Trends and Approach to Multidisciplinary Issues in the Academia:

A Festschrift

In honor of

REV. FR. PROF.

JUDE A. ONUOHA

to mark his priestly

Silver Jubilee Anniversary

Edited by:
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RETHINKING LIBERAL INTERESTS AND RIGHTS: A CASE FOR GROUP RIGHTS

BY

John Ezenwankwor & George Mbarah

Abstract

The liberal conception of rights which has dominated the greater part of the 19th and 20th centuries is still very relevant today with its emphasis on individual interests. The liberals consider the rights or the interests of individual members of the society as trumps over group interests. Under the liberal harm and offence principles for example, they hold that whatever interests claimed by the groups should have adequate protection under individual interests or rights. This paper, while recognizing the controversies and difficulties in a wholesome acceptance of group rights, aims to show that the considerations of the liberal harm and offence principles that ignore the interests of groups or collectives will be incomplete in handling or managing the problems of the political society. We argue that in spite of the difficulties and controversies related with group interests and rights, we cannot ignore the constant problems of the political society that require proper attention to such interests. Our major interest is therefore to show that there is certainly a good case for its recognition in the language of rights. The theory of group rights that stresses the independent existence of group interests from that of individuals is particularly admirable and may not be ignored easily in modern political thinking.

Keywords: Rethinking, Liberal, Interest, Rights and Group Rights

Introduction

In the liberal consideration of rights, the rights of groups are sometimes underplayed and often not recognized. The liberals especially the extreme ones consider the rights of individuals as supreme and therefore hold that whatever interests claimed by groups should receive adequate protection under individual rights. The aim of this paper therefore is to show that an analysis of rights or interests without due reference to the interests of collectives will be incomplete. Any further principle then built on such incomplete

analysis (in this case harm and offense principles) will be problematic. As we do this, we are aware of the controversies surrounding group rights as well as the difficulties that accompany its wholesome acceptance without proper balancing. Our concern therefore is to show that in spite of the difficulties in the acceptance of group rights to the liberal society, it still needs proper consideration. This is because some facts about different countries of the world show that different groups exist with legitimate interests. Even if in some of the cases, the interests of these groups are not accepted as legal rights, they exist as moral rights.

The Problem of Groups vs Individuals

In many countries of the world, we have several racial, ethnic and religious groups. Based on this, there is a continuous debate on the position of these groups in the midst of the larger society in the countries where they find themselves. In America for example, there has been problems related to the treatment meted to the Indian Americans and Black Americans. We also have similar problems in Nigeria with three major ethnic groups often making demands from the central (federal) government for specific attention based on discriminatory treatments related to their tribal bonds. In the post-apartheid South Africa, we have also the problem of the protection of minorities and their self-determination. An important issue to note here is that each of these groups is made up of individuals. These individuals complain that the discriminatory attitudes towards them are because of their group characteristic. At the same time, the liberal project has its major duty as the protection of these individuals from the tyranny of the state and sometimes from these groups. This kind of problem compounds rights talk. People especially liberals for example wonder why we should have the need for group rights when the individuals in the groups are covered by individual rights. Others still wonder whether there will be any possibility of getting justice for group interests if the legal concept is built entirely on individualistic trend. Cronin in his work, '*Defining Group rights*' indicates the problematic questions that arise in group versus individual rights vividly:

> Given that from the beginning the history of the rights movement has tended to focus on individual

> entitlements, why should there be any need for the concept of a group right? Are not groups made up of individuals, so that so-called group rights are simply an amalgamation of individual rights? There are different categories of rights, where do we include the rights of collective entities? Human rights are practically always predicted of individuals; can we say that some human rights are better predicated of groups of persons? If group rights exist, are they of the moral variety, or of the legal variety, or both? If collective entities are said to have rights, which of these entities do we have in mind? (100)

We do not intend to clarify all these problems here but to note that in whichever way we try to resolve these questions, there is a background truth, which we cannot ignore. That truth is that many racial, religious, cultural and ethnic minorities legitimately demand a certain level of treatment based on their common bond. Liberalism with its dominance in America and Europe in the past two centuries has contributed much to the denial of group interests because of their constant affirmation and justification of individual interests. For the most part, they discredited any form of group interest and confined any of such interests to the interests of the individuals within it. In recent times however, extreme liberalism has come under attack especially by various forms of communitarian views and more and more writers are interested in group rights. Criticizing liberalism, they hold that individuals can flourish only when they embrace the values of some community tradition, and that living in community with others is to be understood neither as a necessary evil nor as a mere means to the end of personal fulfilment. (Cronin 100.)

This is not to say that following the part of group rights is an easy and straightforward one. Indeed, a wholesome and unwarranted assertion of rights to groups may be a very negative and retrogressive thing to the society. This is most likely the liberals' fear. Viewed from the perspective of history, we can, up to an extent, understand the liberal's disdain for group rights. Within the 17th century, the predominant emphasis was on the 'Natural Rights' or the 'Rights of Man (Cronin,

100). The rallying point of emphasis over the rights of man was the assertion for freedom and value of the individual person over the sovereign power of the state. According to Cronin, this assertion underlined the value of basic equality at a time when many were used to thinking of the members of the human race as being subject to natural hierarchies, especially through the doctrine of the divine rights of kings (Cronin, 100). The prevailing need so to say this time was to protect the individual from the tyrannies of the state and church and so any discuss of group rights this time will be absurd. We can therefore rightly say that because of the abuse or oppression of individuals by these powers, the focus of rights activists in the 17th century was on individual rights. In our time, we can say that this individual sovereignty has been achieved to a large extent especially in Europe and America. The present situation which can be considered as a one-sided individualistic consideration of rights has further created its own problems. Groups are constantly being denied their legitimate collective interests. As a result of this, just as we had movements for individual rights, many writers today (liberals and conservatives) are now gunning for consideration of group interests

Advent of Group Rights

The striking tension between the liberal overemphasis on individual rights and the vulnerability of minority cultures caused unease for many liberal political philosophers of the 19th century. As a result, liberalism with an over emphasis on individual autonomy came under attack. According to Kymlicka, it was notably clear during this period that:

> national minorities were treated unjustly by the multination empires of Europe, such as the Habsburg, Ottoman, and tsarist empires. The injustice was not simply the fact that the minorities were denied individual civil and political liberties, since that was true of the members of the dominant nation in each empire as well. The injustice was rather the denial of their national rights to self-government, which were seen as an essential compliment to individual rights,

> since 'the cause of liberty finds its basis, and secures its roots, in the autonomy of a national group' (50).

The unjust treatment to minority groups resulted to sympathetic consideration among many liberals. At the same time, other liberals marched this sympathy with a strong feeling of repugnance. Among such liberals were John Stuart Mill and Henry Sidgwick. They believed that it was better for minority cultures to get assimilated into dominant cultures. Barktus in her work, *The Dynamic Secession* quoted a long passage from Mill that showed both Mill's arrogance and indifference to minority interests.

> Experience proves that it is possible for one nationality to merge and be absorbed in another: and when it was originally an inferior or more backward portion of the human race, the absorption is greatly to its advantage. Nobody can suppose that it is not more beneficial to a Breton, or a Basque of the French Navarre, to be brought into the current of ideas and feelings of a highly civilized and cultivated people-to be a member of the French nationality, admitted on equal terms to all the privileges of French citizenship, sharing the advantages of French protection, and the dignity and prestige of French power-than to sulk on his rocks, the half savage relic of past times, revolving in his own little mental orbit, without participation or interest in the general movement of the world. The same remark applies to the Welshman or the Scottish highlander, as members of the British nation (Barktus 268-287).

The antipathy of some liberals (as seen in Mill's proclamation above) to the plight of minorities notwithstanding, the move for proper recognition of the rights of groups continued in the 19th and 20th centuries. During this time, the major influence was F.W. Maitland who was influenced by Otto Von Gierke in Germany. Gierke stressed a theory of groups which saw them as free-forming and free-developing. This was in contradiction to what became known as the

Roman theory of groups in which they were regarded as mere 'fiction', created by a 'concession' of the sovereign and having no independent existence. (Stapleton xi) Gierke saw the idea of groups as 'fictions' totally odd with the rich associational life in Germany which is rooted in the local community and fellowship.

This spectacle of free and tribal originating communities in Germany captured the spirit of Maitland who saw England as equally rich with such groups. In his translation of *Gierke's Political Theories of the Middle Ages*, he introduced the same conception to English readers in 1900. J.N. Figgis applied the idea embedded in the free forming groups to the question of the disestablishment of the Church of England. His concern was with the freedom of all voluntary societies (from the state), which he took the Church of England to be now. (Stapleton xv) Stapleton quoted Figgis as holding that the sooner modern state recognised the fact that groups were 'separate societies with inherent rights', the better. The idea of sovereignty was now a 'venerable superstition', founded upon a persistent but futile and dangerous belief in 'the republic, one and indivisible' (Stapleton 15-16). Most theorists who wrote on group rights after Figgis have continued to re-echo in one way or the other the desirability of the unity of the different groups. After the experience of the great wars, the international communities saw the greater need to discuss the issue of minority rights.

Groups in the Language of Rights

Feinberg defined rights in terms of valid claims. These claims are better understood in the contest of the logical correlativity of rights and duties that provide for the legal or moral recognition of rights holders who should make claims against duty bearers. To have a right is to have a claim against someone whose recognition as valid is called for by some set of governing rules or moral principles. To have a claim, in turn, is to have a case meriting consideration, that is, to have reasons or grounds that put one in a position to engage in performative and propositional claiming(Feinberg and Coleman,312).

The idea of logical correlativity has been used by many authors to explain the nature of rights. In Feinberg, correlativity implies as we

can see from the above quotation that rights, both moral and legal, are valid claims to interests against other agents with corresponding duty to respect the claims of the right-holders. Four major questions can be asked for proper resolution of the issues involved in logical correlativity. Who or what can be the subjects of rights? What things can be claimed by these subjects or their representatives? Who are the correlative duty bearers who must respond to the claim-rights of others? And how does one justify claim rights.

Groups a Right Holders

Following the interest theory of rights, rights are attributed to subjects with the capacity or ability to have interests. In this sense, some liberals and political philosophers are in agreement that at least some groups can be, and are, the subject of rights (Cronin 106). There are at the same time, many other liberals and philosophers who are quite opposed to this idea of attributing rights to groups. A prominent liberal on the opposition to group rights is Jeremy Waldron who held that the talk about rights is essentially about individual interests. Cronin quotes him as suggesting that by its very nature, the theory of rights is an individualistic theory. Rights purport to secure goods for individuals: that is an elementary consequence of their local form (ibid). He does not deny the importance of groups but thinks that the value of groups should be expressed in a different kind of normative language, other than that of rights. Waldron's argument seems to depend entirely on the historical push which liberals have given to the language of rights which has always remained a one directional thingthat of the individual. His argument therefore remained defective without proper logical premise and conclusion but only dependent on liberal bias. Like Waldron, Michael Hartley does not believe that groups can have rights. He sees the rights of the individuals sufficient to cover group interests. He particularly feels that some philosophers confuse the distinction between moral and legal rights in their quest for what they refer as group rights. His view is that there should be proper distinction between legal rights which a legal authority can confer at will and what a philosopher will refer as rights in the sense of moral rights. In his words:

> The utterance of a legal authority (legislature, official, court) that a right is being conferred is conclusive evidence that a legal right has been conferred. Whatever legal authorities say is a legal right, whether this agrees with what philosophers would say about moral rights. If a statute says that trees have rights, then trees have certain legal rights, whether we consider this to be morally defensible or even morally possible (Hartney 210-211).

He feels that the mere ascription of rights to groups by some legal statutes is not enough to warrant a philosopher doing the same in the sense of moral rights. The ascription or creation of rights to specific groups by a particular legal statute may only be to solve a particular problem of social policy but moral rights according to him should be treated differently. He in fact does not believe that collectives have any value except the value they have in contributing to the wellbeing of individuals.

In defence of rights ascription to groups, Van Dyke answered many of the questions raised by Hartney. He noted that groups can have both moral and legal rights depending on the justificatory reason for a particular right. Using a sovereign state as an example of collective entity with rights, he explained that it can have both legal and moral rights. He held that the rights of the state are in many situations original to it and not merely reduced to the rights of the individuals in the state. For example:

> When the state imposes taxes, breaks up a monopoly, requires attendance at school, or conscripts a person and sends him into battle, it is not exercising rights taken over from individuals, for they never had such rights. Moreover, such rights could not reasonably be reduced to individual rights; they are necessarily and unavoidably the rights of a collective entity (Dyke 183).

Van Dyke argued further that if the case is good that states have moral and legal rights, the same can be predicated of nations and peoples

who are everywhere said to have the right of self-determination . (Dyke 184) For example, the right of self-determination is clearly stated in Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) as quoted by Kly in his work, *A Popular Guide to Minority Rights*: In those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exists, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language (Kly 57). The cultural, religious and language rights in this sense are both moral and legal rights for Van Dyke which belongs to the groups as collectives and not to individuals.

With reference to Hartney's caution on arguing from collective interests to collective rights, Cronin counsels that Hartney was correct in calling for discretion and held that: Having an interest does not automatically guarantee the existence of a right. For one thing, the interest must be of particular importance, if one is to justify limiting another person's freedom through the imposition of a duty (Cronin 108). In effect, Cronin believes that group rights can still be defended in spite of the criticism giving above. For him, having interests are not necessary enough to ascribe rights to groups but the kind of interest being referred is also important. If the interest is such that it is strong enough to use the language of rights for its better protection, he sees no reason why rights cannot be ascribed to such interests.

Objects of Group Rights

Underlying every discussion of rights is an interest that needs to be protected. Either as individuals or as groups, we make claims to interests which partly justify our holding another to a duty. Because we have staked in these interests, we are harmed or diminished when they are set back in any way. Our concern here is with the interests of groups which can properly justify them as collectives with rights and at the same time diminish or harm them when they are set back. Cronin for example, believes that the most promising way to establish group rights is by an examination of group interests or what he called 'collective goods.' He indicated that all values are not reducible to individual interests (Cronin 108), but some values can

be pinpointed as specifically being that of the groups or collectives. Instances of such collective goods are land, education, religion, culture and language. Darlene Johnson in reference to the indigenous peoples of Canada, native Indians and some other places held that land is not just a piece of property that can be disposed at will but something which has some special relationship with the life of the people as a group. Johnson quoted some lines of a testimony of a Fort McPherson Indian which highlights in a summary form the sentiments associated with the land for indigenous peoples:

> Being an Indian means being able to understand and live with this world in a very special way. It means living with the land, with the animals, with the birds and fish, as though they were your sisters and brothers. It means saying the land is an old friend that your father knew, your grandfather knew, indeed your people always have knownwe see our land as much, much more than the white man sees it. To the Indian people our land is really our life. If our land is destroyed, we too are destroyed. If your people ever take our land, you will be taking our life (Johnson 194).

Johnson believes that to deprive the native communities their land will amount to the same thing as denying them their self-preservation. According to him then, the native community requires the assertion of a right against the group-destructive practice of alienating native land (ibid).

The right to education is a value often seen in individual terms by liberals which is also a value that can be claimed by collectives. Cronin held that education is a value which benefits the individual as an individual but beyond that also helps for his proper integration into a social setting. According to him, from the social and cultural perspectives, a system of education is a key dimension of the process of socialization into a tradition or form of life, and thus transcends individual needs. (Cronin 109) The value of the right to education cannot easily be explained away in individual terms but further involves proper grooming towards incorporation to a way of life such

as culture or religion. This explains the controversy over the United Nations declaration in respect to the education of children according to the vision of their parents. Article 2 of the Human Rights Act as quoted by Ken Brown reads: No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any function which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the state shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions (Brown 58).

The different nations of Europe accepted the article with some reservations. For example, the British government added a clause in respect to the second sentence of the article for its acceptance. They accepted to respect the rights of the parents to education of their children on the condition that it has to be compatible with the provision of efficient training, and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure. (Human Rights Act 1998, chapter 42, schedule 3, part 11) (Brown 59). In Netherlands however, it was a total affirmation of the rights of parents for educating their children according to their religious and cultural orientation through proper funding by the state. Ireland argued that Article 2 is not sufficiently explicit in ensuring to parents the right to provide education for their children in their homes or in schools of the parents' own choice, whether or not such schools are private schools or are schools recognised or established by the state (Convention for human Rights 1952, Other Declarations Made by States, n. 8) (ibid). These examples are merely to highlight some disagreements in the talk about educational rights in reference to groups. From the above, it is evidently clear that the rights of parents to educate their wards in conformity with their religious and cultural orientation are recognised at least in most countries of the world. What is however controversial is the limits placed to the recognition of this right.

In many respects the right to practice religion and cultural rights are similar to the right to education. The survival of a particular way of life or a particular religion is largely dependent on the kind of education that is given to the children. It is therefore particularly important to religious or cultural groups that their children are properly groomed to continue to uphold the tenets of their religion. The 1947 United Nations Convention on human rights encoded

respect for the rights of minorities to preserve their traditions. Based on this, liberal multiculturalism is positively disposed towards a political attitude that encourages cultural identities of groups within a society. The problem however is that it lacks proper legal definition as cultural rights are often seen as personal rights insofar as they protect the right of the individual to a cultural life, or the right of the individual as author to protection of artistic, literary and scientific works (Buchli 117). A striking thing however, is that cultural rights are asserted in many United Nations Conventions. Buchli further noted the mention of cultural rights in UNESCO convention of the Algiers 1976 declaration on the declaration of the rights of peoples as referring to respect for cultural identity.

The liberals see the religious education as involving a conflict of two rights: the right of children to education and the rights of parents to practice their religion and pass them on to their children. Cronin suggests that the group rights defenders include within the bounds of the adult rights to education of their children, the right to education according to their group interest. This is exemplified in the American legal battles that concern the Amish people. They insisted that it is their right to educate their children according to their religious conviction as a group. David Walbert quotes a passage from an unpublished work of the Amish, Minimum Standards for the First Eight Grades in the Amish Parochial and Private Schools which show vividly the intention and the passion with which the Amish wished to protect their cherished religious group identity.

> We desire to provide a type of Christian education which will enable our children to learn to be self-supporting and respectful. Help them mature into healthy home-makers who not only know about working, but can actually do the things that they are supposed to learn in school we intend to model our schools after the distributive education pattern which will enable our children not only to gain all the teachers have to offer in the classroom, but will also have the advantages of learning from their own parents, and from the parents of the other children in

> actual projects which can best be carried out in the homeW e want them to learn to do independent study so they will be equipped to continue learning all their lives. We want a better education for our children than the minimum standards the public schools provide (Walbert 56-7).

What is important and striking here is that the religious value (Christian way of life in the case of the Amish) is cherished by the group as an entity and not just as individual within the group. We do not intend to go into a detailed discussion of the demerits or merits of a particular religious way of life but only to note that some religious groups have some basic positive values that we cannot just ignore in the discus of rights. The justification for the right to practice religion or religious values appeals to the interests of all or most members of those who belong to a particular religion. This right is not wielded by individuals as individuals on their own behalf but for the welfare of the group and sometimes wielded by the group for the group's wellbeing which also includes wellbeing of the individuals within.

Another value which is understood in terms of the group interest is the language cherished by a community. The idea of self-determination in terms of language rights is built on the notion that most minority cultures and language groups would be swamped (and die) if they did not have some form of (preferentially territorial) self-determination (Henrard 114). Based on this kind of fear, language rights are recognised in some states. Van Dyke lists Switzerland and Belgium as countries where linguistic rights are incorporated into their legal system. We also have similar provisions in post-apartheid South Africa. Kristin Henrard lists the recommendations given to the South African commission set up to investigate and recommend procedures of treatment for minority groups. The recommendations include *inter alia*:

> (a) to promote respect for the rights of cultural, religious, and linguistic communities; (b) to promote and develop peace, friendship, humanity, tolerance, and national unity among cultural, religious, and

> linguistic communities, on the basis of equality, non-discrimination, and free association; and (c) to recommend the establishment or recognition, in accordance with national legislation, of a cultural or other council or councils for a community or communities in South Africa (Henrard 115).

The provisions made in these countries according to Van Dyke do not grant rights to individuals. By implication, they concede rights to the linguistic communities as entities. And it is clear that the legal arrangements followed the acceptance of a moral claim (Dyke 118). The individual right to choose the language they wish to speak does not extend to the public sphere. I can learn as many languages as I like but I am not entitled to be communicated to on those languages. Only legitimate groups can demand such rights and not individuals.

Duty Bearers in Group Rights

The talk of rights without the existence of an agent or agents whose burden it will be to carry their corresponding duty will be odd. Feinberg's valid claim for example is a relational concept that correlates in the duty of others to provide for the satisfaction of what is being claimed. My interest here is the proper identification of the duty bearers in the rights of collectives. Most presumed rights of groups have the state as their presumed duty bearers for protection and other groups for respect. There are also other weak cases of group rights where the duty bearers are the individual members of the group.

Probably an easy and simpler way to pinpoint the duty bearers in group rights will be to have recourse to Will Kymlicka's distinctions between 'internal restrictions' and 'external protections'. Kymlicka suggested that an easier way to dispel the liberal fear that group rights could diminish the rights of individuals is to properly distinguish the kinds of claims that are made by groups. He distinguished two kinds of claims: The first involves the claim of a group against its own members; the second involves the claim of a group against the larger society (Kymlicka 35). The first kind of claim 'involve intra-group relations' where a particular ethnic group may implore the help of the state power to restrict the liberty of members so as to achieve group

unity. This is usually necessitated by some internal dissentions that put the group at the risk of disintegration. Here, critics of collective rights worry that such restrictions could be used to oppress the members and deny them their individual rights especially in theocratic and patriarchal groups. This kind of oppression is clearly exemplified in the Muslim group's view of the Rushdie affair and the Muslim religious enforcement of the wearing of hood (veil) for their women. As a result of some of the abuses inherent in granting 'internal restrictions,' Kymlicka was unfavourably disposed to the rights that grant such to groups.

On the other hand, he distinguished external restrictions as involving inter group relations where the national group seeks the protection of its distinct identity and existence through a limitation of the influences of the larger group or society (Kymlicka 36). This is done against the destabilizing impact of other groups or even the state. In this second category, the duty bearers are the larger society and other distinct groups. It is not equally without abuse and so critics hold that it can be used by larger groups to oppress the minority groups and vice versa. In South Africa for example, during the apartheid regime, a minority group oppressed a majority group. Kymlicka however does not see this kind of protection as a cause for oppression but rather sees it as an opportunity for placing the two groups on an equal footing where the vulnerability of the smaller group is reduced to the barest minimum (Kymlicka 36-7). He is therefore favourably disposed to granting rights of external protection to groups.

Conclusion

We have so far tried to highlight some indications which show that in our society, we cannot easily ignore the constant cases that require giving proper attention to the interests of groups. Our intention here is not strictly to present a defence of group rights but only to note that there is certainly a good case for its proper recognition in the language of rights. The theory of group rights that stresses the independent existence of group interests from the interests of individuals is particularly admirable and cannot easily be ignored in modern political thinking. Cronin referred the claim to such interests as an ontological claim that relies on the position of some intrinsic value of the collectives, independent of her individual members

(Cronin 114). In order to give due credence to this intrinsic worthness, he suggests the use of some balancing mediations in the resolution of possible conflicts between group and individual interests.

The liberal consideration of harm and offences as the only reasons for limitation of liberty obviously ignores the harms and offenses to groups. As a result of this, it still leaves many problems unsolved in the society. Going through the major liberal positions particularly the positions of John Stuart Mill and Joel Feinberg on harm and offences respectively, we see their repugnance for any form of group recognition. At best, they consider any form of group interest as the interest of the individuals in the group. For example, Feinberg recognized the profound offensive behaviour of the Nazis and Klansmen (Feinberg 52) not in terms of an offense against the Jews and blacks as a group but as an offense to individual members of the group. It will be wrong to refer to such abuse of the Jews and blacks as an offense to individual members of the black or Jewish race. It is rather an offense to these groups as entities. The individual members of these races get offended because their collective identity is being ridiculed. Further, Feinberg totally recognised the extremity of racial insult and yet merely considered it in individual terms. For him the outrage for such offense is profound because it is caused by a shocking affront to his or her deepest moral sensibilities, but he or she also happens to be the violated or threatened victim of the affronting behaviour (Feinberg 59-60). One can actually hold rightly that the shock to the individual's moral sensibilities is caused by the insult to the race where one is bonded. He is shocked not because he has been assaulted as an individual but because he feels that he shares in the group identity that is insulted. His outcry is not because he has been wronged or threatened personally as Feinberg held, but because the group where he belongs has been wronged and threatened.

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ABOUT *the* BOOK

A Festschrift is a collection of writings in honour of anyone who has distinguished himself in his chosen field. It is a very rare privilege to have a book of readings in honor of someone. Rev. Fr. Prof. Jude A. Onuoha has been adjudged by some of his professional colleagues and ex-students in character, learning, pioneering endeavours and personal attributes to be worthy of this honour. However, the book is not out to shower routine praises on him, rather it contains scholarly and well peer-reviewed researched papers focused on both recent trends and approaches to multidisciplinary issues in academia and on Prof. Onuoha's major areas of teaching and research interests. The main objectives of the Festschrift are to

- Mark the 25 years anniversary of an icon in the vocation of priesthood
- Serve as a source of inspiration to younger priests and professional colleagues
- Draw the attention of other academics, students and researchers to new trends and approaches in their profession
- Propagate and preserve Rev. Fr. Prof. Onuoha's intellectual output and his philosophy for posterity
- Highlight the honouree's life of service and pioneering
- To encourage and attract potential priests and professors into the profession

Such a book that is rich in different ideas and experiences of renowned authors is worthy of a place on every library shelf, on the internet and in the personal collections of educators, students, individuals and researchers .

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Engr. Chijioke Kuba
Digital Officer, UCH, USA

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