms and the importance of preserving biodiversity. Naess says, “The concept of life as a network of relations, not as entities, is crucial for deep ecological thinking” (Naess, 1973, p. 94).

Deep ecology, as espoused by Arne Naess, offers a framework for examining and taming environmental destruction in the Niger Delta. This article explores how Arne Naess's Deep ecology can serve as a transformative framework for addressing the urgent need to restore ecological balance in the Niger Delta. The application of deep ecology in promoting environmental balance is critical, especially at a time when the world's ecosystems are under threat. According to Rolston enables human beings to have a

deeper understanding of their relationship and place in nature and cultivate a harmonious relationship (Rolston, 1988,p. 305). Deep ecology aims to change human perception of nature, from detached and utilitarian to an interconnected and sacred view of the world. By fostering a deep ecological understanding, people can appreciate the value of biodiversity and work towards restoring ecological balance in the Niger Delta and beyond. Naess' philosophy of deep ecology advocates for the interconnectedness of all life forms, and he suggests that humans must treat other beings as subjects with inherent value. Thus, Arne Naess provides a framework for an ethical restructuring of human beings to achieve a more harmonious coexistence with the earth and its other creatures. Ecological balance refers to the state of equilibrium and harmonious coexistence among elements of an ecosystem.

In the spirit of Naess's philosophy, this paper delves into the implications of valuing all life forms and acknowledging the interconnectedness of ecosystems, and human and non-human communities in the environment. This paper aims to explore the applicability of Deep Ecology's principles in the Niger Delta, where ecological restoration is intertwined with the well-being of local communities.

Drawing insights from Naess's Deep Ecology and considering the profound ecological challenges in the Niger Delta, this paper endeavors to contribute to the discourse on Niger Delta as it relates to the search for ecological balance, sustainable development, environmental justice, and the vital pursuit of ecological balance in this critical region.

Philosophy and Principles of Deep Ecology

Definition and Origin

Developed by Arne Naess, deep ecology is a philosophical viewpoint that goes beyond the superficial

understanding of environmentalism to enact a radical change in human perception and relationship with nature. Naess's deep ecology developed as a reaction to anthropocentric worldviews. Deep ecology challenges traditional anthropocentric views of the environment, emphasizing instead the inherent worth of all living beings, and not just their instrumental value to humans. Arne Naess first introduced this concept of "deep ecology" in the paper "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement: A Summary" (Naess, 1973). The thrust of this influential publication is that deep ecology parts ways with an anthropocentric worldview to posit that every being or life form holds intrinsic value beyond and without its utility to human interests. Arne Naess lists eight tenets of deep ecology which can be summarized thus: 1. All living things have inherent value, 2. Diverse forms of being have value in themselves, 3. Human beings are restricted from interfering with the natural world except for vital needs, 4. For human and non-human life to flourish population reduction is to take place, 5. Antecedents of human interference with nature are already excessive, 6. Policies that affect structures and aspects of life must change, 7. Change must occur towards quality life, not more possessions, 8. Environmental changes should be prioritized and pursued (see Naess, 1989, p.151)

Deep ecology offers a unique perspective on the relationship between human beings and nature. It challenges the dominant anthropocentric worldview that values nature only for its usefulness to humans. Deep ecology suggests that all living beings have inherent value and equal right to live and flourish, regardless of whether they serve a human purpose or need. Deep ecology recognizes the interdependence and diversity of all life forms and stipulates the reduction of human interference with the natural world. Deep ecology promotes a process of self-realization, which entails human beings identifying themselves with the wider ecological community thereby developing a sense of ecological responsibility and solidarity.

Naess defines deep ecology as a holistic perspective that values the inherent worth of all living beings and their ecosystems, emphasizing the interconnectedness and interdependence of all elements within the biosphere. He argues that a deep ecological approach necessitates a profound shift in human values, from the dominant anthropocentric perspective that views nature solely as a resource to be exploited for human benefit, to an ecocentric viewpoint that recognizes the intrinsic value of the natural world. In the context of the Niger Delta, this shift is particularly pertinent, as the region has long suffered from the devastating consequences of oil extraction and pollution. By embracing deep ecology, and the accompanying shift in values, it is suggested that the Niger Delta can move towards a more sustainable and balanced relationship with its environment. As Arne Naess states, that his philosophy calls for attitudinal and behavioural change (Naess, 1989, p. 89).

Some Key Principles:

1. Rejection of Anthropocentrism

Arne Naess turns against anthropocentrism because it consists of an epistemic bias that blurs our understanding of reality and restricts us from appreciating the diversity and complexity of the natural world. Naess is critical of anthropocentrism because it reflects a human-centered worldview that is ultimately harmful to both humans and non-humans. He argues that we need to adopt a biocentric or ecocentric perspective that recognizes the intrinsic value and dignity of all living beings, regardless of their utility to humans.

2. Biocentrism

This is a foundational principle of Deep Ecology. It asserts the intrinsic worth of all life forms. Arne Naess succinctly captures this idea when he states that: Life diversity and richness help in the realization of the value of biocentricism (Naess, 1986, p. 22). Thus biocentrism calls for a profound shift in

perspective, recognizing that each living being possesses inherent value, irrespective of its utility to humans.

3. Self-Realization

Self-realization is another principle of Deep Ecology. This principle stipulates that individuals are to recognize their interconnectedness with the broader ecosystem and identify with it. Naess elaborates on this by emphasizing that "self-realization occurs as a person derives increased awareness of the totality of life" (Naess, 1989, p. 11). This principle invites humans to move beyond the boundaries of the self and cultivate a deep sense of unity with the natural world while fostering empathy and responsibility towards the environment.

4. Ecological Interconnectedness

Deep Ecology underscores the intricate web of ecological interconnectedness that binds all life forms together. Naess writes, "Everything is interconnected so that one cannot think of oneself without also thinking of everything else" (Naess, 1986, p. 20). This interconnectedness extends beyond species boundaries and encompasses entire ecosystems. Understanding and respecting these complex interrelationships is vital to Deep Ecology's perspective.

Implications for Ecological Balance in the Niger Delta

In the context of the Niger Delta, applying these Deep Ecology principles could have profound implications for how we approach the region's ecological challenges and the pursuit of ecological balance. Recognizing the intrinsic value of the Delta's ecosystems, fostering a sense of interconnectedness among its inhabitants, and encouraging self-realization of their role within this web of life can offer innovative approaches to address the environmental crisis in the region.

Deep Ecology, in its principles and aspects, presents a framework and a vision for pursuing ecological balance in the Niger Delta. Naess's deep ecology is rooted in the belief that humans are interconnected with the natural world and that all living beings have inherent value. By prioritizing the preservation of biodiversity and the intrinsic value of nature, Deep Ecology offers a framework for environmental ethics that challenges the historic anthropocentric perspectives. The Niger Delta has been adversely impacted by human activities such as oil extraction, deforestation, and pollution, resulting in widespread ecological degradation. Deep ecology offers a vision and path for aiming at environmental equilibrium.

The environmental destruction that has occurred in the Niger Delta has been instigated by economic and human interests. In the pursuit of economic gains and technological objectives, the oil companies have engaged in exploration-exploitation activities that have left biodiversity loss and pollution on their trail. Deep Ecology with its shift in principle offers a contrasting path to the unbridled pursuit of profit and mineral exploitation that the Niger Delta has experienced. Deep ecology accommodates the value of biodiversity and the interest of both human and non-human actors in the ecosystem. With the shift from anthropocentrism to ecocentrism or biocentrism, applying deep ecology to the Niger Delta context would imply stemming oil exploitation activities and working to restore or remediate the adverse interference in the ecology of the Niger Delta.

The Niger Delta is a region of contrasting features. Ecologically, the region has a rich biodiversity. But it is also an environmentally degraded and impoverished region due to decades of oil exploration and exploitation by multinational oil corporations in collaboration with the Nigerian government. Specific environmental issues in the Niger Delta include oil spills, gas flaring, deforestation, pollution, loss of biodiversity, and human rights violations.

These environmental issues have adversely impacted the livelihoods, health, culture, and dignity of the local communities who depend on rudimentary fishing and farming as their means of livelihood. The Niger Delta is a theatre of the conflict between economic development and the moral responsibility of human beings towards other animals, plants, and the natural world.

The environmental issues in the Niger Delta are parallel to the environmental crisis that prompted Arne Naess to develop his theory of deep ecology as a reaction, solution, and vision aimed towards environmental sustainability, the harmonious coexistence of human and non-human life forms, and the flourishing of biodiversity. As already stated in this paper, Arne Naess's deep ecology offers a radical critique of the dominant anthropocentric worldview that regards nature as a resource to be exploited for human benefit and proposes an ecocentric alternative that emphasizes the intrinsic value of all life forms, the value and diversity of life, the respect and conservation of natural resources, and the identification between human and non-human entities in the environment. Arne Naess argues that humans are not separate from or superior to nature, but rather part of a larger ecological community that includes animals, plants, and ecosystems. He calls for a definitive questioning of underlying values that drive modern industrial society. He proposes a transformation of the human self from a narrow, egoistic, and consumerist identity to a wider, ecological and compassionate being. Arne Naess also calls for a voluntary simplification of the human lifestyle, a reduction of the human population, and non-violent resistance to the forces that threaten the ecological balance of the planet.

Arne Naess's deep ecology philosophy has implications for the Niger Delta. Naess developed deep ecology as a challenge to the anthropocentric world view

glorifies economic gains and human interests. When Naess's deep ecology is applied to the Niger Delta, it enacts a challenge to the legitimacy and morality of oil activities which have adversely impacted the environment and people of the region. Applied to the Niger Delta, deep ecology plays out the dissonance or maybe, more accurately contradiction, between the economic growth and the quality of life. Applied to the Niger Delta, deep ecology raises questions about the distribution of the costs and benefits of oil extraction, it raises questions about justice and equity about the oil exploitation and its outcomes.

Beyond a reaction to an anthropocentric worldview, deep ecology also outlays an emphasis on the intrinsic value of life forms and the flourishing of biodiversity. Applied to the Niger Delta, deep ecology provides a path and a vision for a more sustainable and harmonious relationship between the human and the natural world in the Niger Delta. Deep ecology presents a path of responsibility for stakeholders in the oil extraction process: communities, government and its agencies, and oil companies. The path of responsibility would imply that communities along with their sense of ownership of oil and natural resources, also must protect their environment: water and aquatic life, vegetation and wildlife, soil and plants, and even the atmosphere. The path of responsibility for government and oil companies would imply that they moderate exploration and exploitation with profound respect for both human and non-human entities in the environment. Then, responsibility also implies that both government and oil companies engage in activities to stall, mitigate or restore concerning the adverse impact of oil activities. A pathway of responsibility inspired by deep ecology would imply more moderate and ethical interventions and operations in the Niger Delta space by those human and corporate agents that have contributed to the degradation and loss in the region's ecology.

Deep ecology in the Niger Delta is an impetus for

communities, government and oil companies to work collaboratively to protect and restore the Niger Delta environment. It is also an invitation to reduce the scale and impact of oil activities in the environment to allow diversity to exist and flourish.

Deep ecology implies that the Niger Delta ecosystems should be respected and protected as a valuable and diverse ecosystem that has intrinsic worth beyond its economic and instrumental value. Indeed, deep ecology applied to the Niger Delta implies an attitudinal recognition of the inherent value of the human, biological and physical entities that consist of the region's ecology. This recognition includes a fundamental appreciation of biodiversity and a concession for it to flourish in all its richness and variety. This recognition would foster a sense of ecological responsibility and care among people and stakeholders, motivating them to protect and conserve natural resources rather than pursuing untamed exploitation that results in environmental destruction. Arne Naess was perceptive in emphasizing the intrinsic worth and the right of biodiversity to flourish in rich variety. According to him, everything in nature has intrinsic value and humans can only use some of them to satisfy genuine needs (Naess, 1984, pp 31-43)

What Arne Naess says is profound. It is an affirmation of the value and unity of life forms. It is also a foundation for a deeper sense of respect and care for all living beings and the natural world. Deep ecology implies that the Niger Delta should be treated as a 'creation' of moral concern, not an object of exploitation. It implies that the human and non-human beings in the region have equal rights to exist and flourish, and that their needs should be considered and balanced in attitudes, perception and practice. Deep ecology implies the compassionate attitude towards all forms of life,

and a recognition of interdependence and interconnectedness of all beings.

A basic implication of deep ecology for ecological balance in the Niger Delta is that is the reduction of the ecological footprint and environmental impact of the oil industry, which is the major actor in causing destruction in the form of pollution, deforestation, land degradation, and loss of biodiversity. Deep ecology requires activities of oil companies must be moderated or minimized, as they cause damage to the environment and the living things that depend on it. Deep ecology calls for a shift from the situation of seeking more economic and industrial growth to a situation of more simplicity undominated by profit and allures of technology. In the situation of simplicity, human needs will be met according to the limitations of ecological sustainability.

Deep ecology lashes at consumerism and the excesses of economic pursuit. It proposes as sustainable a simple lifestyle devoid of the sophistication of economic and technologic advancement that have cost the planet so much. In the Niger Delta context, deep ecology would lead to reduced consumption and the adoption of simple and sustainable lifestyle that is in harmony with nature. As Arne Naess, the proponent of deep ecology says, “The smaller one comes to feel compared to the mountain, the nearer one comes to sharing in its greatness. I don't know why this is so.” (Naess, 1984) PP. 31-43.

Deep ecology, considered in its entirety, implies that the Niger Delta should be governed in a way contrived to be more democratic and participatory. This participatory governance will allow more community involvement and input. The participatory system will also respect the autonomy and diversity of local communities, conceding to some involvement in the making of decisions about their

environment and its development. Deep ecology with its emphasis on structural change and non-violent resistance to powers that contribute to environmental crisis, implies that people in the region are to commit to the transformation of the social and economic structures that perpetuate the ecological in the region, even resisting the forces that threaten ecological balance in the region. Arne Naess states: “You can give a struggle a constructive character only if you conceive of it and carry it out as a struggle in favor of living being and certain values, thus eventually fighting antagonisms, not antagonists” (Naess, 1984, pp.31-43).

Critical Evaluation

Arne Naess's deep ecology and its application to the Niger Delta context has its fair share of criticisms, but it still has application and is relevant in resolving the biodiversity and climate crisis (Truehugger,2021).At the level of philosophical theory, Murray Bookchin, a principal proponent of social ecology, has rejected deep ecology's biocentrism which sees human beings as threat to nature (Truehugger,2021). Bookchin opines that contrary to deep ecology's stance, it is not human beings but capitalism with class differences that pose the basic ecological threat to the earth. Another criticism directed at deep ecology at the level of pure theory is that it does not make explicit the connection between man's domination of women and the reality of environmental degradation.

There is yet another criticism against deep ecology targeting the aspect of the intrinsic value of diverse life forms- the focus on the value of living beings looks abstract, and metaphysical and does not provide standards on how to determine the intrinsic value of non-human life (Truehugger, 2021.) Another point is that: “At the level of its application to the Niger Delta, deep ecology has been criticized to be idealist, vague, unpracticable: deep ecology's vision of a radical transformation of human society and culture is too

vague and utopian to provide any practical guidance for the Niger Delta's environmental and social problems (Lindberg,2021,p.6.)

In addition to the impracticability criticism, another criticism directed at deep ecology's application to the Niger Delta is that it does not take into cognizance the specific history, culture, geography, socioeconomics, and politics of the Niger Delta: “ Deep Ecology fails to acknowledge the historical and cultural specificity of the Niger Delta, and instead imposes a monolithic and westernized worldview that erases the diversity and complexity of the region.” (Mayer,2021,p.6). As the ecologist Ramachandra Guha opines deep ecology is Western and imperialistic (see Truehugger, 2921).

Yet, another criticism against the application of deep ecology has to do with its blatant rejection of anthropocentrism with its concomitant opposition to pursuing economic and technological gains: deep ecology fails to take into consideration the human beings in the Niger Delta who needs to depend on the natural resources for survival (Kalu and Ott,2019,p.10)

Conclusion

These criticisms notwithstanding, deep ecology offers the Niger Delta a substantial vision and path for achieving ecological balance. Ecological equilibrium is all the more critical for the region, which is one of the most ecologically diverse and sensitive regions in the world. Yet, the region is also one of the most exploited and degraded by the companies of the oil industry, which operate in collaboration with the government. The environmental crisis in the Niger Delta has resulted in severe consequences for the local communities, who depend on natural resources for their livelihood and culture, and who have been marginalized and

oppressed by the dominant economic and political players. This situation in the Niger Delta calls for a cogent solution that can address the root causes of the problem and restore ecological balance and harmony.

Deep ecology, as proposed by Arne Naess, is such a solution, mainly for its holistic frame. Deep ecology is against the anthropocentric/utilitarian worldview that underlies contemporary industrial society, and advocates for a profound respect and reverence for all forms of life, regardless of their instrumental value to humans. It calls for a reduction in human consumption and tempering technology. It calls for the transformation of politics, culture, and the economy during this time of ecological crisis.

By applying the principles of deep ecology to the Niger Delta, we have important implications. One such implication is the recognition of the intrinsic value and quality of the rich and varied biodiversity of the Niger Delta, which is home to many endemic and rare species, as well as a vital source of livelihood and culture for the local communities. This recognition will foster a sense of responsibility and care for the environment, and motivate people to protect and conserve natural resources, rather than exploit and destroy them.

Another basic implication is that deep ecology would lead to a reduction of the ecological footprint and the environmental impact of the oil industry, which has been the main cause of pollution, deforestation, land degradation, and loss of biodiversity. Such reduction would require a shift from a growth-oriented and profit-driven economy to a steady state and ecologically sustainable economy, where human needs are met within the limits of the carrying capacity of the biosphere.

Deep ecology in the Niger Delta context implies a change in the economic, social, and political structures that have been responsible for the degradation and

marginalization of the indigenous communities of the Niger Delta. This change would require a decentralization of power and a democratization of decision-making, where the local communities have more autonomy and participation in the management of their natural resources and their affairs.

Deep ecology in the Niger Delta would bring about a harmonious and sustainable relationship between human beings and other living beings, and between human beings and the natural environment. It would also bring about a peaceful and prosperous society, where people can enjoy a better quality of life and a higher level of being. According to Arne Naess, “We don't say that every living being has the same value as a human, but that it has an intrinsic value which is not quantifiable. It is not equal or unequal. It has a right to live and blossom.” (Naess, 1989, p.27).

REFERENCES

- Green Politics Wiki. (n.d.). Deep ecology. Retrieved April 24, 2023,
- Kalu, K., & Ott, J. (2019). Anthropocentrism and the Niger Delta crisis: A critique of deep ecology. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 13(2), 49-60.
- Kalu, K., & Ott, K. (2019). *Environmental ethics and sustainable development*. New York: Springer International Publishing.
- Lindberg, A. (2021). Deep ecology and the Niger Delta: A critical assessment. *Journal of African Environmental Studies*, 18(1), 1-15.
- Meyer, J. (2021). The politics of deep ecology in the Niger Delta.
- In E. Okafor & C. Udeani (Eds.), *Environmental justice and sustainability in the Niger Delta* (pp. 85-102). Oxfordshire: Routledge.
- Naess, A. (1973). *The shallow and the deep, long-range*

- ecology movement: A summary.
 Inquiry, 16(1-4), 95-100.
- Naess, A. (1984). A defence of the deep ecology movement.
 Environmental Ethics, 6(3), 265-270.
- Naess, A. (1984). The shallow and the deep, long-range
 ecology movement. A summary.
 Inquiry, 16(1-4), 95-100.
- Naess, A. (1989). Ecology, community and lifestyle: Outline
 of an ecosophy. Cambridge University Press.
- Naess, A. (1995). The deep ecology movement: Some
 philosophical aspects. Philosophical Inquiry, 17(1-2),
 42-55.
- Naess, A. (2008). Are there social limits to adaptation to
 climate change? Climatic Change, 93(3-4), 335-339.
- Naess, A. (2008). The ecology of wisdom. (D.
 Rothenberg & A. Drengson, Eds.).
 Counterpoint.
- Naess, A., & Sessions, G. (1984). A platform of deep
 ecology. The Ecologist, 14(5-6), 194-200.
- Rolston, H. (1988). Environmental Ethics: Duties to and
 values in the natural world. Philadelphia: Temple
 University Press.
- Sodipo and Oladele (2018). African philosophy in the
 global village: The conversation continues. New
 York : Springer International Publishing.

The Pastoral-theological Implications Of Environmental Wastage In John 6:12: An Eco-solidarity Perspective

Andrew Ugochukwu Anah
andyano2000@yahoo.com
Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria

Abstract

This study is motivated by the fact that our society is witnessing a serious environmental crisis caused by industrialization and human activities. This calls for serious global attention. The concern here is mostly on how to curtail wastage and encourage recycling to reduce its negative effects on the environment. This study is hinged on the pericope from the Gospel of St. John (Jn 6:12), where Jesus after feeding the multitude insisted that all the leftovers must be gathered to avoid wastages. This gospel principle can support the worldwide community's efforts to raise awareness of the environmental issue and global warming, which is a ticking time bomb. Our world has become extremely industrialised, and as a result, a great deal of human activity has contributed to the current global environmental disaster.

KEYWORDS: Pastoral, Theology, Environment, Wastage, Ecosystem, Eco-Solidarity

Introduction

The human being is one of the most important beings of society. They are a part of the surrounding, and anything that has an impact on them can have either a beneficial or negative effect on them. God explicitly gave man the responsibility to care for other creatures and their

surroundings after the act of creation. In Genesis 1:28–31, he commanded them to be fruitful, increase and fill the earth. They are to take care of the environment. They are not to exploit or carelessly manipulate nature. Therefore, it is human responsibility to protect the surrounding. This is what eco-solidarity is all about. Francis (2015) people are to avoid degradation and protect the earth. Ikeke (2005) has also discussed this notion of eco-solidarity affirming the interconnectedness of all things and the human responsibility to protect creation.

The main goal of this study is to raise awareness of the need to step up efforts to slow down environmental degradation among religious organisations and the general public. This holds significant relevance in devising and advocating pastoral and pedagogical approaches that empower religious institutions to critically and productively address environmental deterioration. This plan will help provide opportunities for everyone to become more conscious of the world around them and to gain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to address the situation.

The Hermeneutics of John 6:12

John 6:12 “ἵνα μή τι ἀπόληται that nothing be lost. The Lord creates with ease, but He does not want His creations to be lost for no reason at all. According to Barnes (1870), Jesus cares that there be no waste, as seen by his demand to gather up the shards so that nothing be lost a command that is ignored by all other evangelists. Even though he was able to supply any amount of food, he has taught us not to waste the abundance of providence.

The Saviour taught us to be thrifty in everything, even though he had an endless supply at his disposal. Despite being the Lord of all, he was also economical in himself. If he was, in fact, saving, then it is our responsibility as dependent beings to honour the abundance of a kind providence. It

becomes extremely important that the wealthy not waste Providence's many gifts. They frequently believe they are wealthy. They've had enough. They don't feel that studying economics is necessary, and they have no fear of poverty. However, let them never forget that all they own is a gift from God, just as the fishes and loaves that the Saviour made were also his gifts. They are not given to trash, spent in riots, or used as a tool to harm their health or shorten their lives. It is provided to preserve life, inspire thankfulness, and prepare people for God's active service. Nothing should be wasted or lost; everything should be used for its intended purpose. This gets us to the important topic of environmental solidarity. To treat our environment fairly and prevent economic waste and exploitation of any kind, we must work together.

Environmental Degradation: An Eco-solidarity Perspective

According to Okojie (1991), environmental degradation refers to ecosystem breakdown, wildlife extinction and depletion in the quality of water, air, soil, etc. Environmental degradation is the lowering of the quality of nature and the things in nature. According to Simmons (1981), people relate to nature based on their knowledge. According to Jimoh (2000), the Palaeolithic, Neolithic, and Modern Eras people's relationship to nature has been pattered.

Environmental determinism, in which the environment essentially provided for man, peaked during the Palaeolithic era. Man was, in essence, dependent on his surroundings. This link results from the low level of technical advancement of humans combined with their relatively small environmental impact. During the Neolithic era, metal was used to make tools, just like in the Iron Age. This resulted from some astounding advancements in human technology. Consequently, there was a noticeable relationship between the environment and man. Additionally, man had a propensity to create needs that went beyond what the surroundings could

provide and then devise means of achieving those predetermined goals.

Ultimately, the jet age begins in the modern era when man makes decisions about his actions both inside and outside of his surroundings. This time frame perfectly captures the range of environmental damage caused, the majority of which was unintentional. Environmental degradation refers to the deterioration of soil, water, air, and vegetation resources, among other things, in terms of their numbers and characteristics. In contrast, Miller (1989) defines environmental degradation more clearly as a declining trend in environmental resources such that human cultures' use of them declines proportionately and at an accelerating rate.

Pastoral-Theological Perspective on Environmental Protection

This section shall attempt to examine Biblical Perspective of Environmental Protection, Patristic Teaching on Environmental Protection, Magisterial Teachings on Environmental Protection and Contemporary Theologians Opinions on Environmental Protection

4.1 Biblical Perspective on Environmental Protection ***The Creation Story***

The creation story in Islam, Judaism, and Christianity all affirm that God created the world. In the creation story man is created last and to have dominion over the works of creation (Genesis 1:26-28). This is one passage in the Bible that has been interpreted in a variety of ways. Including the idea that, as a result, God has given man the authority to ruthlessly explore and use the planet without having to take some sort of accountability for its preservation. These interpretations have led some to even charge religion—because of the verse "subdue the earth and have Dominion over it"—as a primary cause of the current ecological problems. In reality, John F.

Haught made a more compelling case in his book *Religion and Science: From Conflict to Conversation* against religion's lack of care for the well-being of society. Haught states that: because theology and religion are known for having little concern for the welfare of the natural world. Churches, synagogues, and mosques have historically paid little attention to the major ecological issues. The classic texts of religious traditions tell us very little about the extinction rate of species, global warming, soil erosion, loss of freshwater sources, desertification, pollution of land, water, and air, and destruction of rainforests and other natural ecosystems.

To debunk the claim presented by Haught, Igwe (2017) posited four main themes namely:

- a) **Human Domination:** The injunction "have dominion" and "subdue" only gives humans special duties in creation as they represent God
- b) **Community of Creation:** Human beings are also creation's part.
- c) **Creation as theo-centric reality:** The purpose of creation is for God and all created things have worth.
- d) **Redemption of all creation:** Redemption includes the redemption of all (Romans 8:20-21; 2 Peter 3:13).

In addition, Pope Francis (2015) enunciates that human beings being created in God's image does not mean they are to dominate and have absolute rule over creation (LS 67). According to Abasili (2016), who agrees with Pope Francis that human beings are to till the earth and this implies that their usage of the earth should not be exploited (pp 41-42). As Francis states, tilling with keeping speaks of relationship and human responsibility towards creation (LS 67).

b) **Deforestation**

Deforestation is the process through which unlawful

tree-cutting continues unchecked, depriving the forest of its natural resources and contributing to deforestation, biodiversity loss, and global warming. Deuteronomy 20: 19–20 has been selected as the book of Deuteronomy that addresses the issues of deforestation and pollution. This is evident from the fact that its pages contain topics about geographical and ecological concerns, like valleys, fruit, fire, water, trees, and burning offerings. It is almost difficult to dispute that humans rely on natural plants for many of their basic needs. As a result, even during times of war, the book of Deuteronomy forbids its destruction. The people of Israel are commanded not to destroy trees when they attack a town (Deut. 20:19). There are also specific instructions about ecological issues, particularly those about the disposal of deceased animals (Deuteronomy 21:22-23).

c) *God and Creation*

St. Paul made the following claims in multiple letters that support Jesus Christ's divinity: "He is the image of the unseen God, the first-born of all creation, for in him were created all things in heaven and on earth" (Philippians 2:16) and "who being in the form of God, he did not cling equality with God a thing to be grasped" (Colossians 1:15-16). These two passages from St. Paul's letters provide insight into the created universe as it was made evident by Jesus Christ. According to Mark Bredin's book *The Ecology of the New Testament*, this suggests that Jesus Christ "is understood as the creator with God of all things." Paul's declaration that Jesus Christ is the Creator expresses his belief that Jesus is divine and shares identity with the God of Jewish monotheism more clearly than anything else. Paul's words, "Yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist" (1Cor. 8:5–6), further support this school of thought.

Here, Bredin makes an intriguing observation

regarding Paul's creation theology. Paul is saying that God created humans and the rest of creation. God is the source of creation as well as its ultimate purpose; he is also the one for whom all of creation exists. The statement includes God creating everything from nothing as well as bringing everything to its ultimate conclusion in himself through new creation. Paul affirms that creation is groaning as it is in bondage (Romans 8:19-21). Mark Bredin connects this to the current environmental problems that people are facing worldwide.

4.2 Patristic Perspective on Environmental Protection

One of St. Augustine's (A.D. 345-A.D. 430) preoccupations was to denounce various heresies propagated in his time. On the doctrine of creation, Augustine wrote to correct the Manichean heresies which hold that the world was created out of existing matter. In the Jurgens book, *The Faith of the Early Fathers* Vol. Three, Augustine was quoted as saying, that God created all things out of nothing.

Now, relating this teaching implicitly to that of protection of the ecology Augustine argued, "the man who has cultivated that remote land and who has gotten his bread by his very great labour is able to suffer this labour to the end of his life". It is within this context of cultivation that Pope Francis taught that tilling means preserving, overseeing, protecting, and caring for (LS 67). Similarly, Oleh (1975) puts more clarifications on Augustine's position as he observed: "Augustine described the goodness of the world against his former companions, the Manicheans, and insisted that the world was created good, *ex nihilo*, by the "supremely good Creator" and every natural being "great and small, celestial and terrestrial, spiritual and corporeal" was also good."

St. Irenaeus, (A.D. 140-202) according to the Jurgens, was adjudged to be the most outstanding and 'important theologian of the second century' (p 84). In correcting the

erroneous teachings of the Manicheans concerning creation, Irenaeus taught the faith the Church received from the apostles affirms that God almighty Father created heaven and earth and all things; and what God created reveals him and God is greater than all.

St. Basil of Caesera (329–379) had a significant impact on his theological ideas. A man who openly resisted the errors of the early Christian Church, particularly Arianism, and who was also instrumental in the formulation of the Nicene Creed. Oleh, summarizing Basil of Caesarea remarkable contribution says he attributed the world's goodness and beauty to God's providence and his continued concern for humanity even after the fall of the First People. For the devout, Basil underlined the significance of the material world, saying that as human beings contemplate creation they come to know God's wisdom. For Basil, studying Scripture and Christian tradition is necessary to supplement natural theology as a means of learning about God. Basil, however, emphasised the need to value God's creations for their intrinsic traits and sacramental attributes as, in living out their natural selves, they reveal and glorify God. The cohesive functioning of all beings, according to Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, is attributed to God's uniting love. The beneficent God is the source of life, and all living things derive their souls, lives, motion, and sustenance from Him. All that He creates grows, and He renews it through cleansing.

Furthermore, Basil emphasises moderation in all facets of human existence, including food consumption, clothing, accessories, communication, sleep, laughter, money management, political service, business administration, and most significantly, having a calm and understanding attitude towards neighbours. Oleh continued, taking inspiration from Basil's stance on the need for moderation in all facets of life saying understanding the world is vital for today's asceticism (Oleh. Web 14/3/2018).

4.3 Magisterial Teachings on Environmental Protection

Pope Benedict XVI states clearly that among the matters of great concern to human beings are sustainable development, climate change, and environmental protection (p. 40). This highlights how the environment and its sustainability remain at the core of the pope's teachings, as noted by Jacquelyn (2012). In a similar spirit, the Pope condemned in *Africae Munus* the exploitation and contamination of the natural world, which has resulted in both pollution and desertification. The Pope states that biodiversity has been damaged threatening the survival of the planet (AM 8). The Pope urged African leaders to safeguard the environment, recognising the threat that these activities pose to all of humanity (AM 10).

In a similar vein, Pope Paul VI recognised ecological degradation as a threat to human survival in Octogesima Adveniens, "A Social Teachings of the Church on New Social Problems," noting that there is an awareness now that exploiting nature degrades it (OA 21). The Pope reiterated that Christians should take responsibility for taking care of creation (OA 21) to avert the threat that lurks around humanity.

Regarding ecological challenges, Pope John Paul made a strong statement in the Encyclical *Centesimus Annus*. He lamented how human activity's impact on the environment has made mankind as a whole need to be more concerned. He was worried that the issue of consumerism was now being accompanied by ecological concerns. He states that consumerism is also a big problem that leads to destruction of the nature world (CA 38).

4.4 Contemporary Theologians' Opinions on Environmental Protection

Theologians have tried to discuss the issue of

protecting the environment from their diverse fields of expertise. Consequently, Akinwale (2017) taught that: "Prudence, like every other virtue, makes its possessor good, and his work good likewise" (p. 146) in *Theology and Ecological Issues* while discussing environmental degradation as a moral issue in his article "Prudence and Temperance: On the Relevance of Aquinas Moral Theory". With this knowledge, he links this idea to environmental preservation and, as a result, advises individuals in the oil and gas industry to exercise caution. He made the following argument: "Prudence controls the means to the end in addition to leading directly to the excellent end. When caution is neglected, it shows up as a lack of consideration for error and a disregard for the environment.

In her paper "The Agrarian Nature of Theological language and Concern for the Environment" in *Theology and Ecological Issues*, Kenduanyi (2017) explored environmental conservation from the perspective of the agrarian nature of theological language. She endeavoured to investigate the significance of language use in conveying the pertinent information, including a variety of imagery to make her point, including light, darkness, shepherd, bread, wine, vine and branches, salt water, and flower. She insists that when referring to pastors and Christians, the terms "sheep," "flock," and "shepherd" will still be used. She effectively argued in these lines that we have a duty to care for the environment, having established the inherent connection—facilitated by language—between the Christian message and imagery. The idea of God as the "Lion of Judah" will therefore be considered outdated by future generations, who will find theological terminology relevant for a generation of Christians who will not even know what a lion is (p. 8).

Fagbamigbe (2017) highlighted the worry about the current ecological catastrophe in the essay "Ecology and Social Teaching of the Church" and outlined the position of

Catholic social teachings from Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'* 2015 to Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* of 1891. She goes on to list the social teachings' tenets and then looks at how they apply to ecological concerns. She was able to pinpoint five fundamental ideas during the process. The course titled "Education on true Stewardship" is the one that deals specifically with the preservation and upkeep of the environment. It says, in part, that we should protect and preserve the earth's resources rather than taking them for granted and using them anyway we choose. All of creation has value and is good in the sight of God, who is its author. Human beings must discover and respect its value.

If for nothing else, the aforementioned environmental submissions make it quite evident that human involvement with the ecosystem is causing the globe to head towards precipitation. As a result, it is now more crucial than ever for every person to work together to stop this dangerous threat. Global nation-state collaboration may enable this to be accomplished.

The Pastoral Role Of The Religious Organizations In Addressing The Menace Of Environmental Wastage

Pastoral Agents, such as priests and religious, pastors of other Christian denominations, catechists, Sunday school teachers, and others, are directly responsible for the pastoral function that religious organisations play in society. Because Jesus himself gave us the "Great Mandate" or the "Great Commission" in Matthew 28:19 implying that all the baptized are pastoral agents.

Priests, religious leaders, and other pastoral agents have a responsibility to spread the word about the need of eco-solidarity, or the importance of protecting the environment. Pope Francis (2015) noted that people who work persistently to address the devastating impacts of environmental degradation on the lives of the world's poorest people deserve

special recognition (p. 14). By taking this action, they are giving up their chance and platform to join the ranks of well-known environmentalists who have been bringing the world's attention to the critical need of protecting our environment. It is common knowledge that during religious services and gatherings, people listen intently to Pastoral Agents. Therefore, it wouldn't be inappropriate for Pastoral Agents to stop using these platforms to inform their audience of the importance of our shared responsibility to preserve the environment and our planet.

Conclusion

It is imperative that we as a global community start taking environmental solidarity seriously. A culture of throw-away should become a culture of recycling. In this way, we listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, our Lord, and Master, who has set an example for us in this study's Gospel pericope (John 6:12). By telling his disciples to pick up the leftovers, Jesus—the wonderful Pastor par excellence—set a wonderful example for us on how to prevent or handle waste.

WORKS CITED

- Abasili A. (2016). "Subdue the Earth and Have Dominion Over Living Things: An Exegetical Analysis of the Commands in Genesis 1:26-28 through the Lens of *Laudato Si*". *Abuja Journal of Philosophy and Theology*.
- Akinwale A. (2017). "Prudence and Temperance: The Relevance of Aquinas Moral Theory". *Theology and Ecological Issues*. Ibadan: Floreat.
- Augustine of Hippo (1861). *Confession, Book 1*. Translated by J.G. Pilkington. From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. 1. Edited by Philip Schaff. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887.)
- Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight.

- <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/110101.htm>.
- Barnes, Albert. "Commentary on John 6:12". *Barnes' Notes on the Whole Bible*.
<https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bnb/john-6.html>. 1870.
- Ben sm. [www.https://jpicblog.maristsm.org/laudato-si-goals-and-action-plan](http://www.jpicblog.maristsm.org/laudato-si-goals-and-action-plan).
- Fagbamigbe M. (2017). "Ecological Crisis and the Stand of the Catholic Social teachings". *Theology and Ecological Issues*. Ibadan: Floreat.
- Haught F.A.(1967).*Religion and Science: From Conflict to Conversation*. London: Beckley
- Igwe T.U. (2016)*The Interdependence of Eco-Systems in Jeopardy: A Critical Evaluation*.Ibadan: Apex.
- Ikeke, M.O. (2005). *Redesigning an ecosolidarity and indigenously informed education*.
<https://www.proquest.com/openview/a7b45366eef7e5fa9799d9bf8211f234/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>
- Iyede M.O. (2014). *Biblical Condition towards the Solution of the Problem of Global Warming*. Lagos: Blue Print.
- Jacquelyn K. (2012). *Reflection on Pope Benedict XVI's Teachings*. NY: Skyline.
- Jimoh, H.I. (2000). "Man-Environment Interactions". In Jimoh, H.I. and I.P. Ifabiyi (eds.) *Contemporary Issues in Environmental Studies*. Ilorin: Hayte.
- Kenduanyi M.N. (2017). "The Agrarian Nature of Theological language and Concern for the Environment".*Theology and Ecological Issues*. Ibadan: Floreat.
- Miller, G. T. (1989). *Resources Conservation and Management*. London: Wadsmonh.
- Okojie, J.A. (1991). *Misuse of Renewable Natural Resources and Environmental Degradation*.A Paper presented at the symposium to mark the African Year of the Environment in Ogun State, Abeokuta,

June, 25.

- Oleh K.(1975).*Patrology, Ecology and Eschatology: Looking Forward to the Future of the Planet by Looking back to the Fathers of the Church*. Retrieve October 7th 2018.
- Oso F. A. (2017). “Ecology and Social Teaching of the Church”.*Theology and Ecological Issues*. Ibadan: Floreat.
- Pope Francis. *Laudato Si*’n Care for our Common Home. Nairobi: Paulines, 2015. Print.
- Simmons, I. G. (1981).*The Ecology of Natural Resources*. London: ELBS Edward Arnold.
- Usoh F. & Nwanosike A.I.(2021). “The Morality of Caring for our Common Home in Laudato Si’”. Anagwo E.C. (ed.) *Ecological Liturgy and the Church in Africa*. Port Harcourt: Cornel Printz.

African Traditional Deities and Their Resilience in the 21st Century

Akpoduado, E. Juliet
Department of Religious Studies & Philosophy
Delta State University, Abraka
akpojuliet3@gmail.com
&
Professor J. Enuwosa
Department of Religious Studies & Philosophy
Delta State University, Abraka

Abstract

The 21st century is filled with enormous challenges. These challenges includes extreme forms of capitalism, religious fundamentalism and extremism, globalization, morbid nationalism, sectionalism, the environmental crisis, forced global migration, etc. All these challenges have affected the practice of African Traditional Religion in its belief in deities. Though the African traditional belief in deities may have been endangered, the belief is also very resilient and has not died. This paper uses critical analytic, sociological and hermeneutics to examine the resilience of African traditional deities. The paper finds that the belief in African deities is threatened. It concludes that the belief is still resilient and people should be tolerant of the belief in deities.

Keywords: Africa traditional religion, deities, 21st century, religion, challenges.

Introduction

In every society, several forms of worship, beliefs, and norms are practiced, and entrenched in the belief system (religion) and culture of a people. The beauty in the diverse cultural practices from ancient till date is implanted in its

social-religious entities and diversity. Religion with its unbroken ties with culture, pervades every nook and cranny of the African society. As ascertained by Adogbo (2010) religion is interested not only in sacred beings or things but is also concerned with the totality of life and the world at large. Religion will continue to play its unique role in every society. There are several religions in Africa (Nigeria), however, the mother religion of African people has been battered over the years by evangelical religions (Christianity and Islam) and their missionaries thereby leading some scholars like Humphrey to the erroneous conclusion that the weight of these missionary religions would crush the traditional religion of the African folks. Contrary to this opinion, Robin (1971) has observed strength and resilience in the traditional religion of the African people. This vitality or strength could be traced to the worship of African deities, divination, ancestral recognition, and diverse forms of rituals.

The African traditional religion is a religion with no founder, it has maintained its originality from time immemorial till date except in areas of interaction with other religions. The religion of the African people is of great importance to Africa and the world at large due to its unique role in human society. The traditional religion of the Africans is found in the people's festivals, rituals, shrines, religious objects and symbols, sacred groves, myths and legends, proverbs, and other ceremonies.

The African religion cuts across every sphere and stage of life, though with diverse themes, yet inseparable from the people's daily life and practice. Burnett (1988) speaks of the Ga could not do without acknowledging the presence of their ancestors when eating or drinking. The Urhobo community also imbibe the same cultural practice in virtually everything they do; for the entertainment of guest they pray with kola nut and drink, in celebrations such as marriages, festivals, dedications (of baby, land, car, business

or house), oracle, any form of social or religious gathering, praying with kola nut and drink is a major part of such celebration. Undeniably, some of these rituals minor or simple has helped at one point or the other to strengthen African society. Onimhawo (2011) opine that religion inspires communal devotion and compliance of collective individual to an ethical standard that transcends the individual's purpose in society.

Features of the 21st Century

Several features marks the 21st century. Such as insecurity, modernization of culture, the strong desire for illegal accumulation of wealth, power tussles, religious conflict, and many more. The African nation especially Nigeria has in the past been a home of peace, love, and justice. But today, there are negative replacements of all three qualities mentioned above. Reflecting back to the 19th and 20th centuries, Nigeria had a better image than it is today. The major ground for these images destroying battle today is the political arena and religious setting. Thus, this paper aims at pointing out some major features of the African traditional deities and how this traditional religion can help fix some of the mess in Nigeria.

Modernization of Culture When the word modernization is mentioned, what quickly flashes to mind is “current trend, the present”. While culture points us to a particular lifestyle of a people. As envisaged by Aziza (2001), culture is everything that pertains to a people, that differentiates them from others. Modernization is a powerful tool for growth that needs to be appreciated as it brings infrastructural developments. However, it has some flaws on Africans and their cultural practices, such as their religion and cultural dressing.

Before the advent of westernization of Africa, Africans have their own existing religion and culture; a culture so unique and pure, a culture that command respect

both for God (god) and man. Today, the negative impact of Westernization is eating deep into the African fabrics in the name of modernization. The African culture forbids the sale and public display or advertisement of one's body especially as a woman, all around society today, men and women go naked like madman in the name of modernization. These could be regarded as abominable or forbidden act to the African traditionalists and their deities, but a welcome development to different churches and Christian homes today. The high rate of moral and spiritual decadence is a reflect of western culture and its imposition on the Bible and African people.

Deforestation / Attack on Nature: These are major features in 21st century in Africa especially Nigeria. Due to economic hardship and lack of understanding of the impact of rich vegetation, majority of the locals have turn themselves an enemy of nature in the country. This is reflected in the rate of bush burning either by herdsmen, children who are hunting for animals, and farmers; illegal lumbering and the use of dynamite and other intoxicants for fish; oil spillage and lack of clean-up by the oil producing companies.

Insecurity: This is a common phenomenon all around the world, insecurity had had its gripe on the various nook and cranny of different societies all over the world (America, Europe, Russia, the Arab world, Asia, Africa). This has led to the developing of new weapons and robotic tech by different developed nations. There are various groups formed especially by the various Islamic fanatics (the ISIS, Boko-Haram, ISWAP and the likes).

There are different Africa nations that have been engulfed in the nightmare of insecurity over the century Mali, Morocco, Nigeria just to mention but a few. The rate of insecurity in Nigeria had been so alarming, there had been several and countless cases of terrorist attack/activities since

the inception of the 21st century. Frequent bombing of churches and other places (market and other social gatherings), between 2011 – 2013, kidnapping and mass abduction of school children and travelers. For example:

- The abduction of Chibok girls.
 - The ambushed, killing, and abduction of passengers en-route Abuja – Kaduna train, 28, March, 2022.
 - Murder of more than thirty persons in Owo church attack by terrorists on 5, June, 2022.
 - Countless herdsmen attack on farmer and their communities
 - The unbearable kidnapping activities in the Niger Delta.
- The IPOB unrest in the eastern part of Nigeria.
- Cultism activities both in primary, secondary and tertiary institution which is daily on the increase.

Every part of Nigeria has become unsafe as a result of the failure on the part of parents, religious leaders and bad government. As ascertained by delegates that represented Nigeria on security related issues at ECOWAS parliament that July and August 2022 witness a height of insecurity as both security operatives and civilians encounter severe attacks from terrorists and armed bandits.

Increase of Churches: During the 19th and 20th centuries, the known and recognized churches/denominations were the Catholic, Baptist, Anglican (CMS) and Methodist. Though there was a little glimpse of Pentecostal such as the Church of God Mission (CGM) which others later emanated from, there had never been in history the wide and radical spread of Pentecostalism as it is in the 21st century. Despite the fact that one major purpose is to help build good morals in the society and brings the individual close to God or gods. As also ascertained by Onimhwo (2011) that religion inspires communal devotion and compliance of the individual to ethical standard that

transcends individual's purpose in the society. This focus has been lost by more than ninety percent (90%) of today's churches, their focus is rather shifted from the normal or usual ethical standard of religion (selfless service and community service to God) to selfish and self-aggrandizement service. In a traditional African society, religion is mixed of the people's life and culture. In spite of the increased numbers of churches in this 21st century, the African society is starved of the impart of religion morally and spiritually. This lacuna which results from selfish interest has ushered in moral decay and degradation of the African society. Interest such as: desire for huge accumulation of wealth by church leaders and founders, show of power which has led some to what maybe described or regarded as syncretism, self-righteousness, lack of respect or regard for leadership. However, there is no depth that some originated as a result of response to call for duty.

This 21st century syndrome of multiplicity of churches would have been of great benefit to the African society if well managed with good intent.

Power Tussle: Is another common feature in the political arena of the 21st century. The government of different nations all over the world want to be in-charge (dominating) especially those of developed countries. For instance, the Russian - Ukraine war today is a result of power tussle between countries. As analyzed by Nataliya (2018), the existing international system is characterized by a diffusion of power among different state and non-state actors, a shift in a balance of regional and global powers, relative weakening established western nations and emerging of new power countries, increasing importance of regional integration, and return of great powers' geopolitical competition.

Religious Fundamentalism: A practice common to the missionary religions (Christianity and Islam) in West African especially Nigeria. These religious groups believe that their

tenets and values are the best, thus, it should be practiced by all (everyone). The Muslim believe that anyone not practicing Islam is an unbeliever. According to Ayatollah's proclamation during the 80s, "for Islam to conquer the world, Muslim need to engulf the nation with crises by repeatedly causing crises" (Ali, 1999). A declaration born out of the conviction and belief that the spread of Islam must be through violence in northern Nigeria since the inception of the 21st century. Fundamentalism as apologetic movement, which strictly follows the basic rules and teachings of any religion has become a common trend among Christians and Muslims that end up in struggle or claim of superiority. A practical demonstration was the introduction of Sharia law by Muslims as a main body of civil and criminal law in 2001 in twelve northern states of Nigeria.

Materialism: The crave for materialism is one great feature that characterizes the 21st century, that is undeniably wrecking this present generation. A generation like never was, were parents encourage their children in the get rich-quick syndrome (yahoo, yahoo), teachers encouraging students in examination malpractices, students at levels engage in cultism, politicians looting the nation's wealth, INEC and the counterpart specializes in rigging elections and subverting the people's will, all for materialism. The church which was once a watch-dog, now champion the course for materialism, leading to unwanted competition within and among churches.

Impact of 21st Century Challenges on African Traditional Deities

A happy and lively home is an evidence of a friendly environment. There is no doubt that every creature (including man and deities) would want to remain and maintain a host municipal that is friendly to them, just as unfriendly environment would repel its inhabitant. There are several challenges confronting the African traditional deities in this

21st century. Some of the challenges are: deforestation, environmental hazard, destruction of symbols/objects and totems, attack from other religious groups (Christianity and Islam). The impact of these challenges has been immensely pronounced on the African society.

Deforestation / Environmental Hazard: The forest has been a peaceful home to diverse African deities and wild life till recent when illegal lumbering and bush burning becomes the order of the day. The high rate of bush burning and illegal lumbering has daily posed serious threat to all forest inhabitants. Thus, some of these deities have lost their homes, sacred grooves lost, relocation and total extermination of these phenomena. For instance, majority of sacred grooves and sacred homes including shrine for deities are being occupied by churches, individual buildings and industries today. Wotogbe – Weneka (2017), when stating the implications of the massive demolition/ destruction of sacred grooves in the 21st century among the Ikwerre people of Rivers State observed that it leads to loss of historical and geographical identity. This was also the case of majority of sacred points or places in Urhobo land in Delta State. For example; the 'eghwa-rode' (big bush by implication, sacred forest) in Samagidi-Kokori which was once a home both for the living-dead and several deities is been occupied by several buildings now, defiling, excommunicating, dislodging and destroying the original occupants. Seismic activity causing hazardous waste both to man and some of these deities dislodging and even killing them due to pollutant effects and use of explosive devise such as dynamites.

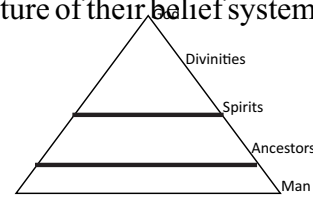
Infrastructural Development: This is a key point in modernization, which has to do with the development and progress of a people or community. Nonetheless, this appreciated development has become a threat to some African deities. An event which occurred along Nembe-Brass river was narrated by Dr. O. Cyril who had never believed in

the existence of these beings (deities), he states there is a place called 'juju point' along Nembe-Brass river where bridge was to be constructed by a construction company (Julius Beggar), but the work was abandoned as a result of careless destruction of work done by the company, and their properties. That the huge iron(s) pinned to the river bed were up-rooted and twisted by the water deity, possible occupant of that territory, that the sight alone prove a massive destruction which possibly could not have carried out by man-made machine but some forms of supernatural being.

Another event which occurred in a locality in Delta State where dynamite was cast into a swamp and a deity raced out of the water wailing the death of her children (interview with Jones and Sunday, 20, March, 2020) are all evidence of harassment and endangerment faced by the African traditional deities in this 21st century. The various activities associated with the 21st century, have impacted negatively one African traditional deities; loss (death) of some African traditional deities, harsh weather condition due to cutting down of trees, burning and destruction of grooves which serve as a home of some African traditional deities, relocation of some African traditional deities, unhealthy / unfriendly environment due to frequent harassment.

The Resilience of African Traditional Deities

The practice of African Traditional Religion is as old as the African communities or society itself. A religion with no founder and cannot be separated from the people's culture. The Africans believe in a Supreme Being (God) who transcendent above all other beings. They believe in deities, spirits, ancestors, charms, oracle, magic and others. The hierarchical structure of their belief system is charted below:



The African society has both major and minor deities with one form of historical relationship or affliction that is bound to the existence of the community / their existence in the community and their persistent till date despite the strong wave and influence of the missionary religion.

A case study of Urhobo land reveals some major and minor deities and their functions:

a) **Major Deities**

· Egba vo Ogidigbo of Kokori in Delta State.

These are two principal deities in Kokori land that have been worshipped from ancient time till date. Deities believed to have protective powers. The historical affiliation / origin of 'Egba' in Kokori land reveals that the deity was imported. In the ancient past due to the frequent inter-tribal wars, the people decided to invite a medicine man who travels from one community to the other preparing charms for battle, and the mystery behind this charm is that as he departs from that community he leaves with the charm. The Kokori people been very observant of the man's craftiness, thus, decided to execute that man after the preparation of the charm when he was invited by the Kokori people. They buried him at that same spot where the charm was prepared. Few days later, an iroko tress sprout from his grave and this spot remained the Egba shrine till date. The iroko tree grows with speed become gigantic and during its falls, it falls or break in piece in a very mysterious way by gathering itself at a spot, no damage is caused when it falls. Few days later, a new iroko comes up from that same spot, a mystery no one has been able to explain.

There is a ropy plant hanging over the iroko tree of 'Egba', it alerts the people any time there is danger in and within Kokori land (communities) by going slack and floating around the floor of the Egba shrine, and the warriors immediately swing into action. Individuals or group from far and near visit Egba shrine to prepare medicine or charm for

protection (bullet-proof medicine, cutlass repellent etc.). Egba as a war deity is said to be readily available protect Kokori born not necessarily worshipper alone.

Ogidigbo – Another principal deity is Kokori community. Is believed to be a female deity who origin is unascertained or unknown to the people of the land. There are no written nor oral traditions that will help to trace the origin of Ogidigbo. Her worshippers are majorly females, she incites them with an incurable (medically) madness, unless and until the candidate is brought to Ogidigbo shrine, there will be no healing. Ogidigbo is a community deity that helps to protect Kokori indigene/elite in time danger and war situation. Ogidigbo is also believe to be a fertility goddess that blesses the individual(s) with children.

Egba vo Ogidigbo are celebrated side by side during the Egba festival in the month of February. The festival is an enactment of drama, pack full with diverse forms of rituals, dance, prayers of various degree and blessings. Participants and spectators come from far and near during the festival. These class of principal or major deities are common to majority African communities especially the Niger Delta territory of Nigeria. They continue to manifest their strength of vitality daily, this may be due to environmental influence, dedication of adherents, cultural affiliation, other factors for resilience could be traced to the desire for justice and crave for protection from danger in time of crises, and efficacious power of its medicine.

b) **Minor Deities**

· Edjorame (Water deity)

Edjorame is the name used generally by the Urhobos in Delta Central for water deities (mermaid) or mami-water (pidgin). This group of deities are common and mostly worshipped among the Urhobos probably due to their geographical location. According to Obegor (2016), scarcely

would there be any Urhobo community without water gods or goddess (water deity(ies)) that is without religious connotation and mystical prowess. Some are believed to have been involved in the establishment and existence of some of the communities in the Niger Delta territory. Most people in the past associated with fruitfulness (especially in child bearing), healing and protection.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Christianity manifested a strong force of vitalization through its evangelical move by African converts who took the gospel to the various locality introducing the liberating power of Jesus Christ, by moving from community to community, preaching the gospel of Christ. Because as at this time, some (traditional worshippers) were believed to be in bondage as the deity they worship will dictate for them the type of food to eat and what not to eat. As the gospel of Christ offer them privilege to eat whatever kind of food they desire to eat and heal the sick there was a shift from this traditional worship to Christianity was introduced by the mid-20th century, while a new understanding (interaction) of the traditional religion and Christianity was introduced by the mid-20th century. And by 21st century, this interaction has gained more ground as individuals' shuttles between two religions today.

The advent of yahoo or yahoo⁺ in the 21st century have drastically increased the numbers of Edjorame worshipped as young boys and girls patronizes the worship of these deities as they believe their source of patronage and breakthrough is from the Edjorame. The theophany of Edjorame could be through dreams, some kind of strange illness, or disappearance of would-be votary. This experience sometimes involves been held hostage by Edjorame under water for seven days. And the re-appearance of the captive is followed by manifestation of some gifts such as healing the sick, insight into herbal, performance of some kind of rituals and sacrifices, and building of Ogua(place of worship). As the

primary home for this class of deities is water (river, lake, swamp and ocean), their sacrifices are usually by the side of the river or altar established by the votary. Sacrificial items are usually soft drinks (Fanta, Coke, Merrinder or Pepsi), biscuits, duckling, fowl, goat and other food items. Festivals are usually celebrated in honour of the water deities either at the beginning of the year or toward the end of the year.

Other traits associated with the revelation of Edjorame are offering of monetary gifts and other material gifts to would-be votaries and adherents.

Conclusion

ATR the known ancient and modern religion of the African people has no history of historical founder as it is with other world religions. ATR has a long history of condemnation by scholars of various fields of studies such as Anthropologists, theologians, sociologists, Christian missionaries, and adherents of missionary religions (especially Christianity). The religion has for long not found its name on the good book of both African Christians and Westerners.

In spite of the condemnation derogatory names and terms used in classifying this religion, it has continue to maintain resilience on different grounds – worship of deities, ancestors, spirits and many more. Despite the edge gained by evangelical religions over ATR, the worship of deities has continued till this 21st century where the tide seems to be more favourable to adherents due to environmental factors, interaction, the new trend in Christianity (miracle seekers), yahoo yahoo generation, 21st century weakness in Christian faith, insecurity and crave for materialism as it seem to meet the demand of the people.

REFERENCES

Aidoghie P. Insecurity in Nigeria declining, Nigeria

- delegation tells ECOWAS Parliament.
<https://sunnevsionline.com/insecurity-in-nigeria-declining-nigeria-delegation-tell-ecowas-parliament/> (retrieve 26-July-2023).
- Ali, M. (1999). *Islam Reviewed*. Labelle, FL: Fish House Publishers.
- Aziza, R. C. (2001). The Relationship between Language use and survival of culture: The case of Urhobo Youth. *Nigerian Language Studies*, 4.
- Burnett, D. (1988). *Unearthly powers*. London: Whitefield House.
- Erivwo, S. U. (2003). *Traditional religion and Christianity in Nigeria: The Urhobo People*. Nigeria: Benin': AMBIK Press.
- Francis, D. J. (2007). Peace and Conflict Studies: An African Overview of Basic Concepts. In Gaya B.Sc. (ed.), *Introduction to Peace and Conflict Study in West Africa* (pp. 32-34). Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
- Gabriel, E. I. (2015). *Africa Culture and Values*.
- John, O. U. (2003). *Urhobo Traditional Medicine*. Ibadan: Spectrum Book Ltd.
- Nataliya, G. (2018). Major Features of the 21st Century International System from Ukraine's Perspective. Oleksandra Kordonska, Rostyslav Romaniuk (eds.). *Modern Geopolitics Nation University for International Security*. Ivan Franko Nation University of Lviv: Lviv-Olsztyn.
<https://elibrary.ivinas.gov.ua>>searched 13-03-23.
- Obegor, R. M. U. (2016). *Themes in African Culture: The Urhobo People*. Kokori: Patola Printing Press.
- Odje, S. J. (1995). *Kokori People Ancient and Modern*. Benin City.
- Ushe, U. M. (2015). Religious Conflict and Education in Nigeria: Implication for National Security. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6 (2):117-129.
- Wotogbe-Wenek, W. O. (2017). The Implication of the Demolition and Destruction of Sacred Groove in the 21st Century Ikwerre of North Eastern Niger Delta. In *Religion in Historical Perspective*(pp.42-53). Port-Harcourt.

Conflict Prevention and Peace-Building: An Imperative for National Development

Ojighoro, Reuben Edafenene (Ph.D)
Department of Religious Studies, College of Education, Warri
Email: reubenojighoro@yahoo.com

Abstract

Nigeria had been bedeviled by different kinds of conflicts, resulting in ethno-religious crises, political crises, and economic crises. Conflict, with its multifaceted effects, has stood in the way of Nigeria's progress, political stability, economic growth, and general national development. Engagement in conflict prevention and peace building is, therefore, a proactive measure that advances not just the ultimate resolution of a particular conflict but also the preservation of finite resources and human life. This study aims to clarify the ways in which Nigerian national development may be facilitated by the use of conflict prevention and sustainable peace building strategies, given that development can only occur and be observed in a peaceful environment. The study utilized a mixed-methods approach, using both quantitative and qualitative data, to determine the effects of conflict in Nigeria. The study revealed that while conflict prevention and peace building are essential strategies for increasing the national development of any nation, ongoing conflict hinders progress and development in any given country. It further revealed that peace building and conflict prevention foster growth and social cohesiveness.

Keywords: Conflict prevention, peacebuilding, national development.

Introduction

It is impossible to discuss peace without first recognizing and contextualizing the issue of conflict in human society, given that conflict and the notions that are associated with it, including violence and crises, represent circumstances in which peace is absent. A higher degree of interest and attention from time past and even more in contemporary discussions have been focused on the dangers conflict poses to human existence and cohabitation (Okpetu et al., 2011).

David Augsburger (1992) compared the process of selecting a simile in dispute to that of having sex. For Victorians, having sex was something you had to put up with, not enjoy. Conflict, like sex, should only arise between people who are devoted to one another, happen on a regular enough basis, be exciting for both parties, activate both equally to offer their best selves, and last until each party can reach a mutually satisfying climax. After it's done, both of them ought to feel better. Like sex, disagreement may also lead to happiness, contentment, empowerment, and celebration. By insinuating that conflict that is handled well may be a tool for societal change, Augsburger is making the same claim about sex. It might, however, potentially be harmful if improperly handled. Therefore, a disastrous conflict like the one brought on by the Boko Haram crisis in Nigeria may be diverted and employed as a means of bringing about social transformation in the North East. This implies that there are several approaches to managing conflict situations.

On a broad level, there are several methods to understanding conflict. These might include game theory and decision-making, interpersonal status and class conflict, or inter- and intra-state conflict (Brams & Kilgour, 1988; George, 2007). It is crucial to highlight that practically all academic fields in the social sciences and humanities use distinct ways to conceptualizing conflict (Lance, 2015). Reviewing all relevant conflict literature is beyond the scope of this study; nonetheless, this researcher will primarily focus

on "conflict prevention and peace building as an imperative for socio-religious, economic and political development in Nigeria. Disagreements lead to conflict. It arises when individuals differ on their values, motivations, perceptions, thoughts, or desires. These differences may appear little at times, but when a disagreement elicits powerful emotions, a deep personal and relational need is at the heart of the issue: a need to feel safe and secure, a desire to be respected and appreciated, or a need for greater closeness and intimacy (Iherue, 2014).

Conflict prevention happens when efforts are taken to avoid disagreements turning into crises. A genuine conflict prevention technique is to eliminate the most important causes and improve the environment that foster or encourage conflict in the first place (Okpetu et al., 2011). To prevent conflict, rather than reacting to crises, it requires dialogue and joint problem solving, acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the interests of all parties concerned, and understanding of the historical and psychological dynamics at work (Okpetu et al., 2011).

Conflict prevention is often divided into structural and direct preventative approaches (Lanle, 2015). Structural conflict prevention strategies typically focus on certain groups or topics, such as economic growth, political engagement, or cultural autonomy. Structural preventative measures are most effective in a stable and tranquil environment. Conflict prevention has been shown to be more cost efficient than attempts to manage, settle, or alter situations that have escalated. Conflict prevention works best when people and groups in charge of making choices and implementing essential preventative measures or activities are sufficiently proactive (Lanle, 2015).

According to Best (2007), this may be accomplished in part by paying attention to early warning indications of conflict and responding quickly to them. Dispute prevention is typically conducted with the express purpose of

anticipating a dispute or preventing its development into widespread and uncontrolled violence, whether between two groups or at the societal level. Early warning, which refers to addressing the structural or underlying "root causes" of conflict and preventing it from escalating into fatal violence, is unquestionably a key challenge for conflict prevention. Peace comprises the maintenance of openness and accountability; peace includes not only the absence of war or physical violence, but also the presence of circumstances of wellness, collaboration, and just relationships in the human and ecological spheres (Ogunewu, 2014). It also extends beyond the nature of relationships between nations, ethnic groups, or major groups to relationships among individuals.

As a result, the peace that this paper envisions is not just the absence of conflict but also the advancement of amity through peacebuilding. To prevent conflicts in all of its manifestations, peacebuilding entails identifying and endorsing the actions required for a shift toward more enduring, peaceful relationships and governing institutions. Socioeconomic growth, effective governance, institutional change in the justice and security domains, and the promotion of a culture of justice, truth, and reconciliation are the four pillars of peacebuilding that Halle (2009) highlights. It is anticipated that by preventing and resolving conflicts, the cultivation of these virtues will lead to a significant decrease in hostilities, violence, and all manifestations of "peacelessness" among individuals, relationships between groups of people, and the various ethnic nationalities that comprise Nigeria. Conflicts using various strategies.

Conceptual Clarifications

1. Conflict Prevention: When attempts are taken to keep disagreements from turning into crises, conflict prevention takes place. Eliminating the most significant causes and altering the circumstances that encourage or facilitate conflict

in the first place constitute a real conflict prevention strategy (Okpetu et al, 2011). The following are necessary in order to avoid conflict rather than responding to crises:

- a) A forum for dialogue and cooperative issue resolution
- b) The recognition of the rightfulness of each party's interests.
- b) Knowledge of the psychological and historical factors at play (Okpetu et al., 2011)

2. Peace Building: The United Nations' efforts to promote peace were intended to include peace building as a key component. In the UN's arsenal of conventional peace keeping, peacemaking, and preventative diplomacy, peace building has found a place. In order to prevent a return to violence, it is described as "an action to identify and support structures that will tend to strengthen and solidify peace" (Lanle, 2015). Following 1992, when Boutros-Ghali, the UN Secretary-General at the time, unveiled his peace agenda, the phrase "peace building" became widely used (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). Since then, the phrase "peace building" has gained widespread usage but is sometimes ill-defined, implying actions beyond crisis intervention, such the longer-term creation and elaboration of institutions and governance structures (Lanle, 2015). Today, there are hundreds of groups working on local, national, and worldwide conflict management and prevention initiatives. In addition, it has expanded to cover poverty, HIV/AIDS, and resource-based and violent conflict (Njura, 2011).

According to Lanle (2015), peace building is defined as “activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war” in the Brahimi Report, which is the 2000 Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. Although peace building is a different concept from

peacekeeping and peacemaking, its goals and methods are similar (Lanle, 2015). Additionally, the tasks associated with peace building differ based on the local circumstances and the agent or organization engaged. Over time, there has been an increase in the practice, research, and study of peace building.

Today, government, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, faith-based organizations, civil society groups, and professional organizations are involved in various activities to prevent, manage, and respond to conflicts, either armed or unarmed. These activities include seminars, workshops, media initiatives, and peace education in schools, communities, and places of worship. Imperative: As an adjective, it means to do something formal, very important, and needing immediate attention or action (Hornby, 2006).; as a noun, it could mean: something that is very important and needs immediate attention or action.

4. National development: The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines national as a phenomenon that encompasses a whole country. Therefore, the general progress of a country or nation's socioeconomic, political, and religious improvement may be referred to as national development. A country's growth may also be viewed as a national transformation, which denotes a fundamental shift in identity and little to no similarity to the previous arrangement or framework (Iorkpen, 2022). This means that national transformation entails a profound alteration of a country's core components, affecting its infrastructure, politics, social structure, and economy (Dakuku, 2014). Development planning, often known as the nation's collection of government-mapped strategies, is a means by which national development may be accomplished.

Causes of Conflicts and Violence in Nigeria

Conflicts or disputes do not simply happen on their own.

There are some variables that can be linked to all known conflicts in history, including those that started between peoples and nations and finally manifested as acts of mass violence and warfare. There is no Nigerian society that is conflict-free. Any community that claims to be conflict-free is really claiming to be in a state of nirvana, where nothing but bliss and harmony prevails (Unya, 2012). As long as there are conflicting interests or activities, conflict can arise between people, families, clans, groups, or even within or between communities. Conflict is and should be understood as a necessary component of human existence. Land conflicts are among the most prevalent issues in traditional or indigenous Nigerian civilizations.

As long as there are competing goals or pursuits, conflict can arise between people, families, clans, civilizations, or even within and between communities. Conflict is and should be understood as a necessary component of human existence. One of the main sources of conflict in traditional or indigenous Nigerian society is land disputes. Indigenous civilizations are rife with land conflicts, to the point that disagreements can arise between members of the same family, within groups, or inside and between communities.

Tasie (2011) found that in traditional Nigerian communities, land is the most prized asset for two reasons. First, according to Tasie, land is where people live and work. Since most of Nigeria's adult population lives in rural areas, land often employs the majority of its workforce. A plentiful crop is also viewed as being guaranteed and given by the land. Tasie said that the earth gave birth to crops from her gut, especially yam, which every successful farmer used to feed his family during the farming season. The second reason land is significant to any traditional Nigerian civilization is the mystical bond that the people have with the land of their ancestors, which Tasie (2011) claims is evocative of

Socioeconomic hardship that results in a social group's destitution within a community can potentially spark conflict. When individuals compete for the same resources—such as land, employment, money, and housing, among other things—or when those resources are not allocated equitably, conflicts can emerge. This also holds true for other natural resources like fresh water, arable land, and oil. Roughly 90% of the issues surrounding "the Niger Delta crises" are related to this one (resource/socio-economic). The region's activism and aggression can be attributed to the people's frustration with the state and oil companies for their negligence and destruction of the Niger Delta ecology, which has left them without equal benefits in terms of access to revenue from oil production, increased resource sharing, environmental protection, and human rights respect. Cattle rustling is another factor contributing to violence in traditional Nigerian society. Northern Nigerians engage in more widespread cattle rustling, which has been a major factor in the violent conflicts that have occurred there, particularly in the Jos Plateau region (Unya, 2012).

According to Brock-Utne (2001), cattle are significant to native Africans. Cattle ranches are their primary source of income, he claims. A cow is comparable to a contemporary bank account. Brock-Utne claims that cattle are highly valued assets and that each group feels that all cattle worldwide belong to them by divine right in order to further support the significance of cows and the reasons why they are a cause of conflict among the indigenous nations. Additionally, they assert that each of them has been given the divine right to seize any livestock that neighbors may own or that any ethnic group may claim as their own, using force if necessary (Brock-Utne, 2001). Political conflict and violence can manifest itself in a variety of ways, including disputes resulting from electoral fraud, military takeovers, violent overthrows of governments, and disagreements within and between parties. Unhappiness

with the way the people are ruled leads to conflicts. This is due to the fact that weak governance ultimately leads in group violence, war, and armed conflict—something that is stressed must be communicated (Okpetu et al., 2011). When opinions diverge, conflicts occur. The belief may be political, social, moral, or religious. Political and religious beliefs are especially delicate since they are frequently the basis for a person's sense of self and community. People will occasionally take pleasure in their affiliation with a certain religion or political party.

A religious or political group may be attacked, or it may be motivated by the group's desire to propagate or even impose its beliefs on others, which can lead to conflict. The Islamist group Boko Haram's insurgency in some Northern portions of Nigeria and the Taliban threat in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which has taken and continues to take many lives, are two recent instances of excellent examples. People have been using religion as a justification for violence for ages. This is not to say that religion incites violence, but it is common for people to use religion as an excuse for acts of violence. Certain leaders may intentionally inflame religious and political tensions in order to maintain or seize power. Ethnic disparities might also contribute to it. Another major cause of conflict and violence is boundary disputes. The early 2000s border dispute between the Ife and Modakeke people in Osun State, which resulted in several fatalities and the destruction of houses valued at millions of Naira, serves as an excellent illustration. Additional instances include the border conflicts in Delta State between the Ogbe-Ijoh people and Aladja, as well as between Igbide and Emede. The occurrence of war in Nigeria has been attributed to a number of factors. According to Annumal (2013), disputes are the root cause of conflict and, if not resolved, can lead to acrimonious arguments and occasionally violent altercations.

Conflict arises whenever individuals hold divergent opinions on their beliefs, intentions, ideas, or values. According to Jegede (2000), global competitiveness is what led to wars. According to him, there was neither competition nor necessity for it in the early stages of human history since there was an abundance of resources accessible to each individual at a time when the population was far smaller than what was needed. Competition is necessary for people to have access to resources since, as the population grew, the limited resources could not satisfy everyone's needs. After that, man evolved a form of aggressiveness to cope with anybody or anything that would put an obstacle in his path during the competition (Jegede, 2000).

Consequences of Conflict in Nigeria

Conflict has always existed in our society, despite the fact that people all throughout the world prioritize peace above all else and that international organizations work hard to keep it that way. Nations, institutions, communities, and organizations continue to experience this phenomenon, and it is rare, if not impossible, to find a group of individuals who have never encountered a dispute in their lifetime. Violence is wreaking havoc on human civilization in a way never seen before, spreading mayhem throughout Africa, particularly in Nigeria. Conflict has hampered advancement, political stability, economic prosperity, and Nigeria's overall socioeconomic development due to its multifaceted effects (Ogunewu, 2014).

Nigerian conflict indicators are not hard to find—news outlets cover them almost every day. Any sane person would be appalled by the horrific acts being committed by a man against his followers in Nigeria today, and they should be filled with despair. This covers border conflicts, abduction, terrorism, and intolerance based on religion. Individuals who live in a world of constant peace could not understand the

negative consequences of war. In Nigeria, the individuals least accountable for causing the conflicts are also the most susceptible to its effects. Many times, violent wars, displacements, and violations of human rights trap thousands of people, mostly civilians, women, and children. The establishment of a democratic administration in Nigeria was supposed to reduce violence and provide respite to the populace, but as of May 1999, the situation has turned violent. According to Ogunewu (2014), the nation has experienced an unparalleled surge in violence, particularly in the form of terrorism, since the restoration of democracy.

Nigeria's political structure has been negatively impacted by the country's numerous ethno-religious conflicts. Many people have died as a result of these crises, which have also caused property losses and disruptions to Nigerian citizens' socioeconomic lives (Gajere & Dodo, 2014). Gwamna (2010) affirms that the religious crises in Nigeria have left enduring legacies of tension, insecurity, mutual suspicions, arms buildup, and negative inter-religious relationships. Since the 1980s, when ethno-religious crises heightened in Nigeria, people have relocated to what they consider safe areas. These relocations are based on ethnic and religious borderlines, which will have serious security implications in the future. This is because battle lines are already being drawn for potential war in times of crisis.

Major northern cities are now laid up according to Christian and Muslim divisions (Gajere and Dodo, 2014). For instance, Muslims are more prevalent in Tudun Wada, Unguwan-Sarki, and Kawo neighborhoods of Kaduna than Christians are in Television, Barnawa, Sabon Tasha, Romi, and Goni Gora (Gajere and Dodo, 2014). In a same vein, Christians dominate Tenta Adamu, Kabong, Anguwan Rukuba, and Tudun Wada regions in Jos, whereas Muslims live in Anguwan, Rogo, Bauchi Road, and Ganguare (Gajere

and Dodo, 2014). According to Danfulani and Fwatharks (2002), there has been a significant degree of mistrust, suspicion, anxiety, and even open animosity between certain Muslims and Christians in Jos town since the events of September 7–12, 2001.

However, it should be mentioned that these moves and displacements have brought up socioeconomic problems as some are thrown out of their jobs. Some of these settlements have also become a haven of idle hands that constitute potential bands of armed robbers and other social vices. People in Nigeria are being conditioned to retain resentment and grievances against one another as a result of the ongoing escalation of ethnic and religious disputes, which might potentially lead to a catastrophic catastrophe (Gajere & Dodo, 2014). The weaponization of the Nigerian state is one of the clear fallout or aftermaths impacts of these crises. Many weapons have been hoarded in areas experiencing religious or ethnic conflicts as a means of deterring future religious adversaries or as a check on possible "opponents."

There are significant security ramifications for Nigerians living in peace in this arrangement. These weapons have occasionally been used by disgruntled youngsters to form armed gangs on the roads as well as ethnic and religious militias. The military has really become divided along racial and religious lines as a result of the ongoing confrontations between different ethnic groups (Gajere & Dodo, 2014). During times of crisis, the health and education institutions are not immune and instead collapse, just like the judiciary becomes powerless and anarchy and a breakdown of law and order takes over.

The consequences of conflict can be summarized thus:

- i. Destruction of lives and properties

- ii. Displacement into squalid camps
- iii. Retardation/lack of meaningful growth and development
- iv. Militarization of the civilian populace especially male youths and teenagers.
- v. Abduction, rape and murder
- vi. Chaos, confusion and lawlessness
- vii. Lack of trust as people become suspicious of one another.
- viii. Deep rooted hatred and resentment for those in the opposite camps.

The Impact of Conflicts Prevention and Peace

Advancing the growth of the country According to Olaiya (2020), national development is the process of expanding Nigeria's entire state in all respects for the benefit of everybody. Development is unavoidable in a country free from violent disputes, violations of human rights, and threats to life or property. When there is peacebuilding and conflict avoidance, resources are frequently improved, and even limited resources may be effectively used for the country's growth. This only emphasizes that peacekeeping and conflict avoidance are essential to Nigeria's development.

National development is influenced by peacebuilding and conflict prevention in the following ways: Any significant growth requires the enabling environment that is created by peacebuilding and conflict prevention. It is more difficult to develop when there is no tranquility. Poor policy implementation and service delivery are clearly not the result of poverty in cultures where there is no peaceful cohabitation, but rather of dishonest and fraudulent individuals whose primary motivation for running for office is personal enrichment (Naboth, 2012).

This essentially implies that the government turns into a group of robbers or thieves with the key to the national treasury when morality and peace are removed from

governing. Policies intended to improve society are seldom executed in this circumstance, which leads to the abandonment of most projects due to improper location, poor management, ill intentions, or both because of corruption and selfishness (Naboth, 2012).

Therefore, a nation's development will only occur when there are no threats to its peace and security. Once a nation maintains its peace and security, its development tool will also continue to exist. A keystone and entry point for long-term, stable national growth is peace. No nation on the planet can grow and prosper without peace. The most crucial component of a successful nation is peace. For the country to develop sustainably, it is essential. It's commonly stated that peaceful cohabitation inside a nation's boundaries and among its population is a prerequisite for any economic development or growth (Iorkpen, 2022).

The fastest-developing countries are often those that have the greatest architectural or security systems in place, as well as a culture of peace and quiet. The current security concerns are the main reason why the Nigerian economy is far from that. Because Rwanda is one of the few safe and stable governments in Africa, it has seen significant development and sustainable economic growth over the past 20 years. National output, commerce, and investment have all increased as a result, boosting every area of the economy. Furthermore, according to World Bank rankings, Rwanda consistently ranks among the top locations for ease of doing business (Iorkpen, 2022).

Among the indicators used to get this kind of information are those related to investment protection and public safety, both of which depend on how secure and peaceful a nation is. Religious principles that instill regard for

human dignity also include conflict avoidance and peacebuilding. Virtues like lawfulness, tolerance, fraternity, reconciliation, humility, unity, and respect for human life are emphasized in peace building and conflict prevention. These qualities serve as a catalyst for the advancement of the country (Tanimu & Adebayo, 2020). From a sociological perspective, social cohesion and security foster a sense of shared responsibility among members of the community. Those who live together always have a sense of unity.

This oneness is expected to extend the attitude of people to the national cause, so that the objectives of national development will be achieved. In this view, it becomes clear that peace and security play more important roles in national development than technical know-how. For where there is no peace and security, the number of technologies acquired cannot be used for any meaningful development efforts (Tanimu & Adebayo, 2020). Security and Justice are the basic factors that brings about structural equalities both in resources distribution and location of development projects in society. Lack of peace and justice is responsible for the uneven development of Nigeria. This is the main factor for the agitation of restructuring the country that is currently going on. Today, it is widely accepted that no country can develop without peace; for violence is in reliable base for underdevelopment.

According to Amaele and Dunami (2014), this is because there is not only a lack of security for people's lives and property, but it also precedes lawlessness, which breeds rape, looting, vandalism, assassinations, kidnappings, and terrorism. Since no one works or attends school in a lawless nation, it is obvious that the availability of raw materials, science and technology, policies, and income will not serve any development purpose in any society that lacks peace, justice, equality, freedom, rule of law, responsibility, and

honesty. **Benefits of Conflict Prevention and Peace Building:** It is practically difficult, if not impossible, to pinpoint the complete advantages or gains of conflict prevention, peace building, and security. This is due to their profound penetration and reach over all regions and times, in addition to their multiplicity (Uwagwu, 2019). There are many benefits to peace for man and his civilization everywhere on Mother Earth. In particular, persistent peace and security provide the following advantages:

- i. **Fostering Social Unity:** The capacity to establish and maintain social cohesiveness and harmony among stakeholders in any society, or even village, is a major benefit of peace and security, its noble twin. Peace has the power to reduce needless disputes in the affected community or society through social cohesiveness and harmony (Uwagwu, 2019). This ability to create and sustain social harmony and cohesion, has many other beneficial effects, including cooperation and collaboration and others, some of which will be examined below.
- ii. **Promoting Development:** It is a well-founded and accurate statement in Africa and some other regions of the world that a wise man would never sow in a forest that is already on fire (Uwagwu, 2019). The significance and impact of this astute remark highlight the indispensable role that peace and security play in the growth of any given community or civilization.

In the modern world, sustained peace is essential to progress, particularly when it comes to sustainable growth. This is due to the fact that sustained investment can only occur in a safe and prosperous environment. African nations like Ghana have seen economic progress as a result of the absence of protests for over 25 years (1987–2012).), the country did not experience demonstrations that crippled economic activities and create security problems in

the nation (Ola, 2012). Nigeria saw one coup d'état, two abortive coup attempts, political crises on June 12, thirty-one crises involving religion and ethnicity, twenty-one nation strikes related to the elimination of gasoline subsidies, and the crises surrounding the general election of 2021 over the twenty-five-year period. How is Ghana's economic growth not greater than Nigeria's? Is it possible for a nation that sees at least two types of civil disturbance annually to develop at the same pace as one that doesn't? Collier et al. (2003) state that the fundamental tenet is that "war retards development, but conversely, development retards war." This suggests that the likelihood of war or other violent conflicts is reduced in nations with strong economies, abundant employment opportunities, and well-functioning infrastructure. Furthermore, in places of widespread peace, any other resources that would have been used to combat instability are, of course, preserved and allocated to other worthwhile projects or sectors.

- iii. **Fostering More Peace and Security:** One consequence of long-lasting peace and security in any region is the capacity to shroud the affected community in an atmosphere of forgiveness, which in turn fosters greater peace and security in the affected community or civilization.
- iv. **Defining/Branding Community/Society:** Uwagwu (2019) asserts that every individual, group, nation, and institution in the world has a perception that the general public has about them. This is the purpose of the principle of perception, which forms an image—a mental representation—in the observer's mind. This perspective determines whether nations, organizations, and structures are seen as secure or unstable.

This mental picture of the subject, particularly countries,

defines the tempo and tenor of how the rest of the world relates to them. Among other things, nations all over the world work hard to establish peace and security in their regions at significant material expense because they want to project a positive image. The ability of a calm environment to draw and hold people as well as their investment is the reason for the high level of attention paid to peace and security (Uwagwu, 2019). The "freedom of worship" is a significant advantage of preventing disputes and fostering peace. Building peace creates a peaceful, cordial atmosphere that allows Nigerians of all religions to worship God without fear.

Conclusion

It is impossible to overstate the value and advantages of peacebuilding and conflict prevention in any region. Nigerian federal and state governments ought to put mechanisms in place for averting conflicts and fostering peace in order to further the nation's socio-religious, political, and economic growth. Both people and governments have to give up assigning blame. Every issue should be handled by the government early on, before it becomes worse.

When addressing matters that have an impact on our collective well-being, the government shouldn't act in a biased manner. If only steps are taken to stop conflicts before they get out of control, Nigeria's once-lost greatness will be returned. It is crucial to remember that all disputes and crises stem from manipulation. Manipulation is the act of fundamentally directing the behavior of an individual or group without that individual or group being conscious that they are being subjected to a type of control or even understanding the methods, purposes, or aims of such control (Ojighoro, 2021).

The aforementioned makes it evident that the reason the manipulators are successful in controlling the populace is that the target is unaware that they are being controlled. The

implication of this idea is that, if individuals have enough consciousness and awareness to recognize the lies being said to them, they will not submit to manipulation.

Recommendations

It is imperative to re-educate people and sway public opinion in favor of peace in order to achieve lasting peace. Governments and a small group of individuals negotiating disarmament cannot build peace on their own, since the sentiment and opinions of the general public greatly influence those tasked with safeguarding the interests of their constituents.

Therefore, everyone has a responsibility to promote peace. Everyone ought to be an expert in their passions. Governments' efforts to bring about peace will be ineffective as long as people are divided into opposing groups by ethnic or tribal animosity, antagonism, mistrust, and inflexible ideology. Vatican II so suggests: "Those who are engaged in education, especially the education of the young, and those who mold public opinion should regard it as their greatest responsibility to educate people to want peace."

Given the fact some adherents of religions in Nigeria are unwilling to profess what they proclaim, because of man's cravings to dominate politically, economically and spiritually over his neighbours, this paper also makes bold to proffer the following recommendations to the government and the people of Nigeria:

- i. Government must steer clear from all involvement in religious matters which, more often than not, aggravate political and religious tensions.
- ii. Government would do better to comply with its declaration "neither to adopt any religion as a state religion nor show any favouritism toward any religious organization."
- iii. The only Jihad both Muslims and Christians should

engage themselves in, is the Jihad with the heart, that is striving after all that leads to goodness, peace and love in Nigeria.

- iv. Religious leaders of the three major religions in the country (Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion) must seek ways and means to forge forums for mutual understanding, collaboration and dialogue, independent of government interference and political manipulation.
- v. Rhetoric's about Nigeria's political freedom and independence must be matched with programmes geared towards economic and social justice. Equitable distribution of the available resources should receive priority attention at all tiers of government.

REFERENCES

- Annumah, I (2013) Conflict management. Lagos: National Open University of Nigeria. Augsburg, (1992) Conflict mediation across cultures: pathways and patterns. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press.
- Best, S. G. (2007) Conflict and peace-building in Plateau State, Nigeria. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.
- Brams, S. J and Kilgour, D (1988) Game theory and national security. New York: Basil Blackwell
- Brock-Utne, B (2001) A Draft Paper Presented at a Weekend Seminar on Indigenous Solutions to Conflicts, held at the University of Oslo, Institute of Educational Research; February 23rd-24th
- Collier, P and Elliot, V. I. (2003) Breaking the conflict trap, civil war and development policy. Washington D.C: World Bank and Oxford University Press. p.1

- Dakuku, P. (2014) National transformation. Retrieved on 29th May 2015 from Dakukupeterside.com/national-transformation-the-youth-link.2/.2014
- Danfulani, U. H.D and Fwatsharks, S. U. (2002) “Briefing the September 2001 events in Jos, Nigeria ” African Affairs Royal African Society.
- Gajere, J. T and Dodo, J.G (2014) Ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria: causes and solutions” (Eds: Along, Y. J; Doma, L; Umar, L; Umar, A.Y and Gajere, J.T.) Religion and contemporary issues in Nigeria. p.119-132
- George, R. (2007) Contemporary Sociological Theory and its Classical Roots: The Basics. 2nd /3rd Editors. St. Louis McGraw-Hill.
- Gwamna, J.D. (2010) Religion and politics in Nigeria. Bukure: African Christian Textbooks (ACTS)
- Halle, S (2009) From Conflict to peace building: the role of natural resources and the environment. Nairobi: United Nations Environment Programme.
- Iherue, S. O (2014) Psychological of religious conflict. Lagos: Frans-Maggie Limited
- Iorkpen, N (2022) Peace and security: essential tool for national development. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)* 6(1)p.563-571.
- Lanle, E.N (2015) An introduction: issues in conflict and peace studies. Jos: University Press.
- Naboth, H.A (2012) Peace education and national development: a critical appraisal. *Journal of*

Economics and Sustainable Development. 3(11)
p.132-135

- Njura, S. O. (2011) Peace building practice, research. Report Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of M.A in International Law and the Settlement of Disputes
- Ogunewu, M.A. (2014) "The church, peace-building and conflict reduction in Nigeria." (Eds: Nihinlola, E; Ayegboyin, D.A; Obiremi, S.A; Oladejo, S). the Church, Justice and Peace: The roles of the church. Ogbomosho. *Journal of Theology*. Vol XIX No 3 p.20-47.
- Ojighoro, R. (2021) Conflict resolution and sustainable peace building: a tool for transforming violent societies in Africa." (Eds: Fyanka, B. B; Ekanade, O.) The Adeboye Institute for Peace and Good Governance, Redeemer's University, Ede, *Journal of Humanities and Peace Studies*. 2(2) p.34-48
- Okpetu, S. A. and Isitoah, O. E (2011) Introduction to peace studies and conflict. Warri: V.O.A. Press

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP, INSECURITY AND MIGRATION IN AFRICA IN THE LIGHT OF MATTHEW 2:13-23

Rev. Anyanwu, Charles Anozie, PhD;
Mrs Kokey Grace Chinedu, PhD; and
Ven Agoha Emmanuel Chijoike, PhD
Department of Religion and Cultural Studies.
Alvan Ikoku University of Education, Owerri, Nigeria
charlesanya10@gmail.com

Abstract

The paper argued that political leadership and insecurity are the major causes of migration in Africa. The purpose of the study is to investigate Matthew 2:13-23 to find out how this passage of scripture supports the proposition of the paper. The method of investigation is biblical exegesis. This way, hermeneutical procedures and principles were employed in data gathering and analysis. The study employed interactive political leadership theory by Eva Sorensen and Everett Lee's Push - Pull Migration Theory as a guide for the paper. The findings germane to the study are that political leadership is the cause of insecurity in Africa. That political leadership is the cause of migration in Africa. That Africa, as it were, was peaceful, hospitable, and accommodating to all, indigenes and non-indigenes. That God has a divine purpose and interest in Africa. Jesus' family possibly had a relationship with Egypt in Africa. That God is interested in security matters, especially for His children. The study concludes by recommending that political leadership in Africa should be interactive and not autocratic and that Africa should be returned to the peaceful, hospitable, and accommodating community it used to be in biblical times. This will reduce insecurity and migration from Africa to other parts of the world.

Keywords: Political. leadership. insecurity. Migration, Africa, and Matthew.

Introduction

Political leadership in independent Nigeria has existed since 1960. The challenges of Nigeria resulting from political leadership are myriad from inception. In a seemingly long history of political leadership, Nigeria has struggled with a plethora of facets of conflicts, insecurity, poverty, political instability, youth restiveness like the End SARS, et cetera. Many scholars and authors have treated political leadership in Nigeria but not many if any have done substantive study on the topic that is being discussed currently. The debate that the Nigerian citizenry is not satisfied with each of the political leaderships that have emerged in Nigeria has led many to migrate to other countries through land, sea, and air. Sometimes these migrants succeed and other times they stake their lives en route to their countries of destination.

Concepts Clarifications

The first word on the topic of discussion is political. In Collins Dictionary (2023) political denotes the way power is achieved and used in a country or society. The American Heritage College Dictionary (2004, p.1078) defines political as relating to, or dealing with the structure or of pairs of governments, politics, or the state. This is the conduct of government. In this paper, political entails how power is attained, structured, and used in the conduct of affairs of the government of a country.

The next word used in the study that needs explication is leadership. Leadership according to Ward (2023) is the art of motivating a group of people to act toward achieving a common goal. Such authors as Klingberg, Moore and Varea - Hammond (2006) see leadership from the perspective of its requirements, which are insight, self-awareness, organization, communication ability, ability to catalyze future vision, and ability to attract followers who are

motivated to perform and produce. In another development a document known as Economics Discussion (n.d.) refers to leadership as the art of influencing people to attain group objectives willingly. The paper upholds that leadership is the ability to attract, influence, and motivate a group of people to willingly follow a leader to achieve organizational goals.

Defining these two concepts, political and leadership is a hard task even as scholars argue that literature on political leadership seems to be scarce. Although publishers such as Routledge produced the Ashgate Companion to Political Leadership in 2009, the Oxford University Press released the Handbook on Political Leadership in 2014, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences published on Political Leadership in 2016 et cetera, there is much to be done in the field of political leadership. In addition, it is also posited that there is no existing theory that unifies the two concepts of political and leadership (Ofosu - Anim, 2022). Furthermore, the author argues that the term “political” is often neglected in leadership discourses. Ofosu-Anim (2022) citing Kane & Patapan submitted that the omission of political leadership is not fortuitous or accidental but a blind spot for theorists due to its evasive or slippery nature.

It is therefore, difficult to give a straight cut unifying definition of political leadership. Moreover, as Ofosu-Anim (2022) remarked that neglect of scholarly discussion on political leadership might stem from the fact that many conflicts and dysfunctioning of society and governance have been blamed on bad or poor (political) leadership, hence good and effective leadership has often and always been recommended. Further, they added that the missing of “political” in leadership discourses might arise from the dissatisfactions that it creates, as it reminds people of their suffering and lack of confidence in political leaders (Ofosu-Anim, 2022). Mentioning or discussing political leadership

in many circles brings memories of sorrows and sorrows of poor and or failed political leadership in Nigeria and Africa in general.

Yet political leadership is essential in public policy, programmes, and projects which help in solving societal challenges. Effective political leadership galvanizes citizenry to comprehensive development that mitigates insecurity and minimizes migrations. Conversely, ineffective political leadership tends to bring misery and destruction, killing, inequality, hardship, and oppression of the poor rather than improve the lives of the citizenry (Ofosu-Anim, 2022). An attempt is made here to define political leadership as the conduct of person(s) with the ability, skills, and will to structure governance and through consultation achieve the public goals and goods in a given period. So that when political leader(s) can structure governance, and make consultations that are geared towards achieving public goals and good, insecurity and migration of citizens will be reduced.

Insecurity is another term that needs to be discussed in the present paper. Insecurity is a noun form of the term insecure which refers to not sure, doubtful (of the future). It also means inadequately guarded or protected; unsafe, troubled (the American Heritage College Dictionary, 2004). Therefore, where there is insecurity, individuals feel unsafe in their lives and properties.

Theoretical Review

The study engaged the theories of Eva Sorensen and Everett Lee to enrich the paper. Eva Sorensen in 2020 developed a captivating political leadership theory away from the traditional view of political leadership. This political leadership theory states that interactive political leadership occurs when the members of the political

community take an active part in governing their society. This framework holds that interactive political leadership has the potential to promote robust governance via the promotion of interactive democracy, political learning, accountability, interactive *political entrepreneurship and socio-political implementation*. Furthermore, this style of political leadership encourages elected politicians to strengthen their political leadership role through initiating, orchestrating, and engaging in the co-creating of public value outcomes. In this manner problem-processing interfacing and interaction with relevant and affected actors from the economy and civil society are built (Forfing & Sorensen, 2019). The interactive political leadership theory is relevant to this study as it will ameliorate many of the factors causing insecurity and migration in Nigeria. This is because the actors and citizens will interface and cooperatively engage in building the country together. It results in the government of *anyi anyi* all of us and not *unu and anyi* meaning you and us. It will be governance by all and for all.

The other theory used in this study is Everett Lee's theory propounded in 1966. The theory states that migration is associated with pull-push factors. Pull factors are those that attract an individual to move *japa* to a new place which might include better wages, better standard of living, better education, better security, better job mobilities et cetera. On the other hand, pull factors are those that force persons to move to new places which include insecurity, poor standard of living, poor educational system, poor job opportunities, conflict and wars et cetera. However, the theory hinted that there might be intervening elements hindering people from migrating to another area. Currently, technology and globalization have reduced these intervening obstacles to the barest minimum (Mytutor, n.d.).

This theory has critics who argue that longstanding inequality in a poor country exploited by the rich powerful ones causes

migration. While the structure of labour market in richer countries favour the pull-push model of migration framework (Van Hear, Bakewell & Long, 2017). This theory of pull-push is relevant to this paper despite its critics because it is actually a better life that attracts individuals to migrate or move to new places. It is the poor quality of life that forces a person out original place, but when there is interactive and cooperative political leadership in a country, persons will constructively think before *japaing* to avoid jeopardizing their lives and future as is the case in Nigeria where many are just escaping suffocation.

Methodology

This study engages exegesis as the core method of investigating the biblical text whereby biblical dictionaries, biblical commentaries, and resourceful literary works are used to gather, interpret, and analyze data in this process and procedure. Exegesis is defined as the determination of the meaning of the biblical text in its historical and literary contexts (Zuck, 1999, p.19). Exegesis as an aspect of hermeneutics is concerned with the precepts and methods for gaining an understanding of the Bible. Using exegetical procedure enables the interpreter to be sensible while guaranteeing that the interpretation is accurate (Klein, et al, 1993). The study of literary context, historical-cultural setting, word structure, and analysis will be undertaken, and then the application of findings done.

Context of Interpretation - Africa

Africa is a blessed continent with many natural resources spread across the region. High quantities of mineral endowments are found in Africa such as Diamond in Botswana, Congo Kinshasa, South Africa and Angola; Gold in South Africa, Ghana, Tanzania, and Mali, Uranium in Namibia, Niger, South Africa, Bauxite (for aluminum) in Guinea in Mozambique, Petroleum in Nigeria, Angola, and

Algeria, Iron Ore in South Africa, Mauritania, and Algeria, Columbite in Nigeria, Platinum in Zimbabwe, Manganese in Gabon, Gold, Diamonds, Copper in Democratic Republic of Congo, Gold, Copper, Silver, Zinc in Egypt, Clay, Cement, Salt, and Limestone, Phosphate Rock, and Sulfur in Libya, just to mention for illustration.

Africa is not lacking in Agricultural products in the world market. For instance, South Africa produces maize, wheat, sugar, fruits, and livestock; Sudan produces cotton, sorghum, and millet, Swaziland produces sugar, maize, and timber, Tanzania produces coffee, tea, cotton, maize, cassava, Nigeria is home to palm oil, cassava, yams, groundnuts, Algeria has wheat, oats, olives, Benin has coffee, cocoa, yams, Burkina Faso has groundnuts, cotton, sorghum, Cabo Verde has bananas, maize, fish, Ethiopia has coffee, tiv, pulses, livestock, this is for illustrative purpose. Every country in Africa has some agricultural products in large quantities.

Africa has large human resources and infrastructure, ranging from highly educated, to poorly educated, highly professionals to poor artisans and farmers. The current population of Africa in 2023 stands at 1, 473, 472, 287 as of Friday, November 17, 2023 (Worldmeter, 2023). The 40% of the African population is between 15 years and below; while the median age of the African population is about 20 years (Statista, 2021). The importance of the young African population is the economic and productive manpower available in abundance in the region. Sadly, these young and youthful energies are not utilized efficiently to drive the economic and productive systems for the benefit of the citizenry.

Lamentably, not fewer than 462 million persons in Africa live in suffocating poverty in 2023. Many African

countries are at risk of external debt distress in 2023. Economic growth leaves nothing to be desired. Conflicts and military takeover of government in some African states are concerns for anxiety and insecurity in the region. Many Africans are under the crushing force of extreme poverty with Nigeria leading the procession in colours of 11.9% on the poverty index (Statista, 2023). Africa's inability to reduce its extreme poverty rate is attributed to among several things, over-reliance on natural resource exports to their colonial allies without any value-added initiative. Despite the vast fertile and arable land mass and huge youthful population, agriculture is relegated to the backgrounds as jobs for poor subsistence farmers. It is on record that many African governments are into large-scale modernized agro-chain businesses in Africa.

Political leadership in Africa which is supposed to be the driver of socio-economic prosperity given the natural and human resources and endowments have become thorns in the flesh of Africans. It is argued by Carbone and Pellegata (2020) that since the independence of many African states, Africans have seen power holders overstaying in office and chronic instability caused by election malpractices, and coups have given rise to years of disappointing developmental performances. With many electioneering reforms and regular changes of leaders, the question is, what impact have the new methods of selecting leaders had on the political stability, growth of economies, and the well-being of the citizenry? The data available show that as Africa began to change its leaders and the way they acquired power, those new leaders have continually changed Africa (Carbone & Pellegata, 2020). In many cases, the changes in Africa have been devastating, and destructive to the lives and economies of Africa. This scenario is at the core of a variety of insecurity in Africa.

Insecurity in Africa is multifaceted. There is

insecurity in every part of Africa. In their views, Delgado et al (2023) highlight climate change, violent conflicts, the COVID 19 pandemic, and the high cost of living as drivers of insecurity in the region. Similarly, Adamolekun (1988) submits that while the nationalists who struggled for the independence of African states were for nation-building, the successors have not only failed in nation-building like the first phase of political leaders but also have failed in comparable achievements. Political leadership is at the center of the socio-economic system and might pose a great challenge. Consequently, Africa needs competent transformative leaders who are development drivers. The region deserves and desires effective political leadership which could mobilize enormous human and natural resources to build institutions that will endure (Sackey, 2021). Political leadership that is callously suffocating leads to insecurity and migration in Africa.

Migration in Africa is becoming phenomenal, figures available indicate that migration is in the increase from 18 million to 21 million in 2021 (IOM, 2023). The causes of migration in Africa are varied. They include suffocating poverty, violent conflicts, and environmental stress (Flahaux & Hass, 2016). Other factors are unemployment, low standard of education et cetera. The Nigeria scenario is presented in the following space as migration has taken a new dimension of *japa*.

In the words of Agbelusi (2022) insecurity in Nigeria has remained a monster of great worry to all good citizens as it has become a recurring phenomenon that threatens the fabric of many a citizen. The author continues to lament that the south-west of Nigeria is infested and bedeviled by a myriad of armed robberies, kidnappings, herdsman-farmer crises, and banditry. While the southeast is plagued by kidnapping, attacks by unknown gunmen, agitations, and

cyber and commercial crimes. The North-east is a heaven of Boko Haram militia and insurgency cum the Islamic State in West Africa Province. The North-West is the garden of ethnic-religious killings, banditry, illegal mining. The South-South is boxed by militancy, kidnapping and abduction, illegal refineries, marginalization, and environmental agitations (Agbelusi, 2022).

Concurring, Udo (2015) remarked that illegal armed groups, ethnic militia, cult groups, religious extremists and fanatics, agitators, civil and youth unrest characterize life and living of insecurity in Nigeria. Similarly, Okoli, (2022) lamented over the seemingly horrifying insecurity situation in Nigeria as he recounted the 28th March, 2022, when terrorists ambushed attacked a passenger train en route from Abuja to Kaduna; killing some passengers and abducting many. All the sections of Nigeria are affected. Businesses are crumbling in the south-eastern states with some big city markets closed on Mondays sit-at -home resulting from violent agitations that have given occasion to insecurity. Okoli (2022) suggested that remedy must be proffered by decentralizing Nigeria's security systems and networks, engagement of state and community security networking, and strengthening neighbourhood and village vigilantes which of course should be supervised and trained by experts in security architecture.

In this scenario of barrage of all forms of insecurity lies the reasons for unprecedented migration from Nigeria. The rate of migration from Nigeria to any and every nation of the globe is of enormous magnitude. Human Migration is the permanent change of residence by an individual or group which excludes movements such as migrant labour, nomadism, commuting or tourism that are transitory in sort or character (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2023) Two broad varieties of human migration exist. Internal

migration is the movement of people from one area from the rural to city or rural to rural of the same country for the reason of new opportunities (Oyeniya, 2013). International migration is the movement of persons from one country to another to make new residences, good socio-economic and a better standard of living. Oyeniya (2013) posited that internal migration in Nigeria is complex comprising all genders, all ages from 14-65, both educated and uneducated, both skilled and unskilled. He added that internal migration is linked with socioeconomic and political situations. It is a poverty alleviation mechanism (Oyeniya, 2013), psychological anxiety dousing, social enhancement, and economic empowerment, and also improves the living standard of the host communities. The study turns attention to international migration which is the core of the study at the moment.

International migration has been in existence from old times, some voluntary and some forced. The slave trade was a forced migration. In the 70s and early 80s when Nigerian economic security was vibrant and the naira was higher and stronger than the dollar, when there was relatively political stability and security virtually on all fronts, only a few Nigerians emigrated from Nigeria since working conditions were attractive and business environment was equally conducive (Oluwabukunmi, 2021). The author added that in the 21st century while Nigerians travel abroad for various reasons such as holidays, Medicare, trading, and businesses, other factors such as failure of political leadership, socio-economic considerations, insecurity and poverty, failure of educational systems have increased the rate of migration of Nigerians in the present times (Oluwabukunmi, 2021). Furthermore, notwithstanding the immense growing labour market, youth population, gross mismanagement consequent on ineffective political leadership has decapitated the Nigerian productivity index (Oluwabukunmi, 2021).

Continuing, Duru (2021) upheld that such factors as job or work opportunities, unemployment, wealth creation, safety and security, underemployment and low salaries, low standard of living, and poor educational system heighten migration from Nigerians to other countries of the world. This is followed by the submission by Olajide (2019) that migration from the south-east of Nigeria is one of the highest engendered by growth in population and harsh political and economic conditions in Nigeria. Migrants are often youth causing high school drop-out, loss of labour force, Olajide (2019) argued. The tide of migration is changing rapidly as it is no longer only youth or rural dwellers, or unemployed nor uneducated Nigerians that are leaving in droves. It is now the employed, educated, professionals, in all fields that are leaving with their hearts and hopes.

The proverb that *Anu gbaa ajoo oso agbaya ajoo egbe*, meaning if a hunter's prey runs furiously, the hunter will shoot at it furiously - is obvious in present Nigeria. The situation and conditions in Nigeria are dastardly devastating to the social, economic, and educational capabilities and capacities of Nigerians. Thus, everyone is on the run to escape the impending collapse. This scenario led to the coming and emergence of the slang *Japa* in Nigerian parlance. The new term *Japa* is a word used to describe the astronomical rate at which Nigerians are out-migrating into Canada, Europe, and other parts of the globe (Okunade & Awosusi, 2023). The Nigerian space is suffocating its citizens and all eyes are on the political leadership in Nigeria as being the cause and having the remedy. Okinade and Awosusi (2023) presented data from their empirical investigation on the causes of *japa* syndrome in Nigeria which include poor economic situation, career projection, exhaustion by professionals, secured future for their children, lingering consequences on an economically declining nation such as Nigeria resulting from the colossal capital and human swarm.

Since development and globalization will not allow *Japaing* to end, the political leadership is called upon to deliberately address inter-structural challenges to reduce the desperation of Nigerians to *japa* out to other countries (Okunade & Awosusu, 2023). *Japa* a Yoruba word for “to run”, or to flee when put into the Nigeria political, sociological and economic sphere implies that *japa* is necessary for survival in the present Nigeria. Many Nigerians think that the situation is unbearable and that they cannot cope (Liu, 2023). From Liu (2023) factors such as economic dissatisfaction or discontent, political leadership inefficiency, and failures in the education sector via incessant strike action by Nigerian universities are some reasons to *japa* away to save life and time. Besides the above-mentioned causes of *japa*, Osuagwu (2023) mourns that *japa* is negatively impacting the growing IT industry as talented Nigerians are swarming away into other counties that need them more and pay them better. Companies from abroad are scouting for IT experts from Nigeria making such talents scarce for domestic use in the IT industries. Political leadership must respond to the situation by building and funding learning hubs to aid youth in acquiring necessary IT skills. The government should also encourage IT hardware and software manufacturers to improve the economy of Nigeria (Osuagwu, 2023).

In a country like Nigeria where legions of doctors, nurses, tech-experts, academics and students are fleeing from a besieged city, it is a call for concern. Given that the situation is putting the Nigerian economy, image, and goodwill to mud. It is also a huge drain on the country's talent resources which is reducing Nigeria to a desert of opportunities (Nwabufo, n.d.). The high-hill of problems associated with the current *japaing* of Nigerians outweighs all the advantages like remittances, investment at home, taking family members abroad et cetera. Again, the gigantic negative effects that *japaing* will continue to bring upon Nigeria if not

intentionally mitigated are associated poverty, and ineffective and insensitive political leadership that has plagued Nigeria since it became a nation. Consequently, the study tends to directly link the challenges of insecurity and migration to failed political leadership at all levels in Nigeria.

Africans have lost their lives in trying to *japa* cross the Mediterranean Sea. An endowment “Human Right Watch” (2015) opines that the Mediterranean is the world's deadliest migration route. Due to several reasons in their countries of origin, Africans are willing to risk their lives as it were to attempt *japaing* through these death routes of the deserts, seas, and lands. It has been sufficiently, pointed out in the piece that integrative and cooperative political leadership in Africa is the solution to insecurity and unprecedented migration avoidance in the region in recent times.

Text of Matthew 2:13 - 23

The text of the study is Matthew chapter 2:13-23. The study will follow literary context, historical-cultural background/setting, and exegesis proper which is done through citing of text, structure of the text, and text analysis.

Literary Context: Literary context is crucial in the proper interpretation of a passage because words behave in their family. Literary context is the passages surrounding the passage that are being interpreted. It is therefore the text before and the text after the passage that is being studied. An interpretation that fails to consider the literary context of the passage is adjudged as a pretext, which will amount to wrong representation cum wrong interpretation. In the present study, the literary context of Matt 2:13-23 is Matt 2:1-12 and Matt 3:1-12.

Mathew 2:1-12 discusses the visit of the Magi or wise men who came from an unknown part of the East. They came or visited during the reign of King Herod the Great, which

was about 4BC following the birth of Jesus Christ. They visited to worship and paid homage with special gifts that portrayed their allegiance to Jesus' Kingship. Herod's apprehension was understandable because he was afraid of rivals in the later years of his reign. That was why he asked the Magi to find out where the child was born and return to him with words. As they were led by a Special Star to the Bethlehem where the child Jesus was born they worshipped and returned to their country instead of going back to King Herod.

In Matthew 3:1-12, the scripture records the ministry of John the Baptist who came to prepare the way for the ministry of Jesus Christ. John the Baptist lived an ascetic lifestyle and was baptizing people in the Jordan River. John's message centered on repentance, judgement and presentation of Jesus as the Mighty Saviour of humankind. Amid this scenario is Matthew 2:13-23 which presents the flight of Joseph and Mary with the child Jesus because King Herod who was afraid of any rival in his kingdom wanted to kill Jesus. An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word, for Herod will seek the young child to destroy Him" (2:13). Joseph obeyed the angel, took Mary and the child Jesus to Egypt until Herod died. After the death of King Herod Joseph returned to Galilee and lived in the city called Nazareth. Thus as Jesus was being waned, John the Baptist came up to prepare the way for Jesus' ministry. This is the literary context of the text of this study.

Historical Cultural Setting of Matt 2:13-23

The gospel of Matthew was written about 90 AD or before. It was written during the Roman reign over Israel and Herod the Edomite was an appointee of the Roman Empire over Judea.

The gospel of Matthew is a strong document confirming that Jesus was a Jewish messiah. The destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem indicates the political and economic context of Matthew's gospel. Matthew's careful but subtle criticisms of Roman rule are seen all through the gospel. Consequently, Matthew's stylish presentation of Jesus in the social domain not only as a religious but a political leader is obvious in the Beatitudes in chapter 5 (de Nido, n.d.). The core message of Matthew is that the kingdom of heaven transposes the traditional Roman leadership to where the poor, oppressed, and meek will be rewarded, justice will be given to those in need of it, and the powerful rich be put down and have bearing on the relationship between Romans and the Jews.

It is from this background that the powerful King Herod wanted to kill the poor child Jesus and He was taken to Egypt for safety (de Nido, n.d.).

Citing the Text of Matthew 2:13-23. The text is cited in Greek language transliterated into English words and thereafter an English version will be cited too for clarity.

Transliteration from Greek to English (Bible Hub Olive Tree Bible APP)

2:13 Anachoresanton de auto idou, angelos kyriou phainetai kat onar to Joseph, legon, Egertheis, paralabe to paidion kai ten metera autou, kai pheuge eis Aigypton, kai isthi ekei hoes an eipo soc; mellei gar Herodes zetein to paidion, tou apolesai acito.

2:14 Ho de egertheis, parelaben to paidion kai ten metera autou nykos kai anechoresen eis Aigypton.

2:15 Kai en ekei hoes tes telentes herodou; hina plerothe to rethen hypo kofriou dia tou prophetou, legontos, Ex Aigyptou ekalesa ton huion mou.

2:16 Tote Herodes, idon hoti enepaichthe hypo ton magon,

ethymothe lian, kai apostellas, anilen pantus tous paidas tous en prethleem kai en pasi tois horiois autes, apo deetous kai katotero, kata ton chronon hon ekribosen para ton magon.

2:17 Tote eplerothe to rheten dia Jeremiou tou prophetous, legantos.

2:18 Phone en Rhama ekousthe, klauthmos kai odyrmos polys, Rhachel klaiousa ta tekna autes, kai ouk ethelen paraklethenai, hoti ouk eisin.

2:19 Teleutesantos de tou Herodou, idou, angelos kyriou phainetai kat onar to Joseph en Aighypto,

2:20 legon, Egertheis, paralabe to paidion kai ten metera autou, kai porenou zis gen Israel; tethnekas in gar hoi zetountes ten psyche tou paidiou.

2:21 Ho de egertheis, parelaben to paidion kai ten metera autou kai eiselthen eis gen Isreal.

2:22 Ako usas de hoti archbos bailevei tes Ioudaias anti tou patros autou Herodou, ephbethe ekei apehlthein; chrematistheis de kat onar, anechoresen eis ta mere tes Galilaias.

2:23 Kai elthon, katokesen eis polin legomenen Nazaret; hopos plerothe to rheten dia ton propheton, hoti Nazoraios klethesetai.

Citing the Text of Matthew 2:13-23 in English Language (New King James Version)

2:13 Now when they had departed, behold, angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, take the young child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young child to destroy Him.

2:14 When he arose, he took the young child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt,

2:15 and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet,

saying, “Out of Egypt I called my Son”.

2:16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time. Which he had determined from the wise one.

2:17 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying:

2:18 A voice was heard in Roman, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.

2:19 Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

2:20 Saying, Arise, take the young child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young child's life are dead.

2:21 Then he arose, took the young child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.

2:22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee.

2:23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, “He shall be called a Nazarene”.

Exegesis of Matt 2:13-23

The exegesis of the text of Matt 2:13-23 is carried out through structuring and analyzing the text of study as follows:

Structure of the text of Matt 2:13 - 23

1. The flight to Egypt to escape Herod's Murderous plan (2:13-15).
2. The murder of male children by Herod (2:16-18)
3. The return of Jesus' family to Israel (2:19-23).

Analysis of Text of Matt 2:13-23

Following the textual structure of Matt 2:13-15 is the fact that there was an evil plan and intention to kill Jesus in his infancy by King Herod. Joseph was alerted in *onan* dream indicating divine connection and initiative in the episode. Joseph was to *egert* arise take the child and his mother and flee to *Agypton* Egypt for Herod was seeking the young child, Jesus to destroy Him. Take note that King Herod is a political leader. Why did Herod want to destroy an infant Jesus? Herod was afraid of a political rival. It could be perhaps that he Herod had not ruled the people well and did not want any change in leadership. Thus, the main reason for wanting to destroy Jesus in His infancy is political leadership. This point has been missed by many a scholar or commentator. Herod became ruthless especially when he saw a potential rival (France, 1987). Many political leaders in Africa today because of fear of rivals have become ruthless and wicked to the point of being murderous. Africa today is witnessing political killings. Citing examples of political killing in Africa, Bruce (2013) opined that between 1994 and 1996 not less than 220 persons were killed in political

violence in South Africa. Aljazeera News of 23 February 2023 reported that Labour Party candidate Oyibo Chukwu was killed in an attack on his convoy in Southeastern Enugu State ahead of the country's national election. In the same vein, the Sahara Report of January 10, 2023, informs that not less than 27 Nigerians were killed in 57 politically motivated violent situations between January and December 2022. African leaders who are happy to perpetuate the suffering and suffocating poverty in the community are usually afraid of change and could eliminate any potential rival on their way. Political killings have been normal occurrences in Africa in recent times. In a word, political insecurity in Africa is a consequence of poor political leadership.

Another development in the structure of the text of Matthew 2:13-15 is the flight to Egypt. The crux of the point here is that political insecurity in the New Testament times led to forced migration. The divine instruction in the text *phuge* depart or flee is an imperative mood pointed to a command to leave in a hurry. The fact also that fleeing was at *nyktos* night suggested a secret and hurry departing or departure. The secret and hurried departure of Jesus' family into Egypt is indicative of the fact of the seriousness of Herod's murderous intentions to destroy Jesus to avoid rival to his status and throne. In this way, Matthew in his artistic style brings into the scene the divine provision of security for Jesus' family in Egypt, Africa (Hagner, 1993). In sum, poor political leadership leads to forced migration in Africa. Many

persons *japaing* from Africa to other continents are trying to escape being destroyed by the political leadership and political leaders in Africa. They are fleeing like Jesus and His family to a place of safety and succor.

From the African perspective, the paper suggests some social cultural reasons for Jesus family fleeing to no other place than Egypt in Africa. In Achebe (2008, p. 107) a man belongs to his fatherland when things are good and life is sweet. But when there is sorrow and bitterness, he finds refuge in his motherland. Your mother is there to protect you. Indicative from the above quote is that people take refuge in the motherland when they are being threatened in their fatherland. It is therefore convenient to suppose that Jesus motherland was Egypt or that Jesus had a maternal relationship in or from Egypt. God could not have asked Jesus family to go to Egypt without any specific place to stay.

The text is also suggestive of the hospitality of Africans in ancient times. Both Israel and Jesus are God's chosen. In both cases, the descent into Egypt was to escape danger, and the return was important to the nation's providential history (Walvoord & Zuck, 1983, p. 22). Among nations (continents) of the world, God chose Africa as a place of refuge for both the Israeli ancestors and Jesus in the New Testament era.

The text again continues that Africa is cardinal in the

divine economy of God. God has a mission and mandate for Africa which the church in Africa must endeavour to discover and recover quickly.

Africa was a peaceful domain that prompted God to secure refuge for His chosen nation, Israel, and His chosen Son, Jesus in Africa. The violence and killings in Africa are not African and should be rejected.

Discussing the murder of male children by Herod (2:16-18) is in this wise; his murderous intention continues from when it was reported of the birth of the potential Messianic King. He will not tolerate rivals. So that when the magi did not return to Herod, his anger doubled. He thus ordered that all male children who were two years and under in Bethlehem and its environs should be massacred. Like many tyrant African political leaders, Herod's horrendous and ruthless act was unleashed upon innocent children to protect and perpetuate his reign on the throne (Hagner, 1993). Bible commentators have placed the number of baby boys killed by Herod at a score (Guthrie & Motyer, 1992). It is observable again that a pattern is emerging in the discourse, that is poor or bad political leadership leads to the killing of purported or potential rivals. Inefficient politicians and political leadership often do not tolerate rivals for fear of losing their seats or thrones. Matthew wrote that these killings fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah about the Matriarch Rachel crying for the deaths of her children. In the

same manner, African Mothers are wailing and weeping for the innocent lives of their children lost at the hands of hideous politicians and political leaders in Africa.

Analysis of the return of Jesus' family to Israel (2:19-23) takes its turn. God is interested in the security of His chosen children. Notice how God was carefully watching as events leading to the death of the tyrant Herod happened. Immediately after Herod died, God sent His angel to inform Joseph of their return to Israel. As God led Jesus' family through the angel, Joseph the leader of the family continued to obey and follow. The return of the Holy family to Israel at the death of Herod confirms the biblical saying: "when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when a wicked man rules, the people groan (Proverbs 29:2, NKJV).

In this wise, therefore, the message of the text of Matt 2:13-23 is consistent and relevant to the subject of this investigation. That change in political leadership in Africa will bring about the return of many migrants from the continent, especially those who fled as forced migrants from the land, Africans should endeavour to set righteous political leadership on the throne in Africa, and forced migration and *japaing* will be reduced. African intellectuals and professionals will return to Africa to an enviable peaceful continent of hospitality and prosperity as it was in the Bible times to host the entire nation of Israel for over 400 years.

Conclusion

The piece treated all aspects of the discussion from introduction, concepts clarification, and context of interpretation which is Africa to the analysis of the text of Matt 2:13-23. The study therefore states as follows: Bad or inefficient political leadership exists in Africa. That bad political leadership is the main cause of insecurity in Africa, overtly or covertly. That bad political leadership is the contributing factor in the current *japaing* or mass migration from Africa to other nations of the globe. That bad political leadership is the reason for suffocating and scorching poverty in Africa through the management of abundant human and natural resources. Effective and good political leadership will bring revival, renewal, and return of professionals, intellectuals, and skilled artisans alike that restore prosperity and progress in Africa.

REFERENCES

- Achebe, C. (2008). *Things Fall Apart*. Pearson Education Limited: Heinemann.
- Adamolekun, L. (1988). Political Leadership in Sub-Saharan Africa: From Giants to Dwarfs. *International Political Science Review*, 9(2), 95-106. <https://doi.org/10.1177/019251218800900202>
- Agbelusi, S. (2022). *Insecurity: A norm in Nigeria..* <https://www.thecable.ng/insecurity-a-norm-in-nigeria>
- Aikins, E.R. & McLachan, J. D. (2022). *Africa is losing the battle against extreme poverty.* <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/africa-is-losing-the-battle-against-extreme-poverty>

- Ajuwon, T. (2023). *Fresh data shows 141,000 Nigerians fled to UK in one year as economy worsens under Tinubu*. <https://gazettengr.com/fresh-data-shows-141000-nigerians-fled-to-uk-in-one-year-as-economy-worsens-under-tinubu...>
- Aljazeera News (2023). *Nigerian Senate candidate killed ahead of presidential elections*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/2/23/nigerian-senate-candidate-killed-ahead-of-presidential-elections>
- Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2023, December 14). human migration. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/human-migration>
- Boyce, J. (n.d.). Background of Matthew. <https://enterthebible.org/courses/matthew/lessons/background-of-matthew>
- Bruce, D. (2013). Political killings in South Africa. *SA Crime Quarterly* 45:13-24.
- Carbone, G. & Pettegata, A. (2020). Political leadership in Africa. In *Political Leadership in Africa. Leaders and Development south of the Sahara* (pp.1–11). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Collins English Dictionary (2023).
- Cuthrie, D. & Motyer, J.A. (1992). *New Bible commentary*, Third Edition. Westmont, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.
- Del Nido, D. (n.d.). *Historical context for Matthew*. <https://www.college.columbia.edu/core/content/matthew/context>
- Delgado, C., Tschunkert, K. & Smith, D (2023). Food Insecurity in Africa: Drivers and Solutions. *SIPRI Research Policy Paper*. <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2023/policy-reports/food-insecurity-africa-drivers-and-solutions>
- Duru, I.U. (2021). Examination of the causes and consequences of International Migration in Nigeria. *Asian Development Policy Review*, 9(4), 180-193. <https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.107.2021.94.180.193>.

- Economics Discussion (n.d.). *What is leadership?*
<https://www.economicsdiscussion.net/management/leadership/what-is-leadership/32116>
- Flahaux, ML., De Haas, H. African migration: trends, patterns, drivers. *CMS* 4, 1 (2016).
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-015-0015-6>
- France, R.T. (1987). *Matthew. Tyndale New Testament commentaries*. Westmont, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.
- George, G. (2023). *143, 990 Nigerian doctors, others moved to U K in nine months*.
<https://punchng.com/143990-nigerian-doctors-others-moved-to-uk-in-nine-months/>
- Hagner, D.A. (1993). *Word Biblical commentary*, volume 33A. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- Human Rights Watch (2015). *The Mediterranean migration crisis*.
<https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/06/19/mediterranean-migration-crisis/why-people-flee-what-eu-should-do>
- International Organization for Migration (2023). *Africa and the Middle East*. <https://www.iom.int/africa-and-middle-east>
- Klein, W.W., Blomberg, C.L. & Hubbard, JR, R.L. (1993). *Introduction to biblical interpretation*. Dallas: Word Publishing.
- Klingborg, D.J., Mooce, D.A. & Varea Hammond, S. (2006). What is Leadership? *Journal of Veterinar. Medical Education*. 33 (2): 280-3.
- Liu, Jing Jing. 2023. Japa, or to flee or to run: Nigerian youth and the urgency of departure. *MoLab Inventory of Mobilities and Socioeconomic Changes*. Department Anthropology of Economic Experimentation . Halle/Saale: Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology.
- Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2023).
- Mytutor (n. d.). *How does Lee's push and pull model explain migration?*

- <https://www.mytutor.co.uk/answers/55128/A-Level/Geography/How-does-Lee-s-Push-and-Pull-model-explain-migration/>
- Nwabugo, F. (2021). *Nigerian youths and the Japa syndrome*. <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2021/10/03/nigerian-youths-and-the-japa-syndrome>
- Ofosu-Anim, D. (2022). Political Leadership: A new conceptual framework. *Open journal of leadership*, 11, 398-421
<https://doi.org/10.4236/oje.2022.114021>
- Okoli, A. C (2022). *Nigeria Insecurity: 2022 was a bad year and points to need of major reforms*. <https://theconversation.com/nigeria-insecurity-2022-was-a-bad-year-and-points-to-need-for-major-reforms-194554>
- Okunade, S. K., & Awosusi, O.E. (2023). The Syndrome and the migration of Nigerians to the United Kingdom: An empirical analysis. *CMS* 11, 27 (2023).
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-023-00351-2>
- Olajide, O. A. (2019). *Migration: Its causes and consequences in South East Nigeria*. 5th European conference on African studies: African dynamics in a Multipolar World. https://repositorio.iscte-iul.pt/bitstream/10071/7553/1/Olajide_Adeola_EC_AS_2013.pdf
- Oluwabukunmi, O.I. (2021). *Rationales for migration from Nigeria: societal effects and its impact*. <https://globalhistorydialogues.org/projects/rationales-for-migration-from-nigeria/#:~:text=The%20research%20demonstrates%20that%20societal,reasons%20for%20migration%20from%20Nigeria.>
- Osuagwu, P. (2023). *Japa syndrome dealing deadly blow to retaining talents in Nigeria, Reeltech ceo cries out*. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/07/japa-syndrome-dealing-deadly-blow-to-retaining-talents-in-nigeria-reeltech-ceo-cries-out/>
- Oyeniyi, B.A. (2013). *Internal migration in Nigeria: A*

- positive contribution to human development*. IOM Publication.
<https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/nigeria.pdf>
- Sackey, F.G. (2021). Impact of African leaders characteristics and regime transitions on economic growth in Africa: A dynamic model approach. *Social Science and Humanities*, 4, (1): 100147.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2021.100147>
- Sahara Reporters (2023). *27 Nigerians killed in 57 politically-motivated attacks in 2022, violence to likely Mar 2023 elections report*.
<https://twitter.com/SaharaReporters/status/1612845081190404101>
- Sørensen, Eva, 'Introduction', Interactive Political Leadership: The Role of Politicians in the Age of Governance (Oxford, 2020; online edn, Oxford Academic, 20 Feb. 2020),
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198777953.003.0001>, accessed 18 Dec. 2023.
- Statista, (2021). *Population of Africa in 2021, by age group*.
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1226211/population-of-africa-by-age-group/#:~:text=In%202021%2C%20there%20were%20around,as%20of%20the%20same%20year>.
- The American Heritage College Dictionary* (2004), fourth Edition). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- The World Bank (2023). Africa Overview: Development news, research.
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/afr/overview>
- Torfin J, Sørensen E. (2019). Interactive Political Leadership in Theory and Practice: How Elected Politicians May Benefit from Co-Creating Public Value Outcomes. *Administrative Sciences*, 9(3):51.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci9030051>
- Udo, E.W. (2015). Insecurity in Nigeria: Political, Religious and Cultural Implications. *Journal of*

- Philosophy, Culture and Religion*, .5:1-7 .
<https://core.ac.uk/reader/234694644>
- Van Hear, N. Bakeell, O., & Long, K. (2017). *Push pull plus; Reconsidering the drivers of migration*.
https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:36957d87-22cf-414a-90c6-3a625d2d55b6/download_file?file_format=application%2Fpdf&safe_filename=02%2BVan-Hear-et-al%2Bnvh%2B26%2B09%2B17%2Bfor%2BORA.pdf&type_of_work=Journal+article
- Walvoord, J.F. & Zuck, R. B.(eds). (1983). *The Bible knowledge commentary: New Testament edition*. Weaton, IL: Victor Books.
- Ward, S. (2023). *What is Leadership? The Balance*.
<https://www.thebalancemoney.com/leadership-definition-2948275#:~:text=The%20Balance%20%2F%20Theresa%20Chiechi,to%20meet%20the%20company's%20needs>.
- Worldmeter, (2023). *Africa population*.
<https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/africa-population/>
- Zuck, R.B. (1999). *Basic bible interpretation*. Weaton, IL: Victor Books

