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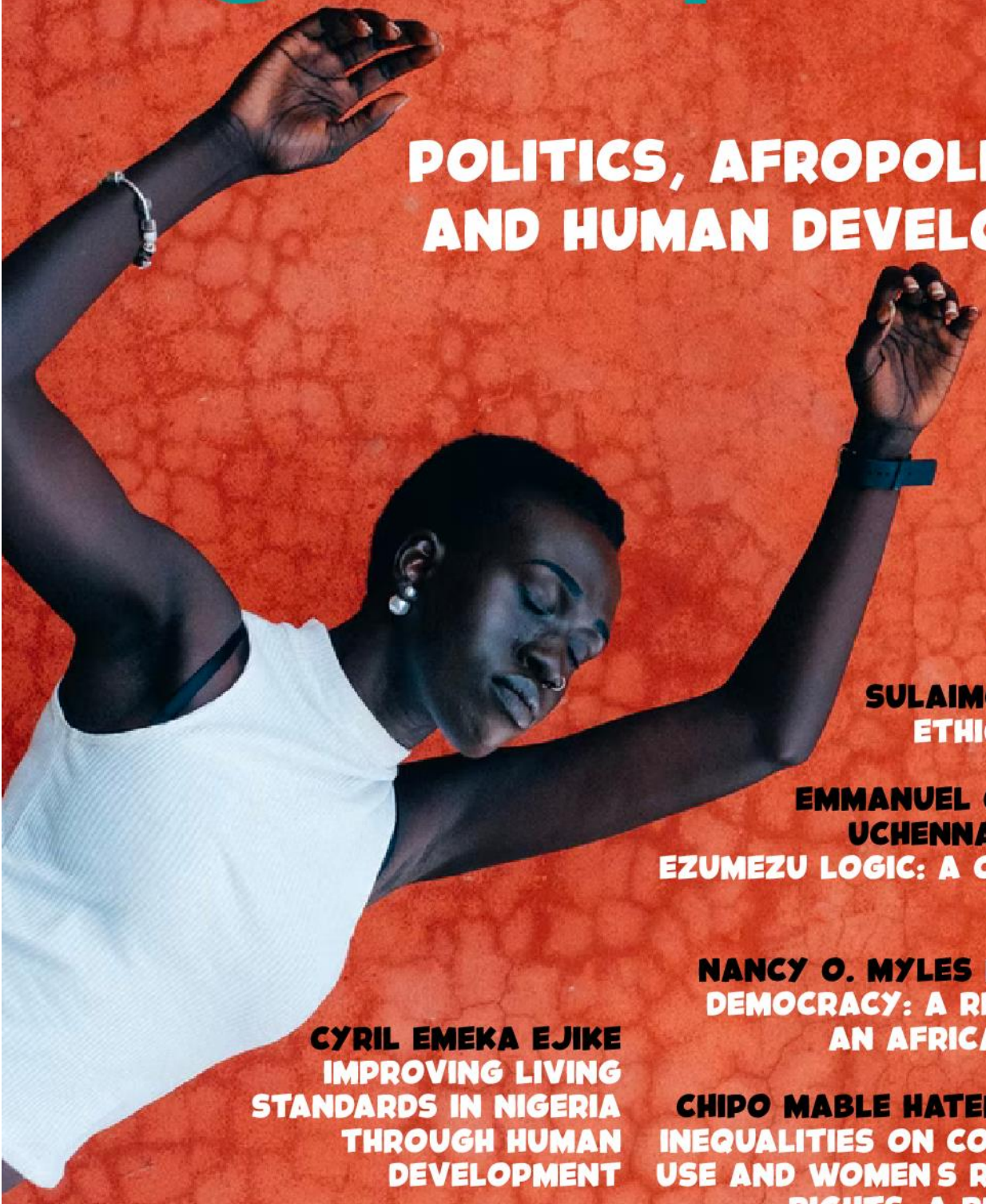

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Improving Living Standards in Nigeria through Human Development

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Abstract

Gross National Product (GDP) or Gross National Income (GNI) computation upon which the measurement of per capita income in Nigeria is predicated does not disclose how national income is distributed among the population, and neither does it factor in deficiencies in basic necessities of life that are not determined by the purchasing power of individual incomes. Therefore, income per capita figures are not a true measure of the standard of living in Nigeria. Against this background, I contend that rather than relying on the conventional income per capita estimates to measure living standards, Nigeria government should focus on providing adequately essential ingredients of human development such as good health care, quality education, housing, and healthy environment. This is because they are indispensable for the building of human capabilities and realization of human potentialities which are central to improvement in living standards. I conclude therefore that building human capabilities through investment in health care, education, and basic infrastructures are of central importance in the improvement of living standards in Nigeria.

Keywords: Development, Human development, Living standards, Nigeria.

Introduction

The per capita income figures are widely employed to measure the rate of poverty and the standard of living of nations as well as their relative standing. This method of gauging well-being presumes that an increase in income per capital translates into an improvement in the general welfare or well-being of the populace. But the Gross National Income (GNI) or the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) estimates upon which the measurement of income per capita is predicated do not show how national income is distributed among the population. The computation of the GNI or GDP only considers and factors in total earnings or incomes of individuals, firms, and governments emanating from the production of goods and services.

Moreover, the conventional measurement of living standards in terms of GNI per capita is inadequate to estimate changes in living standards since it does not factor in aspects of well-being that are not determined by the purchasing power of private incomes [Crafts 1997: 229].

For instance, an individual cannot boost of having a decent standard of living when his income can sustain him materially, whereas he lacks access to good health care, good housing, healthy environment, quality education, and so forth. Thus, income per capita figures are not a true measure of living standards.

In Nigeria, where the existing socio-political institutions and structures are arranged in such a way that national income is concentrated in the hands of the privileged few and thus is not widely and equitably distributed, the GNI per capita estimates have proved to be narrow and inadequate for gauging living standards. For example, the GNI per capita in Nigeria in 2000 was 2,378 dollars [UNDP 2016: 3], whereas the figures rose to 5,231 dollars at Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) in 2017 [UNDP 2018: 24]. Despite the significant increase in per capita income between 2000 and 2017, the proportion of the Nigeria's population truly living in abject poverty increases yearly.

Little wonder Nigeria became the poverty capital of the world in 2018 with 86.9 million people living below the international poverty level of $1.90 in PPP terms a day [Brookings Institution, as quoted in Okagba 2019: para. 1]. Regrettably, the number was increased dramatically to 91.16 million in 2019 [World Poverty Clock, as quoted in Okagba 2019: para. 2]. When deficiency in other necessities of life that enhance well-being is taken into account such as lack of access to good health care, good food and safe drinking water, good and affordable housing, healthy environment, and quality education, the actual proportion of the Nigeria's population who cannot afford the bare essentials for a minimum standard of living far exceeds the above figures. This is also true when consider the fact that income per capita estimates do not disclose how national income is distributed among the populace.

Thus, the extent of deprivation in well-being in Nigeria is enormous. Against this background, this paper attempts to propose the development and enhancements of humans as a basis for achieving overall improvements in the well-being. To this end, I will first conceptualize the standard of living. Second, I will discuss human development as a concept and a theory on which our argument for human development is built. Thereafter, I will delve into basic dimensions of human development and the Nigerian experience. Finally, I will show how human development enhances living standards and draw a conclusion.

Conceptualizing the Standard of Living

The standard of living refers to "the level of welfare attained by individuals in a country at a particular time" [Anyanwuocha 2000: 251]. This level of welfare is measured in terms of the individual's income level, quantity and quality of food and drinking water an individual eats and drinks respectively, access to quality health care, quality and affordability of housing, quality and availability of education, environmental quality, quality and availability of employment, life expectancy, cost of goods and services, and so forth.

Income per capita is widely used as an index of living standards in a country. The average standard of living is said to be high when the per capita income is high. However, the average standard of living is said to be low when income per capita is low. The average living standard

is also partly determined by income distribution in a country. Living standards improve when national income is widely and equitably distributed among the population. But there is a decline in the standard of living when the income is not equitably and widely distributed.

Generally, the cost of living determines the standard of living. The cost of living refers to the money cost of obtaining goods and services or the total amount of money spent to obtain them such as food, shelter, clothing, medical facilities, transport services, education, and so forth [Anyanwuocha 2000: 252]. The cost of living is high when the prices of goods and services are high, but is low when the prices of goods and services are low. A high cost of living means a fall in the standard of living, while a decrease in the cost of living means an increase in the standard of living.

On the whole, a true measure of the standard of living takes account of not only the rate of poverty measured in terms of per capita income based on the international poverty line, but also deficiency in other necessities of life that are indispensable for improving the quality of life. It is in this sense that the standard of living is said to be closely related to the quality of life – a general improvement in the quality of life means an improvement in the living standards.

Philosophical Underpinnings of Human Development

The need to satisfy human needs and desires is the basic motivation for formation of society as well as social relations and cooperation. A human person is by nature social, insufficient and independent being. According to Aristotle [1999: 5], no human person can be self-sufficient without social cooperation and relationships with others. A civil state or society is born out of the need to compensate for human lacks through mutual interdependence and complementation of individual members of the society. Accordingly, human society is a means of securing good life and fulfilling the existential ends of its members as an association that originates in the bare needs of life and for the purpose of attaining the full self-sufficiency [5].

Natural law tradition views development as a change that is oriented towards a goal or an end which an entity seeks to attain. Aristotle [2006: 9] asserts in his book, *Metaphysics*, that potency and act are basic elements inherent in all entities. A being in potency has an inherent potential or capacity to realize its end (form). It is in act when it has fully attained its end. It realizes its end when it attains full development. The goal of human development is therefore the fulfilment of individual potential. To this extent, development is seen as a natural process since it follows an order which corresponds to the goal of the entity [Ejike 2018a: 2].

Aristotle also distinguishes between the formal cause and the final cause as key components of an entity. The formal cause is the form or structure which constitutes the nature or essence of a thing, whereas the final cause is the end for which a thing is made. The final cause is the end or completion of the developmental process – the process of realizing the entity's essence (the formal cause). The formal cause (essence) and the final cause (end) are thus inextricably linked.

Following this natural law tradition, Aquinas [I-II, q.1. a. 2] asserts that "every agent of necessity acts for an end" and that end is built into the very nature of the agent (intelligent or

non-intelligent) that acts. The good (end or goal) therefore constitutes the very essence or nature of human person which he seeks to realize, for it is in the nature of a being to tend towards that which defines its nature or essence.

Development as part of the maturing process is therefore "an unfolding of potential for better flourishing of the individual, the entity or society" [Njoku 2009: 213]. Buttressing this view, Pareek [1990: 119] conceives of human development as "the process of unfolding the unique potential and strengths of individuals and groups in a society." On the whole, development, for natural law tradition, is a natural process of attaining fuller and matured status of an entity for optimal flourishing of the entity.

Marx's theory of development holds that the attainment of self-realization is the motive behind social and historical change. All humans strive towards self-realization – the goal of development and the motive force of history. For Marx [1976], production of life is social in nature in the sense that it entails "the cooperation of several individuals no matter under what conditions in what manner and to what end" [48-9]. The satisfaction of human needs is the rationale for the cooperation of individuals which finds expression in social activity, namely, labour.

The development of the productive forces and organization of social relations of production (substructure) are aimed at self-realization – the realization of human creative potential in labour and its products. This goal of self-realization is therefore the basis and justification for a specific substructure which determines the superstructure in the sense that the superstructure exists to serve and satisfy the need created at the substructural level [Agbakoba 2003: 65]. Productive forces have to be steadily developed and fully utilized to meet an increasingly higher percentage of human needs and eliminate all forms of alienation. When productive forces are fully developed, little time would be devoted to the production of items to meet basic needs. This efficiency in the production of commodities would in turn afford us sufficient time to produce varieties of commodities in large quantities, thereby providing people with considerable "latitude of productive options to engage in for the purpose of self-realization" [73].

Historical and social changes occur as a result of the inability to meet human needs. Put differently, society evolves to revolutionalize the means of production for the attainment of self-realization. In Marcel's thinking, human needs vary with the development of labour and thus are historically specific [Marx 1976: 48]. Values are created or defined within society. The social environment determines the development of human creative potential and thus productive forces of society [Agbakoba 2003: 76]. Although for Marx, the end-state of human needs and desires are historically specific – the specific realization of the self vary in content depending on an individual due to differences in genetic endowments and potential (nature) as well as physical and social environment in which the individual is brought up (nurture), Agbakoba [89] opines that human needs are centred on improving the quality of the life of people and that this improvement relates increased luxury, improved healthcare, education, communication, and so forth. Human needs, for him, are critical to the full development of a human person and his self-realization [68].

Human needs, for Marx [1959], are integral to human nature and that satisfaction of the basic necessities of life is a precondition for human engagement in any human activity such as philosophy, intellectual discourse, and other works of art. The satisfaction of human needs is therefore indispensable for developing human potentialities at maximum capacity and realizing the self. On the whole, humans fulfil themselves in the specific realization of their potential.

For Hume [1957], a large part of human needs of food, shelter, and security is satisfied in society with the cooperation of others. As he puts it: "By the conjunction of forces our power is augmented; by the partition of employments our ability increases; and by mutual succour we are less exposed to fortune and accidents. It is by this additional force, ability and security that society becomes advantageous" [46].

Human Development: Conceptual Frameworks

One of the foremost African contemporary philosophers, Professor Joseph Agbakoba views human centred development as "the process by which human beings seeks the maximium realization of themselves" [Agbakoba 2019: 54]. It relates with the quality of life of a person, that is, the degree of a person's self-realization [54]. Agbakoba's idea of human development concurs with Mabogunje's conceptualization of development as essentially "a human issue, a concern with the capacity of individuals to realize their inherent potentials and effectively to cope with the changing circumstances of their lives" [Mabogunje 1980: 45].

Roodney [1972: 4] maintains that the development of a human person is the ultimate goal of development. Such development, for him, entails "increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being" [3]. On this line of reasoning, development is seen a process of expanding people's choices and capabilities (substantive freedoms) and improving their overall well-being. Thus, United Nations Development Programme [UNDP 1990: 10] defines development as "a process of enlarging people's choices" and improving their well-being.

Though the choices can be infinite and change overtime, the essentials of them are for people to lead a long and healthy life, to be educated, and to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living. According to UNDP [1990: 10], other opportunities remain inaccessible unless these choices are available. The idea of well-being goes beyond the quantity of material production and consumption. It has to do with the quality of life and thus human development is basically concerned with improvements in the quality of life rather than a mere quantitative material progress. Development is this sense transcends a mere expansion of income or wealth.

Human development approach emphasizes enlarging people's freedoms and opportunities rather than economic growth [UNDP 2018: iii]. Haq, Sen and Anand, who are renowned human development theorists, focus on expansion of people's capabilities – what people can do and be – as the major determinant of their well-being rather than their material goods. Capability is the ability "to lead the kind of lives we have reason to value" [Sen 1999: 285]. It reflects an individual's "freedom to lead one type of life or another" [74]. It defines "the freedom to choose

a valuable life in accordance with individual preferences" [Vollmer 2009: 70]. Capability is the freedom to achieve things which one is able to do and be. In this sense, an individual's capability constitutes his freedom – the real opportunity to have well-being [Sen 1992: 40; 1987: 36].

Anand and Sen [2000] explain that this human development approach views development as the expansion of people's capabilities "to live better and richer lives, through more freedom and opportunity" [84]. The capability approach focuses directly on the quality of life individuals are actually able to achieve; a life that they have reason to value [Sen 1999: 31]. Expansion of individual freedom or capability is the principal means and goal of development [Haq 1995: 12; Sen 1999: xii]. Sen [1999: 72] argues that income and wealth (resources) people have are inadequate for evaluating well-being since, for him, they provide only limited and indirect information about the well-being of the people.

Capability or the extent of freedom plays a central and direct role in the achievement of well-being. Adequate provision of health care and access to quality education are of central importance in the building of human capabilities. Their inadequacies are obstacles to attainment of people's well-being and enjoyment of life that they value [Haq 1995; Sen 1999]. Haq, Sen and Anand's conception of development as capability expansion has a strong connection with Aristotle's understanding of human flourishing and good life which forms the basis of natural law theory of human development. Like the human development theorists, Aristotle does not see wealth (material resources) as an end in itself. In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, he states that "wealth is clearly not the good we are seeking, since it is merely useful, for getting something else." [Aristotle 2004: 7}.

According to Annan [2003, as cited in Igbokwe and Iwuoha 2019: 132], development basically "embraces human rights and good governance, access to education and health care and ensuring that each individual in rural and urban areas has opportunities and choices to fulfil his or her own potential. "The development and realization of individual potential at maximum capacity requires the satisfaction of basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, and good health, as well as secondary needs like desire for knowledge, desire for societal recognition/respect, desire for comfort, and freedom from violence.

Human development is therefore concerned with human beings and their capabilities (qualitative development). Human development approach takes cognizance of improvements in all aspects of people's life and not just material well-being. The Human Development Index (HDI) is the leading index for measuring and determining achievements of a country in promoting human well-being. HDI evaluates overall human development in terms of three primary dimensions, namely, a long and healthy life, access to knowledge, and a decent standard of living which are represented by life expectancy, education, and per capita GNI respectively [UNDP 2018: 1].

Integral human development entails the full development of the whole human person, including intellectual, moral, material, social, spiritual and cultural dimensions [Gorospe 1975: 93]. Oladipo [2009: 95] explains that development has tangible and intangible dimensions. The tangible aspect relates to material well-being and it entails exploitation and control of the physical environment by the application of results of science and technology. The intangible

(or moral) aspect deals with improvements in the quality of life through human capability building, as well as improvement in the quality of social and human relations which find expression in internalization and institutionalization of positive values like justice, equity, truth, love, freedom, peace and tolerance [95]. The intangible aspect helps to improve the capacity of an individual to shape his own life without being insensitive to the common good [95].

Dimensions of Human Development and the Nigerian Experience

The three basic dimensions of human development include a long and healthy life, access to quality education, and a decent standard of living.

A Long and Healthy Life

Longevity and good health presuppose material subsistence, access to nutritious food, clean and safe drinking water, shelter, clothing, fresh air, health/medical care, and healthy environment that promote physical and mental well-being of the people. In Nigeria, majority of the populace cannot afford the bare essentials for a minimum standard of living. World Poverty Clock Report [as quoted in Okagba 2019: para. 2] indicates that 91.6 million people presently live in extreme poverty below the poverty line of $ 1.90 in PPP terms a day. Although this rate of poverty measured in terms of income per capita is not a good approximation of the number of people living below the poverty level in reality, it shows the enormity of deprivation in well-being.

Environmental degradation, poor sanitary conditions and poor hygienic services are rife in some parts of the country. The environment is being polluted and ravaged by household and industrial waste. Inadequate of waste disposal systems and ill-timed removal of waste disposal by Environmental Protection Agency make waste disposal system easily gets filled up, prompting people to dump refuse on all sides of the system. Consequently, the heaps of refuse dump stink and expose villagers to airborne diseases such as common cold and cough. Besides, when there is strong bliss, the refuse dump easily disperses every nook and cranny. Some waste gets into sewers where they mingle with sand to obstruct the passage of floodwater. Sewers in the long run become breeding grounds for mosquitoes and other harmful flies.

Environmental degradation endangers human health and life, as they engender deficiency in necessities of life, endanger water, air, industrial, and chemical pollution, and expose humans to airborne and waterborne diseases. For instance, gas flaring and oil spillage, on account of indiscriminate exploitation of oil in the Niger Delta region of the country, have severely polluted farmlands and sea, thus engendering ecological disaster, scarcity of good food and clean water as well as denying the inhabitants, who are mostly farmers and fishermen, their means of livelihood.

Related to these are inadequate and poor medical facilities and centres which make it difficult to treat chronic illnesses. While the affluent fly abroad for medical treatment, those who could not afford an enormous amount of money needed for medical trips and bills abroad have to expose themselves and their dependants to health centres and hospitals stocked with

substandard drugs and facilities. All these account for high stillbirths, infant mortality, and death rates in the country. For example, the report of UNDP [2018: 52] reveals that Nigeria had a low human development in 2016 explained in terms of mortality rate which was 66.9 per 1000 live birth, for infant. For adult, male mortality rate was 371 per 1000 people, while that of female was 333 per 1000 people [52]. Healthy life expectancy at birth in 2016 stood at 48.9 [52].

UNDP [2018] report also shows that Nigeria had a low human development measured in terms of environmental threats. Of all the countries classified under low human development in 2016, Nigeria had the highest mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution, as it recorded 307.4 per 100,000 population [100]. Mortality rate attributed to unsafe water, sanitation, and hygiene services stood at 68.6 per 100,000 population in 2016 [100].

Access to Quality Education

Education refers to transmission of knowledge, skills and values to individuals which enables them to develop and realize their potential, function effectively in society, and survive. Education is qualitative when it touches all aspects of learners' life such as intellectual, moral, spiritual, social, and psychological. Such education does not only concern with literacy and numeracy, but also prepare individuals for human relations, social participation, citizenship, and economic activity [Oluwagbemi-Jacob 2018: 6]. It is holistically aimed at developing all the capacities inherent in individuals: developing vocational and technical efficiency and competency, cultivating social, moral, spiritual and cultural values as well as awakening consciousness of maintaining good health and physical fitness, so as to prepare the individuals for future profession, vocation or trade, for good leadership and citizenship.

Regrettably, education system in Nigeria, modelled on the British system of education, lacks ingredients necessary for the development of vocational and technical efficiency and competency as well as moral development. Coleman [1971: 114] notes that in colonial era, education in British colonies in Africa, including Nigeria, was based on learning to read, write, and do arithmetic in the English language. The British system of education in Nigeria was thus tilted towards literacy and numeracy with little or no emphasis on technical and vocational education, especially at the tertiary level.

The best such literacy education could do was to provide government offices with English speaking clerks and assistants [Ebo 1989: 29]. The British-based literacy curriculum lacked the ingredient to challenge learner's mental faculties, and prepare them to achieve economic security and self-reliance. In this regard, Azikiwe [as quoted in Ebo 1989: 47] remarks: "Many boys and girls who should be eligible for jobs in many capacities could not do so because they were unemployable. They were intelligent enough but lacked requisite skills in any sector of commerce or industry."

A pressing need for curriculum that would respond to the needs and aspirations of citizens led to the National Conference on Curriculum Development in 1969 which culminated in the articulation of the current National Policy on Education (NPE) and expansion of scope of education. School curriculum has been since expanded to incorporate technical and vocational subjects such as Technical Drawing, Food and Nutrition, Clothing and Textile, Practical

Agriculture, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to match the ideals and challenges of changing economic and social structure of modern society and provide individuals with the means of solving personal or community problems. It is hoped that vocational and technical subjects would equip learners with practical and applied skills and empower them for jobs creation and wealth generation [Ejike 2018b: 2].

However, the practical aspect of these subjects is not adequately taught in schools to achieve the desired results. There has been a steady decline in government budgetary allocation to the education sector in recent years. This makes it difficult to provide state-of-the-art laboratories, instructional materials, workshop tools, machines, and other facilities for the practical training and learning of technical and vocational subjects. Besides, the largely unsustainable education funds meant for the facilities and their maintenance are more often than not diverted into the coffers of corrupt officials in the education sector. Inadequate capital projects and corrupt proclivities of officials in the education sector impede the development and accessibility of quality education in Nigeria.

Add to this is the lack of value-based moral instruction that helps learners to develop right virtues and values and be able to make free, informed and rational moral decisions when they are faced with moral dilemmas and challenges. It cannot be rightly gainsaid that Moral Instruction being taught in Nigeria's primary and secondary schools is religious and faith-based. It is mainly concerned with religious rites and services, and serves as an avenue of deepening the understanding of religious doctrines and propagating religious dogma, while little or no attention is paid to morality. Thus, the so-called Moral Instruction classes have been reduced to religious indoctrination classes that nurture and reinforce religious extremism in the country.

Moreover, majority of citizens do not have access to quality education at the secondary and tertiary levels mainly due to extreme poverty, rising unemployment, and absence of social security (welfare benefits) which make it difficult for parents/guardians to afford school fees and other educational materials for their children/wards. Consequently, there is a high rate of out-of-school children and school dropouts with its concomitant high illiteracy rate. According to UNDP [2018: 56] report, adult literacy rate in Nigeria from 2006 to 2016 was 51.1%, while youth literacy rate was 58.0% (female) and 75.6% (male) which were all rated low in the human development index.

A Decent Standard of Living

A good standard of living is an essential building block of human well-being. It is intimately linked to a long and healthy life, and access to quality education we have discussed. An individual's income level, the amount of wealth the individual has, quality and quantity of food and water the individual takes, access to quality education, housing, healthy environment, medical care and other necessary social services determine the living standard.

Income is indispensable for meeting primary needs like food, clothing, and shelter. It enables the individual to choose a valuable life in line with his preference, and opens up opportunities for the individual to expand his capabilities. Income is necessary for the attainment of a quality education, a long and healthy life, security in illness and old age, and so forth [Oluwagbemi-

Jacob 2018: 6]. As we have noted in this paper, 91.6 million people in Nigeria presently live below the minimum subsistence level based on the international poverty line pegged at $ 1.90 in PPP terms a day, indicating low living standards.

However, multi-dimensional poverty is not just deprivation of material sustenance, but also entails deficiencies in other basic human necessities and lack of freedom (capability) occasioned predominantly by lack of quality education and good health. Sen [1999: 36] argues that utilization of human capabilities, which is made possible by access to quality education and health care, helps to improve not only economic or material well-being of an individual, but also his standard of living. Therefore, high individual's income level or wealth per se does not guarantee improved welfare.

A good standard of living presupposes that there is availability of good food and safe drinking water, good housing, good health care, quality education, healthy environment, and other basic necessities of life that improve the overall well-being of the populace. For instance, high quality and adequate health services as well as clean and healthy environment provide people with good chances of surviving childhood, achieving physical and mental well-being, and having greater longevity, thus improving living standards. In addition to low income level, inadequate of basic necessities of life therefore makes living standards in Nigeria poor. UNDP [2018: 85] report shows that Nigeria was ranked low in human development in 2015, as 41.1% of rural population had access to electricity, 67.3% of Nigeria's population were using improved drinking water, while 32.6% of the population were using improved sanitation facilities [85].

Human Development as a Cornerstone of Improvements in Living Standards in Nigeria

Human development is seen in this paper as a process of building human capabilities and expanding people's choices. According to human development theory, enlargement of individual capability is the goal of development. For the natural law version of human development theory, every individual has inherent potential or capacity and the realization of this potential is the goal of the individual. It stands to reason that the individual cannot flourish at the optimum level and attain self-realization unless his potential is developed and fulfilled. Human development is inextricably linked to living standards, as both are concerned with the quality of life.

Improvements in living standards presuppose the development of human capabilities through access to quality education and health care and other basic infrastructures. Lack of good health and access to quality education hinder the realization of the income-earning potential of individuals and attainment of good life). Therefore, the ability to lead a long and healthy life, and have access to sound and quality education are critical to the improvement of the standard of living. Per capita income per se measured in terms of the international poverty threshold (in PPP terms a day) is not a true measure of living standards in Nigeria since such measurement does not only fail to take into consideration how the national income is distributed among the populace, but also fail to consider the availability and accessibility or otherwise of other basic

necessities of life that enhance socio-economic welfare which is inextricably connected with human development.

It is the adequacy or inadequacy of certain basic capabilities together with the level of individual incomes that determines considerably human development or otherwise and, by implication, the standard of living. Essentially, improving living standards depends substantially on the provision of public services such as quality education and wide-ranging public health care as well as the individual's income level. This is because the provision of these public services is instrumental in expanding people's choices. Thus, the Nigerian government must create an enabling environment for people to develop their capabilities. This can be done by investing in education and health sectors, and by providing basic infrastructures.

A premium should be placed on education and increase its budgetary allocation, while functional mechanisms should be set up by the government to ensure that funds budgeted for and allocated to education are not siphoned off. Given that a good number of parents/guardians do not have the financial wherewithal to fund their children/wards' schooling, free tuition fees should be provided by Nigerian government up to the secondary education to encourage mass education and mass literacy. As the largest oil producer in Africa and a member of Global Education Partnership (GPA) that provides education funds for its members, Nigeria has sufficient national wealth to provide free tuition fee at all levels of secondary education.

But this education must be sound and pragmatic, otherwise a larger pool of educated people will only increase the number of educated unemployed. Regarding this, Azikiwe [1970] rightly states that he learns from his academic adventure in America that "with all the academic distinctions one might acquire, if one did not have a good job from which to earn a steady income to have food, shelter, clothing, and the necessities of life, one's education could be regarded as a dismal failure" [160]. Therefore, academic certificates and laurels are useless if they cannot give the individual who badge and receive them respectively the capacity to earn a decent livelihood.

Making learners employable calls for full implementation of technical and vocational subjects in the school curriculum as well as the establishment of more vocational and technical schools in each state of the federation so that people can enrol for specialized training. Parents/guardians and Guidance Counsellors should encourage their children and students respectively, especially those who are not studious and lack 'book' knowledge, to enrol in vocational and technical schools designed for the development of individual skills, attitudes and capabilities, and to prepare learners as potential paid employees and creators of jobs in this 21st century age of technological revolution. A quality and pragmatic education will produce highly skilled, creative, innovative, and productive individuals who have the capacity to create wealth for themselves and contribute immensely to economic and technological development of the country.

There is an inextricable connection between human development and economic development. Developing and investing in human capital (skills and enterprise, and institutions that produce them) through massive investment in technical and vocational education at all levels of education would, in the long run, produce creative, innovative, resourceful and enterprising individuals whose productive inputs would not only boost productive capacity of Nigerian

economies, but also improve the individuals' means of livelihood, and ultimately raise the standard of living which is an index of economic development. In the light of this, Haq [1995: 3] asserts that people are both "the means and the end of economic development."

Basic human needs must be met for individuals to attain a reasonable standard of living. But the satisfaction of the basic needs presupposes the existence of an appropriate 'knowledge-state'. Agbakoba [2013: 57] explains that the knowledge-state includes "normative beliefs, common sense and theoretical knowledge, and the practical manipulation/organization of nature and human beings (technology, magic, and social organization)." The goal of development is self-realization. From the perspective of Marx's theory of development, the general and immediate conditions which are to be satisfied before the ultimate goal, self-realization, would be realized include "an increased development of productive forces and the establishment of social institutions and structures which will make for an equitable distribution of the socially produced objects" [92].

However, technical and vocational education that would bring about improved productive capacity, substantial improvements in the economic well-being of Nigeria and thus human well-being must be rooted in African indigenous knowledge – a lived world constituting Africans' experiences, insights, and reasoning which embody their indigenous modes of knowing necessary for their continual existence and sustenance [Akena 2021: 601]. In other words, the process of knowledge production, transfer, application and utilization must involve the use of ideas (or philosophies) tools and approaches indigenous to Africans in order to be responsive to socio-cultural and economic interests and needs of Nigeria.

Ilmi (2014), for instance, observes that some young boys at Mombasa (a city of Kenya) produced "magnificent battery-operated toys from scrap metal, wood and neon lights" [142-3] during his encounter with them. The handiwork of the boys demonstrates that Africans can utilize their local resources to meet their development needs if their enterprises, creativity and capabilities are built through technical and vocational education that incorporates African indigenous knowledge. It calls for integration of African indigenous knowledge with Western science, technology and knowledge, where necessary, to meet Nigerian development needs. Such education should involve the transfer and adaptation of modern technology where necessary, given the comparative advantage, to meet Nigeria's geographical and socio-cultural circumstances and other exigencies for the purpose of industrialization of Nigerian economy and job creation.

It should also entail integration of African unique culture (specifically artifacts) and modern technology, where local materials are insufficient, for the production of commodities for domestic consumption and exportation. For example, Engineer Ozoemena Ani, a coordinator of the Mechatronic Research Group in the Faculty of Engineering, University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN), discloses that 80 percent of components his research group used for manufacturing of a first homegrown electric car in Nigeria in 2019 were locally sourced, while the remaining 20 percent were foreign materials [Babalola 2019: para. 3]. Moreover, Innoson Vehicle manufacturing Company in Nigeria uses about 60 percent of locally sourced materials (which are largely electric aspects and other equipment) for manufacturing of vehicles

(automobile and bus), while other materials (engine and light) are imported. In these ways, Nigeria can promote local content and capacity.

What we are driving is that Nigeria's engagement with modern technology must be responsive to its operative conditions and needs for the development and realization of individual potential. Agbakoba [2019: 57] contends that the process (means) and ends (goal) of self-realization would entail social existence – they would necessarily be in the social, political, historical, cultural and economic context of a degree of social created states(s) that would work towards the self-realization of each individual in a society at the social, national and global level. He distinguishes between two dimensions of self-realization, namely, the particular (specific) and the universal dimensions. The particular dimension of self-realization pertains to specific individuals, groups and communities. It constitutes the cultural dimension of development that pays attention to socio-cultural and geographical circumstances, interests, needs, and challenges of a given society.

The universal aspect of self-realization relates to all human beings, regardless of the form of society in which they are organized. It comprises those values, ideas, attitudes, orientations, practices and objects which are either preconditions or enhancing conditions for the realization of humans across the globe [Agbakoba 2019: 57]. This realization requires that primary human needs are adequately met. The universal dimension focuses on science-driven technological and economic progress. The existence of the knowledge-state or its aspects generated in one society or community need to be modified or adapted to suit and reflect specific physical, geographical and environmental circumstances, socio-cultural and historical contexts of a given society before such knowledge, ideas and practices of a universal interest can be transferred in the specific society.

These modifications as well as other activities geared towards meeting societal specific choices and needs form part of the particular dimension of self-realization [Agbakoba 2019: 58]. Things that have meaning and value for people or society outside general basic needs constitute the specific aspect of self-realization. Secondary human needs therefore constitute in part the particular dimension of self-realization since there satisfaction is sought within the socially approved bounds (every society formulates and expresses its own general axiological orientations on the basis of its historical-cultural antecedents and geographical circumstances) and how much (the extent to which) they are met depends on individual aptitudes (or endowments), skills, aesthetic sense, geographical and physical conditions.

So, the ultimate goal of human development – the realization of the self – is attained in a social-cultural context. The two dimensions of self-realization should not be conceived of as if they are partitioned into independent compartments. Cultural development is inextricably bound up with economic development; there is a reciprocal and causal relationship between them. In this regard, Agbakoba [2019: 62] asserts that "the type and functional input of cultural and social systems exert a lot of influence on economic development." The particular and universal aspects of self-realization are thus interlocked, forming a functionally organic whole within which individuals can realize themselves.

Beyond this, culture of poverty can be alleviated by distributing available resources equitably, creating employment opportunities through industrialization, and formulating and

implementing skill acquisition programmes for the youth for entrepreneurial training and development. The programmes will go a long way towards equipping the youth with skills and knowledge needed to develop their potential and become self-reliant and self-sufficient. There is a youth empowerment programme called Youth Empowerment Scheme (P-YES) launched by the Federal Government in 2019.

The programme is designed to train and empower the youth on certain areas such as information technology, technology acquisition, agriculture, fashion, and catering. P-YES beneficiaries are to undergo a two-year training that involves one-on-one or small group contacts with professional trainers. Thereafter, they will be empowered with Seed Empowerment Tools (SET) required to become self-employed and self-sufficient. This scheme has the potential to develop human capacities, if implemented. Government is therefore urged to kick off the enrolment and training of the youth in the scheme as soon as possible.

Numerous studies show that enhancement of people's capacities, creativity, and productivity through quality education creates economic opportunities which improve income distribution Ranis and Steward 2005: 4-5) and strongly impact on income equality [Psacharopolous et al. 1992: 48]. Such education correlates significantly with technological capability and technical change in firms or industries [Gopalakrishna and Rao 2012: 638]. It also impacts positively on farmers using modern technologies [Behrman, Rozenzweign and Vashishtha 1995, as quoted in Ranis and Steward 2005: 4]. Development of human capabilities through pragmatic and quality education will therefore make people employable and improve the quality of labour that increases productivity and well-being.

This will, in turn, increase earnings which contribute to improvements in the standard of living. In the light of this, Azikiwe [as quoted in Economic Rehabilitation of Eastern Nigeria 1955: 47] asserts:

> *The philosophy of education, which is based on the transformation of indigenous material, human and otherwise, from unskilled to skilled, for the improvement of society is collateral with the idea of education not only as a process of mental and social change but as a means of acquiring skill, to enable the educated person to adapt himself to his society and be useful as a skilled wage-earner and thereby improve his standard of living.*

However, being gainfully employed and increase in individual incomes alone do not guarantee improvements in living standards unless other basic necessities of life that enhance a long and healthy life are available and accessible. For example, an individual whose earnings are high but lives in poor sanitary conditions is predisposed to infections and infectious illnesses. If he becomes unhealthy, on account of the disgusting and degraded environment, he has to spend a large chunk of his salary on medical treatment, thus leaving the individual with little or no money to provide for his basic needs.

Again, suppose that he has no access to safe drinking water and high standard medicines, and thus suffers from typhoid due to contaminated water, he would keep spending part of his earnings on medical treatment at weekly or monthly intervals. This is because the typhoid would linger after a respite, having been exposed to substandard medicines that are mere

palliatives. In the long run, the victims will be impoverished. Therefore, to raise the standard of living, the government must ensure, inter alia, that there is good sanitation, adequate waste disposal systems, and periodic and timely removal of refuse dumps, environmental management, access to public health care, adequate and affordable high quality health products and facilities, availability and accessibility of safe drinking water, access to credit and land, affordable public housing, rural electrification, rural road network and other public works.

Social security benefits should be provided to those who are incapacitated and most vulnerable members of society like the disabled, the elderly and poor widows to enable them acquire basic necessities of life. There is also need for regulation of industrial activities especially those from mining and petroleum industries in line with international best practice to ensure environmental protection and sustainable development. It calls for environmental management so that the exploitation of resources for economic growth does not endanger the life of the present and future generations.

Seventeen (17) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by General Assembly in September 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are mainly centred on humans because human development significantly correlates with living standards and thus with the economic well-being of a nation/country. It is the positive building and expansion of human capabilities that brings about technological and economic advancements. The 17 SDGs summarily include:

1. No Poverty – end poverty in all its forms everywhere.
2. Zero Hunger – end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
3. Good Health and Well-being – ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at ages.
4. Quality Education – ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
5. Gender Equality – achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
6. Clean Water and Sanitation – ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation.
7. Affordable and Clean Energy – ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth – promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and employment and decent work for all.
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure – build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
10. Reduced Inequality – reduced inequality within and among countries.
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities – make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
12. Responsible Consumption and Production – ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
13. Climate Action – take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
14. Life Below Water – conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
15. Life on Land – protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

16. Peace and Justice Strong Institutions – promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
17. Partnerships to Achieve the Goals – strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development [United Nations n.d].

Above all, Moral Philosophy/Ethics should be introduced in the school curriculum and be made compulsory subject in all primary and secondary schools. It should be also incorporated in the General Studies Programme in all tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This subject/course will expose learners to intricacies of moral issues and equip them with the moral frameworks that will guide them in making free, rational and informed moral decisions when they are confronted with moral dilemmas and ambiguities of life [Ejike 2018c: 44]. It will also help to inculcate right values and cultivate moral character in the lives of learners which will enable them to function effectively and contribute positively to their society.

Moral development is indispensable for the realization of the goal of development. Self-realization is not possible unless there is order and stability in society. In other words, people cannot enjoy long, healthy and creative lives, and freedom in an atmosphere of insecurity, instability, violence, strife, crime, animosity, and falsehood. As we have seen in Oladipo's distinction between tangible and intangible or moral aspects of development, the moral dimension of development is concerned with improvements in the quality of social and human relations and that it involves the promotion of positive values such as peace, justice, freedom, tolerance, and cooperation.

The moral aspect of development ensures that the pursuit of individual needs, desires and interests, and overall enhancement of individual capacity do not endanger the well-being of others. It seeks the common good of all. Moral development helps to establish a well-ordered society that creates an enabling environment for provision of infrastructure, investment, and industrialization which would in turn provide opportunities and choices for the development and realization of individual potential.

Accordingly, the teaching of Ethics should be grounded in five human values which include love, truth, peace, right conduct or action, and non-violence. Love is learnt by cultivating its sub-values such as sacrifice, selflessness, kindness, compassion, sharing, hospitality, patience, discipline, empathy, forgiveness, consideration, obedience, companions, tolerance, and good neighbourliness. Peace is realized by imbibing and internalizing virtues of happiness, humility, harmony, orderliness, self-control, calmness, contentment, perseverance, self-acceptance, self-respect, self-understanding, reflection, and self-determination.

Right conduct is built by learning its sub-values such as diligence, duty, good manners, efficiency, resourcefulness, competence, loyalty, flexibility, and tolerance, while non-violence is cultivated by teaching learners to imbibe and internalize sub-values like forbearance, forgiveness, fairness, tolerance, harmony, cooperation, compassion, respect and concern for others, concern for environment, and appreciation of others' cultures and religions [Ejike 2018d: 20]. These five basic human values should serve as an ethical guide in policy making and implementation as well as in human relations at all levels of education [Ejike 2018d: 21].

Moral education will go a long way towards producing virtuous individuals who value love, truth, justice, integrity, self-discipline, diligence, peace, and other human values. When these individuals of high moral rectitude take over the affairs of State, they tend to have the much needed political will and determination to restructure the existing political institutions and system in a way that allows for equitable distribution of income, and creates an enabling environment for investment and industrialization which create employment opportunities for the jobless.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that increase in income per capita does not translate into an improvement in living standards in Nigeria. This is because national income is concentrated in the hands of the privileged few and that is not taken into account in the estimation of GNI or GDP upon which the measurement of per capita income is based. Moreover, even if the national income is equitably distributed, it does not mean that living standards have considerably improved. This is because a mere increase in one's income above the poverty line to such an extent that it guarantees one's sustenance materially does not translate to an improvement in the standard of living unless other basic necessities of life that enhance socio-economic welfare are adequate.

Thus, a more comprehensive and true measure of living standards must take account of the ability or otherwise of the individuals to lead a long and healthy lives as well as to have access to quality education which are essential ingredients of human development. Living standards and human development basically relate to the quality of life. A decent standard of living is attained when other building blocks of human development, namely, a long and healthy life and access to quality education are realized. There is therefore need for increase in government expenditure on health and education. Long and healthy life is achieved by provision of social security benefits, adequate public health centres as well as standard and affordable health products and services, clean and healthy environment, and other basic amenities.

To meet the challenges of 21st century, Nigeria needs education that is eminently pragmatic. Education in Nigeria should not be a mere matter of accumulation of certificates, but rather should be geared towards endowing individuals with skills and capabilities needed to successfully cope with the exigencies of technologically advanced world of work as well as demands of social economic security and self-reliance. Beyond this, engaging the youth in skill acquisition and training schemes after schooling are critical to their employability.

Finally, the teaching of Ethics grounded in five human values in schools will help produce leaders of great moral integrity that have the political convictions and will to introduce hygiene into politics in order to sanitize the country, provide citizens with opportunities for the development of their capabilities, and create an enabling environment for self-actualization, thus improving the overall well-being of the populace.

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The Political Legitimacy of Traditional African System of Governance: Ethical Considerations for Majoritarian Democracy

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Abstract

This paper examines the system of politics and governance in pre-colonial African societies. It examines how they enabled that era to produce societies that were democratic and that took the interests of their community members into consideration, without neglecting any group. This becomes pertinent in view of the extent of non-democratic practices that currently characterise post-colonial African states. The paper considers what contemporary African societies can learn from the pre-colonial approach to good governance.

Keywords: Culture, tradition, consensus, communalism, individualism, humanism.

Introduction

This paper examines the system of politics and governance in traditional African societies, and their roles in promoting an ethical and democratic society. The paper further explores the benefits of this primordial system for contemporary African states. Pre-colonial African societies were inherently democratic. This can be noted, for instance, in cases where community members or their representatives participated actively in debates and discussions on community issues at public fora. This system of governance was non-adversarial, unlike what obtains in the western majoritarian democracy which is more concerned about consolidation of power and the protection of the interest of the majority. The indigenous communities were largely administered by chiefs, while final decisions were made in consultation with council members and the elders.

Wiredu notes that political interactions and democratic engagements in traditional African communities were channelled towards achieving consensus. The kind of political system in this era which promoted consensus building did not dispense power to individuals on the basis of majority votes. Moreover, it was not characterised by competition for dominance and power among political parties. Community members were able to engage in this kind of conducive democratic process because they were guided, less by individualism, but more by the spirit of communalism and humanism. A number of theorists criticise colonialism for its negative

influence on the behaviour of contemporary Africans, and for its contributions to the erosion of the humanism that characterised pre-colonial African societies. This paper appeals for a re-examination of the good elements of traditional African democratic systems, with the view to integrating them into the socio-political and economic practices of post-colonial African states.

Democratic Governance in Indigenous African Context

Traditional African societies, according to Bates (2010: 1134) were infused with democratic culture. For instance, in centralised kingdoms were found prominent fora that citizens utilised to challenge the bureaucrats and the royals. In other societies, commoners were appointed to the office of the prime minister. In other communities, the council of commoners provided a check on the public administration. The masses held strong bargaining powers. Although there was inequality in pre-colonial African states, the people that occupied privileged positions were required to allocate state benefits to all community members.

Traditional African system of governance differs from the post-colonial and western systems. While modern rulers are elected and vacate office at the end of their terms, traditional African ruler-ship is a life-long appointment to remain accountable to both their subjects and their ancestors,

> *to serve all the needs and concerns of their communities and of future generations. Political power and leadership of this kind is not obtained through the votes. It cannot be assessed accurately by the standards that apply to the exercise of multi-party electoral politics in late capitalist societies, as exist in the US and UK (Lauer, 2012: 44).*

The system of governance in traditional African context, and in particular, in the pre-colonial Akan society, hinged on a non-party politics, and the choice of the head of a royal family who is supported by an advisory council of elders in life-long service. In some traditional African societies, the position of the chief in itself, confers absolute authority and dictatorship over his community. This kind of African democracy has evolved since the origin of civilization. Decision making was consensual and entailed the consideration of the views of all members (Lauer, 2012: 41-44). In pre-colonial Akan society, the chief as the leader and head of the political structure obtained his position through heredity. However, he did not command absolute authority. The final decision on matters before the council did not proceed from the chief. Rather, his pronouncements were a reflection of the collective decision of all members of council. The position of the chief was also considered both political and religious as he was seen as the link between the ancestors and members of the community (Matolino, 2009: 35). Representatives from various clans within the community constituted the council, and through them, the concerns of their specific constituencies were relayed to the council. The decisions of the council on matters under consideration were arrived at through dialogue. Although voting was not a criterion for arriving at a decision (this became a determining factor only after its imposition by the colonialists), the decisions reached through logical persuasiveness were owned by all, even if they were not all in agreement with it (Matolino, 2013: 140).

It may be erroneous to conclude that traditional African system of governance is undemocratic just because the chief was not elected into office. However, in many pre-colonial African societies, such as the Akan, the chief neither rules in line with his independent discretion nor at will, but always according to the advice of the elders of his community. He may be removed from office should he allow his personal choices or his personality to influence the style of administration, or if he attempts to dominate council proceedings. In the West African system of democracy by consensus therefore, the council of elders command authoritative position in policy formation and decision making. This system of governance remains a common feature in many contemporary African tribes such as the Igbos, Yorubas, Hausas, Akan, Ewe and Dagbon. In most cases, these systems are run in parallel with the adopted western system of governance, and they are recognised by the national governments (Lauer, 2012: 45).

In traditional African societies, consensus, for Wiredu (in Matolino, 2009: 35), was noticeably evident in most adult social relations. Most political and social engagements, decision making processes, discussions and interactions among members of society were channelled towards achieving consensus. Consensus, for Wiredu (2007: 164), is "an agreement arrived at by all members of a given group through rational dialogue and mutual accommodation". Democracy by consensus, according to Wiredu, entails reaching a decision having considered not only the views of the majority, but the will of the minority as well (Matolino, 2009: 35). In political terms consensus becomes democratic since all stakeholders are expected to physically or by representation participate in the decisions that may possibly impact on them. The dual representative nature of consensual democracy made it participatory and inclusive of minority groups (Ani, 2014b: 344). Democracy by consensus, for Wiredu (in Matolino, 2013: 138) provides a political system that is not defined by competition for dominance and power among political parties. It avoids conferment of power on winners based on majority votes.

This differs from the western majoritarian democracy which is primarily concerned with protecting the interests of the majority as well as consolidating their power, which is easier to achieve than seeking consensual outcomes (Matolino, 2009: 35). It is also in contrast with the western approach where democracy is conceived as adversarial competition among various political parties in a majoritarian system, and which confers political power on the party that got majority votes in an election and relegates the losers to opposition. He further defends democracy by consensus for providing the electorate with maximal representation, and preventing the marginalisation of the minority (Matolino, 2013: 138). In most sub-Saharan pre-colonial African states, conflicts were resolved by seeking the opinions of all adult members of the community until they come to an agreement. This, in line with the sharing notion of Ubuntu (humanism), also relates to sharing political power in a manner that ensures that decisions are taken in the interest of all community members (Murove, 2010: 384).

Wiredu (in Ani, 2014a: 311) anchors the process of consensual decision making on the spirit of cooperation that was common in the communal structure of these societies. Although he concedes that consensus was not necessarily a common feature in all pre-colonial African societies, the practice was widespread. According to Wiredu (in Ani, 2014b: 342-343) deliberations in this era were not subjected to voting. Consensus was considered self-evident for joint action and was an inherent or immanent approach to relationships among people. The

import of this immanence for him could be seen in people reconciling not for the sake of avoiding punishments and revenge, but the genuine nature of dispute resolutions, as opposed to what largely obtains in the current era, where disputes are resolved without consequent genuine reconciliation. Ani (2014b: 345-346) objects to the manner in which Wiredu attached the doctrine of immanence to consensus. Although Ani accepts the merits of consensus as a social and political theory, he believes that the idea of immanence can only be attached to human beings in general and not only to Africans, because such classification plays no helpful role in dispelling or in discouraging other negative biases such as that Whites are inherently superior in intelligence to other races.

A number of conceptual factors play a significant role in Wiredu's conception of democracy by consensus. Firstly, in his assessment of human nature, he claims that the differences among human beings proceed from a mistaken belief or the failure to understand and correctly judge their actual interests. When disagreements arise, the parties to the dispute should rather take cognisance of the fact that ultimately they share an identity of interests (Matolino, 2013: 140). In other words, consensus hinges on the belief that the interests of all community members are ultimately the same, even though their initial understanding of those interests may differ. He uses the example of an art motif. In the Akan culture, the Art motif portrays a crocodile with two heads but one stomach fighting over food and forgetting that the food is destined for the same stomach. Wiredu considers this symbol as capturing the basic problem of ethics as well as its solution. The problem that it captures is that while human beings possess legitimate interests as depicted by the different heads, they can however, forget that their interests are the same, especially their common well-being, which the same stomach symbolises. The root cause of disagreements and conflicts result from losing that notion of common interest, "and its restoration should facilitate that agreement on the sharing of assets which recognises the interest of all parties concerned" (Wiredu, 2009: 10).

Wiredu believes that human beings are able to work through their differences until they arrive at a similar comprehension of their interests through rational dialogue and debate. He also believes that consensus can be achieved by people or parties with different interests if they are prepared to overlook their views in favour of a persuasive alternative view, and if they are committed to attaining consensus (Matolino, 2013: 141-142). Consensus for Wiredu does not mean that all aggrieved parties are in full agreement. Rather, consensus presupposes and appreciates diversity and different points of view, and utilises dialogue to bring about results that are acceptable to all concerned individuals and groups, giving rise to the willingness to suspend disagreement. This will enable them to agree on what should be done, while retaining their personal views about what is true or false, despite their differences in ethical and intellectual belief (Ani, 2014b: 343). The fundamental basis of the traditional Akan politics, for Wiredu, lies in the ability of the council members to reach agreement (the will to consensus). Those among these elders holding different opinions can maintain the integrity of their opinions while at the same time be willing to make compromises that will promote the realisation of a plan of action (Lauer, 2012: 46). The residual minority are usually those who suspend their disagreements in favour of

> *the view of the majority which prevails not over, but upon, this minority to accept the proposal in question - not just to live with it, which is the basic plight of minorities under majoritarian democracy. Wiredu emphasises that all this is made possible by the will to consensus. The feasibility of this depends not only on the patience and persuasiveness of the right people but also on the fact that African traditional systems of the consensual type were not such as to place any one group of persons consistently in the position of minority (Ani, 2014b: 343-344).*

Wiredu's preference for democracy by consensus over majoritarian democracy attempts to develop an understanding of a state where the majority party does not exercise political power while overlooking the opposition and minority parties. He notes that such slanted appropriation of power has been a source of problems in Africa since the end of the colonial era and the emergence of majoritarian democracy. Wiredu's arguments in favour of consensual democracy also attempts to find solutions to the myriad of challenges confronting post-colonial Africa (Matolino, 2013: 138). He adamantly criticizes the multi-party electoral processes characteristic of modern oligarchies (e.g., the UK and US models) as too expensive and distracting from development agendas so critical to modern African citizens' welfare all over the continent. While he notes the potential of democracy by consensus to enhance the realisation of contemporary Africa's search for ideal democratic order, he also advocates the adoption of a modified version of its ideals of good governance for contemporary systems of governance and administration in Africa (Lauer, 2012: 42- 43).

Matolino objects to Wiredu's idea of democracy by consensus as not different from what obtains in a one-party state. Although it is not Wiredu's intention to advocate for one-party state, Matolino considers Wiredu's position as tending towards a dangerous form of benevolent one-party state (Matolino, 2013: 149). Eze criticises Wiredu's treatise of the Akans' system of governance and the manner in which he ascribes political legitimacy to it as an excessive rationalisation, a misleading romanticisation, and a non-party system of politics which can serve the purpose of defending the early nationalists' single party system of politics in which their total control of political power did not encourage democratic freedom. In pre-colonial African politics, the indigenous council of elders also showed signs that deter democratic inclusion (Lauer, 2012: 41-43).

Wiredu (in Matolino, 2009: 36) conceives the legitimacy of the chief as residing in the eldest member who possessed the power of persuasion and critical thinking that guaranteed the attainment of consensus through dialogue. Contrary to this position, Eze believes that political power derives its legitimacy from other factors that enable consensus building, such as religion and other beliefs since they are able to influence the kinds of choices that people make. He does not see logical persuasion as a sufficient guarantee for political power since the exercise of public power also depends on cultural, social and religious fantasies, myths, the party, progress, liberation and freedom, which demand less of logic in getting people to cooperate and understand each other.

For Eze (Lauer, 2012: 49-50), it is inconceivable to subscribe to the effectiveness of consensual politics in the traditional Akan society on the basis that all society members shared a rational understanding of the power of reason, believed in the persuasive strength of ideas and

recognised the commonality of their interests. He reasons that the deliberations of the elders were tolerated as a result of the mystical powers associated with the rituals of governance which ensured that the people naively believed that they were bound together by a mystical force. He further posits that such institutions cannot function in the current era since Africans are no longer naive. The concerns raised by Eze gain support from a number of contemporary African political analysts such as Kojo Amanor and Kwame Ninsin; and contributors to American anarchists' studies such as Mark Lance and Daniel Levine, who suspect that Wiredu's consensus politics can undermine the egalitarian ideals and inclusiveness of contemporary representative democracy and become a means of hiding authoritarianism, and a very useful hegemonic instrument for side-lining opposition (Lauer, 2012: 42-50).

Eze cannot be totally right in his views on the ineffectiveness of traditional institutions in the post-colonial era because there are many contemporary African societies that still believe in the potency of mystical powers in governance processes. In the current day Nigeria for instance, most tribes including the Igbos, Yorubas and Hausas believe strongly in the powers of the deities and in their ability to inflict both blessings and curses on people as a result of their conducts. While contemporary African societies have been enmeshed in developments and globalisation, the fact remains that traditional beliefs are still upheld by many individuals and societies.

The Akan system of politics in Ghana is similar to the Igbo system of traditional governance in Nigeria, and this system has not substantially deviated from its pre-colonial practice. Looking at most traditional African mode of governance will reveal similar traits. In the Igbo traditional system of politics, including the contemporary case, members of the council are usually older men who have passed the stage of youthful exuberance. One of the shortfalls of this system is that almost all members of the council, especially in the Igbo case are men. The age of westernisation has not been able to influence the practice. One of the main reasons for this trend is probably the fact that men in the traditional Igbo culture do not consider it appropriate to include women in the council. Women may send representatives to the council if the so desired.

Wiredu and other philosophers who support democracy by consensus posit that traditional African societies were inherently democratic. They outline the process of consensus in the traditional African societies and deduce its desirability as a preferable type of democracy in contemporary African political systems. Wiredu's main treatise on African politics proceeds from his evaluation of the traditional Akan philosophy and culture, from which he has been able to produce a modern philosophy in the form of democracy by consensus that is applicable to contemporary African society. Wiredu posits that based on merits and in continuation of the good traditional African democratic practices of the Akan and other commendable African societies, such as the Igbos, democracy by consensus is a better option than majoritarian democracy. He appeals to a return to democracy by consensus because democracy in Africa was not imported, but has always been an inherent feature of rule in pre-colonial African society, with distinctive advantages over majoritarian rule (Matolino, 2013: 139).

There have been various disagreements among theorists on the political legitimacy of traditional African system of rule and their relevance to contemporary democracy. The

traditional African system of consensus politics which Wiredu alludes to has survived for centuries despite colonial interference and the corruption of the local traditional authority. While Wiredu promotes non-party politics, Eze promotes multi-party politics in Africa. Wiredu's non-party consensual politics is essentially utilitarian. However, he has not been able to provide practical processes for its implementation, which are capable of replacing multi-party rule in a large society. Nonetheless, Wiredu and Eze are in agreement on a number of areas, such as promoting freedom of speech and opinion, discouraging autocracy, and encouraging political contestation. They both discourage the lust for power, wasteful, extravagant and reckless lifestyle which seem to be prevalent in the political life of many oligarchic democracies. They both believe that African societies can derive immense benefits from systems of rule that have not been perverted by the worse forms of capitalism. However, they both disagree on the feasibility of a reformed kind of democracy by consensus as an alternative to the excesses of western democratic practices. A substantial aspect of indigenous African system of rule has remained undiluted and effective even throughout the colonial era and up to the contemporary period as its intrinsic values portray (Lauer, 2012: 54).

The foregoing reveals that the indigenous African system of governance was characterised by democratic culture (Bates, 2010: 1134). This is contrary to what obtains in western majoritarian democracy, which contemporary African states largely practice, where the political landscape is characterised by tension, disagreements, where the winner is accorded maximum political power and the opposition is relegated to the background (Matolino, 2013: 138). The system of politics and governance in traditional African societies can be linked, as Wiredu (in Ani, 2014a: 311) opines, to the cooperative and communal nature with which community members interacted with each other.

Communal Nature of Traditional African Societies

African communalism proceeds from the humanity with which indigenous Africans interact with each other. This humanism is known as Ubuntu in the traditional and contemporary Southern African societies. Humanism, according to Letseka (2012: 54) emphasises the interdependence and common humanity of human beings, and the responsibility that proceeds from human interconnection. For Dolamo (2013: 1-3), Ubuntu represents what makes an individual human and the elements that promote the attainment of individual and communal fulfilment. This African humanism, according to Letseka (2014: 547) requires community members to treat each other with respect, care, compassion, cooperation, loyalty, solidarity, reciprocity, dignity, harmony and collective responsibility.

However, various theorists argue that colonial influences have impacted negatively on the conduct of contemporary Africans to the extent that it has eroded many of the values that made Africans authentic human beings. For Ezenweke and Nwadialor (2013: 61-62), African communalism has been eroded and largely replaced by individualism in the contemporary era. Chimakonam (et al, 2014: 145-146) observe that the individualistic orientation of western liberal democracy, which post-colonial Africa subscribes to, is detrimental to the largely communal nature of African societies. He further asserts that the western individualistic

ontology, which places the individual ahead of the community negates the African ontology, which while recognising the individualistic nature of the person, considers the community as prior to the individual.

Wiredu (2009: 15-16) opines that it can be anthropologically established that communalism is the operative ethic in the traditional African society. The communalism that permeates Africa is the type of social formation in which kinship plays a fundamental role. Individuals are developed from childhood to cultivate the feeling of affinity with all members of their family and extended family. This kind of unity begins from the immediate family and transcends to the other relations, and eventually to the community at large. The sense of connectedness that individuals developed resulted from the reciprocal nature of interrelationships. This seems to be largely absent in the manner in which the current era relates with each other, the consequences of which are often unfavourable for the well-being of individuals and communities. Wiredu, however, adds that this idea of human connectedness goes beyond a mere idea of connection based on kinship and rather, fundamentally involves a sense of connection rooted in humanity.

In traditional African community, the members, according to Ezenweke and Nwadialor (2013: 64-65), assume collective responsibility for the needs of the less privileged, the old and the weak. In the Igbo community for instance, the entire community contributes towards the needs of the less privileged. The community members often assist their kinsmen to build their houses or to cultivate their farmlands. Interdependence is a paramount ideology among the Igbo race. The Igbo principle of interdependence recognises the enormous strength that proceeds from a united front. This promotes discipline, humanises relations and reduces crime (Ezenweke & Nwadialor, 2013: 65).

In traditional African societies are found a number of ethical principles such as the principles of individual and communal responsibilities, which guide the behaviour of their community members. The principle of individual responsibility states that individuals and their immediate family members, not the whole community, are responsible for the person's actions (Lajul, 2013: 117-121). This principle is in line with the Kantian theory which holds that human beings must assume responsibility for the consequences of their actions, and not transfer the consequences to someone or something else (Urbanovic & Tauginiene, 2013: 72). Individuals in this case are held accountable for their actions because they possess personal values which are guided by different factors through the course of their lives. While each community or entity possess values which shape the culture or way of life of its members, the conduct of each person determines if the values which the community seeks to emulate will be actualised (ICAS, 2015: 6).

The principle of communal responsibility posits that the actions of an individual impact on the community as a whole. In other words, an action is right or wrong based on its effect on the community (Lajul, 2013: 119). The individual is defined in relation to a larger ethnic or social group which covers the living, the dead, the unborn and the spirits. The individual is attached to the social or ethnic group in a manner that confers his primary responsibility to the clan or his community. A number of critics consider this detrimental to self-individuation. This lack

of subjectivity is viewed as the primary cause of the numerous challenges that African countries continue to experience (Kochalumchuvattil, 2010: 112), such as intertribal conflicts and wars.

There are many cynics who reject the idea of communal responsibility. Examples include a number of people and movements in the Western thought, such as the social deviants and the anarchists who perceive society as a clog or an impediment to the realisation of individual happiness. They assume a rebellious lifestyle against society and its values. One may attribute such negative attitude towards society as emanating from the individualism that characterises a substantial aspect of Western life. The loss of faith in community life becomes entrenched in environments where the individuals are no longer able to enjoy the social equilibrium that they had become used to, which offered them the space to construe themselves as autonomous, supreme and self-governing. In cases where such individuals are not able to adequately deal with the problems that confront them, they become worried. They develop a sense of abandonment by society and conclude that their world is obstructive and an impediment to their happiness. Contrary to these negative sentiments, it is unlikely that Africans would succumb entirely to these kind of absolutist individualism since they believe that the life of an individual only acquires meaning in the community. In other words, the individual can only realise his wellbeing and social aspirations by mutually interacting with other community members (Agulana, 2010: 287- 288).

The principle of communal responsibility is responsible for the myriad of challenges that confront the African continent, such as corruption, revenge, rampant violence, collective condemnation of specific ethnic groups, and ethnic cleansing. These negative tendencies must be discouraged if there is any hope of developing the African countries into strong and desirable nation states. On the other hand, it is imperative to encourage the positive aspects of the principle of communal responsibility, by dissuading tribalism and ethnic affiliations, by promoting justice and fairness, and by embracing all members of a given community without any discriminatory practices (Lajul, 2013: 120-121).

Lessons for Contemporary Systems of Governance in Africa

The majoritarian system of governance, which most contemporary African countries adopt, largely differs from what obtained in pre-colonial African societies. While pre-colonial African societies were more humane and considerate in their outlook, contemporary systems of governance are more contentious, corrupt, selfish, party oriented and struggle to reach consensus among various stakeholders. In most African countries, such as Nigeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe, political parties fail in many cases to reach consensus on matters that affect the well-being of the citizens. This results in bad governance, poor service delivery, fraud, corruption and instability. For instance, South Africa witnesses intermittent violent protests by dissatisfied individuals over issues relating to poor service delivery. This often leads to the destruction of public property and private businesses (Nembambula, 2015: 47).

Case studies across the globe reveal, as Hobbes (1968: 186) also notes that the inability of community members to adhere to the principles of good governance and peaceful coexistence leads to violence and death. Therefore, African countries cannot continue to wallow in bad

governance. The attitude of public representatives and leaders must change so that the lawlessness, violence and random killings that characterise many African states can be avoided. A true ruler, for Aristotle (1962: 130), "is the guardian of what is just, and as such he is also the guardian of equality and fairness […]. His labour is, therefore, for the benefit of others […]". For Plato (1988: 1), justice is "the central value in both the unity of human societies and the harmony of individual souls". These philosophers show that justice promotes democratic and orderly society where the views, wellbeing and interests of all community members are taken into consideration, irrespective of their beliefs or political affiliation. The views expressed by these philosophers can promote a society that is more inclusive, humane, community oriented and consensus building.

African leaders must be trained on the good elements of pre-colonial African system of governance, on ethics, integrity and accountability. They must realise that the positions they occupy are for the delivery of public good, and not for selfish gains. Public officials must cooperate with each other in the formulation and implementation of public policies. African governments must institute strong mechanisms to ensure that leaders and public representatives adhere to the principles of good governance and oversight. Public officials and leaders must be penalised when they fail in their duties or when they engage in acts of corruption, fraud and other unethical practices. While political parties are more concerned with the interests of their members in a majoritarian democracy, leaders must bear in mind that they are chosen to protect the interests of both the majority and the minority. Although the good elements of majoritarian democracy are encouraged in African politics and governance, pre-colonial elements of consensual democracy must be taken into consideration as well.

Conclusion

This paper explored the system of politics and governance in pre-colonial African societies, and their implications for the contemporary era. Traditional African societies are considered inherently democratic, always seeking all sorts of agreements on most major decisions that impact on citizens. In most pre-colonial African societies, conflicts were resolved by seeking the opinions of all adult community members until they came to an agreement. Political powers were dispersed in a manner that ensured that decisions made were to the benefit of both the majority and the minority. Specific attention is paid to consensus as essential in reaching just decisions.

Critics of democracy by consensus contend that it can lead to the entrenchment of one-party politics. They consider it a misleading romanticisation, excessive rationalisation and a non-party system of politics, which can be used to justify the single system of party politics of the early nationalists which discouraged democratic freedom as a result of their complete control of political power. It is further criticised as an instrument for camouflaging authoritarianism, and for its potential to become a useful hegemonic means of side-lining opposition.

Wiredu prefers democracy by consensus to western majoritarian democracy which contemporary African states largely practice, but which is characterised by tension and conflict. He subscribes to the kind of political system which does not promote a winner takes it all

philosophy, but which equally provides for the needs of all society members, irrespective of their political affiliations. The communal nature of traditional African societies as espoused in this paper shows how the principles of humanism enabled the cultivation of ethical, more tolerant and considerate individuals. While there are divergent views on the ability of democracy by consensus to ensure the realisation of a good system of governance, there are many benefits associated with it that need to be harnessed. These include caring for all members of society and being ethical in all dealings. The good aspects of this kind of political system and African communalism should be encouraged in Africa in order to guarantee the realisation of the kind of state that all its members desire, a state free of favouritism and bias, and which is structured on the disposition towards a just and reasonable treatment of all community members.

Wiredu and Eze outline a number of factors that guarantee the legitimacy of political power. For Wiredu, the political legitimacy of traditional African leadership resides in the persuasive ability of leaders and critical thinking. For Eze, this legitimacy results from processes that promote consensus building; and from those factors that enable community members to cooperate and understand each other; such as religion, values, cultures and freedom. It is worth adding that the political legitimacy of both traditional and contemporary leadership requires all the elements that Wiredu and Eze allude to. Many leaders do not apply these principles in the execution of their mandates. This oversight results in the erosion of values and governance failures, with dire consequences for social, political and economic wellbeing of community members. A good leader must be ethical, humane, intelligent, well-educated and wise. Moreover, a society that neglects religion, ethics, morals, values and cultures will always be confronted with ethical challenges.

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Ethics of Racism

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Abstract

Humanity is shrouded with different class of bias. This in scholarship is codified as racism. Racism as an ideology has received various interpretations from diverse perspectives ranges from colour, ethnics, religion, gender and what have you. It serves as climax of discrimination of one against others in any form of disguise. Beyond its sociological and psychological inclination, this discourse, using the critical tool of philosophy attempts a philosophical disquiet of racism from an ethical perspective. This is done within the context of some ethical theories form where it is concluded that, it is rationally and ethically right to claim that racism is all about degrading humanity. This claim is not unconnected with the fact that only a few agrees to racism, all because they use it as a means to an end, not minding its consequences on fellow humans. Thus, racism is conceive as a moral burden that devalue human dignity.

Introduction

When the term ‘racism’ is mentioned, the next thing that comes to mind is the ‘black-white disparity’, but suffice to say, many ethnic and racial groups in the world including American Indians, Asians and so on, have faced racism historically. Racism features as denial of social, civil, economic, political, and educational opportunities, as a result of one’s race or racial background. Till date, racism still exist in our society as exhibited among several ethnic and racial groups in the areas of employment, housing, education, justice, and the likes. On the contrary, too many people won’t agree to be racist, as they claim to be ‘colorblind’ on matters of race. One thing worthy of note is the fact that racism is a fundamental and inevitable part of our social and cultural history, and as such, we tend to be ‘racially conscious’. Being ‘racially conscious’ implies how we tend to perceive ourselves and people around us (even though we refuse admitting it). This can be inferred from our daily choice of words on how we describe ourselves and people around us - ‘I am a black and educated man; Dangote is the richest black man in the world; White men are good at movie making; Jack is a tall white man in his twenties’. In these descriptions, we see how conspicuous the racial differences are well spelt, as a result, some persons tends to favor and appreciate individuals of the same race with them over people of other races. Given the relevance of race to our society and the circumstances

surrounding it, it becomes imperative to evaluate racism from various lenses. Thus, this work shall take as its main thrust the burden of evaluating racism from an ethical viewpoint. In doing this, it is expedient that such is commenced with a rich, brief and explicit conceptualization of the term 'racism' for more understanding.

Conceptualizing Racism

Over the years, there have been political and theoretical debates as regards conceptualizing the term 'racism' as an analytical or social concept. At the same time, the analysis of the term has featured in several disciplines such as sociology, political science, philosophy, economics, anthropology, cultural studies, and so on. The key question that suffices is 'what is racism?'.

The earliest use of the term can be traced back to the 1902 edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, which was used in describing the U.S policy towards Native Americans.[1] The term 'racism' was used interchangeably with the word 'racialism' in the first half of the 20th Century, as such, many scholars from different disciplines have given various definitions. Racism can be defined simply as any policy, belief, attitude, action or inaction, which subordinates individuals or groups based on their race.[2] Michael Banton, a British social scientist, defines racism as "… the doctrine that a man's behavior is determined by stable inherited characters deriving from separate racial stocks having distinctive attributes and usually considered to stand to one another in relations of superiority and inferiority."[3] Ruth Benedict in her famous book entitled *Race and Racism* defines racism as "… the dogma that one ethnic group is condemned by nature to congenital superiority."[4] In view of the above definitions, it is evident that these scholars failed to expose the historical formation of racism as an institution and an ideology. Owing to this, Paula Rothenberg gives a more robust definition of racism with reflection from the historical and social perspective. She opined that:

> *Racism involves the subordination of people of color by white people. While individual persons of color may well discriminate against a white person or another person of color because of their race, this does not qualify as racism according to our definition because that person of color cannot depend upon all the institutions of society to enforce or extend his or her personal dislike. Nor can he or she call upon the force of history to reflect and enforce that prejudice. ... History provides us with a long record of white people holding and using power and privilege over people of color to subordinate them, not the reverse.*[5]

In simple and clear terms, racism can be said to be discrimination against someone, or some set of people based on their race(s). Racism is exhibited through actions, attitudes, beliefs and

[1] Howard, G. (2016, August 21). The Easiest Way to Get Rid of Racism? Just Redefine it. The New York Times Magazine. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/21/magazine/the-easiest-way-to-get-rid-of-racism-just-redefine-it.html on 12-08-2020.
[2] Rowan, W. Race and Racism Retrieved from https://www.pcc.edu/illumination/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2018/05/race-and-racism-curriculum.pdf on 12-08-2020.
[3] Banton, M. (1967). *Race Relations*, London: Tavistock Publications, p. 8.
[4] Benedict, R. (1983). *Race and Racism* (New edition). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
[5] Paula S. R. (1988). *Defining Racism and Sexism: An Integrated Study*. New York: St Martin's Press.

policies, and it is in several forms which includes but not limited to individual racism and institutional racism.

Individual racism, as the name depicts, is specific about the individual person. This form of racism denotes the individual's racist beliefs, assumption and behaviours. According to Henry F. & Tator C., they defined individual racism as "a form of racial discrimination that stems from conscious and unconscious, personal prejudice".[6] Implicatively, one may become a racist and exhibit the trait in his actions and beliefs, as racial discrimination can come to be through one's conscious and unconscious prejudice. Going further, Brigham J.C. made us to understand that individual racism can be expressed both openly and secretly.[7]

Institutional racism "refers to the systematic racial bias inferred into policies or laws as well as its practice (e.g. enforcement and judicial systems)".[8] It involves the differential effects of policies, practices, and laws on members of certain racial groups over other group(s). Institutional racism can be said to develop from intentional racism, for instance:

> *…limiting immigration on the basis of assumptions about the interiority of other groups), motivations to provide resources to one's own group (e.g., attempts to limit another group's voting power), or as a by-product of policies with one explicit goal but with unintended systematic race-based policies, which typically are associated with ideologies developed to justify them.*[9]

Going down the lane of history, the Caucasian Americans exhibited institutional racism by developing racial ideologies that helped to justify the laws that enabled them to attain two important types of economic exploitation: slavery and the seizure of lands from native tribes.[10] According to Rowan Wolf, 'housing market' is a good example of how institutional racism works. He held that:

> *The creation of the suburbs in the United States was driven by public policy and taxpayer money. The GI Bill through the VHA opened the opportunity to purchase a home to millions of veterans after World War II. However, of all the home loans made in those boom years, less than 2% went to non-whites. Meanwhile, the federal government set up lending standards and created "red lining." "Red" districts had low insurability* ***because*** *people of color lived in those areas. White communities were seen as "good risks," and hence lenders did not offer mortgages in red lined districts. These practices excluded people who were not white from the home ownership market.*[11]

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[6] Henry, F. & Tator, C. (2006). *The Color of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society*, (3rd edition). Toronto, ONT: Thomson Nelson Canada, p. 329.

[7] Brigham, J. C. (1993). College Students' Racial Attitudes. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 23, 1933-1967.

[8] Jone, E. (June 8, 2020). The Other Pandemic: Systemic Racism and Its Consequences. Retrieved from https://equineteurope.org/2020/the-other-pandemic-systemic-racism-and-its-consequences/ on 14-08-2020.

[9] Chaunda, L. S. A Discussion of Individual, Institutional, and Cultural Racism, with Implications for HRD. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED504856.pdf on 13-08-2020.

[10] Klinker, P. A., & Smith, R. M. (1999). *The Unsteady March: The Rise and Decline of American Commitments to Racial Equality*. New York: Free Press.

[11] Rowan, W. *Race and Racism*. Retrieved from https://www.pcc.edu/illumination/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2018/05/race-and-racism-curriculum.pdf on 17-08-2020.

In view of the above, it is can be inferred that racism serves as a very vital tool for both the perpetuation of White dominance and of White privilege, thus, it is imperative to attempt an ethical evaluation of racism as it has great effect on the individual and the society at large.

Racism as Moral Issue

The struggle against racism and its effect has been for years. This struggle has led to some being heroes that we celebrate today, while some lost their lives in procuring the end of racism. Amidst the several heroes being celebrated today are Martin Luther King Jnr and Nelson Mandela. Mandela, at the opening of the defense case in the Rivonia Trial, Pretoria, South Africa, in 1964, said "*during my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against White domination, and I have fought against Black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die"*.[12] This implies that Mandela's struggle against racism was not for the Black man, but for all men irrespective of their skin colour or race.

Suffice to say, some of the challenges we face in the world today are aftermath effects of racial discriminations from the past. The believe in 'white supremacy' has in a way distorted the minds of many, both white and black, especially in the way we perceive one another. Racism can be termed a moral issue as it is one of those things that affect how we perceive and treat our fellow men. Owing to a critical look at racism, one may opine that racism was a tool employed by the Whites to justify colonialism and imperialism, and as well destroy and impoverish indigenous people and their culture. It is no gainsaying that several discussions in our contemporary society about racism focuses on the American history, South African and Nazi Germany. The German Nazis upheld the distinction between the Aryans and other groups, most especially the Jews. For the fact that the German Nazis were only concerned about the welfarism of the people of Aryan race, not minding the sufferings of the Jews, Slavs and Gypsies, depicts the moral wrongness of racism.[13]

Prisoners captured from Africa to America were used and worked as slaves along with Native Americans and Europeans. These African slaves were called 'negroes' by the end of the 18th Century and thereby seen as being lower and inferior to the Whites in all ramifications.[14] Towing the historical lane, far back as 1856 in colonial America, we were made to know that each time an enslaved person files an appeal to the U.S Supreme Court, seeking his freedom, the Court always ruled against them, and thereby reinstating that the 'Bill of Right' didn't apply to African American. This is predicated on the argument that if the 'Bill of Rights' applies to the African American, then they would be permitted 'the full liberty of speech in public and in private,' 'to hold public meetings upon political affairs,' and 'to keep and carry arms wherever

[12] Anonymous, Protest and Resistance through the Rivonia Trial 1964. Retrieved from https://overcomingapartheid.msu.edu/unit.php?kid=163-571-8 on 12-08-2020.
[13] Singer, P. (1983). Is Racial Discrimination Abitrary? In J. Naverson (Ed.). *Moral Issues*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 319.
[14] Zack, N. (1993). *Race and Mixed Race*. Philadephia, Pa: Temple University Press, pp. 116-122.

they went.' In summary, African Americans, at that time, were unjustly discriminated and stripped off their human rights because of their racial background. In 1899, three Black families in Richmond County, Virginia were said to have challenged the closing down of the area's only public black high school. These families petitioned the court to permit their wards to complete their education at the White high school following the closure of the Black high school. The Supreme Court, after three years, established that if there was no suitable Black school in a district, thus, Black students would have to do without an education. Going further, President Roosevelt, during the World War II, gave an executive order restricting the rights of Japanese Americans, thereby ordering 110,000 to be relocated to internment camps. This order was challenged in the Supreme Court by Gordon Hirabayashi, but he lost the case. Similarly, Fred Korematsu also challenged the order and lost, and it became established that individual rights are not absolute and may be suppressed at will during wartime.[15]

The foregoing gives a picture of how racism takes the human right of one away, thereby relegating one to the class of animals, and as such, this can be considered morally wrong. In view of this implication, it is no gainsaying that racism is a violation one's fundamental human right, as it negates the core human rights of dignity, self-determination, and equality.[16] Similarly, it denies a key 'moral principle of person'. This principle holds that one ought to treat others the way one wants to be treated. This is further in line with the teachings of Jesus Christ in the book of Mathew 7:12, which says "therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them…".[17] This implies that as human beings, every of our actions towards our fellow men ought to be actions that we will appreciate and welcome if and when it is done to us. The big question now is 'will any racist be happy to be discriminated in his environment?', the obvious answer is NO. Thus, being a racist or promoting racism can be considered morally wrong, as racism is invariably an action that the people involved in it wont want such to be done to them.

Going further, Aristotle made us to understand that we know a thing better when we know what it is as against knowing the colour or size. He further brought a distinction between *essential* and *accidental* properties. *Essential* properties are things in themselves while *accidental* properties are the colours or sizes of things. In the case of humans, being a human being is an *essential* property, while being black, white, tall or short are just *accidental* properties. Being black or white does not imply being a human being, as anybody could be either black or white. That anyone is black or white is an *accidental* property on humans by predestination, nobody chooses to be either white or black. This raises a critical question that why should any human be judged or discriminated over what he or she has no power or choice over. Being black or white can be said to be determined by the Supreme Being. The Supreme Being created us all as humans but distinguished us with various *accidental* properties like our skin colour, hair colour, eyes colour, height and weight. Discriminating a fellow human being on the bases of

[15] Tom, H. (2019). 10 Racist Supreme Court Rulings in US History. Retrieved from https://www.thoughtco.com/racist-supreme-court-rulings-721615 on 17-08-2020.

[16] See: United Nations, (2005). Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (Illustrated Edition) p. 4 ("All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and right"); Thornberry, P. (2016). *The International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination*. Oxford University Press. ("Equality and non-discrimination are intrinsic to the architecture of human rights law.")

[17] KJV Bible

our skin colour can be considered a sin against the Supreme Being, hence making racism morally wrong. This can be further predicated on some of the verses of one of the holy books of the Supreme Being, the Bible; Acts 17:26 posits that God has made "of one blood all nations of men"[18]; 1 Tim. 5:21 kicks against doing things out of partiality and favoritism.[19] This further depicts that every form of racism is morally wrong as all men, irrespective of our racial background, are one and the same.

Subsequently, we can claim that it is rational and logical to say that racism is nothing more than a tool in the hands of the oppressors (racist) to fulfill their desires. This claim can be justified on the ethical theories of hedonism and egoism. Hedonism as an ethical theory argues for pleasure as the most important pursuit of mankind, and the only thing that is good for an individual, as against pain.[20] Egoism on the other hand is a theory that asserts that "human beings act or should act in their own interests and desires. Egoism is opposed to altruism, which asserts that human beings should act in ways that help others."[21] With the actions of racists as earlier exposed, it is safe to say that they are exhibiting both the hedonist and egoist trait. Their actions depict that the discrimination and inhuman treatment of people of other racial backgrounds is to fulfil their selfish desires. This is conspicuously unveiled in the capturing of prisoners from Africa to America and thereby using them to work as slaves. As slaves, these Africans were used to work in attaining the desire, goal and development of America. These slaves were maltreated, underfed, overburdened, beaten and killed (in cases of rebellion). These treatments were not only aimed at making the slaves to suffer or to work harder, but it gave pleasure to these slave-masters as they joyed in the sufferings of the slaves. This can further be interpreted as the application of the Machiavellian assertion that 'the end justifies the means.' The behavior of these oppressors depicts that regardless of the action taken, in as much as the desired end result is attained, the means (action) is justified. It is glaring that racism is a tool (means) used by these oppressors to achieve their desired end result, which includes but not limited to development in their country. Thus, racism can be tagged morally wrong, because of the cruelty melted on fellow human beings as a result of racism being a tool in the hand of the oppressors.

Conclusion

So far, this work has been able to argue for racism as an ethical issue. Inarguably, there is a moral dimension to racism, morality can be said to be a principle as regards the differences between good and bad or right and wrong behaviors or actions. The ills and wrongs of racism on humanity were richly exposed and trialed within the ethical purview, it can be inferred from the various argument laid out that racism is morally wrong. The immoral state of racism can further be predicated upon Immanuel Kant's "categorical imperative."[22] Kant's categorical

[18] KJV Bible
[19] KJV Bible
[20] Anonymous, Hedonism. Retrieved from https://www.philosophybasics.com/branch_hedonism.html on 17-08-2020.
[21] Dee A. S. Egoism. Retrieved from https://www.learningtogive.org/resources/egoism#:~:text=as%20self%2Dism.-,Egoism%20is%20a%20theory%2C%20in%20ethics%2C%20that%20human%20beings%20act,in%20ways%20that%20help%20others on 17-08-2020.
[22] See Tim, J. Immanuel Kant. Retrieved from https://iep.utm.edu/kantview/ on 17-08-2020.

imperative is arguably a universal ethical principle which holds that one ought to always respect the humanity in others, and one's actions ought to be in line with rules that could possibly hold for everyone. With the above in mind, it is rationally and ethically right to claim that racism is all about degrading humanity. Only a few agrees to racism, all because they use it as a means to an end, not minding its consequences on fellow humans. To this end, we don't only submit to the claim that racism is a moral issue that should be evaluated morally, but racism is morally wrong as it is a weapon used against humanity.

Ezumezu Logic: A Clarification and Defense

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Abstract

Two common denominators may be discerned from the overall body of objections leveled against Ezumezu logic. The first, questions the originality of the Logic saying it is no different from Hegelian logic where the third value is a synthesis. The second seems synonymous with the fallacy of passing one of the many species as the genus – being an Igbo-inspired logic, critics have probed, to what extent it speaks to philosophizing for the entirety of the Africa continent. Our aim therefore is to defend Ezumezu against these charges and clarify the principal thesis of the System. We argue that a synthesis in Ezumezu is an anathema, hence it bears no semblance with Hegelian logic. In addition, we counter the outlook that the system impresses itself as the dominant African logic. Hence, we implore critics and African philosophy experts to engage the logic of their cultures critically, to discern places of parallels and departures from Ezumezu. This is pertinent for two reasons – a philosophy is African, or Western or Asian because of the logic that fortifies it and a logic that undergirds African philosophy and studies must evolve from within the continent but not without.

Keywords: African Philosophy, Defense, Ezumezu Logic, Hegelian Logic, Logic-Criterion

Introduction

The principal character of this disquisition concerns with addressing the brows that critics have raised since the appearance of Jonathan Chimakonam's inspiring and monumental work on African Logic – *Ezumezu: A System of Logic for African Philosophy and Studies.* As the subtitle of the work relays, the author seeks to foreground an Africa-inspired logic that will mediate thought, theory and method within the African philosophic place. Even when the Logic is Africa-inspired, the author stresses in several pages throughout his treatise that for the sake of originality and Africa's contribution to world knowledge, Ezumezu Logic is not culture-bound. The implication of this claim is that it also extends to places non-African too (Ofuasia 2019, 63). As Amara Esther Ani (2019, 85) puts it, Chimakonam's motivation is to present "Ezumezu Logic as an Africa-developed logic that lays a structure for enquiry in Africa in particular and in the globe in general." Since the publication of the work however, it has gathered some criticisms most of which arose from the failure to understand that classical logic

is one out of many strands of logic that humans use to order reality. As a result, our aim is to clarify and defend the System against the structured misrepresentation of its inner kernel by critics.

While most of the criticisms miss the mark, it is important to engage the constructive criticisms leveled against the System by David Martens (2019). This will however be explored in a latter part of this paper. For the moment, it is helpful to relay that to attain its major focus, this research, has five parts including this introduction. In the second section which follows shortly, we commence with a brief recapitulation of the main thrust of Ezumezu Logic. Here, we disclose the main primary nature of the System to forestall future misconceptions and misrepresentations. In the third section, we deduce two common denominators from the deluge of warrants leveled against Ezumezu. We reflect over plausibility of these objections. In the fourth section, we evince the misleading nature of the two overriding objections in the light of our brief exposition of Ezumezu in the first section. The fifth part concludes this inquiry.

The Essential Character of Ezumezu Logic

Ezumezu is an Igbo word that depicts aggregation. As an Igbo-inspired logic system developed by Jonathan Chimakonam, Ezumezu is an amalgam of three values – 'ezu' (truth); 'izu' (falsity); and ezumezu with small letter 'e' (complemented), which is usually presented as 'C.' This makes it a trivalent logic, since it explores three values in its analysis of thought. Now it needs to be stated that Chimakonam's (2019) logic is not the first trivalent system. The author is not only aware that there are other logic systems that are trivalent but is quick to differentiate his system from them. In his words, Ezumezu is "a variant of three value logic that is context-dependent which unlike the variants by Jan Lukasiewicz and Stephen Kleene, prioritises complementarity rather than contradiction" (Chimakonam 2019, 160). Essentially, Ezumezu logic boasts of two seemingly opposed variables which are complemented in the third value. Unlike the mainstream and dominant bivalent logic system in the West where 'T' and 'F' are treated as contradictories, Ezumezu logic passes these as sub-contraries. Chimakonam's Ezumezu logic presents itself as a philosophy of logic, methodology and as a formal system. There is however one chief motivation for the development of this system.

The need to propose a logic for African philosophy and studies, according to Chimakonam (2019, 22) arises out of the charge that African philosophy is nothing but the transliteration and reproduction of ideas of Western philosophers by experts of African philosophy. Hence "it becomes pertinent for African philosophers to map out their methods and the logic that grounds them" (Chimakonam 2019, 22). This is based on his conviction that a philosophy is African, or Western or Asian because of the logic that fortifies it. Hence for Chimakonam (2019), a philosophy is African if and only if it is mediated by African logic. What we have relayed subtly here is Chimakonam's logic criterion concerning the question of the Africannes of African philosophy. It has been documented elsewhere that "Chimakonam seems to hold the outlook that this criterion has the capacity to make African ideas more original than previously articulated proposals aimed at exorcising the spell of Aristotle in the concurrent African

academia. This spell, according to him, was brought into the African place by Peter Bodunrin, Paulin Hountondji and Henry Odera Oruka" (Ofuasia 2019, 74).

Another crucial point concerning Ezumezu is the introduction or addition of three supplementary laws of thought to the three classical laws initiated by Aristotle. Aristotle's classical laws of thought are the laws of contradiction, identity and excluded-middle. Upon a critical assessment of these laws of thought, Chimakonam (2019) finds them deficit for mediating how Africans conceive reality. Initially, the classical laws had been perceived as sacrosanct and axiomatic, needing no revision. Any foray into these laws was perceived as scandalous (Chimakonam 2019, 108). Princewill Alozie (2004, 53) had written in this connection too that the classical laws "are considered immutable and true under all circumstances." It is crucial to however affirm that Chimakonam (2019) is not the first to call attention to the limitations and incompetence that beset the classical laws.

In the history of Western philosophy, Gottfried Leibniz is known to have added a supplement law to the three classical laws of thought (Alozie 2004). The law of Principle of Sufficient Reason (PRS) admits that "every true thought should be sufficiently substantiated" (Alozie 2004, 60). Leibniz must have arrived at this conviction following the insistence that the classical laws of thought need to be supplemented, owing to their logical incompetence. While commenting on Leibniz's supplementary law, Sir William Hamilton chronicles: "In modern times, the attention of philosophers was called to this law of Leibnitz, who, on the two principles of Reason and Contradiction, founded the whole edifice of his philosophy" (Hamilton 1860, 67). In a recent formulation, the law of sufficient reason is depicted thus: "For every substantive fact Y there are some facts, the Xs, such that (i) the Xs ground Y and (ii) each one of the Xs is autonomous" (Dasgupta 2016, 12). On lucid terms, this means, every event must have a reason or a cause. This is a principle that is present in the reflections of Anaximander, Archimedes, Cicero, Avicenna, Aquinas and even Spinoza. Assuming Aristotle's classical logic were not treated as universal and absolute, this law too should have been added to make it four. At this point, it therefore should not call for surprise if critics direct their prongs at Chimakonam for adding three laws to the classical laws – no one took Leibniz seriously hitherto and then Alfred North Whitehead entered the fray!

Whitehead (1948, 182) argues that the laws of non-contradiction and excluded middle are too stringent to allow for innovation and inventions. In his words: "We are told by logicians that a proposition must be either true or false, and that there is no middle term. But in practice, we may know that a proposition expresses an important truth, but that it is subject to limitations and qualifications which at present remain undiscovered." In a latter page, Whitehead (1948, 186) reflects: "In formal logic, a contradiction is the signal of a defeat: but in the evolution of real knowledge it marks the first step in progress towards a victory. This is one great reason for the utmost toleration of variety of opinion." For those who still insist that Chimakonam's supplementary laws of thought are scandalous and subaltern, the fact that he is among the sound minds who have questioned the absurd sanctity given to these laws should put the matter to rest.

Chimakoman's supplementary laws are: Njikoka, Nmekoko, and Onana-etiti. The law of njikoka states that "A is true if and only if A is true wedge-implies A and B is true. Here, the

variable A is said to be true only in the company of another or other variables, not in isolation" (Chimakonam 2019, 139). For Nmekoka: 'C' is or equals a complement of 'T' and 'F.' This 'C' is the third truth value called ezumezu or nwa-izugbe. Whereas Njikoka hints at individual identities within the group, Nmekoka lays emphasis on group power or identity through the convergence of individual elements. Onana-etiti, the third supplementary law employs a conjunction where Aristotle's law of excluded middle involves a disjunction. The law states that "A could be both true and false or if a thing is equal to itself it can be unequal to or different from itself depending on context" (Chimakonam 2019, 140). Chimakonam arrives at these supplementary laws thus: "In loosening the laws of excluded middle and contradiction on the one hand and identity on the other…, I mitigated the characters of absolute difference and absolute identity thereby shaded determinism from bivalence and transformed the latter into trivalence" (Chimakonam 2019, 97). It is then clear why the laws endorse his trivalent logic system – Ezumezu.

A crucial point is worthy of explaining here for the sake of clarification and defense that this research aims. Chimakonam (2019) did not at any point, throughout his treatise insist that the classical laws of thought be rejected or expunged. His position on these laws is that they are incompetent to handle ideas in the African philosophical place hence some laws need to be invoked as supplements Ezumezu therefore announces itself as an original Africa-inspired system to mediate thought, theory and method both for Africa and non-African reflections. To be sure, Chimakonam argues that his logic grounds African ontology as disclosed in the reflections of Innocent Asouzu's (2013) Complementary reflection; Chris Ijiomah's (2014) Harmonious Monism; and Ada Agada's (2015) Consolationism. In attempt to show that Chimakonam's system is not restricted to Africa, Emmanuel Ofuasia (2019) has argued that Ezumezu has the capacity to mediate process philosophy, which was first codified by Alfred N. Whitehead (1978). Even when Whitehead is circumspect of formal logic and its classical laws of thought, he failed to develop a logic for his system as Aristotle had done. Ezumezu logic however has the capacity to fill this lacuna. Speaking on the main character of the system, Chimakonam (2019, 96) insists:

> *Ezumezu as a prototype of African logic studies values, meanings and understanding of logical language. Nothing is treated without content. It is both an art and science which studies the logical relationship among realities expressed in terms of propositions and symbols. Ezumezu therefore is a logical framework that can be used to explain and analyse experiences in African world-view.*

It will be incomplete to end this rudimentary exploration of Ezumezu logic without patenting its relationship with the method of conversational philosophy – a latest trend and methodology in African philosophy. Conversationalism is a higher sophistication portions of the Socratic Method which can occur both at the micro (individual) and macro (cultural) levels which makes intercultural philosophy possible (Chimakonam 2017, 17). As a method, conversationalism may be perceived as a formal procedure used for gauging "the relationships of opposed variables in which thoughts are shuffled through disjunctive and conjunctive modes to constantly recreate a fresh thesis and anti-thesis each time at a higher level of discourse without the expectation of the synthesis" (Chimakonam 2017, 17). Conversationalism presupposes

relationship(s) between '*nwa-nsa*' who is the epistemic agent that poses an idea which needs defending and revision, and '*nwa-nju*,' who can be defined as an epistemic agent that questions the rigour and extent of the epistemic proposal from *nwa-nsa*. This interaction between these epistemic agents perceives a synthesis as anathema "in that its foremost goal is to birth a new concept by opening up new vistas for thought; struggle, in that the epistemic agents involved pit themselves against each other in a continuous disagreement (Chimakonam, 2017, 17). In this sense, each of '*nwa-nsa*' and '*nwa-nju*,' retain their distinct identities. This foray into conversationalism is essential to assist in refuting the proposal of critics that Ezumezu logic is similar to Hegelian logic. At this juncture, we now turn to the deluge of refutations and discomforts directed at Ezumezu logic by critics.

Ezumezu Logic and its Critics

Arrays of criticisms have surfaced to vitiate or mitigate the originality and applicability of the Logic as a method and criterion for African philosophy and studies. Whereas some of them are wide off the mark, owing to the failure to comprehend the core thesis of Ezumezu, some of them are mildly valid suggestive of a thorough engagement with the Logic. This is the true when one considers the assessment of Ezumezu by David Martens (2019).

In his paper, "Some conservatisms in African Logic" presented at the Third Biennial African Philosophy Conference at Dar es Salaam, David Martens (2019) seems to hold that even when Ezumezu is virtuous in some regards, it is too conservative in other ways. To make his point, Martens queries the three doctrines to the discourse on African logic by Chimakonam (2019) – the polemicists, the apologists and the system builders. The polemicists deny the possibility of African logic when the apologists "defend the idea of African logic at any cost including using Afrocentrist propaganda and making logic culture-bound" (Chimakonam 2019, 56). Martens seems to hold that Chimakonam's self-ascription as a system builder – those who intend to construct a system of logic that can be African (Chimakonam 2019) is no different from the apologists since he is optimistic that a logic that is originally African is possible. On first showing, this argument seems valid. A deeper reflection however shows that even when Chimakonam may be treated as an apologist in a way, we can say that he is a 'soft apologist' since Ezumezu for him is not culture-bound but relativistic. This is what we meant when we hinted in the preceding section that Chimakonam's logic is applicable to places African and non-African (Ofuasia 2019). In this sense, we maintain that he may not be situated rigidly within the apologist camp. The similarity between Chimakonam and the apologists may be discerned *only* from the conviction that there can be African logic. In addition to showing that Chimakonam does not situate properly in the apologists' tent, it is imperative to relay that none of the apologists offered a system of logic that passes as philosophical logic, formal system and methodology. This is inclusive of the implicit admission by these apologists that the classical laws of thought are too sacrosanct and axiomatic to be revised. This is the sin that that has greeted the apologist exertions of African scholars such as Kazeem Ademola Fayemi (2010) and Edwin Etieyibo (2016).

Aside the assessment of the Logic by Martens (2019), the Logic has been argued by some to be nothing but the use of Igbo words and terms for garnishing the familiar Classical (Aristotelian) logic. Most find the supplementary laws as fraudulent and do not consider Ezumezu as a valid prototype of African logic that passes as philosophical logic, formal system and methodology. Unfortunately, most of them do not even have a copy of the work which they express resentment about. From these we can discern two overriding prongs that will now be the focus of this inquiry. We settle over these not only because they are intellectually sensitive but because they have been used as the main artillery for denigrating Ezumezu, hence the need for this clarification and defense.

One of the warrants leveled against Ezumezu is connected to the outlook that the third value of Ezumezu logic bears semblance with the synthesis in Hegelian logic. The second objection poses whether or not Ezumezu may be erected as a logic that speaks for the entirety of Africa owing to its Igbo inspiration. Specifically, this second portion speaks to the fallacy of passing one of the many species as the genus (Griffin 2007, vii). In the section that follows, we contend with each of these prongs and the attempt to restate the main thrust of Ezumezu to avoid further misconceptions and misrepresentations.

Assessing the Two Common Prongs against Ezumezu Logic

The first prong concerns with the semblance of the third value in Ezumezu logic with Hegel's synthesis. Perhaps a brief elucidation of Hegel's logic is pertinent for this prong to be understood. In Hegel's system, a thesis is confronted by an anti-thesis which ensues into a synthesis (Ofuasia 2021). This synthesis evolves eventually into another thesis which is confronted by another anti-thesis to form another synthesis on and on *ad infinitum*. One point to not in this Hegelian system is that when a thesis is confronted by an anti-thesis, both lose their individual and distinct identities in the synthesis. This is the character which the third value ezumezu (or 'C') in Chimakonam's logic displays for this strand of critics. It is on this basis that they are motivated to denigrate the Logic as possessing any form of originality if nor rehearsing what is already replete in Igbo concepts.

One very helpful way of perceiving how this prong does not extend to Ezumezu is to see how the logic girds conversational thinking, which we already hinted at previously. The first two values are likable to two conversationalists – *nwa nju* and *nwa nsa*. The latter is a proponent when the former is the opponent (Chimakonam 2015) and both engage in serious intellectual interchange. From the Hegelian parlance, the one (*nwa nsa*) may be seen as the thesis (T) when the other is the anti-thesis (F). Where 'T' and 'F' engage in dialogical interchange, their individual identities are retained as they strengthened one another without evolving into a synthesis. At one point, the third value 'C' is a conjunction which underscores how each value has come to close in agreement but in other cases, it soon turns out as a disjunction where an improved *nwa nsa* is further queried by *nwa nju.* This is precisely what Chimakonam (2015, 469) means when he asserts that "In the end, it is possible for a viable synthesis to sometimes emerge, but it is to the production of new concepts that the main aim of conversational philosophy is targeted. Thus, while questions and arguments and the unveiling of new concepts

are central to the method, conversationalists do not actively hinder a viable synthesis where necessary." Unlike the Hegelian system where the thesis is transformed into an anti-thesis, which implies a necessary conjunction, Ezumezu and conversational thinking employs a disjunction soon after the conjunction. The entire process which is underpinned by arumaruka involves "the reshuffling of thesis and anti-thesis, each time at a higher level without the expectation of synthesis" (Chimakonam 2017, 17), until they arrive at the benoke, a terminal point where "opposed variables cannot get closer" (Chimakonam 2017, 19). On this showing it is therefore lucid that in spite of the similarity between Hegelian dialectical pattern and conversational thinking aided by Ezumezu, this difference, which we have evinced is usually overlooked by critics (Ofuasia 2021). When the former praises and looks forward to a synthesis which evolved into another thesis to be confronted by an anti-thesis, for the latter, "synthesis is perceived as anathema" (Chimakonam 2017, 22). We now turn to the second objection!

This objection concerns the ethnic affiliation of the Logic as it employs Igbo terminologies for its use. Ezumezu suffered heavy attacks for being Igbo-inspired as it seeks to speak for the entirety of Africa as well. More, the underlying admission that classical logic is universal and the classical laws of thought are not only valid for all times and places but not revisable too, continues to make Ezumezu circumspect for these critics.

To this objection, we clarify by stating that throughout the treatise the Chimakonam (2019) was humble to admit that Ezumezu is open to refutation after proper application to African philosophy and studies. A similar position is redolent in Ofuasia (2019, 78) who submits: "it is my view that Ezumezu logic should be engaged in other African philosophic systems to see if it is original to them too." What this means is that rather than vitiating the Logic on the grounds of its ethnic inspiration, critics are challenged to engage critically with the text, then apply its principal thesis to their local African culture to see whether or not it makes sense of how the peoples of the culture perceive reality. Upon his critical engagement with Yorùbá ontology via their ritual archive – the Ifá literary corpus, one the one hand and process philosophy, on the other hand, Ofuasia (2019, 78) takes the position that Ezumezu is suggestive in the theories, thoughts and methods of these philosophies. Unfortunately however, a similar engagement from critics concerning other culture philosophies both on the African continent and beyond has yet to emerge. It is on this showing that we propose Local Expansion of Thought (LET). LET challenges all the cultures and sub-cultures on the African continent especially to engage the logic that functions for their thoughts systems with or without Ezumezu as paradigm. Via LET, various logic principles and values will emerge and a general assessment of this will speak for the continent. Until this is done, Ezumezu currently speaks for the content as a philosophy of logic, formal system and methodology.

Conclusion

Within the preceding pages, we have been able to engage the popular objections that have been levelled against Ezumezu logic and show where these objections miss the mark. This study has also been able to admit that there are some elements of criticisms that have been raised against the System, yet do not vitiate its originality and methodology to African philosophy and

studies. As a result, we submit that there is the pertinent case of engaging the logic that girds the numerous cultures in Africa for a logical equilibrium to be attained. And this can only be achieved when scholars, return to their indigenous knowledge systems, interact with them to be sure of the laws of thought and the rules of logic that hold. When Ezumezu is Igbo-inspired, it will be imposing to conclude that it speaks for the entirety of the African continent. Even as we are tempted to draw such an inference, we hesitate to compare and contrast Ezumezu logic with any other available Africa-inspired system of logic that is discloses itself as a philosophy of logic, formal system and methodology. And unfortunately, none has come forward to testify as Ezumezu as done. We therefore suggest that Ezumezu may be engaged critically within the purview of other indigenous African cultures and thought systems in ways that it can improve beyond its present scope and focus.

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Remembering Democracy: A Reflection on an African Tradition

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Abstract

In this paper, I look at traditional African socio-political system in contrast with the colonial legacy of democracy as a system of governance and prescribe conceptual decolonization as a response to many of the varied challenges of politics in Africa today. I reference authorities in traditional African thought to echo the need for a *critical* return to the past. The view I defend here is that a critical return to the principles of humanism, communa*lity* and consensus *pursuit*, evolved in the traditional African setting by the African herself, would make the practice of democracy better in contemporary Africa given its multi*nation*al character and history of prolonged colonial impact. Adopting both a descriptive and normative approach and the tool of conceptual analysis leading to conceptual innovation, I present a philosophical yet accessible case for reconceptualizing Africa, its peoples, its identities and more emphatically, its politics to give meaning to democracy as 'the-people-centred' rule.

Keywords: democracy, consensus, communality, African, colonial, conceptual decolonization, self-rule, tradition, post-colonial, critical *sankɔfaism*.

Introduction

This paper adopts both a descriptive and normative approach with the aim to first, uncover valuable aspects of traditional African politics which have been jettisoned in contemporary times; second, to discuss the extent to which such worthwhile elements may need to be refined and incorporated into contemporary socio-cultural and political democratic practice. Thus, I argue for a more effective practice of democracy as grounded on a more accurate understanding of democracy as self-rule.

Section one explores traditional Africa's democracies to reveal its humanist, commu*nal* and consensual foundations which this paper argues have been altered chiefly by imperialist impositions. I urge that the depth of this disruption undermines the benefit of evaluating democracies in Africa from an actual *self-evolved* context over a relatively less-interrupted time.

Section two discusses the effects of the colonial legacy to make a case for conceptual decolonization (Wiredu and Oladipo 1995). I argue that the ruinous effects of the long history of colonialism then, and in a lingering revised form now as 'neo-colonialism' and 'colonial mentality', are *still* more pervasive in post-colonial African politics and national life than admitted.

Section three makes a case for a critical return (Gyekye 1997: 241). Unlike the defenders of a wholesale return for everything in the indigenous cultural past of Africa, I maintain, like Gyekye, that the worth of specific cultural products, past or present, indigenous or foreign ought to be tested on normatively independent grounds to determine their value in the life of today. I contend that Africa's self-evolved humanistic, communal, and consensual culture must be given prominence in the politics of Africa today.

Democracy in traditional Africa: Communal, Consensual and Humanistic[23]

Democracy, as a concept and a political practice, has been an aspect of the political and socio-cultural experiences of African traditional societies well before the disruptive colonial invasion and consequent partitioning of Africa. This claim, attested to by both foreign and local scholars writing about Africa, is justifiable if by democracy one refers to self-rule: a government that evolves and is sustained by its *people*, or through their named representatives who wield this political power. The claim cannot be contested if by democracy one refers to the politics receptive to *the peoples'* conception of free expression fostered by *the peoples'* conception of equality of all persons which is itself underlined by *their* understanding of the dignity of the human person. And, if these are given expression in the enduring dependence on dialogue, deliberation and the constant search for consensus, with an accompanying openness to the values of tolerance, cooperation and compromise *and* a fixation on attaining inclusiveness; and, the supremacy, and due process, of *the people's* law regardless of political, economic or religious status (Rattray 1929: 406–7).

Not only have there been such significant elements and institutions of democratic governance in the traditional African setting, but more importantly African traditional democracy is mainly undergirded by the communal, consensual and humanistic ethic (Nyerere 1974: 11). We see the same ethic in the Bantu understanding of the person who cannot be conceived of as an individual (See Myles 2018); as a force that exists by itself and apart from its relationships with other living beings around it (Tempels 1959: 103). The African humanistic ethic therefore seeks to identify the conditions for the development of the person as a whole *and* of all people as a society for the underlying reason that one's being human is inextricably linked to the humanness of others who stand in some form of relation to her. The expressions '*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*' which seeks to define personhood through relationships with others and the Chewa saying '*kalikokha nikanyama; tuli tuwili nituwanthu*' which translates as 'what is

[23] I do not suggest an impeccable system of politics in pre-colonial traditional Africa. I only illuminate some significant elements of genuine democratic politics that should be appropriated in contemporary politics. The discussions chiefly focus on the Akan system of Ghana and extrapolate to the African context which, mostly do not differ in significant respects.

one is brute animal, whatever or whoever has a neighbor is a human being' (Menkiti 2004: 324–31) are captured in Mbiti's famous summation of the African conception of the person: 'I am because we are and since we are therefore I am' (1970: 141).

To emphasize the humanist ethic of traditional African thought, Gyekye explains the Akan proverb, 'it is the human being that counts; I call upon gold, it answers not; I call upon cloth, it answers not; it is the human being that counts' in the following manner: that gold and riches may be valuable and may therefore drive many to morally unacceptable extents, but for the Akan, and many African nations as a matter of fact, what ought to be given uttermost moral consideration is the worth of human beingness for its own sake (1997: 259). The same ethic is expressed in Kaunda's assertion cited by Gyekye, 'To a certain extent, we in Africa have always had a gift for enjoying Man for himself. It is the heart of our traditional culture'. Such enjoyment of 'Man for himself', for Gyekye, only means demonstrating compassion, generosity and hospitality towards a person just because he is human; being open to the interests and welfare of others and feeling a moral duty to offer help where it is needed only by virtue of our common humanness (Kaunda 1996: 32). Against the background of such a conception of African humanistic ethic, then, one could extract positive elements that would make valuable contribution to democracy in post-colonial African politics. In what follows, I discuss some salient features of traditional African democratic politics in some detail.

The basic idea of democracy in traditional Africa, namely, 'the rule of the people' is attested to by scholars like Dugald Campbell, a Briton who lived in central Africa and Zambia for close to three decades around late nineteenth century. The following observation he makes should speak for itself:

> *All government is by the will of the people, whether it be the choice and coronation of a king; the selection of a man to fill a new chieftainship; the framing, proclamation, and promulgation of a new law; the removal of the village from one site to another; the declaration of war or the acceptance of terms of peace: everything must be put to the poll and come out stamped with the imprimatur of the people's will (Campbell 1922: 42).*

Eminent British anthropologists also note on African stateship that, 'The structure of an African state implies that kings and chiefs rule by consent. A ruler's subjects … make him discharge these duties' (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1940: 12). Speaking about the people of Central Africa, the French scholar Adolphe Cureau states: 'over the free citizens, the Chief's authority is valid only insofar as it is the mouthpiece of the majority interest, lacking which character it falls to the ground' (1915: 279). These scholarly observations should establish the centrality of the will of *the people* in the institution of political authority *and* the day to day administering of political power whether the government is a centralized type or not (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1940: 5).

The authority of the chief or king was derived from the people even if in most cases the right to rule was hereditary. For, in most of the states, royalty was recognized and accepted by the people themselves based on what they considered to be their history and custom. The people may not have been *directly* involved in the election of the most acceptable candidate from the royal lineage because that was the sole prerogative of the kingmakers, who were themselves

chosen in accordance with the customs and traditions of *the people* anyway, but it was required that the choice proposed by the kingmakers was suitable enough to be endorsed by the generality of *the people* or else the proposed chief could be rejected by *the people* and replaced with their preferred choice. Thus, the people's *self*-rule, central to democracy anywhere, could not be said to have been undermined.[24]

Therefore, traditional African political thought disapproves of the act of imposing a king on the nationals. The kingmakers, in consultation with the people, further have the constitutional mandate of an oversight responsibility over the king and his conduct privately and publicly. The Asante king of Ghana, for instance appeared absolute, yet he was required to seek the consent of chiefs in the Asante confederation to embark on group action; the Zulu king was not allowed to make important national decisions without the *ibandla*, the highest council of state; the Swazi king, *ngwenyama*, chosen by the *ndovukazi* (queen mother) was checked by the *liqoqo* (inner council) and the *libandla* (general council) (Olivier, 1969). The king only represents the people's unity and could therefore be removed if he failed in his duties based on already held and clearly communicated grounds of removal (Abraham 1962: 77). The Asante, for instance, de-stooled three kings for, among other reasons, extravagance and excessively taxing the people (Owusu-Ansah & McFarland 1995: 121).

For the Akan, according to Abraham (1962), the political aspects of a king's rule is to be the symbol of the unity of his kingdom and attend to ceremonial functions. That did not include dictating to the ruling council by virtue of his divine positioning. Contrary to what appears to be the case, the personal word of the chief is never the law, but his official word which represents the consensus of his council, is the law (Wiredu 1995). Thus, any announcement made by the linguist and chief's spokesperson in Akan tradition is preceded by the statement, 'Thus says the chief *and* his council…' (Gyekye 1997: 123) which supports the Akan saying that 'there are no bad kings, only bad councilors' (Wiredu 1996: 185–6).

The unique agency and dignity of every human person is given expression in the representation given to all members in decision-making from the very basic political unit called *abusua* (family/clan) to the governing body – the council – through the culture of consensual decision-making. Wiredu avers that the advantage of such a consensual approach to governance over majoritarian democracies is that it does not only guarantee a *formal* representation of chosen representatives in council but it also ensures the *substantive* representation of the people's will in the decision-making process (Wiredu 1997: 303–12). That approach thus engenders cooperation and good-will from all participants whereas today's liberal majoritarianism only seeks to consolidate the power of the majority and therefore has a tendency of generating antagonism and disaffection. The tradition of pursuing consensus would then ensure respect for 'the right of any well-defined unit of political organization to selfgovernment, the right of all to have a say … and to participate in the shaping of governmental policies, the right of all to freedom of thought and expression…' (Wiredu 1996: 169).

For certain pertinent issues, members of the community may be assembled at the community square or the forecourt of the chief's palace for *dwabɔ* – a market place of competing ideas –

[24] See a refutation of Simiyu's denial of democracy to traditional African political systems based on claims of hierarchical, nonegalitarian, gerontocratic and sexist features of the African sociopolitical structure (Gyekye 1997: 118–20).

to openly discuss the issue(s) and allow for as many perspectives as possible. The term *Adwabɔ* as the very expression for a market and a meeting-place in council is, in the words of Rattray, an 'extraordinarily significant fact' (1929: 407). Here, 'anyone, even the most ordinary youth, will offer his opinion or make a suggestion with an equal chance of its being favorably entertained as if it proceeded from the most experienced sage' (Cruickshank 1854: 251).

Busia (1967: 28) maintains that arguments are made, criticized, revised, jettisoned and finally agreed on mostly in the spirit of cooperation, tolerance, compromise and fellow-feeling more easily offered by the sense of communality and common interest which are stronger at this level because of the stronger sense of shared values and goals which derives from the strong belief, real or fictive, that all members in the decision-making process are knit together and affected by common ties of kinship. Against the background of the ethos of humanism, it is further easier for one to seek the interests of the other(s) whose wellbeing is believed to be tied to one's.

Admittedly, at no time has any society been a realm of constant unbroken harmony. Africa could not be an exception. Conflicts within, between and among the several nation-communities, ethnic-groups and lineages would therefore not have been infrequent in pre-colonial traditional Africa. But Wiredu's view is that the culture of consensus *pursuit*, both in principle and in practice, aided the discharge of joint actions which would not have been necessarily based on agreed notions (Wiredu 1995: 53–64). Kaunda maintains: 'In our original societies we operated by consensus. An issue was talked out in solemn conclave until such time as agreement could be achieved'. Nyerere adds, 'in African society the traditional method of conducting affairs is by free discussion', and quotes Guy Clutton-Brock, 'The elders sit under the big trees, and talk until they agree' (Mutiso and Rohio 1975: 476, 478). Sithole (1959: 86) also observes 'the African people are democratic… council allows the free expression of all shades of opinions. Any man has full right to express his mind on public questions …'.

As such, even in the face of mortal conflicts which would be rampant in a multi-*nation*al context like Africa, the principle of consensus serves as a better mediation tool for the settlement of disputes and the attainment of reconciliation. Like Wiredu, I contend that the structural divisions of traditional Africa's socio-cultural and political systems would have been more effectively tempered by its communal and consensual ethical outlook than the imposed Western model. Not only is there no act of formal voting in the traditional setting, there also is no 'winner' (and therefore no 'loser'). By implication every 'party' is a governing power and the underlying principle of governance is the quest to reconcile varied and competing social interests, not the rule of the majority party. This way, the system is a non-partisan one (Wiredu 1997: 303–12). Such a system is better able to evade the evident problems of both the one-party dictatorship system and the multi-party, winner-takes-all, adversarial politics inherited from or imposed by the colonialist which, 'has produced superficial forms of political/electoral choice-making by subjects that deepen pre-existing ethnic and primordial cleavages' (Ani 2013: 207).

Eze, however, is skeptical about Wiredu's consensus politics as a 'democratic' solution to dealing with the problems of Africa's politics since to him the principle is likely to be used undemocratically by central authorities under the label of a purported converging will of the

people. Arguing that 'the interests of some members or a member of a society may be to dominate the rest, for the sheer morbid enjoyment of power' (Eze 1997: 313–23), Eze questions the supposition that interests are the same for all members of society and challenges the truth of the claim that 'human beings have the [rational] ability eventually to cut through their differences to the rock bottom of identity of interests' (Wiredu 1995: 57). Ani (2014) also cautions against the use of the procedural instrument of unanimous action without unanimity on what *ought* to be done. Ani urges that not all group decisions are value-neutral, as Wiredu opines, and therefore entertaining differences in values would be a better option than sweeping them under the carpet in the name of pursuing consensus. But he nonetheless agrees that there must be some common interest underlying such confrontation of values anyway and that Wiredu's call for consensual democracy should be seen as equally driven by the concern for justification which arises from deliberation (Ani 2013: 211).

In objection however, Matolino (2009) maintains that consensual democracy may have more appeal than Eze is prepared to concede. He argues in agreement with Wiredu that the essential source of legitimization of political authority need not be divine or ancestral as insisted by Eze in his analysis of Wiredu's presentation of the origins of Ashanti political authority which for Eze is not workable in Africa's largely 'secular' and 'religiously pluralistic' states today. Matolino contends that the king's ceremonial function of leading religious celebrations, receiving guest chiefs or leading clan ceremonies may be ancestral or sacred but that cannot constitute the *essential* in legitimizing the chief's functional authority. Rather, he argues, that the substantive and real power of a chief lies in his ability to logically persuade, adjudicate over competing arguments in search of a position agree*able* to all parties, and articulate positions adopted by the competing parties. These qualities in a person, for Matolino, are what legitimizes the authority and substantive function of a chief, not a recourse to religious or other beliefs.

On the claim that consensus is attainable because all members' interests are identical at the 'rock bottom' although not realized by them because of misperception, Matolino agrees with Eze that Wiredu is mistaken. However, he maintains that consensus is possible even if it is admitted that interests are not necessarily identical for all, as some may seek to dominate others (Eze 1997: 318). He insists that consensus, as advocated by Wiredu, is possible and attainable if it is centered on dialogue which only aims at uncovering and understanding the various underlying interests of the debating parties and seeks to bridge them by finding a 'negotiated tolerable co-existence' but not to deny the existence of such difference in interests. The consensual approach, for Matolino, should therefore lead members to the realization that for one to be successful in one's pursuits, one would have to give due regard to the interests of others.

Matolino further proposes two institutional requirements: free expression of the will of participants and good faith that, as he sees it, would strengthen the process of dialogue integral to the consensus method to ensure that the system remains a democracy. This way, consensus does not merely search for, or perhaps impose, an underlying 'rock bottom identity of interests' as presumed by Wiredu but rather is a system that addresses the inevitable myriad of differences in human socio-political interests rightly pointed out by Eze. Further, Matolino

believes that the advantage of consensual democracy over other political systems is that it asks the crucial action question of the best way to proceed when faced with competing desires and differences, and answers thus, 'We shall sit and dialogue until we reach a consensus on the best conceivable way to proceed' (Matolino 2009: 42). The aim then is not to deny competition but to engage dialogue to reach an agree*able* position for *all* participants, unlike the majoritarianism that underlies today's multi-partism. Going by consensual democracy, the people's wishes and expectations would be given actual meaning, and that evokes in the nationals a sense of personal commitment to the fortunes of the nation-community. It also gives the impetus for full involvement and makes for the much-cherished all-inclusiveness and real active participation in community and governance affairs which democracy today everywhere undeniably yearns for. These features, in turn, deepen the values of cohesion, fellow-feeling and solidarity necessary for tolerance, cooperation, compromise and the pursuit of the common good.

But if the foregoing account is largely representative of traditional African society and its politics, then the gloomy picture of many contemporary post-colonial African democracies would, as I see it, lie largely, even if not solely, in the ever-trailing legacy of colonialism. Thus, the proposal is to work urgently towards conceptual decolonization of Africa, its peoples and its democracy.

The Urgent Need for re-conceptualizing post-colonial African democracies

This section advocates for conceptual decolonization of contemporary African democracy as one of the prime, if not the prime, remedies to the rooted mutilations of Africa's contemporary national life and democratic governance. This concern being re-echoed here must be taken seriously if democracy is to thrive at all in multi-national African states today.

By conceptual decolonization of African politics, I refer to two things. First, I mean a commitment to halting and reversing, through a critical conceptual *self*-awareness, the unexamined wholesale adoption and absorption of conceptual frameworks embedded in foreign political categories and traditions superimposed unto contemporary African political thought and practice through colonialism in its various forms (Wiredu & Oladipo 1995). Second, I refer to an unfailing commitment to 'critical *sankɔfaism*': exploiting as much as is judicious, the resources of Africa's *self-evolved* indigenous conceptual frameworks for contemporary national life and democratic practice. The greater urgency to be attached to this call should equal, and even exceed, the subtle and pervasive means employed in superimposing this legacy on the evolving African democracy then, and in a revised duplicitous form now.

To understand the context of the preceding remarks, it is pertinent that one comes to terms with the depth of the affliction imposed by the colonialist project on Africa, its peoples, and politics. For, if identity is 'a person's understanding of who they are, of their fundamental characteristics as a human being' which is 'partly shaped by recognition or its absence' and 'nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false,

distorted, and reduced mode of being' (Taylor 1994: 25), then the colonial legacy is a disordered confusion of the self-understanding of the African – a conceptual identity crisis stemming from what has been called 'colonial mentality' (Gyekye 1997: 27), *and* a translation of this crisis unto already unstable and flickering imposed political institutions and structures. Thus, the impairment from colonialism is twofold: to the individual self-identities of the African peoples as well as to the collective self-understandings of their socio-political systems and the African must feel obligated 'to purge [herself] of this imposed and destructive identity' (Taylor 1994: 25) as a matter of dignity.

Not only was the inherited colonialist 'democracy' full of anti-democratic syndromes because it had not yet been fully weaned of its traits of feudalism and its monarchical and aristocratic posture, but its foreign underlying tenets have also invaded an otherwise largely communal culture nurtured in the spirit of cooperation and accommodation and in the belief in an impartial regard for the interests of others including even the physical environment (Abudu 2012: 1046). Its virus of moneycracy and the attendant over-reliance on foreign donors to finance most elections and the financial demands of sustained civic education and coordination of the centralized arms of government have implications that need not be mentioned. Participants of this transmitted 'democracy' are left as perpetual mutual adversaries seeking constantly to outwit and prey on each other (Ibid) 'even if it means killing perceived and real opponents' (Mapuva 2013: 89), to ensure that they secure numerical majority just to propagate party business (Molomo 2004). Young (1998: 114–5) suggests that this phenomenon is one negative aspect of the colonial state bequest to independent Africa. As such, debates and deliberations on public issues are unfortunately mostly focused on how incumbents can grip unto power indefinitely, or how the non-incumbent would attain power at all cost (Melber 2002: 18).

The result of such extreme competitive and inherently divisive characteristic of the superficial 'democracy' imposed is a survival of the fittest or winner-takes-all posture that makes politics tenaciously adversarial in ethnically heterogenous post-colonial Africa (Abudu 2012: 1049). If left on its own, the inevitable consequences would continue to be civil strife and military interventions as evidenced throughout Africa and recently in Mali and Guinea (Adekoya 2021).

I contend that the bleak image painted is chiefly because, these institutions did not evolve as part of the culture of the people themselves and are therefore tainted with the slave-master mentality that created them in the first place. Obviously, there must be good reason why no nation in Europe or America today would give up its *own evolved* version of 'democracy' for that of another. It is important to note that '…democracy is not a set of constitutional arrangements to be taken off the peg for immediate use…. The conditions under which parliamentary democracy evolved in the West were entirely different from those in Africa today' (Austin 1993: 204). Yet, an acquaintance with the general traditional African political setting, earlier referred to, would reveal values of free expression, rule by consent, government by popular will, constitutional limit on political authority, due process of the law and equality before the law as enshrined in the beliefs, precepts and customs of the African peoples themselves.

However, as false and unfounded as the misconceptions and assumptions about statehood in pre-colonial African politics are, they have, regrettably, served to negatively impact the general

African psyche to create a mindset, akin to that of the colonialist, that regards everything branded in non-African labels as superior, more valuable and preferable to a corresponding object with African origin. From values to cultural habits, institutions and structures, the conclusion is often drawn *prior to* critical examination or rational normative evaluation that, 'if it is from the West, then it is best'. The consequence of such spurious perception is a blind glorification of almost *everything* Western or European. That in turn fuels an indiscriminate absorption of Western cultural elements or products even if its functional application to the African context is wobbly. Bemoaning the unfortunate consequences of 'colonial mentality' Gyekye writes,

> *It seems that the most enduring effect of the colonial experience on the African people relates to their self-perceptions, to skewed perceptions of their own values– some of which [values] can, on normative grounds, be said to be appropriate for life in the modern world (1997: 27).*

As I see it, such thinking betrays an underlying difficulty of coming to terms with the bare fact that people everywhere, including Africa, are *capable* of nurturing their *own* borrowed, adapted, appropriated or self-evolved 'home grown' conceptual frameworks, systems and structures for socio-political organization situated within their own local circumstances or experiences. Therefore, the colonialist democracy and its statist systems, is as dispensable as any cultural product – native or exotic, past or present – which, by critical examination, proves less worthwhile in the contemporary life of a people anywhere. Neither should this claim be understood to mean that cultures are insulated from contact with other cultures and therefore, impervious to change resulting from appropriation. Such an intuition would contradict the historical fact of cultural exchanges and resultant hybridity of most human cultures.

Again, neither should this claim preclude the possibility of universal categories of democratic understanding to the extent that these universal meanings are borne out of critical and rational examination which can be reasonably assumed for all human cultures. The emphasis here is that granted that all rational deliberation assumes the *form* of an independent, or culture-neutral, grounds of thought, it does not take from a particularist understanding of the *content* of this thought for, *meaningful* and effective expression of the *form* would have to be in reference to particular contexts. The way to go then is this: 'we give due acknowledgement only to what is universally present–everyone has an identity–through recognizing what is peculiar to each. The universal demand powers an acknowledgment of specificity' (Taylor 1994: 39).

A call for a critical return

Even though the causes of Africa's current socio-economic and political predicament may be legion, one root cause of its current woes which this study stresses is the neglect, denigration or subversion of some important aspects of its traditional cultural values, systems and institutions in the life of today. Some have however denied the relevance of past traditions in the life of today. This section maintains that there is a fundamental failure in each extreme position since both do not acknowledge the basic truth that every human culture at any point

in time would always have both positive and negative elements which will continue to undergo change.

Therefore, neither a wholesale glorification nor a wholesale condemnation of Africa's, and any other region's for that matter, cultural past is defensible. The view defended here rather is that a value, practice or institution of a cultural past should be resuscitated and *adapted* by later generations only on rational and normative grounds to determine its usefulness to the present generation. And, for the politics of today's post-colonial Africa, the case I make here is that the positive atavistic values of humanism *and* consensual democracy built on a self-evolved *communal* framework, stressed by the seasoned African scholars discussed so far, ought to be revived in earnest, reworked and given a significant place.

Dzobo advocates for 'a necessary journey into the past of our indigenous culture, so that we can march into the future with confidence and with a sense of commitment to our cultural heritage' (1981: 32–5). Such advocacy for an unqualified return to Africa's cultural past obviously evokes opposing and disdainful sentiments in others who view a great part, if not the entire, indigenous cultural past as inadmissible in the life of today (Irele 1995: 281, 284; Hountondji 1983: 53). Yet, even the critic refers to a return to Africa's tradition of 'internal pluralism and to its essential openness' (Hountondji 1983: 166).

The point of critical importance then is that the past has some elegant aspects useful for the life of today while some others are not. One may cite the 'intensely and pervasively religious' cultural heritage and some aspects of the inheritance systems as non-beneficial and as such must remain buried in the past (Mbiti 1970: 1; Gyekye 1997: 253). But the worthwhile elements of humanism, communalism, *and* consensus method remain positive features of Africa's heritage which ought to be refined and adapted in the life of today mainly because of their normative weight and relevance to the circumstances of today's post-colonial Africa, its culture, and its politics.

A return to a humanistic ethic and a consensual democracy

One fundamental and pervasive concept notably visible in Africa's indigenous past which undoubtedly yearns for a restoration in the life of today to give deeper meaning to the African's socio-political life is its humanist value (Gyekye 1995: 143–6). Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first president, expresses this thought in the statement that the African leader's aim, 'is to reconsider African society in such a manner that the humanism of traditional African life reasserts itself in a modern technical community' (Nkrumah 2009: 77). For such thinking, the concern for the well-being of other humans, regardless of their antecedents, remains a cherished value for, 'it is the human being that counts…' (Gyekye 1997: 259). If the ethic that humans are 'wrapped up together in this bundle of life and therefore a bond already exists between myself and a stranger before we open our mouths to talk' (Kaunda 1966: 32) is revitalized in modern African politics, then Nyerere's presentation of traditional African society as 'an extension of the basic family' (1974: 12) where the community was taken care of by us and we also took care of the community would be the expected outcome. This ethic would not only deepen sensitivity to the needs of others and strengthen the relational ties all humans necessarily have with each other but would consequently lead to a reversal of the character of today's politicking where most people and societies continue to subvert or abandon the intrinsic

worth of humanity and pursue economic and technological wealth even at the expense of the health and continuous survival of other human beings like themselves.

A humanist ethical orientation, therefore, would spawn an almost seamless continuity of Africa's civil life with its political life. The same would undergird the search for cooperation and compromise and consequently a consensual approach to decision-making in politics. Such consensus *search* even where perspectives on an issue differ is what has been undermined in today's politics and needs to be revitalized. Organically evolved from the indigenous culture of the African peoples, whether of the statal or non-statal type, and therefore not alien to the *being* of most part of its populations, consensual politics would constitute a fundamental, most indispensable principle for harmonization. Against its typically *communal* background, Africa's humanist ethos would enjoin its peoples to think in terms of what *we* can gain from *me* in order that all can benefit and not what *I* can gain from *them*. It is such a sense of attachment to the collective whole, typical of ethnic groups, and a commitment to its welfare that needs to be engendered not demanded of citizens who are now more interested in what their rights, interests and specific benefits are than what their responsibility and obligations towards the whole is.

Returning for a consensual system adaptable to today's Africa would also reduce the many tensions of multiparty democracy and its ballot-box selection of political leaders. In effect, *the people's* involvement in affairs of the nation-state, which established a close relation between the government and the governed then would be restored to make members see their being as part of the whole. This way, the people's sense of ownership of governance which has been overturned by the colonialist state, its institutions and authorities since they are significantly detached from the cultural traditions and institutions of the people would be restored. Such a rule then would constitute self-rule understood as *our rule of my self*. Compromise, which is integral to the search for consensus in political decision-making would take center-stage again as the member would think more in terms of the collective self as 'us' and *our* welfare than the individual self as 'me' and *my* interest. Not only would a humanistic *and* consensual democracy be better able to curtail the situation with multi-party majoritarian 'democracies' where when a party wins and gets into power, other parties, their ideas and policies, by constitutional default agreement of sorts, also lose and get out of power or stay out of it but deliberate obstruction by opposition party to undermine government policy would also be minimized, if not expunged.

Thus, even if Ghana, and for that matter multi*national* Africa, cannot return *wholly* to the elements of its traditional cultural past because most of it hinged on a perception of communality derived from a sense of 'natural' kinship linkages which is not the case in present times, it is in the interest of contemporary African politics to recognize and make substantial room for such valuable traditional institutions and conceptions reworked in the context of the modern state system with relevant modifications where needed. That *sense* of natural-belonging, in the traditional setting, plays a significant role in nurturing a characteristic of human relation in which peoples' rights, obligations, reciprocity and security emanate from sympathy and solidarity towards other humans they consider to be members of their collective 'self'. Not only is such sense of security easily lost in Africa's relatively individualized urbanized cities today, with negative consequences for peoples' psyches and society's

collective welfare, but the communal sense of 'self' as also *necessarily* relational to others which evinced habits of sensitivity to the interests of others has been lost with it. Therefore, a conscious effort towards evolving a sense of nationhood; a genuine sense of belonging together, even if not natural, is what the tradition of humanism and consensual democracy, if revived, would bring to post-colonial African politics.

Conclusion

This article aimed at highlighting aspects of traditional African socio-political systems that are viable and ideal for governance in Africa today in contrast with the colonial legacy to make a case for conceptual decolonization as a fundamental response to many of the varied challenges of Africa's politics today, and to defend a *critical* return to Africa's cultural past or traditions. The defended view is that a *critical* return to the past would make the practice of democracy(self-rule) better in contemporary Africa and give meaning to 'the-people-centeredness' of democracy(self-rule). I conclude with a call for a more meaningful and effective practice of democracy as grounded in a reconceptualized Africa, its peoples, its identities, and more emphatically, its politics.

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Gendered Inequalities on Contraceptive Use and Women's Reproductive Rights

A Philosophical Reflection on Women in the Johane Marange Apostolic Church in Harare

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Abstract

Religion plays a significant role in creating inequalities between men and women in different facets of life. The Johane Marange Apostolic Church (JMAC) doctrine particularly on contraception has created inequalities with regard to women's reproductive rights. This paper is a qualitative investigation and examination of the gendered inequalities on contraceptive use and reproductive rights of women in the JMAC. The paper made use of the Johane Marange Apostolic Churches in some selected districts of Harare as case study. The paper seeks to answer the following research question, how has the JMAC doctrine on contraception created some gendered inequalities particularly on contraceptive use and reproductive rights of women in this Apostolic church. In answering this research question, I made use of field data collected through participant observation and in-depth interviews with women in some selected JMACs in Harare. The paper takes a qualitative research approach. I analyse the data in order to draw conclusions regarding gendered inequalities on contraceptive use and reproductive rights of men and women in JMAC. Major findings of the study showed that the clandestine use of modern contraceptives by women in JMAC against their church doctrine has turned them into independent agents. Women in JMAC have now changed the way in which they view their sexuality, thus, they are now able to control their sexual and reproductive capabilities. Through the clandestine use of modern contraceptives, the paper showed that most married women in JMAC now liberate themselves from being passive sexual and reproductive vessels. On the whole, the paper submits that it is the JMAC religious doctrine against contraception which has created some gendered inequalities on sexual and reproductive rights of women in JMAC.

Keywords: gender, inequality, reproductive rights.

Introduction

The paper investigates and examines the gendered inequalities on contraceptive use and reproductive rights of women in the JMAC. The purpose here is to demonstrate the impact of religion in creating inequalities particularly on contraceptive use and reproductive rights in the JMAC community.

The paper makes use of field data collected on contraceptive use and gender implications for married women in JMAC in Harare. Research findings on contraceptive use have positively indicated a widespread reception of these contraceptives by most married women in the JMAC. Such a widespread reception of modern contraceptives raises issues in two important areas, gender relations and reproductive rights of women in JMAC, The paper gives particular focus on the gendered inequalities on reproductive rights of women in JMAC.

Research Questions

The research was guided by the following research questions;

1) Do women in the Johane Marange Apostolic Church use contraceptives?
2) What are the gendered inequalities on contraceptive use and women's reproductive rights in JMAC?

Research Methodology

The study took a qualitative research paradigm which is concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviour (Kothari, 2004: 5). The quantitative research paradigm could not be employed in this study because the approach surveys a large number of individuals and applies statistical techniques to recognize overall patterns in the relations of processes. The research design adopted in this study is a case study design. Participant observation and in-depth interviews were conducted with married women and church elders in the selected Johane Marange Apostolic Churches in Harare. We conducted one-on-one interviews at their different homes in order to avoid bias. We noted that if these oral interviews were to be conducted at their places of worship, it would distort information since participants would not open up to give true information in fear of their church elders. Key informant interviews were conducted with family planning providers to understand their engagement with women from the Johane Marange Apostolic Church. These interviews were carried out in order to ascertain the position of the Church on the use of contraceptives and to determine women's reception of modern contraceptives. Also, the interviews sought to investigate and examine some gendered inequalities issues that were associated with utilising modern contraceptives.

Twelve different Johane Marange Apostolic Churches (JMAC) in Harare were consulted. The different JMACs which include, Belvedere, Kuwadzana 4, Kuwadzana Extension, Dzivaresekwa, Warren Park, Budiriro, Glenview, and Chitungwiza districts among others were engaged. In each Apostolic church, twenty-five to thirty women were interviewed on contraceptive use and their implications or repercussions on gender. Three to five church elders were also interviewed in order to ascertain the position of the church doctrine on contraception. One member of the Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council (ZNFPC) and two other family planning service providers were also consulted, to understand how they engaged women from Johane Marange Apostolic Churches on modern contraceptives.

Data for this study were collected in one phase between July 2017 and January 2018. Collection of data was through one-on-one interviews, and participant observation. The time frame of data collection from July 2017 to January 2018 was adequate enough. Given the qualitative nature of this study, it utilized the inductive approach to data analysis.The inductive approach takes qualitative data analysis to begin with a complete set of collected data in form of transcripts of

interviews, focus group discussions and participant observation conducted during field data collection.

The Idea of Contraception and the JMAC Doctrine

In this section, I articulate in brief the JMAC doctrine on contraception. The section makes reference to data collected though one- on – one interview on contraceptive use among women in JMAC together with some documented literature. The JMAC is one of the African Initiated Churches in Zimbabwe. The JMAC church was named after its founder, Johane Marange (Vengeyi, 2013:63). The main doctrine of the JMAC is well captured in their Apostolic book called *Umboo Utsva hwaVapostori* (The New Revelation of the Apostles). The book is revered by the *Vapostori* as a canonical addition to the Bible.

According to their Apostolic book, *Umboo Utsva hwaVapostori*, the JMAC maintains a religious culture against the idea of contraception. I note that their stringent doctrine against contraception is anchored on the Bible verse Genesis 1: 28 which says:

> *'God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every creature that crawls upon the earth' (Holy Bible 1982).*

The Johane Marange people's interpretation of the phrase above, 'be fruitful and multiply,' is such that women must bear as many children as possible and should not do anything to prevent childbearing. Also, Vengeyi (2016:262) admits that a number of married women in the JMAC have been loyal to their doctrine that teaches them not to use any form of medication whatsoever that prevents them from bearing children. Based on the given bible verse above, the doctrine of the JMAC is clearly and strictly against the use of contraceptives.

It is observed that the strict beliefs and teachings against contraception in the JMAC are influenced by the patriarchal nature of this Apostolic community. This is a result of certain patriarchal ideologies dominant in the JMAC that take a negative stance on contraception. In this paper, patriarchy is taken to refer to a system of domination of man over women, which transcends different economic systems, eras, regions and class (Boonzaaier and Sharp, 1988:154). I agree with their notion that patriarchal ideology developed as a result of the elevation of the idea of the leadership of the fathers to a position of paramount importance in society. Under this ideology, the father is regarded as the head and protector of the family (Boonzaaier and Sharp, 1988:154). The present paper acknowledges that patriarchal ideologies in the JMAC influence men to take control over their women's sexuality and reproductive rights.

In the Johane Marange Apostolic community, the traditional patriarchal ideologies held empower men to determine the size of the family. According to the one-on-one interviews conducted with some married women in the JMAC, the husband decides on the number of children he would want to have and how to space them as well. One of the respondents in an oral interview conducted in Warren Park 5 reiterated the following and I quote;

> *"Isu pachitendero chedu, baba ndivo vanototaura uwandu hwevana vavanoda, isu semadzimai hatipikise…"* (According to our religion, the husband is the one who just states the number of children he wants, we as mothers do not oppose...) (Wachenuka, Key Informant Interview, 30 September 2017).

It is evident from the above interview excerpt that married women in the JMAC are encouraged to have as many children as possible. I observe that such attitudes on reproduction do not give room for any form of medication to be taken or practices to be pursued so as to prevent pregnancy. Their thrust is to enlarge their family lineages (*kukudza dzinza*) in order to fulfil the scripture, "….be fruitful and multiply…" (Genesis 1: 28).

Also, the patriarchal attitudes that characterise the JMAC influence married men to control their wives' sexual reproductive rights. The available documented literature suggests that married women in this Apostolic community do not have sexual and reproductive freedom, hence they are just passive sexual and reproductive vessels (Mukova and Mangena, 2016: 116). It is noted that freedom and autonomy of married women in this community concerning their sexual and reproductive behaviour is suppressed. The patriarchal ideologies in the JMAC have also influenced the Church to develop teachings and beliefs against contraception.

Findings; Women and Contraceptive in the JMAC

The section presents research findings on contraceptive use among women in JMAC**.** Findings presented in this section will help in ascertaining the role of the JMAC religious teachings in creating gendered inequalities on contraceptive use and women's reproductive rights.

Different women in the JMAC were interviewed to give their position on contraceptive use. One-on-one interviews conducted with married women of JMAC in Kuwadzana Extension (JMAC Kuwadzana Extension District) revealed that these women take modern contraceptives, in particular oral contraceptives (pills) and Depo-Provera. One of these married women said:

> *"Chitendero chedu hachibvumidze kunwa mapiritsi kana chimwe chinhu kudzivirira pamuviri, asi kune avo vanonwa, vanotoita muchivande"* (Our church prohibits the use of contraceptives or anything related to that to prevent pregnancy, but to those who do it, they do it in secret (Japi, Interview, 9 September 2017)).

From the above data extract, the participant explained that it was her wish to have a small manageable family, since having many children would become a financial burden.

During the one-on-one interview sessions, some married women reported that they use modern contraceptives in particular, Jadelle, Depo-Provera, Pills and the Intra-Uterine device (loop) clandestinely without the permission of their husbands. This group of women pointed out that their husbands played a key role in determining the number of children they would opt to have, which in most cases, they opted for more than five (5) children. One of these participants had this to say;

> *"Baba kumba ndivo vanototaura kuti vanoda vana vangani, isu semadzimai tongotevedzera kunyangwe mumoyo tichirwadziwa nekuita vana vakawanda"* (It is

> the husband at home who decides on the number of children we should have, as women, we simply obey even deep inside our hearts we would not want to bear many children) (Madhuve, Interview, 16 September 2017).

From the evidence cited in the data extract above, the key informants indicated that it was the duty and responsibility of the husband to decide on the number of children, although in most cases such decisions would be against their wishes. With regard to the place of men in determining the number of children and issues to do with contraception, the data provided indicated that men in JMAC do play a major role in sexuality issues, where sexuality is a social construct that is biologically driven (Gupta, 2000).

In order to determine or establish the position of JMAC on contraception, I also made use of participant observation method. In a church service I attended in Glen View (JMAC, Glen View district), one of the church elders gave a sermon which included contraceptive use. The church in Glen View belongs to the faction led by Noah Taguta. It is the faction that encourages polygamous marriages and holds conservative views on the different religious aspects in Johane Marange. In addressing the issue of contraception, the preacher reiterated the following;

> "*Vana zvipo zvinobva kuna Mwari, nokudaro, madzimai edu haafanirwe kushandisa mishonga yekuzvipatara inodzivirira pamuviri …… akaropafadzwa mudzimai anobereka vana vazhinji….”* (Children are gifts from God; therefore our women must not use drugs that prevent pregnancy…. Blessed is that woman who bears more children) (Guru, Participant Observation, Preaching, 19 August 2017).

The above evidence clearly demonstrates the position of the JMAC on contraception. The church's doctrine strongly forbids the use of contraceptives and advocates that women should bear as many children as possible.

In order to extract primary information through participant observation on contraceptive use among women in the JMAC, I also attended a service in Budiriro 4. The aim here was to get a holistic understanding on the reception and utilization of contraceptives according to the JMAC doctrine. Evidence from data extracts demonstrated that the JMAC doctrine holds a very strong position against the use of contraceptives. One of the preachers in the church service I attended emphasized that the main duty or responsibility of a woman was to bear children. The message is well captured in the following quotation;

> *“Pachitendero chedu, basa guru remudzimai kubereka vana vazhinji, nokudaro uyo anodzivisa kubereka vana anotadza pamberi paJehovah…” (*According to our religion, the main responsibility of a woman is to bear more children; therefore he who prevents pregnancy commits a sin before God…) (Chikwati, Participant Observation, Preaching, 26 August 2017).

The above findings presented clearly show that the JMAC holds strict conservative views against contraception. They advocate that women should keep on bearing children and taking contraceptives would disturb procreative values.

One respondent in an interview reiterated that the reason was that the church holds a strict doctrine and moral proscriptions related to the use of contraceptives. In an interview, one of the church elders at the JMAC in Belvedere reiterated that, contraception is morally wrong and

should not be practised because the purpose of sexual activity is to reproduce, hence to use contraceptives is actually sinning against God. It is critical to note that such a belief might have stemmed from Genesis 1 verse 28, which encourages reproduction, "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Jeffrey, 2011).

In ascertaining the reception of contraceptives among women in the JMAC, I also engaged the Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council (ZNFPC) in Harare. ZNFPC has the mandate to coordinate, take leadership and support implementation of integrated Family Planning services, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and other related services in Zimbabwe (ZNFPC 1985).

In an interview conducted with the Director of ZNFPC, on the engagement of married women in JMAC on contraceptive use, he reiterated that these women make use of injections and contraceptive implants secretly against their religious doctrines. He pointed out that most women pay visits to the nurses' homes in order to be given contraceptives, such as the Depo-Provera (injection), Jadelle (contraceptive implant) and the Intra-Uterine Devices (IUDs).

From his explanation, most women in the JMAC avoid using the pills since these would be noticed by their husbands at home, instead they opt for injections or implants which for them cannot be noticed. The findings here clearly demonstrate that most women in the JMAC access contraceptives, however, clandestinely. It is their church doctrine that forbids them to take contraceptives but however pretend to follow it.

I also conducted an interview with one of the ZNFPC Service Delivery Department. The aim was also to ascertain whether or not they engage women in the JMAC in their service deliveries. In an interview, one of the staff members pointed out that most women in the JMAC access their contraceptive services clandestinely. In her explanation, she pointed out that family planning services are rendered at the nurses' homes. She also explained that it is difficult for these married women to access family planning services openly at local clinics or any other health centres since again they are bound by their religious church doctrine not to access or get any medical aid from health care practitioners. Also, she reiterated that, on contraceptive use, the problem lies not with the married women, but with the leaders of the JMAC as well as the husbands at home. According to her explanation, these two hold a strict church doctrine on contraception that suppresses women's desires on family planning and gives the husband the powers to dictate the number of children or size of the family. Married women, thus, remain with no power to control their own fertility.

Analysis, Gendered Inequalities on Contraceptive Use and Reproductive Rights of women in JMAC

Analyses on the gendered inequalities on contraceptive use and reproductive rights of women in JMAC made in this section are based on the research findings presented above. It is important to first define the key terms, *gender* and *reproductive rights* for the purposes of

clarity in this paper. The concept of gender has received much attention in sociological, religious and philosophical writings. Butler (2004:43) defines gender as the mechanism by which notions of masculine and feminine are produced and naturalized, but gender might very well be the apparatus by which such are deconstructed and denaturalized. She further explains that gender is a concept that reflects limitations, stability and reconstruction, supported by the notion of heteronormativity, which means the acceptance of heterosexuality as a natural and social norm (Butler, 2004:43). Following Butler's presentation of gender, this permanent, long and well-established structure of genders may be destructed through the subversion of gender roles in creating different performances (Butler, 1990: 55). In simpler terms, the concept of gender has generally been referred to as the social construction of what it means to be male or female (Mapuranga, 2013:304). The present paper does not focus on the concept of gender in general, it gives particular attention to inequalities on gender with regard to contraceptive use and women's reproductive rights, hence the term *gendered inequalities*.

On the other hand, reproductive rights refer to the rights of individuals to decide whether to reproduce and have reproductive health. This include an individual's right to plan a family, terminate a pregnancy, use contraceptives, learn about sex education in public schools, and gain access to reproductive health services. In this context, women's reproductive rights include the right to birth control and freedom from coerced contraception.

Having clarified the two important terms, gender and reproductive rights, I now reflect on the gendered inequalities with regard to contraceptive use and women's reproductive rights in JMAC. In particular, I analyse how the JMAC doctrine on contraception has caused inequalities on contraceptive use and women's reproductive rights. Since patriarchy characterizes the JMAC community, it has affected the behaviour of women on contraceptive use. Results presented above show that most women in this Apostolic community clandestinely use modern contraceptives regardless of their strict doctrine against contraception. The patriarchal elements in this community allow men to have authority to keep on bearing children without contraception. As evidenced by the results presented, most women use modern contraceptives such as Depo-Provera, Jadelle etc, Nicodimously without permission from their husbands. Such behaviour portrayed by these women shows that women in this Apostolic community are not allowed to exercise their rights with regard to fertility issues. Instead, there exists an inequality on contraceptive use and sexuality issues. It is the man who determines the number of children the woman should bear. This is clearly captured in one of the interview excerpt below;

> *Baba kumba ndivo vanototaura kuti vanoda vana vangani, isu semadzimai tongotevedzera kunyangwe mumoyo tichirwadziwa nekuita vana vakawanda* (It is the husband at home who decides on the number of children we should have, as women, we simply obey even deep inside our hearts we would not want to bear many children). (Madhuve, Interview, 16 September 2017).

The response given by one of the interviewees also indicates that the social construction of gender in the JMAC is such that men control fertility and reproduction. There are no equal opportunities between men and women in the JMAC. The woman here does not exercise her

reproductive rights; instead, the man has authority to determine the number of children and when to have those children.

Analysis of the research findings indicate that religion plays a significant role in creating inequalities on gender particularly on contraceptive use and reproductive rights. In the JMAC, the doctrine against contraception has allowed men to supress the reproductive rights of their wives. Results presented earlier indicate that the husband decided on the number of children he wanted to have. Kambarami (2006:1) asserts that patriarchal practices shape and perpetuate gender inequality and strip women of any form of control over their sexuality. It is, therefore, clear from the research findings presented earlier that married woman in the JMAC are expected to be sexually passive and submissive to their husbands. According to this literature, it is the man who is supposed to determine when to bear children and the size of the family as well. I therefore argue that patriarchal attitudes found in the JMAC have led to the subordination of married women to their husbands. With that in mind, I observe that serious gender-related challenges arise for married women in the JMAC.

Against the stringent doctrine on contraception, the clandestine use of contraceptives by most married women in the JMAC clearly shows that men in this Apostolic community suppress their sexual and reproductive rights. However, they try to control their sexual and reproductive capabilities as they clandestinely use modern contraceptives. Such a move reflects that most of these married women are now conscious of the fact that gender is not only biological; but is a social construct within a particular society. It shows that patriarchal hindrances on sexual matters which prohibit women from controlling their reproductive system are slowly fading away in this particular community.

Analyses demonstrate that most married women in the JMAC have turned themselves into independent agents as they now control their reproductive systems through using contraceptives without knowledge of their husbands and against their religion. It is important to note that religion, in particular, the JMAC doctrine has created gender imbalances or gendered inequalities on contraceptive use, sexual and reproductive issues. In trying to address these inequalities on gender, most married women are exercising their freedom and autonomy trough using contraceptives clandestinely. In this way, women can now control the time or when they would want to bear children, hence controlling their sexual and reproductive capabilities. The clandestine use of modern contraceptives by most married women in JMAC indicates a paradigm shift from the traditional gendered inequalities and ideologies that suppress women on reproductive rights. It shows a move towards positive sexualities for women in JMAC. I note that in sexual reproductive matters, a woman must exercise her rights and autonomy. She should not play a passive role.

In this paper, I argue that there is a strong influence of the Johane Marange patriarchal culture on women's reproductive decision making, where married women are meant to be submissive to their husbands. According to patriarchal gendered ideologies, being submissive here would mean that the woman should not have control over her sexuality and reproductive system. Thus, in the use of contraceptives, the woman must follow the position of her husband. Because of these patriarchal gendered ideologies, I observe that serious implications for married women arise in that they tend to lack reproductive rights.

I also note that there is a rigid gender relationship between married men and women which is being championed by patriarchy in this Apostolic community. Thus, the relationship entails that married women should not control their sexuality and fertility. Such an inequality on gender is being perpetuated by their religion. However, from the perspective of human rights, I observe that there is non-recognition of women's sexual and reproductive health rights. Such non-recognition is engrained in Shona societal values that suppress women's sexuality (Parker, Corrêa, and Petchesky, 2008). The patriarchal concepts of the JMAC on women's roles in the family demonstrate that women are often valued based on their ability to procreate. We argue that the deep psychological and cultural roots of patriarchy which still exist in the Johan Marange society are the cause of the prevailing inequalities on gender, why men take control of their women's reproductive rights. According to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), women are guaranteed equal rights in deciding freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and access to information on family planning (United Nations General Assembly, 1948).

Conclusion

The foregoing paper has examined how the JMAC religion has created inequalities on gender with regard to sexuality and reproductive issues. It has investigated and examined some gendered inequalities or imbalances on contraceptive use and women's reproductive rights in the JMAC. Research findings have shown that most women in the JMAC clandestinely use modern contraceptives against their strict religious beliefs and without knowledge and consent from their husbands. I observed that such a behaviour by these women of the Apostolic community indicate suppression of their sexual and reproductive capabilities. The paper has argued that in order to address the prevailing inequalities on gender with regard to sexual and reproductive rights of women, most women in JMAC community try to liberate themselves from the strict religion by taking modern contraceptives secretly. It was shown that the patriarchal elements that characterize the JMAC community allow men to control sexual and reproductive rights of their women. It is a wrong behaviour from the perspective of Human rights; hence women are guaranteed equal rights with regard to sexual and reproductive matters.

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Is Afropolitanism a Colonial Mentality?

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Abstract

Afropolitanism has emerged as a notable platform that aims at not just imagining an African futurity, but also one whose protagonists exude confidence in its future via the praxis of a movement. Afropolitans appear eager to create a new species of Africans that would embrace the rest of the world with or *without* an African identity. This posturing has led to sustained criticisms by scholars like Binyavanga Wainaina and Grace Musila who are unimpressed by what they see as a self-flagellating effort to *sell* a commodified, identityless and exotic Africa to the world. This article extends this kind of criticism explaining why Afropolitanism might be viewed as the very manifestation of an incautious, colonial mentality. More than this, it will show how Afropolitanism as a platform for imagining an African futurity seems ignorant of Africa's political history especially around the imagination of Africa-centred futures. In the end, it will prove that Afropolitans are trying to create an African futurity without Africans, based on an image of Africa acceptable to non-Africans.

Keywords: Africa, Afropolitanism, cosmopolitanism, identity, Pan-Africanism.

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Introduction

Arguments in favour of conceiving Africa-centred futures rest on the well-founded belief that despite the continent's enormous potentials, Africa has struggled to make an impact in the current global order. That is why it is thought, in some quarters, that an African futurity or an Africa-centred future ought to transcend existing ideologies and platforms like pan-Africanism and negritude. An African futurity is expected to occur in the areas of culture and identity; cultural production: morality, arts, and aesthetics; politics, governance, and place. Afropolitanism is one of such efforts at not just imagining an African futurity, but also an attempt to live in that future via the praxis of a (mainly) diasporic Movement. The problem, however, is twofold: (1) Afropolitans are attempting to tie African futurity to the contemporary notion of cosmopolitanism in the west, in what seems, in the last analysis, like a desperate attempt to create an African version of cosmopolitanism. (2) Consequently, Afropolitans appear eager to create a new species of Africans that would be acceptable to non-Africans

(Europeans and Americans in particular) and embrace the rest of the world *without* an African identity. Or more correctly, Afropolitans are trying to create an African futurity without Africans. The rest of this article explains the bases of these claims.

The Uneven Afropolitan Path

As recent debates on the future of Africa *in* the world catch the light, a movement and theoretical standpoint has now become prominent: Afropolitanism. Emerging from the crucible of wider attempts at theoretical and historiographical representations of the African experience in the new Millennium, Afropolitanism has risen to prominence as a platform for theorising Africa, for imagining African futures. As seen in the works of the Nigerian-Ghanaian writer, Taiye Tuakli-Wosornu (now Taiye Selasi), Finnish Nigerian journalist, Minna 'Ms Afropolitan' Salami, and the academic theorist, Achille Mbembe, the neologism Afropolitianism accommodates an expanded account of African citizenship and identity, taking multiracialism and the state of being an African diaspora into account. In the Afropolitan imagining of African present and future, there can be no need for a unique African Personality, no need to protect a cultural integrity, no centre for an African civilisation, only fluid networks and unbounded energy flows. This also means that Afropolitans valorise exposure and travel experience, especially if that mobility translates into a measure of success, while downplaying, and rejecting victimhood and abjection.[25]

On many accounts, 'Afropolitanism' is probably a term coined into theoretical lexicon by Taiye Selasi.[26] In a famous article in *The Lip Magazine* in 2005 entitled 'Bye Bye, Babar', Selasi deploys Afropolitanism to try and make sense of her own complex identity. She attempts to find commonalities of behaviour, dress styles, music and values that could help to make sense of and possibly create a new identity – no matter how fluid – for peoples of Africa's many diasporas, in the new generation. If her project is successful, and she believes it is self-evidently so, then, it would equally make sense to speak of this new generation of morphed Africans, which she identifies with, as a people who are 'not citizens, but Africans of the world', as 'Afropolitans'. Afropolitans, Selasi further tells us, are mainly 'the newest generation of African emigrants' with no enduring ties to any particular geographical location in Africa or in the world, but rather are 'cultural mutts' that exude an African ethos. Curiously though, Selasi adds:

> There is at least one place on The African Continent to which we [Afropolitans] tie our sense of self: be it a nation-state (Ethiopia), a city (Ibadan), or an auntie's kitchen. Then there's the G8 city or two (or three) that we know like the backs of our hands, and the various institutions that know us for our famed focus (Selasi 2005).

The foregoing immediately points us to a certain sense of identity crisis that pervades the Afropolitan agenda and the coming disavowals of the concept.

[25] I believe that these are mostly laudable objectives; but the uncomfortable question remains: why only Africans?
[26] This is true, despite her seeming self-effacing denials.

Selasis sets herself to the pragmatics of Afropolitanism, and tries to place her narrative in historical context, and in doing so, the unavoidable drawbacks of her project become increasingly apparent. She writes about the evolution of Afropolitans thus:

> Some three decades later this scattered tribe of pharmacists, physicists, physicians (and the odd polygamist) has set up camp around the globe. The caricatures are familiar. The Nigerian physics professor with faux-Coogi sweater; the Kenyan marathonist with long legs and rolled r's; the heavyset Gambian braiding hair in a house that smells of burnt Kanekalon. Even those unacquainted with synthetic extensions can conjure an image of the African immigrant with only the slightest of pop culture promptings: Eddie Murphy's 'Hello, Babar.' But somewhere between the 1988 release of Coming to America and the 2001 crowning of a Nigerian Miss World, *the general image of young Africans in the West transmorphed from goofy to gorgeous.* Leaving off the painful question of cultural condescenscion [sic] in that beloved film, one wonders what happened in the years between Prince Akeem and Queen Agbani? (Selasi 2005; emphasis added).

Selasi's depiction of 'Africans of the world' in the above passage is problematic in many ways. Not only is the African identity and place in the world completely dependent on the affirmations, institutions and categories of the cultural west, there is an almost unmistakable tincture of self-flagellation; some kind of apology for the 'un-Euro-Americanised' or the pristinely local, untraveled Africans without 'a famed focus', and who are, perhaps, yet to write themselves into existence. For how do we, for example, explain her celebration of Agbani Darego's triumph at the Miss World contest as the mark of Black Africans' ascendancy in the global order? It appears, only then did 'the general image of young Africans in the West [transmorph] from goofy to gorgeous'! The situation does not get much better even if it were implied that Darego's triumph happened *because* the African global image got better. It is hard to mask Selasi's elitism at this point.

Worryingly, this trend continues to bedevil the Afropolitan path. For example, in trying to place Africans and the African continent in a globalising world system, one staunch Afropolitan asserts that: 'Globalization has shrunk the world to the size of one's palms in the forms of cell phones or iPads. It is now possible to experience, in most African villages, lifestyles hitherto unknown to them thanks to these modern means of mass communication' (Eze 2014: 235). Comments like this reinscribe the elitism, if not Africa-demeaning posture already present in 'Bye Bye Barber' (note that this Afropolitan implies that Africa is made up of (uncivilised?) *villages* and curiously mentions *iPads* specifically, as one of the means of connecting the African rural life to the rest of the (iPad-linked) modern world!). Apart from talking down on Africans, one wonders why this Afropolitan failed to also mention the fact that the same technologies are also being utilised to bring African lifestyles to Europeans, Americans, and the rest of the world. At best, this could be read as a subtle denial of the existence of an African culture or more specifically, a denial of African contributions to global culture, an ironical endorsement of Eurocentrism by the Afropolitan. It appears *lifestyles* are things *African villages* must now experience via modern/western technology, and Africans are never in a position to export to others by any means. Or if ever Africa is conceived in the Afropolitan

imagination as able to give back to the west, it is only via the self-destructive path of opulent consumerism and the marketisation of African culture. From here, it is easy to follow Grace Musila to emphasize with Simon Gikandi that Afropolitanism is a concept which, '…is rich in conceptual and ideological promise, in countering certain forms of Afropessimism; but seems also to be a concept that was expected to run before it had been allowed to crawl and find its feet. This partly opened up the term to extensive appropriation, commoditization and association with conspicuous consumption, with an African flavour' (Musila 2016: p.110).

Returning to Selasi, her general sense of a positive-negative self-split along a glowing Euro-American upbringing/connection and a regrettable African descent soon returns: 'Few of us escaped those nasty 'booty-scratcher' epithets, and fewer still that sense of shame when visiting paternal villages. Whether we were ashamed of ourselves for not knowing more about our parents' culture, or ashamed of that culture for not being more 'advanced' can be unclear' (Selasi 2005). Again, Musila is right in deploring Selasi's passage of thought here:

> … Selasi seems to celebrate cultural integration and, in some ways, cultural passing. [But] … she underlines the difficulty of growing up while painfully aware of '"being from" a blighted place, of having surnames linked to countries which are linked to lack, corruption'; and all the while remaining haunted by a feeling of shame 'for not knowing more about our parents' culture and being ashamed of those cultures for not being more "advanced"'…. These anxieties about Africa mark Afropolitanism as another mode of integration into a mainstream that appears to remain uneasy with cultural difference, hence the need to tone it down, or what Rob Nixon, in a different context, terms 'botox out'… its wrinkles, and only leave enough of this difference for strategic exoticism, and marketability (Musila 2016: p.111).

Furthermore, this split between a (more) advanced, and a less advanced culture is disturbing for many reasons, and I hesitate to draw out the full implications for Selasi and the Afropolitans, for I doubt that she was thinking deeply about this. In all events, Selasi could not help but celebrate the fact that the Afropolitan self is, to use her exact wording, blissfully 'lost in transnation'.

Conversely, Selasi's attention to the ways in which the new generation of African emigrants have expanded their interests beyond traditional disciplines and professions like Medicine and Law to diverse global humanities' disciplines reads like the beginnings of something good. But as I show in the next section, that does very little in placing Afripolitanism in the hallowed chambers of Black African liberatory movements. Afropolitanism very likely proceeds from a colonial mentality, an unhelpful approach to conceiving an African futurity. The rest of this analysis helps to illustrate why we should already be looking beyond Afropolitanism in our quest for a path to an Africa-centred futurity.

Debating Afropolitanism

Based on the foregoing critical exposition, there may be a few things to celebrate about Afropolitanism, but there is clearly plenty to be concerned about, even as its traction as concept and movement continues to ebb and flow. While delivering a plenary address during the African Studies Association UK 2012 conference at Leeds, on the title, 'I am a Pan-Africanist, not an Afropolitan', the Kenyan writer, Binyavanga Wainaina expressed strong reservations about the Afropolitan agenda, stating that Afropolitanism has become the latest contrivance in the hands of the neoliberal capitalist West to not just commodify African arts, culture, and identity, but also to transmogrify African ethics and values to the advantage of the West and to the detriment of Africans. Wainaina could see that Afropolitanism purports to overcome Afropessimism precisely by shading and blunting the historical and continuing work of Afro-centrists, pan-Africanists and negritudists aimed at holding high an African identity and standing up against an unjust global order. Two years later, he found he was no longer as upset as he was at ASAUK 2012, but he continues to query the relevance of Afropolitanism as a platform for imagining and advancing the African self. For he argues that *cosmopolitanism* is not new to the average African who lives in an urban city in Africa and has long ago become comfortable with the multiplicity of languages, the diversity of cultures and the reality of peoples of contrasting identities always coexisting in a common home (Soles interview with Wainaina 2014). Here, Wainaina implies a distinction between the new sense of cosmopolitanism to which Afropolitanism hankers, with an older sense of cosmopolitanism – by which I think he meant, a pre-Enlightenment sense of cosmopolitanism – that existed in Africa, untheorised, and was only later put in words by anti-colonial intellectuals like Kwame Nkrumah (see Uimonen 2019).[27]

What is even more interesting about this, in Wainaina's words, 'very very old and very enduring' African cosmopolitanism is that it is in tandem with pan-Africanism, because the old African cosmopolitanism encourages open borders, intra-African trade and mobility – values that represent Agenda 2063. The new and wrong kind of cosmopolitanism (that Afropolitanism is linked to), Wainaina points out, gives you immunity to Africa, shields you from responsibility and the reality on the continent while you have access to the major cities in Europe and North America. To my mind, this new African cosmopolitanism seems keen on removing Africa from the map, so that Africans can truly become global citizens. As the Liberian academic and activist, Robtel Pailey points out in a different context, the Africanist's contribution should not stop at publishing in top journals in Europe and North America, rather the emancipatory project for the Africanist should be to follow the footsteps of scholars like Walter Rodney and Samir Amin, to be engaged with the political struggles on the continent, engaging with the people in the street and when necessary, even the politicians. For one cannot distance one's self from the people one claims to be helping to liberate (Pailey 2019).

Gladys Akom Ankobrey (2019) defends Selasi and other Afropolitans against charges like those in the preceding paragraph by insisting that Afropolitanism gives African agency a shot

[27] Note that this older sense of cosmopolitanism is not the same, in fact, it is opposed to the sense meant by the likes of Susanne Gehrmann in 2016, Cosmopolitanism with African roots. Afropolitanism's ambivalent mobilities.

in the arm, alongside other diasporic benefits. Paraphrasing Simon Gikandi, and others, Ankobrey writes

> Taiye Selasi's Afropolitanism offers a refreshing counter-narrative against the overexposure of stereotypical images of Africa that prevail in the Western public discourse…. Contrary to the "single story" … of Africa as a poverty-stricken country, Afropolitanism seems to provide visual evidence of the "Africa Rising" narrative. This Afro- optimistic perspective mostly focuses on booming economies and growing middle classes in Sub-Saharan Africa…. It challenges the view of an isolated and marginal Africa by showing its involvement in global processes that shape our everyday reality…. Moreover, while Africa has a passive role in Gilroy's Black Atlantic, Africa appears to reconfigure diasporic connections in Selasi's framework actively (Ankobrey 2019).

I agree that in Afropolitanism, Africa comes alive in dialogic ways unbeknown to the African diaspora discourses. But Emma Dabiri is right when she argues that Afropolitanism, in so doing, silences the voices of many Africans. For example, what is the meaning of Afropolitanism to Africans who live and struggle with xenophobia, racism, and ethnicity in countries on the continent and in many cases even within their countries of origin? Pan-Africanism does a better job of uniting and accounting for the experiences of all Africans both at home and in diasporas. While Afropolitanism seeks to discover how Africa would look good to the rest of the world, Pan-Africanism, on the other hand, asks: how will Africa look good for Africans within the continent and Africans in diasporas? For if Africa and Africans look good to fellow Africans, before too long, the rest of the world would begin to find Africa attractive in a consistent, mutually beneficial manner. Part of the Afropolitan agenda is to *sell* Africa/Africans to the world, where Pan-Africanism seeks to unite African peoples on the continent and in the Diaspora for the purpose of, at first, *selling Africa* to Africans. Also, it is ironical that Chielozona Eze concedes that 'the idea of mobility and the "subtle tensions in between" national, racial and cultural belongings, … [do] not have to be exclusively between Africa and the West. It can be between one African city and another, or even within an African city' (2016: p.115). Yes. But going by the arguments of his earlier essay in 2014, that would hardly be Afropolitan, it would be pan-African.

Furthermore, Wainaina's criticisms imply that the new African cosmopolitanism or Afropolitanism carries with it a baggage of irresponsible, colonial mentality, after all. For a colonial mentality is an internalised attitude orchestrated by colonisation about wishing you were like someone else or something else because you feel inferior and unsatisfied about who you are or who you have become. This is even more true when that desire to resemble or imitate is towards the coloniser or what is purportedly *their* culture.[28] The mistake of the Afropolitans is to move from the fact of their connection to geographical locations in G8 countries to assume that they have been accepted in those spaces as bona fides, as co-equals. Conceivably, this might happen in some distant utopian future, but there is currently very little indication to suggest that the global order is moving in the direction of unmitigated social equality for all.

[28] See Mba 2018 for further clarification of the sense in which culture is used here.

Beyond Wainaina's criticisms and several others like his, Afropolitanism has continued to gain some currency among African scholars in the last decade, especially among those in the diaspora in Europe and North America.[29] One scholar has gone so far as to argue that Afropolitanism marked 'a radical shift in the history of African emancipatory politics', though, as she admits, 'not without certain dangers', since there are risks of the Afropolitan idea 'creating a redemptive narrative for the societies guiltiest of historical violence' (Balakrishnan 2018: 575). Where writers like Balakrishnan show some restraint, others, like the self-styled postmodern-Afropolitans have had fewer worries. Postmodern-Afropolitans like Chielozona Eze argue that the emancipatory politics of Afropolitanism is 'the negation' of 'the oppositional, rigid identity construction in Africa' (Eze 2014: 235). For this reason, Eze celebrates Selasi for distancing herself and Afropolitans from 'African' as a tag of identity. He relishes Afropolitanism or the need to be more nuanced about our definition of African identity as 'a welcome development that more Africans are acknowledging' (Eze 2014: 235).

I think that the alternative to the oppositional shaping of identity exclusively by geography or blood, or culture (anywhere in the world), as Eze argues, is definitely relationality, but not necessarily Afropolitanism. The fact that we have strangers or immigrants among us, or that we travel to different geographical locations outside our place of origin does not necessarily translate into the absence of an identity; migration and intermingling simply enrich that identity. A people's identity does not necessarily disappear because of migration and intermingling, or an expanded experience of the world. People may have a right to choose how to be identified at different points in time, but mutations in identity do not legislate a people's identity out of existence by a fiat. Africans are yet to make that choice because it is unnecessary to do so. Africans have always been comfortable with diversity, relationality, and cosmopolitanism in its older sense as the basis of our identity. So, to suggest that because we now live among Asians and Europeans, even as some of them now identify as Africans (as they do have a right to), that we should now become non-Africans or rootless cosmopolitans, as post-modern Afropolitans suggest, is to say the least, naïve. Other people can justifiably – via relationality or contact – become a part of us and identify as Africans, but Africans cannot cease to exist or become Africanless cosmopolitans or Selasi's Afropolitans. For it is absurd to argue that to have multiple identifiers translates to having no identity. Just because there have been migrations, intermingling and diversity (which is a good thing) does not commit us to a political correctness of historical oblivion. These mutations do not eliminate or transmogrify 'African' as an identity mode, they just enrich and expand its routes of expression.

We can follow Eze, for the sake of argument, to assert that we should aim to be a part of the multiracial, globalised world. But to think in this way is to exude ignorance of the consequences of such held beliefs in the political history of the continent. Bantu Steve Biko in the early days of his political career bought into an ideology similar to Eze's Afropolitan desiderata. He thought he could hang the future of Black (South) Africans on "non-racialism" and the idea of a common society or what Desmond Tutu was to christen the "Rainbow Nation". But as events soon revealed, he and his comrades could not have been more mistaken,as white South African

[29] This could be put down to Achille Mbembe's influence (for even Wainaina admits that Mbembe's version of Afropolitanism is not quite the same as the version that was first popularised – that he had criticised at ASAUK 2012 – the consumerist, irresponsible version).

only mouthed non-racialism in order to invisibilise white privileges and power. To correct that mistake and create a different path for (South) Africa, Biko had to follow the convictions of Black Consciousness, Black Power and Negritude. Soon enough, he and many of his comrades found out, in the most brutal manner, that it was too much for the Apartheid regime to countenance Black people's imagining of an African existence based even on the simple principle of humanity, or the powerful argument that Black people should be seen and treated as human beings just like their white compatriots. Biko and his comrades then "set out on a quest for true humanity…" to ensure that every single African who has lost their personality recovered it, "to make the black man come to himself; to pump back life into his empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity" (Savage 2018). He held that this was the only route to Black African emancipation that would secure the future of Africans, when they all come to realise the truth in the slogan he had coined for the South African Student's Organisation, SASO: "Black man, you are on your own". Biko was brutally murdered by the Apartheid regime that felt affronted by his determined effort to create an Africa-centred futurity, long before he could bring his vision for (South) Africa into fruition.

Earlier in his political development, Patrice Lumumba like early-Biko, imagined the possibility of a post-racial world, hoping that Africans would henceforth be treated equally as their European counterparts. When he awoke to the rude shock of his mistake, he was brutally murdered by the same people he thought Africans could emulate, even as second-class citizens, or as lower-class European cultural humans: as *évolués*. To be sure, Lumumba was at first convinced of the civilising mission of colonialism, and thus imagined that the future of Africa lay in that moment when colonialism would have completed its task, and every African becomes a cultural European, anticipating Selasi's cultural mutt. However, he soon fell out with the west when he began to author and make speeches "…critical of the colonial system and its exploitative, repressive, and oppressive characteristics…" and to imagine a confident Congolese personality (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2015:23). We know how the rest ended: as soon Lumumba began to imagine an Africa-centred future, it proved impossible for western powers to allow him to live.

Frantz Fanon longed for and fought for human dignity and freedom. His burning desire was to bring about a world populated by a new species of humanity, where, he thought, toward the end of *Black Skin, White Masks*, that people, especially people of colour, could love and cherish other human beings regardless of the perceived and actual fundamentals of racism and historical wrongs against Black people. As this desire reached its peak, Fanon elected to fight on the side of the Free French Forces in order, as he claimed, to 'fight for human dignity'. Thereafter, despite being mistreated alongside other soldiers of colour along racial lines by the very people he fought to liberate, *he thought that Africans could look beyond Negritude, nativism, and a unique African Personality to become, in future, a part of universal humanity*. But as Fanon fought to grind out even the right to stay alive for himself and his comrades, and the rest of the African continent caught on the wrong side of the violent, binary opposition of the colonial situation, he realised, in the end, like Biko would find out after him, that indeed, the Black person was on her own. He concluded that a radical upheaval had to occur if humanity were to overcome the binaries and Manicheism that racism and colonialism have introduced in humanity. Fanon realised with much disappointment, that he and other Africans needed to

make superhuman sacrifices to stand any chance of being a part of his own imagining of a futurity. He found that the only route left for him to imagine a future humanity where Black Africans' existence could be accorded equal gravitas is that of radical mutations of *all* of humanity that would quite literally, lead to a new species of human beings that have finally weaned out old prejudices. These old prejudices include the usual suspects: racism, tribalism, and ultra-nationalism, as well as other forms of alienating ontological binaries ('Good-Evil, Beauty-Ugliness, White-Black' and so on) and scapegoathing arising from a certain kind of colonially induced psychopathology which Fanon called *Manichean delirium* (Fanon 2008, p.141; Pithouse 2017). Thus, Fanon prefigured the outcomes of Lumumba's and Biko's quest for an equal humanity for Black Africans and concluded that those wishes were only possible in a hard fought *compossible* world. A realization that eventually came to the trio as they pushed to the limits, the praxis of conceiving an Africa-centred future.

What the foregoing suggests is that an African future or a conception of it, must transcend the received wisdom of the time. An African future imagining cannot coincide with a purportedly global – read Euro-American framework that would benefit mostly those who stand to gain from African naivety. Put simply, Afropolitans seem to be repeating mistakes that have been transcended in the African struggles for liberation and ought to be in the past. In addition, the globalised world Eze speaks of sounds too much like a neoliberal world where what matters the most is the market and marketability. My wider contention is that we need not strive to be a part of the commodified world as mannequins in the hands of a dummy artist. We do not have to be compelled to change our real names for example (as African writers like Teju Cole found out), in order that our cultural production and contributions to human existence be allowed into the purported new cosmopolitan world order that Afropolitans seem to valorize. We should be able to enter the world and be allowed to exist with 'African' as an inalienable tag of identity, and capable of expressing our mode of being in multiple ways, rather than as self-loathing Europhiles that have finally washed away our Africanity, and so become Afropolitans. For doing the latter would amount to a colonial mentality that Biko, Lumumba, Fanon and other icons of Black African liberation have overcome. The real issue is that Europeans and North Americans are the ones who need to embrace a truly multiracial, multicultural, and global world in which Africans, as Wainaina points out, already lived, live in and have long been accepted almost by default (Cf. Mbembe 2007, 26 – 27). Most Euro-American governments and people as Biko, Lumumba and Fanon found out, are opposed to various degrees, to a multiracial world where people of colour, Africans especially, might become equal claimants to a universal human family.

Again, criticisms against the need to introduce yet another term to describe Africa and the African reality have continued to mount, even as the likes of Eze have been forced to admit that

> The term Afropolitanism is troubling. It is difficult to think of it without thinking of some people of African descent who seem to evade the responsibility that comes with being African today. Are Afropolitans the African versions of western trust fund kids? Are they privileged snobs who carry one or more international passports and jet from one global city (in Africa) to another (in the West)? (Eze 2016: p.114).

Nonetheless, the above realisation does not hinder Eze from defending Afropolitanism both as a concept and neologism whose right to continued usage ought to be guaranteed. According to him,

> We need new names not because we are new – we are not; rather, we need new names because we have new stories to tell about our world. These stories acknowledge those of our ancestors, but seek to expand them in order to contain our extended arc of existence. Unlike most of our ancestors, we have white husbands/wives, Asian brothers/sisters – and all of this takes place on the African continent (2016: p.116).

But this is all very strange. So we need new names because we have new stories to tell about our world? It is difficult to unpack this without arriving at absurd conclusions. If Africans need new names because we now have multiracial families and the like, it must then follow that every human group once they encounter new experiences like intermarriages, must surrender their names and abjure their identity and history for that reason. Be aware that when Eze requires Africans to come up with new names, he is not speaking about individual names for our multiracial, interreligious children, for example, he means that Africa as a whole needs new names to describe ourselves as a collective, new names such as Afropolitans or Afroglobalists and the like. Again, be aware that these neologisms or coming neologisms do not seek to describe a segment of African populations occupying a particular geographical location, in the same way one can speak of Eastern European Turkey or European Jews. These new names are meant to help distinguish all Africans and simultaneously make them acceptable to other people especially in urban cities, in G8 cities

Due to some irritation, Marta Tveit had wondered: 'I don't understand why a person with African roots in an urban environment needs a term to set her apart from the rest of the young people in an urban environment. Why separate African urbanites from the rest of the urbanites? How can that be constructive?' (Tveit 2013).

If the Afropolitans are right, then, mobility permitting, in some near future, Africa and Africans would disappear and be replaced by Afropolites/Afropolitans, Afroglobalites or Afropeans, or whatever new term the new generation might deem sexy enough and acceptable to the rest of the world. The question is why is Africa always required to make these kinds of sacrifices? Why not Europeans, Americans, or Indians? Why always Africa and Africans? And when Eze says 'our world', whose world exactly? The current world order created in the image and interest of the cultural west, or the African world which has been struggling in the shadow of an insatiably exploitative west since colonial occupation? Or a future world where African identity and interest will finally begin to matter and matter equally? A new world where Africans are finally able to tell their own stories, as *Africans*? I suspect Eze had the last possibility in mind, and if so his endorsement of Afropolitanism to make sense of that new world becomes even more absurd. Were he to have any of the preceding two options in mind, then, Afropolitanism becomes a self-flagellating joke. In reality, only a conquered people are usually required to change their names and relinquish their identity, names and contributions, so that there is never a chance of nostalgic rebellion by a new generation of the conquered. In the light of the foregoing, it is hard to show that Eze and the Afropolitans are on the positive

side of the iconic Fanon's quote that he (Eze) invokes here: 'each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it'. Afropolitanism is almost certainly a clear example of mental capture, a colonial mentality, rather than a discovery of this generation's mission, to say nothing of fulfilling it.

Towards the end of Eze's 2016 article, in a bid to justify the disappearance of an African identity he writes: 'For those of us who survived colonization, apartheid, racism, wars or military dictatorships there is every reason to love the world: nothing worse can ever happen to us' (2016: p. 117). The false assumption here is that these factors are now in the past, which is even more absurd for an African living in Trump's America in the era of Black Lives Matter! For many Africans, neocolonisation, racism and military dictatorships (often backed by the west) in different guises constitute the bases of daily struggles. We may have no reason for bitterness and hate, but we definitely have every reason to know who we are, to demand for better in our world.

Another key setback for Eze and other Afropolitans (which I have been implying) is that they treat cosmopolitanism as unproblematic. But the truth is that cosmopolitanism has deep roots in Western thought, with many complicated meanings as well as both positive and negative connotations. When the Cynic, Diogenes of Sinope answers upon being queried about where he comes from 'I am a cosmopolitan', meaning that he feels at home everywhere; surely his retort can be understood positively or negatively. For if you are able to live among various kinds of people or accommodate various kinds of people, that would be a good thing. But being able to live anywhere might not always be a good thing, surely? For if you feel comfortable in a community of rapists and lynchers, because, err, you are a cosmopolitan, that cannot be a good thing, especially if your continued acceptance in their fold depends on you condoning their terrible conduct, turning a blind eye to, or even aiding and abetting acts that amount to very serious violation of truly universal human rights. So cosmopolitanism is not always a good thing after all. In the very least, cosmopolitans, or the new African cosmopolitans have to raise voices of condemnation against societies that frequently attack, oppress and kill people of colour. Afropolitanism insofar as it ties its roots to European cosmopolitanism is simply another theory by (non-) Africans about Africa and Africans for non-Africans. Or to borrow Molefi Kete Asante's wording, Afropolitanism becomes '…just another assertion of Eurocentric ideas as universal when in fact they arise from a specific history and culture' (Asante 2020: 203).

Conclusion: African Futures Beyond Afropolitanism

In the end, it would seem that Afropolitanism is meant to be in the interest of an aspiring middle class, wishing to take the master's place in Fanon's post-independence prefiguration. Afropolitans want to resemble 'the master' at all costs and want to be loved by the master. The Afropolitan is like the immatriculation evolue that Lumumba found, was inadequate for securing full middle-class privileges for the Congolese, to say nothing of the very survival of the average person in the street. For the evolue is never a historical and inalienable part of the society or a particular iteration of global culture that s/he seeks to be a part of, the

evolue/Afropolitan perceives that she is only being done a favour as she strives to be 'really really good' as one such Afropolitan put it in a private conversation, in order to be accepted even in their own profession in a whitely world. Do not forget that the Afropolitan feels a sense of belonging in the metropolitan society only in being seen, in an artistic sense, as 'cultured' and if they could make themselves to be seen as ideal citizens. This is why it is mostly cultural-brokers — writers, visual artists, musicians, dancers, and so on, one might say cultured people who occupy a venerated social stage because of their valued and acquired symbolic capital— who identify as Afropolitan (Eaton 2019: p.8). The key test of your acceptability in any society lies not in how you are received when you are thought to have done something praiseworthy or thought to possess a (neoliberal) creative capital; but the acid test for your position or belongingness in a society lies precisely in how you are treated when you are thought to have done something blameworthy or accused of a serious crime, when your immediate or long-term potential contribution is in doubt. Are you treated, in such a scenario according to the laws of the land in which your livelihood has been bound all along? Or are you immediately pounced on and thrown under the bus because of your now accented difference?

One of the most worrying things about Afropolitanism as a means of conceiving African futurity is that it is hard to show that Africans in Africa can ever become Afropolitans, no matter how cosmopolitan they have become in outlook, travel, and willingness to live with others unlike them, in that much older sense of cosmopolitanism that Wainaina explains. Grace Musila muses with a well-placed concern: 'Ironically, despite its celebration of broadmindedness, thanks to its embeddedness in Euro-American affluence and cultural normativity, Afropolitanism, hardly embraces similar forms of mobility and cultural eloquence when these Africans are in, China or Saudi Arabia, or indeed, within Africa' (Musila 2016: p112). Finally, 'Why the need to qualify one's cosmopolitanism? The very necessity of qualifying Africans' being in the world only makes sense when we assume that, ordinarily, Africans are *not* of the world' (Musila 2016: p.112). This article has tried to question why an African futurity should be hung on a high-sounding rhetoric that again has its origins in western reality?

Now, if Afropolitanism as the contemporary dominant approach to conceiving an African future is fraught, how really should we conceive African futures? If we agree that globalisation has become a key issue in thinking of Africa's place in the world today, does conceiving African future primarily entail making the African continent a better place or making the world a better place for Africans? Does an African future lie in an Africa-centred global order or should Africans rather hope for a better world where African interests are better protected, regardless of Africa's positionality in terms of history, values, identity, ideological reference and perhaps even geopolitical relevance? How really, can Africans hope to create a present that would usher in a much more satisfactory future? These are questions worth exploring, but well beyond the scope of this piece.

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