AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS IN A GLOBAL COMMUNITY

Proceedings of the 2023 International
Conference of the Association
For the Promotion of African Studies (APAS) held at the
University of Nigeria Nsukka on 24th -27th May

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DEDICATION

To all APAS members whose hard work inspired and
contributed towards the success of this book

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PREFACE

The 2023 international conference of the Association for the Promotion of African Studies was held at the University of Nigeria Nsukka, with the theme: *Africa In The Global Community: Landmark Achievements, Setbacks And Future Developments.* The conference focused on the relationship between Africa and the global community. The conference aimed to retell the African story in a unique African manner. This is very important as the African continent has been presented and described in the global space, most times negatively and by non-Africans.

This APAS conference, therefore, told the story of Africa from within Africa and in rare African voices - to counter erroneous ideas and projections about Africa. At this conference, African progressive visionaries across the continent reflected critically and discussed theoretical and empirical perspectives on African landmark achievements, setbacks and future developments. The multidisciplinary conference facilitated conversations across a broad spectrum of disciplines, including pure science and technology, management, humanities, social sciences, and arts, among others. This multidisciplinary approach generated robust engagements and enabled the forging of ambitious but concrete paths that will catalyse Africa's prosperity.

The present work on *African Philosophy And Religious Traditions In a Global Community* is a collection of papers presented at the conference bordering on African philosophy and religious traditions. Through this piece, the Conference shares the fruits of her research with the rest of the academic community.

Prof. Ikechukwu Anthony Kanu, OSA
President, Association for the Promotion of African Studies

GLOBALIZATION OF AFRICA AND AFRICAN GLOBALIZATION: A 21st CENTURY PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Globalization has been defined by its increasing interconnectedness and advancement of values across the globe. The recipe for African development has been precipitated by Westernized and modernized designs and architecture. The study interrogates the independence of African states in all spheres of her life, whether it is political, social, or economic. The study also investigates the configuration of the international ideological linings of the capitalist and socialist movements in Africa. Africa is free but everywhere in chains with either her colonial tutelage aprons or playing a second feudal role by the international community. The study adopted secondary sources of data collection and qualitative methods for our data analysis. The study concluded that there are overwhelming negative impacts of African development by globalization which sterns from the international division of world ideologies. The study recommends the indigenization and utilization of African research and technologies by Africans for her development.

Keywords: African states, Capitalism, Development, Globalization, International organization

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Introduction

The world economic and social sphere has become greatly "interconnected" and" integrated" on the one hand, which has affected transportation and integration of Information and Communication technologies which have impacted mightily the downgrade of the concept of "far away". The effect of globalization, which has resulted in into-gross trade, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), capital flows, and technology transfers, have risen significantly in Africa. In Africa, the recent wave of "globalization" is occasioned by increasing concern about its impact on Africa's economic growth and performance since independence in the 1960s after colonial rule.

However, during the late 1970s, the continent set back which led to stagnation and recession through the 1980s and 1990s. Africa's role in the global economy is largely responsible for this, expressed most visibly in insufficient resource mobilization and capital formation and the continent's lopsided trade relations. In contrast, the pessimists show that globalization is quite uneven in its impact and gives rise to negative counter-effects on the previously protected sectors, the marginalization of entire regions of the world economy, and possibly increases the country's income inequality.

Globalization has affected employment, poverty alleviation, and income redistribution within developing countries. Africa's growth performance since gaining independence from colonial rule in the 1960s has been quite disappointing. So used are we to this assessment that we forget that Africa was, at least in the first decade of independence, growing faster than other developing regions in the world. However, the late 1970s set back the continent and led to stagnation and regression through the 1980s and 1990s. Africa's role in the global economy is largely responsible for this, expressed most visibly in insufficient resource mobilization and capital formation and the continent's lopsided trade relations.

Though, the two strong theorists (Liberals and Marxian) of globalization have argued dialectically the opposite of themselves. Among other arguments offered by the Marxist theorist of the effect of globalization on African soil, which includes; Capital and resource flow resistance and mobilization, as well as trade patterns, have crucially weakened African economies that undermine their growth prospects. Other impediments include; structural dependence on primary product exports, limited export variety and diversification of exports, underinvestment in domestic infrastructure, particularly for both agriculture and manufacturing and little domestic value added to extracted resources. The liberal enjoys the spread of the following benefits of globalization to Africa; access to new markets, knowledge of cultural diversities, knowledge of technology and innovation, etc. We concluded in this chapter that there are overwhelming negative impacts of African development and struggle in this present age which sterns from the international division of world ideologies as sponsored by globalization and Western capitalist societies.

Globalization Conceptualized

The word globalization has a lot of detailed usages in contemporary discussions and analyses. It is sometimes referred to as an economic term to mean the increasing interconnections in the global economy in the last few years. The phenomenon is related to the increase of both relatively open international financial markets and global corporations (Barnett and Cavanagh, 1994). Khor (2002) argued that economic globalization is not a new process in the global discussion. He further stated that over the past five centuries, firms in economically advanced countries have increasingly expanded their outreach in trade and production activities (intensified in the colonial period in Africa) to territories all over the world. This was further analyzed by Friedman (1999). Thus he stated that the driving idea or opinion behind globalization is free-market capitalism. That is, the more emphasis is placed on market forces determinants, and the more you open one's economy tailoring towards free trade and competition, the more efficient and effective the economy will be.

Youngs (2007:4) focused on the notions of an indirect persistence of the United States of America's (USA) hegemony and power, which is closely linked to the development of the globalization era. It was Rappa (2004:176) who sustained this line of viewpoint by arguing that the political economy of the USA has a profound financial, social, cultural, and political influence and domination on the process of globalization throughout the world. This is substantiated by a dictum that "A strong claim is that the most powerful multilateral institutions, in terms of the resources at their command, are controlled by the donor countries (and most probably the USA)" (Morten & Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences Vol VII 2017 Desmond, 2014:2). Most old research conducted by social scientists and analysts in this area addressed the impact of trade liberalization on aggregate welfare in developing nations, especially in Africa, in line with the relationship between trade liberalization and poverty (McCorriston et al., 2013).

Rosenau (2003), however, defined globalization as the tensions between opposites that presently outline the course of events and the growth or decline of institutions and systems. Dalby (2007) mentioned that globalization is the means to large-scale changes in social-economic and political life. Hence, on the one hand, globalization means the development of changes in various aspects of society. Turner (2011) argued that the consequence and problem of globalization in modern societies are predominantly multicultural and traditional incline societies. There is a much-modernized role in the process of promoting globalization by multinational and transnational companies in global governing mechanisms. During the time of Clinton's presidency 1 in the USA, globalization increased and expanded so massively that voices of the concerned entities began to coalesce and organize throughout the world by articulating popular movements as in Seattle and elsewhere (Gill, 2000; Halliday, 2000; Kaldor, 2000; Scholte, 2000).

However, the impact of Ronald Regan's administration during his second term of presidency in the USA increased the cultural practices and more extensive economic aggression on financial expansion. This made many cultural affiliations and financial markets of nations to be integrated increasing. During Reagan's years of administration, there was robust nexus between politics, economics, the military, and the expansion of mass consumerism as amplified through the media industry (Barber, 2008; Moffitt, 1987). These variant definitions have detailed the close association of the term globalization with a multi-dimensional disciplinary approach and outlook.

It is obvious that from the aforementioned conceptualizations of the term globalization, the following can be deduced or summarized as the core elements of globalization;

- Integration and diffusion of ideas, technologies, and cultures amongst different people in the world.
- Globalization is a movement that will eventually make all human knowledge, experience, and customs the same because all cultures are increasingly integrated.
- It occurs in everyday life through wireless transportation and communication, electronic commerce, and international trade
- It has been described as a deliberate focus to promote Westernization and Americanization of the world.
- It is a trend that supports the free movement of goods and services across borders.

Historical Overview Of Globalization

Globalization is often referred to as a recent or modern phenomenon; however, globalization can be studied from a historical perspective by using the historical record spanning many centuries or millennia. In phase, we will discuss the historical analysis of globalization, its origins, growth, and implications and also provide a more comprehensive design and a better understanding of the phenomenon and discussion surrounding globalization, most especially in Africa.

However, given the increasing amount of literature on globalization and its numerous interpretations, many scholars and social scientist agree that recently it is even more important to understand the historical context of globalization. The literature provided here discusses how the global economy of the 21st century has been integrated into the foundation and expansion of African commerce and trade and the rest of the world many centuries ago. This section presents literature that examines the historical aspects of globalization by critically analyzing its origins, the history of international economics and trade, and the history of international finance, exchange, and global markets as in the integral process of globalization. This section intends to present a historical and comprehensive analysis of the discussion of globalization.

This aspect of Globalization Studies deals with the historical dimension of globalization. Its main goal is to analyze processes and scales of global integration from a historical perspective, starting with the Agrarian Revolution. Those integration processes (depending on the position of a particular researcher) may be regarded as preparatory stages of globalization or as its initial phases. There are already quite a few studies on this subject (see, e.g., Foreman-Peck 1998; Sharp 2008; Lewis and Moore 2009, etc.).

We contend that, in a certain sense, almost the whole of World History can be regarded as a history of movement toward the increasing size of social systems, their integration, and globalization in general. Hereby, in history and sociology, the investigation is broadening concerning the historical development of globalization processes. According to different authors, globalization has been going on since the first movement of people out of Africa into other parts of the world.

This is according to Andre Gunder Frank, the World System emerged [Frank 1990, 1993; Frank and Gills 1993] or in the Axial Age (Jaspers 1953) in the 1st millennium BC. Each of these dates has its sense. But, notwithstanding this point of view, there is no doubt that the historical dimension of globalization is quite challenging (for more detail, see Grinin 2011). However, among some researchers, there is still a tendency to underestimate the scale of those links in the pre-Industrial era; thus, it appeared necessary to provide additional empirical support for our statement. It also turned necessary to apply a special methodology (which necessitated the use of the world-system approach). There are quite a few periodizations of the history of globalization. An example looks as follows (Hopkins 2003, e.g., pp. 3–7; see also Bayly 2004): (1) Archaic globalization; (2) Early modern globalization; (3) Modern globalization. In this chapter, we did not discuss the whole history of globalization in detail because of the possible transforming inter societal links into the global community in a full sense of this notion. However, between 1500 and the world was not fully globalized yet due to the following number of remarks.

Firstly, not all the territories of the world system had been discovered as of then. Secondly, many societies (in Australia, Oceania, and some parts of Inner Africa) had not been involved in global integration in any significant manner. Thirdly, some of the huge countries of East Asia quite enormously isolated themselves from the rest of the world. Fourthly, the volume of trade could hardly be amount global.

The contemporary integration of the globe in a new version of interconnectedness is what is termed 'globalization'. To distinguish this period from the previous, we have discussed that is the 'planetary' level which denotes the implications of space exploration (these are the space/satellite communication technologies that secure unprecedented opportunities for communication concerning its speed, density, and diversity). Secondly, we observe the involvement in the globalization process of those societies (in Asia, Africa, and other

regions) that were weakly connected with the rest of the world, where the links were rather limited, and those links were often created in a coercive way.

Dimensions Of Globalization

According to Manfred Steger, professor of global studies who believe that globalization has four main dimensions, which include: economic, political, cultural, and ecological, with ideological categorization. However, it was David Held's book termed 'Global Transformations' that is organized around the same dimensions, with ecological typology not listed in it. It was Steger who compares the current study of globalization to the old Buddhist sayings of blind scholars and their first meeting with an elephant. Here we have the following dimensions of globalization as explained thus.

Economic globalization: This is one of the three main dimensions of globalization commonly found among nations of the world as well as in the academic community. Economic globalization refers to the widespread international movement of goods, capital, services, technology, and information. It is the rising of economic integration and interdependence of national, regional, and indigenous economies across the world through an intensification of the cross-border movement of goods, services, technologies, and capital. Economic globalization is solely made of globalization of production, markets, technology, organizational regimes, institutions, corporations, and labour.

Economic globalization has been growing since the emergence of interstate trade among nations. It has grown at an increased rate due to improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of bettered transportation and advances in telecommunication. It has become an important part of the information in this era rather than physical capital movement in the modern economy and by developments in science and technology.

Political globalization: This is the development of integration in the international political sphere of states both in size and operation. One of the basic aspects of political globalization is seen during the time of the great waning of the statist framework and the growth of other actors in the political sphere. It was Gerald Delanty Rumford that defined political globalization as "a tension between three processes which interact to produce the complex field of global politics: global geopolitics, global moribund culture, and interlinkages." However, William Thompson analyzed it to be "the expansion of a global political system, and its institutions, in which inter-regional transactions (including, but certainly not limited to trade) are managed".

Valentine M. Moghadam conceptualizes it as "an increasing trend towards multilateralism (in which the United Nations plays a key role), to an emerging 'transnational state apparatus,' and towards the emergence of a national and non-profitable organization that act

as watchdogs over governments and have increased their activities and influence". This is per what Manfred Steger wrote it "political globalization refers to the intensification and expansion of political interrelations across the globe". Colin Crouch detailed it to be the "growing power of institutions of global democracy such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO)". For the essence of our study here, political globalization refers to the growth and coercion of international governmental authorities and social, cultural, and operative advocacy links across borderlines.

Military Globalization: David Held described it as "the process which embodies the increasing rise and intensity of military relations among the political units of the international community". This analyzes the brooding links of military operations and relations. It also takes recognition of the impact of technological advancement and innovation in the military world. However, Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye see military globalization as "long-distance networks of interdependence in which force, and the threat or promise of force, are employed." It is of great essence for us to understand that military globalization is divided into three distinct phenomena:
· The globalization of the war system
· The global system of arms production and transfers
· The geo-governance of violence

Cultural globalization: This refers to the transmission of knowledge, traditions, and core value system around the world in an increasing dimension of social relations. This process is organized by the integration of different cultures as facilitated by the following source; social media, the internet, and the newspaper. The integration of cultures allows individuals and groups to have access to the line of social relations across state and regional borders.

Ecological Globalization: Issues find within this typology of globalization include; population growth, access to food, worldwide reduction in biodiversity, the gap between the South and North global division, climatic change, and global environmental degradation.

Theories Of Globalization

All theories of globalization have been categorized into eight typologies, which include; liberalism, political realism, Marxism, constructivism, postmodernism, feminism, and eclecticism. Each one of them carries several differentiations. However, two theories of globalization are of interest here; the theory of liberalism and Marxism. The global liberal theorist believes that the integration of nations by the free movement of capital, goods, and services has assisted the democratization and development of African states.

They accrued the progress of globalization with a lot of benefits, especially towards the African continent. The Marxian paradigm has strongly opposed the liberal theorists on the

ground that globalization has brought nothing except the division of the world into two unequal halves; the rich Western capitalist states and the poor underdeveloped countries (African states). They further argued that globalization produces inequality among nations of the world. The following are the theories of globalization;

1. **Theory of Liberalism:** Liberalism refers to globalization as a market-led phenomenon of modernization and Western development. At the primary stage of it, it unveils economic welfare and political liberty. It deals with connectivity as derived from humans to maximize their material well-being and exercise basic freedoms in all spheres of life. This movement and its internal and external coercion definitely will interlink humanity across the planet.

Liberal globalization is in the form of the following:
(a)   Technological advancement of goods, services, transportation, communications, and information generation.
(b)   Alignment of legal, social, and institutional arrangements of nations to enable markets and liberal democracy frameworks on a global world scale.

2**. Theory of Political Realism:** Advocates of this theory are interested in questions of state power, the pursuit of national interest, and conflict between states. According to the theory, states are inherently acquisitive and self-serving and heading for an inevitable competition for power. Some advocates of the balance of power have stated that to achieve world dominance in the international arena; one must pull collective resistance from other states.

3. **Theory of Marxism:** Marxism is typically attributed to modes of production, socio-economic exploitation, and dominance through unjust distribution, exchange, and social disability as an off-shot of capitalism. This originated from Karl Marx, who detailed the development of global capital across barriers to consist of the world as an arena of market and market relations. However, other Marxist scholars believe that globalization occurs when there is an increase in the world's connectivity and integration of social relations which promotes a framework of profit-making and surplus accumulation. Marxists reject both liberalist and political realist explanations of globalization. It is the outcome of historically specific impulses of capitalist development.

4**. Theory of Constructivism:** Globalization here arises out of the way people have emotionally constructed the social world with definite symbols, ascent, and images. It is referred to as the character and dynamics of consciousness. Its designs production and governance as second-order structures that derive from deeper cultural and socio-psychological forces. Globalization, according to constructivists, is the outcome of disciplines such as Anthropology, Humanities, Media and Information Studies, and Sociology.

5. **Theory of Postmodernism:** This perspective of globalization highlights the characteristics of structural power in the construction of identities, norms, and knowledge. This base structure of knowledge in modern society is 'rationalism'. It denotes, in the empirical world, the subordination of nature to human control, objectivist science, and instrumentalist efficiency.

This mode of knowledge has authoritarian and expansionary logic that leads to a kind of cultural imperialism subordinating all other epistemologies. It does not focus on the problem of globalization per se. In this way, western rationalism overawes indigenous cultures and other non-modern life worlds. Postmodernism analyzes beyond the relatively superficial records of liberalist and political realist theories and exposes social conditions that have favoured globalization.

6. **Theory of Feminism**: It refers to the social construction and operation of masculinity and femininity. Here biological sex is upheld overall social order and forms significant change in the course of history and, presently, globalism. The major concern here lies in the status of women's equality, particularly their structural relation to men. To them, women have a high tendency to be marginalized, silenced, and violated by the global community in general.

7. **Theory of Transformationalism**: This theory was expounded by David Held and his mates. They stated that the term globalization reflects the increased interconnectedness of political, economic, and cultural matters across the world. Given this integration of globalization, this is defined as a process of transforming or changing the spatial organization of social relations and links with flows and networks of activity, interaction, and power.

8. **Theory of Eclecticism:** This theory of globalization details some forces that emphasize the technological and institutional building of capital accumulation; this reflects identity and knowledge construction, rationalism and cultural imperialism, and masculinity and subordination of women.

African Global Hegemony And Hindrances

Africa has sorted the very ability to identify the key technological improvement of her region in the global community and utilize them in such a way that other developed nations and continents of the world like the USA, Germany, and Britain did. Recently, there has been a clarion call by African leaders through the African Union (AU) to develop indigenous skills and labour in other to counteract her development deficiencies. However, there are different challenges to Africa as a continent in global hegemony; they include; cultural diversification; technological know-how; environmental time zone differences; lack of integrity; and language barrier. These are all further explained below:

Cultural Diversification - There are differences among nations in value systems, religious affinity, environment, and cultures. There are cultural differences in individual versus collective aspirations that come into play. These differences are witnessed in the cultural build-up, cultural consciousness, cultural awareness, and cultural acceptability in the team.

Technological Knowhow – The differences in expertise among nations in the global community are very large. This has become a challenge for most third-world nations, like Africa in particular. It is the leadership of the nation and its technocrats that performs the role of gathering knowledge and building up expertise in the labour force.

Environmental Time Zones Differences – Time and timing are common everywhere, but there exist differences in geographical zone locations of continents. Most of the African states are situated at the end zone of the world equator as against other developed nations of the world. This is challenging in trade and other relations among them.

Lack of Integrity – Leaders of most African states lack trust, especially in financial management and accountability. Political leaders award projects and contracts without due accountability. Incessant military coups and counter-coup have destroyed trust in governance.

Language Barrier – African states have strong links with colonial heritage and cultural affinities. Language is one of the strong build-ups of this colonial transfer by Western nations to African states. Most of the West African state's lingual language is English and French. This makes it very difficult for African hegemony to be respected outside its sho. This is because language has become a huge barrier in Africa to communicating with the rest of the world.

Dynamic Forces Of Change In African Global Economies

There are forces of change that drive the development and growth of African and world economics; these forces sometimes co-habit with institutional building and policies in and outside Africa. Here we are going to concentrate on the following institutions and programs as a propagator or agents of globalization in African economies;

Multi-national and Transnational Corporations- The operation of the multilateral corporation on African soil has a monopolistic drive in competing with local firms. Sometimes these multilateral corporations paralyze local businesses in Africa. These corporations sometimes penetrate beyond the economic sphere to other parts of society like; mass communication and mass media, and mining industry, etc. It is obvious to say that

multilateral corporation indeed penetrates every economy and political sphere, but the only difference is the impact it has on both the rich and poor countries.

Policies of liberalization and free trade operations have become a trademark of globalization. Transnational Corporation takes the world as one component of business entities where domestic boundaries are irrelevant. Globalization itself in Africa is all about the transnational movement of capital and the rise of conglomerates which are referred to as multilateral or transnational corporations depending on the level of capital transaction entered into by their effectors economy.

World Bank and International Monetary Fund (I.M.F): This is a branch of the U.N.O which is created to assist developing countries like Africa in obtaining long-term loans to improve their national development. The conditionalities attached to the World Bank loan, especially servicing of the loan, have kept Africa in perpetual underdevelopment. Most of the funds issued by I.M.F to African states to tackle her problems all in the name of globalizing Africa, worsen her political cum economic instability.

World Trade Organization (W.T.O): This is a body that is charged with the responsibility of regulating international business and trade transactions across the globe. African trade and investment no longer make independent economic or policy decisions but merely a follow-up of directives of this trade organization. The World Trade Organization's general decision threatens our general well-being, political stability, job security, and the general development of African states.

United Nations (Security Council): This arm of the United nation works towards actualizing peace throughout the globe. It has both permanent and non-permanent memberships. They question any nation or group that goes against their agenda. The Security Council is highly dominated by the U.S.A and the rest of Western countries. None of the African states have been included in the circle of this arm. The non-inclusiveness of African states in the Security Council is an act of global phenomena to continue directing the life and development of Africa.

Benefits Of Globalization To African Development

It is a central argument by liberal scholars and social scientists that globalization positively affects businesses and well-being in Africa. The following are several benefits of globalization in Africa;

1. **Access to New Markets**- Globalization has created new markets, businesses, and entrepreneurs on African soil. Businesses and markets gain a great deal from globalization. Many new customer bases, clients, and diverse economic streams have been created through

the impact of globalization. There is no need for businesses in Africa to establish a foreign entity in an overseas nation, especially in the Internet age.

2. **Knowledge of Cultural Diversities**- Globalization makes it simple for Africans to access foreign culture and good tradition, which includes; food, movies, music, art, and scientific knowledge. This is because globalization permits the free movement of people, goods and services, art, and information.

3. **Knowledge of Technology and Innovation**- The globe itself remains constantly connected and integrated. Much technological advancement in African soil today is a result of this integration. In other words, access so knowledge in innovation advances very fast because most of the African experts in different areas of life are trained and equipped by other nations of the world. This has simultaneously led to knowledge also transfers. This means that scientific advancement gotten in Europe can best work in the African States on some days.

4. **Access to New Talent**- Special gift and talents have been discovered and harnessed in Africa to suit the current capitalist lead market globally. For example, globalization offers firms and businesses the chance to harness and train talents in the formation of a capitalist market.

5. **Higher Standard of Living Across the Globe**-Developing nations like Africa has witnessed an improved standard of living because of the flow of the rule of law and democracy across the border. Furthermore, the improvement in of poverty line has been achieved through the circularization of lifestyle.

Globalization And African Development Challenges

Marxian theorists and scholars of globalization are in strong disagreement with liberal theorists that globalization offers African states any benefits. Furthermore, the Marxist state summarizes some of these challenges as follows;

1. **Arms Proliferation-** The spread of arms in Africa has contributed to major security challenges in the continent. The firearm and other dangerous tools of Boko Haram in Nigeria and other parts of Africa are a result of foreign values spread all over Africa. The supply of small and heavy weapons by Western nations and the U.S. has fuelled crises in Libya, Sudan, Tunisia, and presently the terrorist operation in northern Nigeria.

2. **Unemployment and Immigration Problems**-Immigration problems have caused a lot of internal and external image damage to African states globally. Immigration laws often affect African immigrants negatively who seek white-collar jobs and other opportunities outside

the shores of Africa. Sometimes it becomes difficult to secure visas for employees that are foreign nationals. The U.S.A and other Western nations, for example, are getting stricter in issuing visas to some African states.

3. **Increased Tariffs and Export Duties**-High import and export fees have stifled African trade and investment globally. Businesses and firms domiciled in Africa are constant look to market their goods and services abroad but often face expensive tariff duties which discourage them. Many firms and businesses have been liquidated on this account.

4. **Culture Superiority Clash**-Globalization promotes the superiority of one culture over another. Global ethnocentrism has placed the cultural hegemony of Western values over the African value system. They perceive that African values and civilization are traditional and moribund as such, cannot overhaul her development. They believe that the success of European circularization and assimilation of their culture among African states will lead to her development.

5. **Exploitation by Foreign Nations** – globalization creates a world of unequal size and sphere. Africa is seen as playing a second-fiddle role to other Western nations of the globe. This is occasioned by the emergency of global capitalist development that divides nations according to market lines. Since her colonial period, Africa has played the role of raw material generation. While the well-advanced capitalist societies produce the finished goods from African raw materials. The economic dominance here comes as a result of the high cost of these products being sold back to African nations by the same West.

Conclusion /Recommendation

We concluded that globalization is as old as the human race itself. This is because the interconnection of various communities and tribes in trades and social relations has been there before the organization of life in the international sphere. We itemize various dimensions of globalization and the theories thereof. The theories of liberals and Marxian scholarship were upheld in this chapter because of the numerous impacts they have made towards African economic hegemony and development.

The following global hindrances of African economics were clearly stated as follows; multi-national and transnational corporations, the world bank and international monetary fund, the world trade organization, and the United Nation (security council)

We recommend the following as a panacea towards revamping of negative impacts of globalization in Africa;

· **The Indigenization and Utilization of African Research and Technologies:** African states should, as a matter of urgency, place value on their research and local technologies. The superiority placed over Western technologies should be resolved by African leaders.

· **Reorganization of International organizations such as the UN and its Agencies:** The reorganization of the international organization is eminent for greater participation by other continents, including Africa. The dominance, hegemony, and embargo placed on the Security Council membership by the Western capitalist and socialist nations should be lifted. Most of the agencies of the United Nations were created before the independence of African states.

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ROLES OF *ORIM* (ANCESTRAL SPIRITS) IN THE SOCIO-POLITICAL LIFE OF THE TAROH PEOPLE OF PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

At the moment, the Taroh nation seems to be averagely organized, ordered, protected and guided. This seems to possibly be because of the role played by the Orim in the socio-political life of the Taroh people. The goal of this research is to find out the meaning of Orim, to investigate the role of Orim in the socio-political life of the Taroh people and to suggest ways of improving these roles. The data for this research were collected from books, journals, dictionaries and encyclopedias, among others which were sourced from the internet and libraries. The data were analyzed through the discussion, descriptive and historical methods, among others. The research found out that the role of Orim in the socio-political life of the Taroh people includes maintaining peace and order in the society, connecting marriage and ensuring that it works, making a decision for the land and initiating male children into the Orim cult. The research recommended that the roles of Orim among the Taroh people can be strengthened by making shrines for their worship, venerating the Orim, offering sacrifices for the Orim and obeying the Orim.

Keywords: Orim, Taroh People, Plateau, Africa, Socio-Political

Introduction

Ancestral worship is a global phenomenon. It is a practice that is common in many countries and religions of the world. For some of these countries and religions, the practice is mandatory, while for others, the practice is not too mandatory. Some of these countries and religions of the world have elaborate ceremonies for this worship, while others have elaborate ceremonies for this worship. In the same vein, in these different countries and religions of the world, the practice is done differently (Kessler 1-7; Joffe 1-5; Reuter 1-12; Bae and Merwe 2-10; Morgan and Okyere-Mann 1-6).

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For example, in India among the Hindus, the ceremony is known as "Sraddha", in Rome among the Roman Catholic, the ceremony is known as "the veneration of the Saints", in Mexico among the Mexicans, the ceremony is known as "Dia de Los Muertos", in China among their folk religion, the ceremony is known as "Shi", in Europe among the Europeans, the ceremony is known as "Megalithic Tombs", in Cambodia among the Duddhist, the ceremony is known as "Pchum Ben", in Scotland among the pagans of Scotland, the ceremony is known as "Samhain", in Japan among the Shinto, the ceremony is known as "the Shinto Rites", in Philippines among the ancient Filippino religion, the ceremony is known as "Paganito", in Korea among the both the North and South Koreans, the ceremony is known as "Chuseok", in Wales among the people of Wales, the ceremony is known as "Calan Gaeaf" and in West Africa among the Ghanaians, the ceremony is known as "Vodun". In this modern time, some scholars argue that ancestral worship is expressed in the form of embalming and entombing the dead and also the celebration of memorial days (Kessler 1-7; Joffe 1-5; Reuter 1-12; Bae and Merwe 2-10; Morgan and Okyere-Mann 1-6). This implies that ancestral worship is a reality in many parts and religions of the world including Africa, African Traditional Religion and even Taroh People.

History Of Taroh People

Taroh people are popularly known by two names: "Yar-I-gam" and "Taroh". The first name "Yar-I-gam" was given by the Hausa traders. The name is a corruption of the Taroh word *Yar-I-ga*, which means "Carry and let us go". This expression denotes dissatisfaction from the Taroh people with how the Hausa traders were regularly pricing their farm produce. The second name "Taroh" is derived from the word "Tal", which is a description of where the Taroh people came from. Tal is presently located in the Pankshin Local Government Area of Plateau State towards the North Western part of the Taroh land. The leader of the group that migrated from Tal to found the present Taroh settlement has a son by the name *Tallok* meaning "Tal has multiplied". It was this name "Tallok" that was later corrupted to mean Taroh. Below are the varying traditions regarding the origin of the Taroh people (Shagaya 35-51; Lannap 3-10; Dassah 29-42; Ames 12-20; Banfa 13-31; Butnap 5-17; Lamle16-27).

The first tradition opines that Taroh people came from the southern parts of Africa and as such they are said to be "Bantoid". Although, the route of their migration may be difficult to presently trace, however, when they came, they first settled at Dip, which was an Ngas settlement before finally moving to their present-day settlements. The second tradition has it that they originated from the Middle Eastern and to be précised, Yemen/Egypt. The third tradition argues for the Western and Eastern origin, especially when the migration routes were developed. The fourth tradition holds that they originated from the western region, this tradition argues and links the Taroh race to the western migration route due to its linguistic evidence. This tradition also links the Taroh origin to a Niger-Benue confluence, it argues

that the Benue-Congo Language affirms this and at the same time challenged the opposite view that the language has Eastern and Chadic links. Although the above traditions have gotten a level of acceptance, the controversies regarding them still stand (Shagaya 35-51; Lannap 3-10; Dassah 29-42; Ames 12-20; Banfa 13-31; Butnap 5-17; Lamle16-27).

The fifth tradition argues that the Taroh people are an amalgamation of different people from different places. The composition of these different groups includes Pe, Ngas, Jukun, Boghom, and Tel (Montol) among others. Taroh cultural evidence seems to affirm the above view. It was argued that in the early twentieth century, people from other ethnic groups such as Pe, Ngas, Jukun, Boghom, Tel (Montol) and Yiwom (Gerkawa) migrated and settled together with the initial Timwat and Funyallang clans. These People came as migrant labour workers. The Timwat and Funyallang people being hospitable now accepted them and after serving them for a while, they gave them land to settle, which they later mixed up with the original inhabitants to become the present-day Taroh People (Shagaya 35-51; Lannap 3-10; Dassah 29-42; Ames 12-20; Banfa 13-31; Butnap 5-17; Lamle16-27).

The sixth tradition traces the origin of the Taroh people to the Tal people of Pankshin Local Government Area of Plateau State. The leader of this group has a son by name *Tallok* meaning "Tal has multiplied". As implied by the name, population pressure was the reason for their migration. This tradition argues that Taroh, Ngas and Goemai were brothers who were always moving together until at Tal when they separated to their present-day settlements because of population pressure. Gunnung who was a younger brother of Garum, Chief of Ngas moved to found Langtang, while Lekni the founder of the Goemai moved to found Shendam. Another view has it that the Taroh, Goemai and Miship (Chip) are brothers with the same grandfather who was a former Chief of Garram. Tallok who later became the leader of this group migrated alongside his three sons: Zinni, Gunnung and Bwarat to settle at Gazum. But before settling at Gazum, they first passed through Pe (Dallong) located in the present-day Panshin Local Government Area. The sons of Tallok: Zinni, Gunnung and Bwarat later became the major Taroh clans with "Sa" as an off-shoot of Bwarat. This tradition maintained that by the mid-18th century, the migration of the Taroh race from Tal and their settlement in the present-day Langtang had already taken place. It argued that their migration took place in different phases: the Zinni family migrated and settled in Dutse (Gazum); the Namurang family migrated and settled in the present-day Kanam Local Government Area of Plateau State; Gunnung migrated and settled in the main Langtang town and thus, produced Ce; Bwarat and Sa migrated and settled in the general area presently known as plain Taroh (Shagaya 35-51; Lannap 3-10; Dassah 29-42; Ames 12-20; Banfa 13-31; Butnap 5-17; Lamle16-27).

Similarly, it should be noted that part of Plain Tarok later migrated to Wase. This tradition still held that before 1760, the Taroh of Sa, Dangal, Chuwi and Singha had already spread to

the plain. It is also worthy of note that when the Taroh race left Tal and arrived at Langtang, the Gunnung clan settled in the South-west end of Langtang hill, while the Bwarat clan settled in the north-eastern part, which is below the hills. Although, the view of the Taroh origin from Tal is a widely acceptable view amongst scholars, which is affirmed by the fact that there are cultural similarities between the two groups. Nevertheless, the view is still problematic because of its inherent historical linguistics problem of Tal being from the Chadic family languages, while Taroh is from the Benue-Congo family languages (Shagaya 35-51; Lannap 3-10; Dassah 29-42; Ames 12-20; Banfa 13-31; Butnap 5-17; Lamle16-27).

Primarily, the Taroh dialect is divided into five. This division is informed by the differences in their various settlements. These five Taroh dialects include: firstly, *iTaroh* (Plains Tarok); secondly, *iZinni* (Hill Taroh); thirdly, *iGyang*; fourthly, *iTaroh oga Selyar* and fifty, *iTaroh oga iSa*. The variations in the phonology of these dialects slightly differ from one area to the other, although, the variation is not much, implying that it is just a minor variation of intonations and lexicon. The Plain dialect is understood by all Taroh speakers and at the same time, those that speak the Plain Taroh dialect also understand the phonology of *Ghang* and *Kwallak* except *Zinni*. Amongst all the Taroh dialects, the phonological variation of *Zinni* seems to be more pronounced than all others. However, the variation is more in the intonation than in the lexical formation and thus, the sound is different from all others. Similarly, a critical look at the lexical formation between *iZinni* and *Nambar* will indicate that the dialectical gap seems to be wider between the two than the other three (Shagaya 35-51; Lannap 3-10; Dassah 29-42; Ames 12-20; Banfa 13-31; Butnap 5-17; Lamle16-27).

Methodology

The data for this research were collected mainly from the library. In this library, the researcher made use of books, journals and other relevant literature to source the needed information for this research. The libraries that were consulted include Gindiri Theological Seminary's (GTS) library, the College of Education (COE) Gindiri's library, Theological College of Northern Nigeria's (TCNN) library and the University of Jos' (UJ) library. The data for this research were analyzed through the discussion method, descriptive method, historical method and theological method.

Roles Of *Orim* (Ancestral Spirits) In The Socio-Political Life Of The Taroh People

In Taroh Language, the name used for Ancestral Spirits is *Orim*. The singular form of the word is *Urim*, while the plural form is *Orim*. *Orim* denote "Ancestral Spirits or Spirits of Dead People" and this cult worship seems to be the centre and the pivoting point of the Tarok Traditional Religion. However, the word *Orim* could also mean "masquerades", in which sense; they refer to the representatives of "ancestral spirits or other kinds of good

spirits". There are similarities and differences between *Orim* and *Oka*. Their similarity is that all of them are referring to the dead, while their difference is that *Orim* refers to the spirits of those who died a long time ago, while *Oka* refers to those who died recently. Therefore, *Orim* can be said to be the spirits of those who died long ago, but have come back to give direction, guidance and protection to the living faithful at the individual, family and community levels. It is believed that the living faithful usually have contact with the *Orim* through the *Orim* cult worship. Taroh people strongly believe in the reality, existence, workings and worship of *Orim* and this without doubt has an indelible impact on the people as a whole. The impact is evident in the sense that despite the influence of great religions like Christianity and Islam, this cult worship is still very viable. *Orim* do not publicly appear in persons, but are normally represented by two groups of people: firstly, males that have been religiously initiated and secondly, Post-menopausal women (Butnap 9-20; Galam 15-27; Yarkum 45-55; Shagaya 236-307).

The worship of *Orim* usually takes place in the *Ibang* meaning "shrine" and these *Ibang* are built in and around sacred groves, which are usually located on the outskirt of almost all Taroh settlements. The appearances of *Orim* are usually done in masks, especially when discharging their routine responsibility of disciplining "stubborn" women and making prophecies. *Orìm* does not usually speak through their normal voices, but instead, they disguise their voices by using dotted language with code words. Nevertheless, all these are still framed in the normal Tarok syntax and their interpretations are usually by specially selected unmasked figures (Butnap 9-20; Galam 15-27; Yarkum 45-55; Shagaya 236-307).

Ibang meaning "shrines" are highly valuable in the Taroh Traditional Religion. Each *Ibang* is decorated by/sacred groves. These groves are usually located outside of almost all Taroh settlements and are specially conserved for the worship of *Orim*. Not all kinds of people are allowed into the *Ibang* to consult with *Orim*, but only mature men that have undergone initiation. Whenever Orim are out for their routine mission, women, children and immature men (i.e. those that are not formally initiated into the religion) are forbidden from seeing them. In the event of disobedience, the culprits are severely punished as the case may be. If it becomes necessary for *Orim* to consult with women, they do it by dressing specially for that purpose, appearing as masquerades and communicating their message through an interpreter. It should be noted that only fully initiated members are granted full access to the secret of *Orìm*. So, for certain secrets to be upheld, senior members or elders of the religion use special vocabulary garnished with code words to achieve that purpose. *Orim* cult worship is generally under the leadership of *Ponzhi-Nbin* (meaning "Chief of the Land"). Certain things are considered taboos to the *Orim*, they include embarrassing and harassing the Christians, passing through the homes of the Christians and passing through the premises of the Church (Butnap 9-20; Galam 15-27; Yarkum 45-55; Shagaya 236-307).

Orim plays four roles in the socio-political life of the Taroh people as discussed below. Firstly, maintaining peace and order in society and this could both be spiritual and physical. In one sense, this has to do with dealing with external foes threatening the peace, order and existence of the community. By this, *Orim* has the duty of organizing and mobilizing commensurate counterattacks, in which case, war may even be fought. In another sense, it has to do with disciplining disobedient, rebellious, lazy and stubborn women by either beating them or fining them (to pay chickens, or goats or cook a special diet) as a punishment for their offenses. In addition, it has to do with disciplining disobedience and stubborn children and men who have blatantly transgressed the laws of the gods or laws of the land. The types of *Orim* that carry out the above kind of function are called *Orim aga*, which means "masquerade that gives trouble". It is believed that there is a special season called *aga,* which means a "time of trouble". It is in this particular period that these kinds of punishments are best meted out. *Orim* has a popular practice of requesting food from women or mothers, this is to feed the spirit of dead children because they (*Orim*) are believed to regularly have contact with them (Butnap 9-20; Galam 15-27; Yarkum 45-55; Shagaya 236-307).

Secondly, *Orim* has the duty of connecting marriage and ensuring that it works. This is done by the young ladies telling the *Orim* their choices of husband and if possible, their names. Then *Orim* will now find a channel of communicating this important message appropriately. When the boys accept the *Ngya* meaning "relationship/engagement", they give *Atiba* meaning "tobacco" in the form of "fowl", but if the ladies refuse the gifts, it means they are not bound by that engagement. Thirdly, *Orim* is the highest decision-making body in the Tarohland and as such have the function of making decisions for the land. Their decisions are binding on individuals, families and the larger community. Disobedience to their decisions attracts punishment commensurate to the offence. Whenever there is any dispute between two or more people in the community, *Orim* is normally consulted through traditional priests by inviting the parties involved into the *Ibang* for the settlement and the final decision of *Orim* as to who is guilty stands (Butnap 9-20; Galam 15-27; Yarkum 45-55; Shagaya 236-307).

Fourthly, *Orim* has the function of initiating male children into the *Orim* cult. This is very important because until a male grown-up child is initiated into the *Orim* cult; he will never be recognized as a mature man. This initiation gives the child two privileges: Firstly, to have the needed boldness and courage to function as a mature man and secondly, to be granted access to certain secrets that are peculiar to the cult. However, these secrets are not expected to be revealed to women, children and immature men and doing the contrary usually attracts severe punishment to the level of death. Whenever *Orim* wants to punish by killing, they do not do it by spilling the blood of their culprits, but they rather do it by swallowing them (Butnap 9-20; Galam 15-27; Yarkum 45-55; Shagaya 236-307).

Way of Strengthening The Roles Of *Orim* Among The Taroh People

The roles of the *Orim* can be strengthened among the Taroh people through making shrines for the worship of *Orim*, venerating the *Orim*, offering sacrifices for the *Orim* and obeying and complying with the directives of *Orim*.

Ibang meaning shrines are of great importance to the Taroh people because of their role in the worship of *Orim*. *Ibang* are usually made in the bush, especially forest-like bushes and their primary purpose is for the worship of *Orim*. However, they have other secondary purposes including serving as cultural signposts, markers of identity, powerful symbols of solidarity/cohesion and physical manifestations of presence and ownership, among others. So, the Taroh people have to make *Ibang* for the worship of *Orim* to be encouraged and promoted (Butnap 14-26; Galam 19-30; Yarkum 52-57; Shagaya 236-307).

Orim is also usually worshipped and served through veneration. Veneration is the act of bowing down and paying homage and respect. The Taroh word used in this regard is *Wop Orim*. Whereas *Wop* means to worship, *Orim* means ancestors. So, this has to do with bowing down to worship, especially higher or superior beings. It should be noted that *Orim* usually becomes happy and encouraged to play their roles to the Taroh people whenever the Taroh people venerate them. The veneration is necessary because the Taroh people usually considered their ancestors to be glorified fathers. The veneration usually takes place in the *Ibang*. Among the Taroh, every family, clan and community has its own *Ibang* for the veneration of their *Orim* (Butnap 11-23; Galam 17-29; Yarkum 45-55; Shagaya 236-307).

Orim is usually worshipped and served with the offering of sacrifices. These sacrifices are offered either to make the *Orim* happy with their followers or as a way of atoning for a wrong committed against them. So, the first kind of sacrifice is offered as a way of worshipping God while the second kind of sacrifice is offered as a way of paying for one's offence against the *Orim*. Sometimes, specially cooked foods are offered while other times, the foods are offered raw (Butnap 10-20; Galam 15-27; Yarkum 45-55; Shagaya 240-310).

Orim is also usually worshipped and served through the obedience of their member. The obedience is very important because it is a mark of loyalty of the members. *Orim* normally have rules and regulations guiding their worship. These rules and regulations are expected to be strictly obeyed so that *Orim* will become happy with them. For example, one of the ways the Taroh people are expected to show their obedience to the *Orim* is for those alive to give befitting burial because it is a way of sending their fathers into the land of the ancestors for the later reincarnation back into the family. This practice is usually garnished by the practice of Funeral rite. This funeral rite is done by the children of the deceased which

denotes honouring the dead father and showing that the children are disciplined and responsible (Butnap 9-20; Galam 15-27; Yarkum 50-57; Shagaya 237-310).

Conclusion

Taroh people who are believed to originate from the Tal people of Pankshin Local Government Area of Plateau State believe in the existence of ancestral spirits called *Orim*. These ancestral spirits play important roles in the socio-political life of the Taroh people. These roles include maintaining peace and order in the Taroh society, joining and connecting marriage, making final decisions in the Taroh community and initiating grown-up male children into the *Orim* cult. However, for these roles of *the Orim* to be strengthened, the Taroh people should endeavour to make shrines for the worship of *the Orim*, venerate the *Orim*, offer sacrifices to the *Orim* and obey the *Orim*. This will strengthen the *Orim* to bring peace, prosperity, orderliness, and organization to the Taroh people and their community.

Recommendations

1. For the roles of *Orim* to be strengthened among the Taroh people, there is be need to build shrines for their worship.
2. Veneration of *Orim* which has to do with bowing down to worship, paying allegiance, reverencing and adoration, among others is necessary to strengthen the roles of *Orim* among the Taroh people.
3. Offering sacrifices for the *Orim* is also necessary to strengthen their roles among the Taroh people.
4. Obedience to the *Orim* is also key to strengthening their roles among the Taroh people.

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UBUNTU AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN AFRICA IN A GLOBAL COMMUNITY: RETHINKING AFRICAN CONCEPT OF JUSTICE

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Abstract

Respect for human life is the first and end of every human endeavour. Fundamental human rights constitute the hallmark, cornerstone and yardstick to measure Humanness. The progress, development and civilization of every region, continent or global community rested on observations, respect for human rights, dignity and personality. Africa with all its richness in natural resources, human resources and minerals resources is the least developed and underdeveloped continent in the world. All these are predicated on lack or deliberate, active, conscious and fully aggressive infringements on the fundamental rights of its people. There is an internally motivated wide and chronic violations of rights across Africa and this explains why Africans are scattered around the globe seeking greener pastures in terms of security, job opportunities, and decent living. The harsh treatment administered to the Africans makes them become somehow a threat to the global community in the sense that most Africans have fashioned different tactics of escaping poverty, insecurity, hunger, inhuman treatment and other state-sponsored terrorism to other parts of the world through illegal means. To discuss this precarious situation, Ubuntu philosophy was rethought therefore, the global community through the United Nations and its partners ought to ensure that human rights are respected, observed and upheld in every part of Africa this is the only way the world and Africa in particular can be at peace. We adopted the analytical method in carrying out our research .

Keywords: Human Rights, Africa, Global Community, security, Development

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Introduction

In a comparative analysis, both the interpretation and the enforcement of Ubuntu pose a momentous challenge in this fashionable locale arising from the increasing demands of people all over the world for their rights and justice. Ubuntu's concept of rights differs from the Western and other concepts of rights. There is a correlative reference to the place and role of rights in Ubuntu conceptualization. This understanding in the thought of Vernon if juxtaposed correctly with Ubuntu ideology holds sways that:

> The idea of 'rights' might perhaps have been introduced directly into the basic justifying narrative by the following attractively simple route. In the narrative, the need to establish agreed criteria of legitimacy arose from the contraction of authenticity and the exclusion of extra-political truth (95).

Rights from this outlook especially 'human rights' are enforced by certain extra-political truths which are embodied in the concept of 'Ubuntu'. Therefore, this right correlative resonates with the power of morality that guides the operationality of the concept of our discourse.

Thus Augustine Shutte (2001) seriously engaged the concept 'Ubuntu' and say: "Our deepest moral obligation is to become more fully human. And this means entering more and more deeply into the community with others. ... So, an Ubuntu ethic focuses on self-realization, but is also communitarian" (30). To this assertion, Metz (2010) upholds that "a person is a person through other persons" making it discussable even in the field of philosophy. Although Ubuntu is an ideal or value rooted in South Africa, its attainment as a performative ethic of the human goes beyond its roots in African languages. Undoubtedly, it is a forward leap to flat antinomies in the conversations of societies and rights, since Ubuntu is not simply an indigenous or even African ideal but one that inversely calls for its universal justification leading to ethical reasoning more generally.

Ubuntu, then, at that point, as it is tended to as a lobbyist ethics of ideals and afterwards converted into law, assists with growing the thinking about a cutting edge overall set of laws' obligation to all-inclusiveness by developing conversations of what obligation it has towards the human person in its rights and dignity in a postcolonial country. Since Ubuntu professes to have widespread insignia, its significance as a perspective about law and equity isn't restricted to its accuracy of beginning yet becomes significant in any basic liberties talk that isn't limitedly established in Western European beliefs. Subsequently, it protects any individual who is genuinely grappling with human rights, postcolonial constitutionalism, and contending dreams of the relations between law and justice.

Based on conceptual assumptions, as captured in his "The African Ethic of Ubuntu" 8 September 2019-27 June 2020~ in 1000-*Word Philosophy: An Introductory Anthology*, Metz succinctly says that "the word 'Ubuntu' is from some Southern African languages

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which mean 'humanness.'. To have Ubuntu is to be a person who is living a genuinely human way of life, whereas to lack Ubuntu is to be missing human excellence". In furtherance, he states that "Black people indigenous to Africa commonly believe that one's basic aim in life should be to exhibit Ubuntu, which is done by prizing communal relationships with other people". In Ubuntu ideology, Bolden (2014) comparatively, gives an explanadum to show that:

> Whilst the origins of Ubuntu are distinctly African parallels have been drawn with similar concepts in other societies, including the Chinese philosophy of Jen, the Filipino philosophy of Loob and the Russian concept of Obschina. Similar concepts are also illustrated in the writings of certain European philosophers such as Emmanuel Levinas and Paul Ricoeur although no comparable word exists in the English language (Bolden, 1-2).

Despite its variants, traces to other philosophies have been made and established as an ideology whose deposit can be found depending on its development.

Nature and Characteristics of Ubuntu Philosophy

It is unembroidered to say that 'Ubuntu' has taken a neo-transliteration of collective personality and collective morality. And thus, not essentially cultural or inconsequential concepts, germane to the identity of one group but rather an expression connected to a wider humanity. However, for Mbigi, it is not implicitly expressed in quite the same way elsewhere in the world but only in Africa (2). This implies that Ubuntu expresses values and behaviours that are not narrowly racial or purely sectional when practised in each society, even though, as received in our current discourse, Ubuntu is taken overtly as a uniquely African concept.

The word 'Ubuntu' is from some southern African languages and it means "humanness." To have Ubuntu is to be a person who is living a genuinely human way of life, whereas to lack Ubuntu is to be missing human excellence. The concept of Ubuntu for Richard Bolden, "is an alternative to individualistic and utilitarian philosophies that tend to dominate in the West" (Bolden 1), which offers an expression of deeply-held African morals of one's personhood being entrenched in one's interconnectedness with others.

Ubuntu Philosophy of Moral theory for human rights and Dignity

As a Moral theory: The practice of Ubuntu in the past exclusively differs from the present. Thus, the onus lies on the generation to redefine accordingly to the ever-changing principles of objectivism. The reconstruction does not restrict itself to contemporary South African society, but African indigenous characteristics towards a more all-inclusive interpretation of Ubuntu considering our best current understandings of what is morally right and what is

morally wrong. To attain this, therefore, analytics philosophy should be employed for proper evaluation and reconstruction. Thus, Metz (2011):

> A moral theory is roughly a principle purporting to indicate, by appeal to as few properties as possible, what all right actions have in common as distinct from wrong ones. What (if anything) do characteristically immoral acts such as lying, abusing, insulting, raping, kidnapping and breaking promises have in common by virtue of which they are wrong (Metz 536).

In moral philosophy, a right is therefore regarded as a privilege of individuals, who participate in the humanness of rational beings and/or because they are apolitical as citizens.

For Human rights

So we might wonder about the whole idea of human rights reading from different schools of thought; liberal, Marxist, libertarian and communitarian abounds according to Ukavwe (2017) when human rights are conceived particularly as "a tool in the hands of the individual to safeguard his self-interest against the claims of the and society" (185), it becomes necessary for the state to respect and promote it for equity and peaceful coexistence. This implies in Metz's (2011) understanding that "one has a human right to something, insofar as all agents have a stringent duty to treat one in a certain way that obtains because of some quality one shares with (nearly) all other human beings and that must be fulfilled, even if not doing so would result in marginal gains in intrinsic value or somewhat fewer violations of this same duty in the long run (541). As interpreted above, Amartya Sen (2004), ruminates that "Human rights can be seen as primarily ethical demands… Like other ethical claims that demand acceptance, there is an implicit presumption in making pronouncements on human rights that the underlying ethical claims will survive open and informed scrutiny" (Sen 320), a right against others needless of their legal recognition.

For Human Dignity

Indeed, a survey of human rights shows that handling an individual as someone with dignity demonstrates a superlative non-instrumental importance. Despite this, a human rights violation is a defeat to treat and honour people's special nature, and more often than not, make someone feel treated merely as a means to some creed "such as racial or religious purity or some prudentially selfish end" (Metz, 542). Human dignity is the foundational value of human rights since today has become the prevailing analysis among moral philosophers, jurisprudential scholars, and United Nations theorists, as domiciled in the German and South African Constitutional Courts.

To expressly articulate an African worldview, the revival of the traditional virtues known to be truly African values must be resuscitated as they form the ethical-religious being qua being of all there is in African ontology. On this conception of dignity, we shall look at two varied African worldviews as elementary to the conceptions of human dignity, namely: The Traditional and the Moral understanding.

Ubuntu Philosophy of Right as the Basis of Human Dignity

From Human Rights to Human Dignity: This conception of Ubuntu Philosophy of Right as the Basis of Human dignity take the motion from human rights to human dignity which explains the case of the good life as distinguished on two possible epicentres of human existence; as an animal and as a human. Thus, in the words of Alan Gewirth (1982): "We may assume, as true by definition, that human rights are rights that all persons have simply insofar as they are human" (Gewirth 41), and not contrary in likeness to a beast. And so, humans with such privilege necessarily should act according to the rights and dignity already ascended to by the state. This, Mogobe Ramose, adjudged that "one is enjoined, yes, commanded as it were, to become a human being" (52), while developing a philosophy on Ubuntu. This existentialism of Bhengu becomes more pronounced if someone is found a defaulter, then it is believed by many Africans that "He is not a person" or even "He is an animal" (27). The claim of being human by virtue of rationality in nature would be invoked so as not to be seen as one who lacks the humanness of existence and be termed an animal because he/she has failed to develop such valuable aspects peculiar to their nature.

Ubuntu Philosophy and Human Rights for the global community
Rights to Liberties:

Every individual should enjoy unrestrained rights and freedoms (liberties) if they were to be happy and live a fulfilling social life. In the fundamental right of the UN General Assembly of 10th December 1948, the right to personality liberty entails that nobody should be arrested or detained without lawful justification. Thus, a person must have committed a crime before being arrested. In the opinion of Mill J. S in his Essay *On Liberty* state that, "over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign" (4). The only way civil society can interfere with the rights or liberties of the individual in a society is where that person's rights or actions pose a threat to the other person's rights or harm the society entirely. On no condition should the happiness and fulfilment of individual liberty should be sacrificed at the altar of pleasing society at will. It should be noted that the individual is before society and that society existed only to serve the needs of individuals. To this extent, individual liberty should be safeguarded and secure tightly with the state apparatus. The other in society is meaningful only about the other individuals. Hence, what affects one person tends to upturn others as well because *I am because they are, and they are because I am*. The essence of Ubuntu is this connectedness of others to my being. Without the other life is meaningless and without me life is useless, thus right to liberty of others presupposes

my rights as well and guarantees peace and harmony of the world's system and operationality.

Rights to Criminal Justice:

Justice is a social virtue that secures a good that concerns both the agent and his neighbour in the words of Francis O.C. Njoku, (76). This implies that an accused person or persons should not be presumed guilty unless he/she is given the right to a fair hearing first. It also means that the person should be given an open and public trial so that justice will be seen to be done by members of the public. Therefore, any accused person must and ought to be innocent of a case till it is proven otherwise. Criminal justice is distributive by nature and according to Aristotle, the just in distributive justice is a species of proportionality, for the proportion is equality of ratios (76). What this means is that everyone is entitled to receive exactly what their action deserves. A guilty person when convicted must only serve the term in the proportionality of his or her crime (s). Every criminal justice must have human face and value and thus avoid any form of degrading human dignity. It is imperative to draw the attention of legal jurists that justice in criminal cases should be impartial because miscarriage of justice can both be offensive to God and humanity in general. Every human being has dignity. The right to dignity of the human person is universal and fundamental. It is universal in the sense that every person irrespective of their social, political, cultural, and religious backgrounds carries the image and likeness of God on them. Therefore, the legal jurist must protect every individual against unjust torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, slavery or performance of forced labour, and on the other hand, it is fundamental in the sense that every individual wants to protect his innocence and thus, the legal jurist must ensure to be transparent and impartial in their adjudication of giving verdict on mere allegations without substantial claims and proofs. The carefulness required of a legal jurist has been likened to a pregnant woman prevented from taking some medical substances should that forced her into impromptu labour.

Rights to Distributive Liberty:

Every human is entitled to some inalienable rights irrespective of our human circumstances and association. Hence, "respect for the dignity of persons as individuals with the capacity for friendly relationships qua identity and solidarity accounts naturally for rights to liberty" (Metz 548). Personhood, however, is adjudged to have the following rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Marks (2016) in his book Human Rights: A Brief Introduction holds thus:

> The "International Bill of Human Rights" (consisting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [UDHR] of 1948, and two legally-binding treaties opened for signature in 1966, namely, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), along with the other human rights treaties of the United Nations (UN) and regional

organizations, constitute the primary sources and reference points for what properly belongs in the category of human rights (Marks 4).

From the above comes the various rights we now hold onto these rights are therefore distributive to all peoples of the world. Philip Allott (1990) articulated the modification perspective of human rights and noted that there was, room for optimism on two grounds. (1) The idea of human rights having been thought, it cannot be unthought. It will not be replaced, unless by some idea which contains and surpasses it. (2) There are tenacious individuals and non-statal societies whose activity on behalf of the idea of human rights is not part of international relations but is part of a new process of international reality-forming (Allott 287).

These are all distributive. No government in the world has the moral justification to take away these rights arbitrarily without cogent reasons and of course to secure the goods of the general public. As a citizen of a country, it is your right to receive what is permissible by law to all citizens irrespective of your political, religious and ideological bent. You have the liberty to access public facilities and amenities just like all others without discrimination. Rights to distributive liberty entail gregarious enjoyment of the properties of the human species.

Impediments to the Realization of Ubuntu Moral Theory

Impediments to the realization of Ubuntu Moral theory refer to the factors that obstruct the effective protection and promotion of Ubuntu morality. Such factors include the role of individuals and community leaders, ineffective promotion of human rights by the appropriate bodies, negative impact of scientific progress, and discrimination among ethnicities.

The pursuit of narrow parochial political agendas by the government represents the greatest impediment to the full realization of human Ubuntu morality. While the dominant role of the state in human rights remains a fact today, it is important to know that as well as being a protector of human rights the state too is the fundamental human rights then there is room for disorder and conflict. For example, in Nigeria during elections the political rights of the citizens are abused by rigging the elections, those who emerged into office are not those voted by the people.

Repositioning Ubuntu for Communal Brotherhood

The conceptualization of Ubuntu connotes *African humanism* and *Personhood*. In African anthropology, the person is invariably inseparable from his or her community; the person is part and parcel of the community. This implies that without the community the individual is lost and without the individual, the community cannot exist. It is the communitarian nature

of the Africans that made it difficult if not impossible to have staunch atheists because it is absurd and repugnant for one single to stand out and proclaim his or her belief. This is evident in why Africans are crazily and notoriously religious.

Ubuntu as a concept has both moral and social dimensions. The moral dimension is the fact that each person is a human being worthy of respect and honour. Africans have respect for the sacredness of human life and respect for elders. There is a common saying that "Africans are their brother's and sister's keepers". Although social reality and facts might make this assertion controversial because of its epistemic justification over glaring corruption at the nose and gross human rights abuses within the African setting. This notwithstanding, Ubuntu is a clarion call for reawakening and reexamination of the African cherished values and norms. The social dimension of Ubuntu is the fact that the individual becomes a person through the community. Thus, whatever we are given. These given denote our conformity to the values and standards raised by the community. It is the community that defines and points to us what is permissible and lawful and what is forbidden. In the opinion of John Mbiti as quoted in Michael Onyebuchi Eze, Ubuntu / *Botho: Ideology or Promise* says that in traditional life,

> the individual does not and cannot exist alone except corporately. He owes this existence to other people […] He is simply part of the whole. The community must therefore make, create, or produce the individual; for the individual depends on the corporate group […] the individual can only say: "I am, because we are; and since we are therefore I am". This is a cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of man (251).

In the same vein, the whole community is seen as the mother and father of every individual. Thus, the individual is wealthy if the community is wealthy and poor if the community is poor. The individual has his allegiance and respect for the community. The communal nature is best exemplified in the activity's marriage rites, burial rites, naming ceremonies, the transition period from one stage to another and other festivities ranging from coronation, worship, businesses, etc. It is imperative to quickly note that the individual attachment and inseparability from the community do not in any way negate the autonomy of the person. The individual has freedom and rights within the African system even though the community is seen as supreme.

The best way to form and sustain a community is to first recognize the presence of otherness. A tree does not make a forest, nor can a forest exist without a tree. Both the tree and the forest must be. Without the tree, there can be no possibility of the forest. Thus, repositioning Ubuntu as a communal brotherhood entails and requires the consciousness of others and the willingness and readiness to protect and preserve their rights. Coming together to live a communal life requires certain toleration and respect for the other. As social and political beings, we are being of multiple interests and desires, hence there is a dire need to put into cognizance the peculiarities and interests of all in brackets.

Menkiti was quoted by Michael Onyebuchi Eze from extrapolating African sayings, proverbs and anthropological nuances to conclude that:

> As far as Africans are concerned, the reality of the communal world takes precedence over the reality of the individual life histories […] and this primacy is meant to apply not only ontologically, but also regarding epistemic accessibility. It is in rootedness in an ongoing human community that the individual comes to see himself as a man, and it is by first knowing this community as a stubborn perduring fact of the psychophysical world that the individual also comes to know himself as a durable, more or less permanent, fact of this world […] That full personhood is not perceived as simply given at the very beginning of one's life but is attained after one is well along in society, indicates straight away that the older an individual gets the more of a person he becomes (248- 249).

The point is that the community is a starting point for every individual in the world. No one becomes a person in isolation. We are human because we come from human offspring. The human offspring is from the community and the community is from individual families. The sense of brotherhood is nurtured within the cradle of the community, the family. Each family is an extension of a larger society. Since parents are part and parcel of the community, they in turn form their children with the norms, customs and laws of the community in which they live, move and become human beings. Brotherhood should be seen and understood from the point of sharing, experiencing, giving, receiving and doing and having things in common. That's, whatever I have belongs to my brother, the other. Thus, within the community, we don't lay claim to things as a personal possession even though it is my property but sharing what we have with others and sharing with others what we don't have.

In the opinion of Kwasi Wiredu (1996), in his *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective* asserts that in traditional African society, "the concept of a person is a social concept before it is anything else […] personhood is not an automatic quality of the human individual; it is something to be achieved" (15). This means that the relationship of the individual with the community presupposes his humanness. It is the community that defines the individual and at the same, it is the community that protects and preserves the rights of the individual within the community. The communitarian nature of the African personality is tied down to the individual's obligations and responsibilities to his community. The quality of being human is achieved in the process of interrelationship with others in the community. Our uniqueness and goodness or humanness are shown by what we do for the community. When we help one person, we are in turn helping the community and when we help the community, we are helping the individual because the individual is part and parcel of the community.

Primacy is given to the community because the community is like a tree and the individuals are branches. Whatever affects the community necessarily affects all but not as individual cases.

Conclusion

Most governments in the world have come to realize the indispensability of people and individual rights from the local to the global community. The consciousness of the rights of others is the beginning and subject matter of setting up the justice system in such a way as to address any abuses or encroachments of people's rights and liberties. The state should be the vanguard to protect and safeguard the rights of all people irrespective of their class, social status, political affiliations, religious creeds and cultural backgrounds. The basis for government intervention in promoting and enforcing the rights of all people is on the ground that we are human beings and as human beings, we are born with inalienable rights that needed to be enjoyed and preserved. Furthermore, the government should ensure that justice is served to all and likewise, they should enforce the rights of all without discrimination of any kind.

Government should know that they existed because of human beings. For brotherhood to exist first they must be a person who can enter social intercourse with the other and this person is being with bundles of rights that ought to be respected, reverence and uphold. Therefore, it is imperative and germane for the government to be vigilant to ensure the equality of all to promote and preserve this brotherhood Ubuntu. Thus, without Ubuntu, there is no government. And so, Justice cannot be attained nor achieved.

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IKEJI FESTIVAL AND THE PRESERVATION OF IGBO CULTURAL HERITAGE: A HERMENEUTIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This paper questions the relationship between festivals and cultural preservation by analysing the Ikeji festival of Arondizuogu. Ikeji festival is a significant annual cultural event celebrated in the Igbo community of Arondizuogu of Southeastern Nigeria, by Aros at home and in the diaspora. This study specifically seeks to determine whether festivals are a sufficient means of preserving and transmitting cultural heritage and the African Traditional Religion. Much has been written on the impact of festivals on tourism and the economy, with little or no focus on the role of festivals in preserving African traditional religion and cultural heritage in the face of globalization. As the subject matter is not well researched, this study contributes to a more in-depth understanding of the role of the Ikeji festival in preserving Igbo religious and cultural heritages. To provide a well-rounded perspective, a hermeneutic approach of historical analysis was employed to determine the festival's contribution to the preservation of cultural heritage. This paper also examines the specific ways through which the Ikeji festival promotes essential Igbo values, such as ancestor veneration, masquerade, communal living, prayer, thanksgiving, history and mentorship, while offering a learning opportunity for the younger generation. The research findings will enrich the growing body of literature on African cultural history and will be of great value to scholars, researchers, historians, and cultural enthusiasts seeking to understand the significance of festivals in preserving cultural preservation.

Keywords: Ikeji festival, Igbo, Arondizuogu, cultural heritage and preservation, African Traditional Religion

Ikechukwu Anthony Kanu, PhD & Precious Onyekachi Okoye

Introduction

Cultural heritage is a way of living a community has inherited from previous generations that it passes on to the following generation. It refers to cultural sites, monuments, folklore, religious beliefs, languages, customs, artistic expressions, values, etc. that are considered vital to be preserved for future generations[1]. The concept of cultural heritage is characterised by the idea of a shared connection and sense of belonging among members of a community. It embodies the historical and identity-related elements that define a particular group, serving as a link between the past, present, and future. In the contemporary era of globalisation, cultural heritage plays an important role in reminding us of our diverse cultural backgrounds and can facilitate mutual respect and meaningful dialogue between different cultures. By acknowledging the historical and cultural significance of our heritage, we can cultivate a greater appreciation for our differences and a more inclusive global community.

Given the above, it therefore holds that the preservation of a society's cultural heritage is fundamental to its identity. This is because cultural heritage comprises the shared values, customs, beliefs, and practices that define a people. Consequently, it is critical to maintain and safeguard cultural heritage to preserve the identity of a society. Festivals have long played a crucial role in cultural heritage preservation as they provide an essential platform for the promotion and preservation of the traditional values and practices that form the basis of a society's cultural heritage. In Arondizuogu town of Southeastern Nigeria, the annual Ikeji festival is a prime example of such a festival.

Cultural festivals represent a type of intangible cultural heritage that is characterised by its absence of physical manifestation, in contrast to other tangible cultural artefacts such as historical monuments and relics. The intangible nature of festivals is rooted in the traditions and living expressions that have been inherited from prior generations and passed down to descendants, encompassing elements such as oral traditions, rituals, performing arts, social customs, knowledge regarding nature, religious ceremonies, artisanal crafts, music, dance, literature, theatre, language, and cuisine[2]. The safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage is particularly challenging due to its experiential nature and inability to be restricted to a physical space, necessitating collective efforts by the community as a whole to ensure its preservation.

The Ikeji, loosely translated as (yam tying), holds a significant cultural position within the Igbo community of Arondizuogu, situated in Southeastern Nigeria. Ikeji is a festival that primarily centres around expressions of gratitude and propitiation. Moreover, it functions as

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[1] The Significance of Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Information Eritrea, October 2, 2019. https://shabait.com/2019/10/02/the-significance-of-cultural-heritage/. Accessed on February 19th, 2023.
[2] UNESCO, The Intangible Cultural Heritage. https://www.unesco.org/en/intangible-cultural-heritage. Accessed on February 19th, 2023.

a platform for the community to collectively recount and recollect the history and stories that bind them together, as well as for the resolution of disputes and reconciliation between different lineages[3]. The genesis of the Ikeji festival can be traced back to the "Emume Itinye Aka N' Ubi"[4] feast, an event initiated by Mazi Iheme, the regent of Mazi Izuogu, who was entrusted with the administration of the new Arondizuogu settlement while Mazi Izuogu, the famed warrior from Arochukwu, continued his military campaigns. The Emume feast was a means for Mazi Iheme to obtain the blessings of his master Izuogu before embarking on land cultivation and crop cultivation, and it was from this feast that the Ikeji festival of Arondizuogu was born.

This paper puts forward a central argument that emphasises the enduring importance of festivals in preserving and transmitting Igbo culture and traditional Igbo religion despite their ephemeral nature. The study argues that this is particularly relevant in a world that is rapidly becoming increasingly globalised, and thus, it is crucial to investigate the specific contributions that festivals make towards cultural conservation. To accomplish this, the paper employs hermeneutic and thematic approaches to historical analysis, with the goal of identifying and elucidating the key ways in which festivals sustain the Igbo culture. The research findings highlight specific aspects of cultural promotion that are manifested through the Ikeji festival.

Overall, the paper contributes significantly to the ongoing discourse on religio-cultural preservation and offers valuable insights into the importance of cultural conservation. By the end of this study, readers will have gained a more thorough understanding of the critical role that festivals play in preserving cultural heritage, maintaining social identity, and their significance for the African society.

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[3] Ikechukwu Anthony Kanu and Precious Onyekachi Okoye, Tourism, the Diaspora and the Ikeji Festival of Arondizuogu: Culture and the Exigencies of Modernism. Ochendo: An African Journal of Innovative Studies, vol. 3 no 2, 2022. P. 2.

[4] Ibid

The People of Arondizuogu

The etymological transcription of the name Arondizuogu is thus:

Arondizuogu, a large settlement spanning across three local government areas in Imo State, Nigeria, has a rich and intricate history that traces back to its parent community of Arochukwu. During the 18th and 19th centuries, Arochukwu established a confederacy that spread its influence and presence throughout Eastern Nigeria, the lower Middle Belt, and some parts of Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea[5]. The Aro people, who were headquartered in Arochukwu, revered the Chuku shrine, which housed a powerful oracle called Long Juju by the Europeans. The oracle acted as a judge for the Igbo supreme deity, Chuku, and played a crucial role in the recruitment of slaves who were deported to America and Europe from the port of Bonny and other coastal areas. The British forces destroyed the shrine and its powers during the Anglo-Aro war of 1900-02[6].
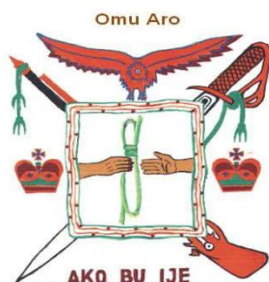
Source: Adamazi.com[7]

Today, the Aro people can be found in over 250 settlements worldwide[8], but none more prominent than Arondizuogu, which spans across 20 villages collectively known as "Ndi Izuogu na Iheme" (people of Izuogu and Iheme).

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[5] Chikezie Okoronkwo and Gibson F. Okoroafor, Value of Masquerades in Igbo Land: a Study of Ikeji Festival of Arondizuogu, International Journal of Strategic Research in Education, Technology and Humanities, Vol. 7, No 9, June 2019. P. 5.

[6] A. E. Afigbo, the Eclipse of the Aro Slaving Oligarchy of Southeastern Nigeria, 1901 - 1927, Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, Vol. 6 no 1, December 1971. P. 1-2.

[7] Uche Ohia, the Origin of Omu Aro, Published October 9th, 2017. https://adamazi.com/2017/10/the-origin-of-omu-aro-by-uche-ohia/. Retrieved on February 21st, 2023.

[8] Chikezie Okoronkwo and Gibson F. Okoroafor, Value of Masquerades in Igbo Land, P. 6.

According to local history, the origins of the settlement currently referred to as Arondizuogu can be traced to Mazi Izuogu Mgboko, a renowned warrior and slave dealer from Arochukwu who maintained the Aro confederacy in any new community he conquered. Among these communities was Arondizuogu, where he appointed his chief servant, Mazi Iheme, in the mid 14th century to oversee the administration of the newly established settlement. Today, the settlement has expanded to encompass 20 villages, collectively known as 'Ndi Izuogu na Iheme' (people of Izuogu and Iheme), and spans three local government areas in Imo state of Nigeria, namely Ideato North, Onuimo, and Okigwe, with other adjacent communities.

IZUOGU COMMUNITIES	S/N	IHEME COMMUNITIES
Ndi Uche	1	Ndi Aniche
Ndi Awa	2	Ndi Onuoha
Ndi Njoku	3	Ndi Eze
Ndi Imoko	4	Ndi Okonkwo
Ndi Amazu	5	Ndi Ogbuonyeoma
Ndi Ejezie	6	Ndi Akeme
Ndi Adimoha	7	Ndi Ukwu
Ndi Anyake	8	Ndi Akunwanta
Ndi Uwaonu	9	
Ndi Ucheagwu	10	
Ndi Ndubuisi	11	
Ndi Ekwulu	12	

The Ikeji Festival of Arondizuogu

The origin of the Ikeji festival in Arondizuogu is shrouded in mythology as many versions exist. Uche Ohia, however, suggested that Ikeji began as a ceremony to mark the end of one planting season and the beginning of another[9]. According to Oghaji, the festival has its roots from its variant celebrated in Arochukwu, the parent community of Arondizuogu[10] where Mazi Izuogu resided. Oghaji further narrates that Ikeji Arondizuogu originated from the parent community - Arochukwu where it was celebrated around the month of September, in line with the Igbo calendar of new yam festival celebration. During that time, Mazi Iheme, who was a regent placed by Mazi Izuogu in the new Arondizuogu settlement to manage it, would travel to Arochukwu to celebrate the feast in his master's household and to pay him all the homage rites due to him as his master and lord, in accordance with Aro tradition.

Upon return to Arondizuogu, Mazi Iheme would return the favour the next year by extending an invite to his master Izuogu to the new settlement-Arondizuogu to officially seek his permission to till the land[11]. This was usually done in March/April and was a celebratory occasion where Mazi Iheme would entertain his master to a grandiose feast and colourful masquerade displays during his stay. He called this ceremony *Emume itinye aka n'ubi*[12](occasion of laying hands into the farmland), where Mazi Izuogu would bless the land before the people cultivate crops.

Ikeji, which is a four-day festival of great cultural significance to the Aro people, was originally a festival of eight days held annually in March or April according to the Igbo calendar (Eke, Oye, Afor and Nkwo). Each of these days have special names and hold special significance that adds meaning to the Ikeji celebration. The last day of the festival is on Eke day, the beginning of a new week, and is called Eke Nwusa Akpata[13]. It is on this day that masquerades assemble at the market square to stage their final display in the festival. At the end of the displays, all masquerades are expected to discard their whips (akpata), hence the title - Eke Nwusa Akpata (Eke for the discarding of whips)[14]. The festival is a period of propitiation, thanksgiving, and feasting, and is marked by a series of events that embody the essence of Aro tradition and culture. The festival is based on the Igbo calendar, with each of the four days of Ikeji corresponding to one of the four market days (Eke, Oye/Orie, Afo and Nkwo) in an Igbo week. Each day of the festival represents a

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[9]Uche Ohia, Ikeji Festival of Arondizuogu: An Introduction. Silverduck Publishing Press, Nigeria, 2014. P. 2.

[10] Nat Okafor- Ogbaji, Ikeji Festival Arondizuogu, ancient and modern. Lagos Printing Press, Nigeria, 1998. P. 11-12.

[11] I. A. Kanu and Precious Onyekachi Okoye, Tourism, the diaspora and Ikeji festival of Arondizuogu: Culture and the exigencies of modernism. OCHENDO: An African Journal of Innovative Studies. Vol. 3. No. 2. 2022, P.3.

[12] H. A. P. Nwana, Arondizuogu Traditional Values. Standard Publishers Ltd, Nigeria, 2005. P. 24-27.

[13] I. A. Kanu and Precious Onyekachi Okoye, Tourism, the diaspora and Ikeji festival of Arondizuogu: Culture and the exigencies of modernism, P. 5.

[14] Ibid

unique dimension of Ikeji, which is renowned for its colourful performances, fascinating masquerades, and pulsating rhythms. The traditional musical instruments used during the festival include wooden slit drums (ekwe) of various sizes, metal gongs (ogene), bells, and wooden flutes (oja).

Ikeji is a period of togetherness and forgiveness, and is marked by various cultural displays, seminars, and lectures on Aro cultures, visits to historic cultural sites, pouring of libation, exchange of kola-nuts, and paying homage to Aro traditional institutions. The festival is also a period for communication with ancestors, reconciliation, peace building, conflict resolutions and development projects. This period is often marked by joyful celebrations of sonship. The festival is a unique platform for the observance of Aro tradition and culture in its pure and varied forms. It is a ceremony that promotes tourism and cheerful dispositions and provides an opportunity for the Aro people to come together to celebrate their culture and promote their heritage. During this period, burials are postponed and cases are resolved with equanimity, highlighting the importance of peace and development.[15].

On the prominence of the festival in Igbo land, Chikezie asserts that the Ikeji is: "One of the longest reigning festivals in Igbo land and the biggest pan-Igbo cultural community festival with strong heritage and international recognition. Perhaps, Ikeji remains the biggest cultural festival in Igboland."[16] Notably, the Ikeji festival represents the most significant cultural celebration for the people of Arondizuogu. The festival is an annual manifestation of the community's cultural heritage, which is characterised by elaborate processions, traditional dances, and the display of various cultural artefacts. It is a time when the community members come together to celebrate their unique cultural identity, which has been shaped by a rich and complex history spanning centuries.

The Concept of Cultural Preservation and Heritage

Gilman asserts that cultural conservation efforts in Africa are focused on preserving indigenous cultural practices linked to ethnic identity and heritage, which are gradually waning due to various factors such as colonisation, globalisation, and urbanisation[17]. Given that festivals are intangible cultural heritage that are sustained only when the communities make concerted efforts to preserve them, it is imperative to explicate and accentuate the salient features of festivals that advance a people's culture. This is the only way to ensure the continuity of a culture in a rapidly evolving world. Albeit fragile, intangible cultural

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[15] Chikezie Okoronkwo and Gibson F. Okoroafor, Value of Masquerades in Igbo Land: a Study of Ikeji Festival of Arondizuogu, P. 8.

[16] Ibid

[17] Lisa Gilman, Festivals, Tourism and Cultural Conservation: Comparing the Livingstone Cultural and Arts Festival and the Nc'wala Traditional Ceremony in Zambia

heritage is an important factor in maintaining cultural diversity in the face of growing globalisation[18].

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO popularized the concept of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) during the 2003 UNESCO convention; to protect indigenous cultures' non-physical aspects[19], which are vulnerable to fading away. Cultural preservation is a significant issue for African countries, given the continent's diverse and abundant heritage, encompassing natural, cultural, and intangible elements. These components are interwoven through various ways of living, believing, healing, dying, and celebrating[20]. For centuries, Africa's diverse intangible heritage has influenced the world through processes such as diffusion, acculturation, and movement. The continent's ICH is expressed through numerous traditions, practices, and beliefs, including the knowledge of its elders, artists, builders, and musicians, among others. It is also present in its poetry, drum beats, historical sites, landscapes, and works of art[21]. Despite being dynamic and rhythmic, Africa's ICH is fragile and vulnerable after enduring centuries of discrimination, destruction, and displacement under colonialism and religious acculturation.

Ikeji Festival and the Preservation of Religio-Cultural Heritage

The Ikeji festival has been found to significantly promote the Igbo culture through numerous aspects; some of which include but are not limited to: ancestor veneration, masquerade and masquerading, communal living, prayer, thanksgiving, enrichening of history, promotion of mentorship and transfer of knowledge from the young to the old, reinforcement of the Igbo cultural sense of sportsmanship and the preservation of Igbo oral history. We will look at these aspects in succeeding paragraphs:

1.   Value of Ancestor veneration:

Ancestor veneration means obeisance to the spirits of the dead. This is based on love, respect and honour for the dead. It is related to beliefs that the dead have a continued existence and may possess the ability to influence the fortune of the living. In the Igbo religion, death is not a sufficient condition for becoming an ancestor. Only those who lived a full measure of life, cultivated moral values, and achieved social distinction attain this status[22].

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[18] UNESCO, What is Intangible Cultural Heritage, https://ich.unesco.org/en/what-is-intangible-heritage-00003. Retrieved on February 21st, 2023.

[19] Ibid

[20] Abungu, George. "Africa's Rich Intangible Heritage: Managing a Continent's Diverse Resources." In *Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage*, edited by Michelle L. Stefano, Peter Davis, and Gerard Corsane, 8:57–70. Boydell & Brewer, 2012. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7722/j.ctt81mt8.10.

[21] Ibid

[22] Encyclopedia Britannica, African Religions. https://www.britannica.com/topic/African-religions#ref810959. Retrieved on February 21st, 2023.

One of the intrinsic aspects of Igbo culture that the Ikeji festival promotes is ancestor veneration or worship. One symbolic representation of ancestor veneration practiced during the Ikeji is the application of the *Ofo.* Kanu avers that during worship, the Priest uses the Ọfọ, which is an insignia of authority among the Igbo obtained from a specific sacred tree. It is also used by every man who has family and kindred (Umunna). It is usually portable so that it can be carried in a goat skin bag by elders. The Ofo symbolises justice and a clear mind. Thus, in the Igbo world, nothing important can be done without the invocation of the Ọfọ. Through it, the righteous dead, good spirits are invoked to uphold justice, decisions and settle disputes[23].

Another symbolic representation of ancestor veneration during Ikeji is in the breaking of kolanut. Among the Igbo, Kolanut is a sign of communion, not just among the living, but also between the living and the dead. During the breaking of the kola, heaven and earth come together and this is seen in the invocation of God (Chukwu Abiama bia taa ọjị), the heavens and the earth (elu na ala bịa ta ọjị), the deities (amadịọha bịa ta ọjị), and the dead ancestors (nnam… bịa taa ọjị)[24].

2.   Value of Masquerade and Masquerading,

According to Nwoga, there exist three forms of being that impinge on a person's life - the physical that can be touched, weighed, eaten, that can touch one through the usual sense; the spiritual which may not be seen or touched except by specially "washed" eyes, but which all the same can affect the shape and nature of physical being; and then the abstract which exists and may affect reality by becoming realised in either of the other forms, physical or spiritual[25]. The idea of masquerade in Igbo tradition relates to all three senses.

Drawing from popular Igbo belief, Masquerades are very important spiritual elements of society. They have symbolic representation and serve many important roles in society. Depending on the locality in Igbo land, Masquerades can have replica images of deities and important ancestral relatives of the society. Consequently, the identities of the masquerade are well-kept secret from children, women, and the uninitiated men of society. Kanu posits that the idea of masquerades in Igbo African ontology is drawn from the understanding of ancestors among the African people and that they are symbols of the dead forefathers of the visible world. One of the ways through which they visit human beings, that is, the living is

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[23] Kanu Ikechukwu Anthony, on the Sources of African Philosophy, Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religion, vol. 11 no 4, 2022, P. 12.
[24] Kanu Ikechukwu Anthony, on the Sources of African Philosophy, p.12.
[25] Nwoga. D.I., NkanaNzere: Focusof Igboworld view, 1984. https://www.ahiajokuIgbonet.com. Retrieved on February 21st 2023.

through masquerades[26]. Ogbonna further alludes that Masquerades (**Mmanwụ**) are held in accordance with local native calendars during festivals such as Christmas and New Yam Festivals, burial rites and other serious social gatherings. The masquerades are adorned in esoteric regalia and colourful masks made of wood and other fabric materials[27].

Source: BBC Igbo[28]

By Arondizuogu tradition, it is a taboo for any part of the masquerade to be exposed by anyone, it is also a taboo to fight with, unmask or to call a masquerade by a human name[29].
Also it was not unusual to witness a tough masquerade walk up to certain individuals and loudly berate them publicly for their hidden abominable bad habits such as coveting a friend's wife, serious crimes such as poisoning someone or other adjudged misbehaviour to society. As crude as this style seems in present day and age, they were very effective in instilling corrective measures to many would-be deviants of society. Thus the traditional norms and values of the community were preserved without sacred cows flouting them on the basis of economic and political status. Since Masquerades were regarded as spirits, they were no respecters of individuals. Every member of society paid attention.

The Ikeji is regarded as a festival of masquerades due to the wide array of masquerades that manifest during the festival. The Ikeji masquerades speak in a guttural voice, sometimes it recites traditional poetry like a troubadour; other times it displays acrobatic dance steps to thrill the crowd of spectators. Each masquerade bears a specific name. Some very important

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[26] Kanu Ikechukwu Anthony, Masquerades in African Philosophy and the Issue of Nation Building, Indian Journal of Applied Research, Vol. 4: Issue 9, September 2014, P. 1.
[27] Mazi Ogbonna, Igbo Masquerades and their Importance to Society, Ekwendigbo. http://ekwendigbo.com/index.php/ar-aa/entertainment/item/29-igbo-masquerades-and-their-importance-to-society, retrieved on February 21st, 2023.
[28]Ikeji Festival: Ihe BBC Igbo huru n'Arondizuogu https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-47944818, published April 16th, 2019. Retrieved on February 21st, 2023.
[29] Kanu, I. A. and Precious Onyekachi Okoye, Tourism, the diaspora and Ikeji festival of Arondizuogu: Culture and the exigencies of modernism, P. 6.

Ikeji masquerades include Mgbadike, Ojionu, Okwomma, Onyekuruye, amongst many others. Each of these masquerades have special significance to the people of Arondizuogu.

1. **MGBADIKE** is regarded as *Nna mmonwu* or father spirit. He exerts authority and exhibits physical strength and fearlessness, presumably dumb and must always have an *otimkpu* (mouthpiece).
2. **NWA ABUJA** is the *Nne Mmonwu* of mother spirit. She is the mother figure of the masquerade family. reputed for her stories and comics. The picture below shows the Mgbadike masquerade (left) and Nwa Abuja (right).

Source: Twitter[30]

3. **OJIONU** is the most ubiquitous masquerade at Ikeji festivals. It is the athletic, whip wielding and fear inducing masquerade that chases cheeky spectators around. Ojionu is regarded as the male child of the masquerade family because he exhibits the agility and vitality of youth.
4. **OKWOMMA** is the king of all masquerades in Arondizuogu in much the same way that Ijele is the chief masquerade in Anambra areas. As such, Okwomma never walks alone, as he must be accompanied by other masquerades such as Ojionu and Mgbadike who make way to herald its appearance. Okwomma symbolises prestige and power in Arondizuogu.
5. **ONYEKURUYE** is a night masquerade who moves about singing in the village. In his songs, he criticises whoever has perpetrated evil in the community and warns them to stop their evil practices. It is a common practice for the community to listen

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[30] https://twitter.com/ukpuru/status/1033425750521769984. Retrieved on February 21st, 2023.

with rapt attention and learn about the wrong actions of other people through Onyekuruye's melodies.

Source: Nairaland.com[31]

The Ikeji masquerades perform an array of roles in the community which include representing the will of the community - they do not do or act just the way they want or order people around. When they enforce obedience and discipline, they do that because that is what the community wants done[32] and enforcing good morals through discipline and exposure of wrong behaviours as exemplified by the singsong Onyekuruye masquerade.

Kanu notes that Igbo masquerading is an exclusive society or cult for men and this aligns with the Igbo traditional structure which places a lot of value on the men. He further avers thus:

> This does not imply that masquerades are anti-feminine. Many masquerades dress like women, displaying women's features and prefer being in the company of women. In some Igbo societies, aged women are admitted into the cult of masquerades because it is considered inappropriate to frighten them. The general reason why women are excluded is because they are considered incapable of tolerating hazards and keeping secrets.[33]

3.   Kinship

As observed by Alyward, the African traditional life is centred around the family. The family is where life is generated, a basic unit of life which represents in miniature the life of

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[31] https://www.nairaland.com/6084092/mysterious-onyekulum-masquerade-adazi-nnukwu. Retrieved on February 21st, 2023.
[32] Kanu Ikechukwu Anthony, Masquerades in African Philosophy and the Issue of Nation Building, P.2.
[33] Ibid

the entire people; it is in the family that the values of the clan, the tribe and of Africa are transmitted whether the individuals are in Africa, Europe or elsewhere in the world. Kinship can be understood as a culture's system of recognized family roles and relationships that define the obligations, rights, and boundaries of interaction among the members of a self-recognizing group[34]. It could be defined through genetic relationships, adoption, or other ritualised behaviour such as marriage and household economies.

The Igbo perception of Kinship is aptly summed up in the writings of the prodigious novelist, Chinua Achebe. During one of the feasts organised by Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart*, his uncle Uchendu revealed the essence of the Igbo-African kinship: "We do not pray to have more money but to have more kinsmen. We are better than animals because we have kinsmen. An animal rubs its itching flank against a tree, a man asks his kinsman to scratch him."[35]

The Aro's perception of kinship is hinged on their belief of 'Aro Oke Igbo' which means Aro of the Great Igbo. The economic and religious dominance enjoyed by the Aro in the 14th to 16th century Igboland made them closely knit together despite the fact that they were migrants. So no matter the new settlement occupied by the Aro, he recognizes his kin and addresses him as 'Nwa Mazi' (son of Mazi) or 'Ada Mazi'(daughter of Mazi) and Mazi (for older males). In more recent times, the Ikeji festival has reinforced the Aro philosophy of kinship and has become the chief reason why Aro men and women spread across several countries of the world return home every year to sit together with their kin, and celebrate the values of a festival that knits the community together. Based on the foregoing, it can then be inferred that the Ikeji festivals strengthens cultural heritage by fostering familial relationships and community pride.

Duke argues that festivals are performative dimensions of cultural praxis that strengthens bonds of cohesion in society[36]. Therefore, festivals are an excellent platform for social interaction within a community because they are often characterised by communal activities such as dancing, music, and communal meals. As people participate in these activities, they create an atmosphere of unity and shared experience, which fosters a sense of belonging among individuals. Festivals create a space for social exchange, where people can come together, socialise and interact with one another in a way that may not be possible during the regular course of daily life. Festivals also provide a platform for individuals to explore

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[34] Kanu Ikechukwu Anthony, Kinship in African Philosophy and the Issue of Development, International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE) Volume 1, Issue 9, September 2014, P. 1.

[35] Achebe, C. (1949). Things Fall Apart, Britain: Heinemann. P. 132.

[36] Emmanuel Duke, from Festival to Social Communion: a Nigerian Experience, Social Space Journal, https://socialspacejournal.eu/19%20numer/From%20festival%20to%20social%20communion%20a%20Nigerian%20experience%20-%20Emmanuel%20Orok%20Duke%20Stella%20E%20Osim.pdf. Retrieved on February 21st, 2023.

and express their cultural identity, which is essential to developing a sense of belonging and connection to their community

Most importantly, festivals provide a unique opportunity to strengthen family bonds. Many festivals are rooted in family traditions, which mean that they provide a chance for families to come together, spend time with one another, and create new memories. For example, the Ikeji festival is often celebrated with family members coming together to cook, eat and celebrate together. As individuals engage in these activities, they develop a closer relationship with their families and create shared experiences that promote a sense of unity. Festivals are not just celebrations of past events; they are a way of bringing people together and creating new traditions, which help to strengthen the social fabric of a community.

4.   Prayer

The Igbo people were primarily worshippers of the God of the earth, sky and seas before the advent of Christianity. This accounts for their reverence and titles referred to God, some of which include:

> **Obasi bi n'elu**~~~~~~~~~~~~ (God who lives in Heaven),
> **Chukwu Okike**~~~~~~~~~~~~ (God the Creator),
> **O'sebuluwa**~~~~~~~~~~~~~ (the maker of the world)
> **Igwekala** ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~ (the heavens above the earth) and so on.

Frazer argued that the mind of man refuses to acquiesce and settle in the phenomenon of sense, and hence man seeks for something more abiding and supernatural than the sensible world and conceives the idea of spiritual being[37]. This was exactly the case of the Igbo man. The Igbo man believes in one God called Chukwu (a collapsed form of Chi - Ukwu meaning Great God).

African traditional prayers also reveal so much about the African traditional philosophy of religion, especially about the relationship between the human and the divine. In many African prayers, God is approached as a Dependable Being, Friend and as Benevolent. The general format is usually the giving of praise to God, then the need of the worshipper is put forward, and such needs include protection, procreation, and prosperity.

Beyond the belief in God, is also the African belief in ancestors and forefathers as earlier stated. The Africans believe that the land is a historical tie between the dead and the living, and the natural world vs the supernatural world as it is on the same land that their fathers before them lived and were buried. Therefore, the Africans in their prayers, remember their ancestors and call their names, praying that they guide them in celebrating a tradition which they themselves did not invent, but which was passed onto them by their forebears.

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[37] James George Frazer, the Golden Bough, a study of Magic and Religion, Palgrave Macmillian, 1922.

Drawing upon this, this explains why during the Oye Egbugbu day (Oye of Slaughter) which the second day of the Ikeji festival is, families bring out all the livestock they purchased the previous market day (Eke Odu). These animals are then slaughtered, and the male patriarch of each family visits the *Obi* (family altar), where prayers are made to the ancestors and the animals offered. This is a ritual that must be completed before the animals are cooked for the celebration. The Aros believe that on Oye Egbugbu day, the good ancestral spirits visit the *Obi* to commune with their descendants. The significance is that people are very careful of their words and actions so as not to anger the ancestors who would come visiting[38].

Generally speaking, the Ikeji is a relic of the *Emume Ibinye Aka N' Ubi* feast where Iheme hosts his master Mazi Izuogu, seeking his permission and blessings to farm the land which was given to him to manage. The general spirit of the Ikeji festival is that of prayer and thanksgiving and seeking the blessings of the ancestors before cultivating the land, and praying that their efforts be blessed with a bountiful harvest later in the year. The Aro culture is intertwined with religion and the belief in a high Chi, which is greater than the personal chi of every individual. During the prayers, libations are poured in the family obi and the spirits of the forefathers are welcomed again to the place they called home in their lifetime.

5.   Value of History:

Some may argue that festivals are simply a form of entertainment, and that their historical significance is incidental. However, research has proven that festivals are a valuable tool for preserving and promoting the value of history in a community. By celebrating cultural events and traditions, festivals provide an opportunity for people to connect with their heritage and learn about their ancestors' beliefs and customs. Festivals are not just a form of entertainment; they are an essential tool for preserving and promoting the value of history in a community. As the great writer and historian Marcus Tullius Cicero once said, "To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child." Festivals help communities to avoid this fate by ensuring that the wisdom and knowledge of their ancestors are passed down to future generations.

The celebration of festivals offers a unique opportunity for communities to gather and commemorate their shared past. Festivals serve as a space for individuals to convene, share their narratives, and connect with their cultural heritage. In numerous cultures, festivals are occasions where family and friends assemble to partake in food, music, and dance. The act

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[38] Ibid

of congregating in a communal area promotes a sense of belonging and fosters collective memory that can be passed down through generations.

Moreover, festivals are also effective vehicles for cultural education. The Ikeji festival, for example, incorporates educational initiatives, workshops, and exhibits through the Arondizuogu Patriotic Union (APU), that imparts knowledge about cultural heritage to participants. Many articles have been written about the Ikeji festival and the rich cultural representations it provides, not just about the people of Arondizuogu, but for the Igbo man. Festivals showcase traditional clothing, music, and art, allowing people to learn about cultural practices that might have been forgotten over time; thereby, preserving the intangible aspects of cultural heritage.

The Ikeji festival of Arondizuogu is a prime example of how festivals can preserve and transmit culture. The scholarly conversation around this festival serves as a testament to the fact that cultural festivals have the potential to maintain and promote cultural heritage. Overall, festivals are a valuable means of cultural preservation, education, and community building, and they should continue to be celebrated and supported.

6.   Value of Mentorship by the old for the young

Mentorship occupies a central theme during Ikeji, and it is deeply ingrained in the traditional customs and practices surrounding the event. One way in which the Ikeji festival emphasises mentorship is through the participation of elders in the festivities. During the festivals, *ndi Ichie* (elders) are given a place of honour and are respected for their age, knowledge and experience. They are responsible for leading certain aspects of the celebration, such as the offering of prayers and blessings for the harvest. This not only reinforces the importance of the older generation in the community but also provides a valuable opportunity for them to pass on their wisdom and guidance to the younger generation. It is during Ikeji that the fathers explain to their sons and daughters the cultural meaning of some of the festival activities; for example, the different types of masquerades and what each represent. Furthermore, the Ikeji festival is a time for the community to come together and bond over shared experiences. This sense of community and togetherness is important for building relationships between the old and young. It provides a space for elders to share their stories and experiences with the younger generation, and for the younger generation to learn from and connect with their elders. Through this, the young are mentored by the old, learn about the cultural values of their community, proverbs and their meanings, the importance of kolanut in Igbo events and the hidden meaning in the different kolanut lobes, taboos etcetera.

7. Reinforces Igbo cultural sense of sportsmanship

One of the festival's most anticipated activity is the *Ito Ebune*. This event is a test of bravery and juju powers among the participants. A ram is tied to a pole with a single thread in a market square, and the person with the strongest juju protection is expected to leisurely walk to the ram amidst heavy attempts by other people to knock him down, maim him, or kill him. This activity is only for the courageous, and those who are not brave either abstain from it or remain with the crowd as spectators.

The contenders face attacks from forces beyond the scope of this article, with a view to stopping them from reaching the ram. If overwhelmed, the contenders beat a retreat back to their starting point. However, the bravest among the masquerades participating in the competition for that year's festival, after overcoming all odds, will reach the ram and untie it to a thunderous applause by the spectators. This achievement is celebrated by fellow kinsmen who visit the winner's house with food and wine to celebrate his victory[39]. The annual event is a recognition of individuals in Arondizuogu and neighbouring towns who possess the strongest juju or voodoo power. Over the years, several participants have earned recognition, including the renowned Pericoma Okoye who emerged victorious in multiple contests[40].

8. Promotes cultural preservation through entertainment e.g, dance, music, folklore

The ikeji festival encompasses various fundamental elements, with two essential components being the flutist and the *ima mbem*. The flutist's role in the festival is vital as they adeptly communicate with the masquerades through soulful melodies that blend seamlessly with the rhythmic beat of the drums. The flutist's gestures and steps, coupled with the melodies, are infused with esoteric messages hidden from the ordinary eyes, which mesmerize and captivate the audience. Another captivating feature of the ikeji festival is the ima mbem, a gifted raconteur who delivers imaginative stories with a musical cadence that only the initiated can comprehend. This element adds an extra layer of intrigue to the festival, creating a sense of mystery that enhances the cultural experience for attendees. The image below is that of a man playing the flute during the Ikeji festival of 2014.

[39] "Pericomo Okoye: When a big masquerade exits the stage". *businessday.ng*. 19 February 2017 https://businessday.ng/arts-bdlife-arts/article/pericomo-okoye-big-masquerade-exits-stage/. . Retrieved 2019-12-04.

[40]"Pericoma Okoye: When an ancestor travels". *www.thenigerianvoice.com*. https://www.thenigerianvoice.com/amp/news/244932/pericoma-okoye-when-an-ancestor-travels.html. Retrieved 2019-12-04.

Source: Obindigbo[41]

The ikeji festival is more than just an annual celebration for the people of Arondizuogu; through entertainment such as dance, music, and folklore, the festival promotes and preserves the unique cultural identity of the Igbo people. Dance is an integral part of the ikeji festival, with various traditional dances performed by men and women during the celebration. These dances are not just for entertainment purposes but serve as a means of passing down traditions from generation to generation. The intricate steps and movements in the dances are a physical representation of the Igbo culture, and as such, their preservation ensures the continuation of the culture.

Similarly, music is a powerful tool for cultural preservation, and the ikeji festival makes use of music to maintain the Igbo culture. The festival features the flutist and the ima mbem, who both use music to communicate and tell stories. These musical performances are not just for entertainment purposes but serve to pass down the Igbo culture's oral traditions, values, and beliefs.

Folklore is another important component of the ikeji festival, with the *ima mbem* using storytelling to pass down cultural values and beliefs. These stories serve to entertain the audience, but also serve a more critical purpose of preserving the culture by ensuring that the next generation is aware of their cultural heritage.

Conclusion

The rapid pace of globalisation and westernisation has led to increased interest in the role of festivals in preserving cultural heritage. In this context, the question of whether festivals are

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[41] Photos from Arondizuogu Ikeji Festival 2014 in Lagos. https://obindigbo.com.ng/2014/05/photos-arondizuogu-ikeji-festival-2014-lagos/. Retrieved on February 21st, 2023.

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capable of entrenching and transmitting culture is frequently posed. This study focuses on the Ikeji Festival of Arondizuogu, which is seen as sufficient for preserving the cultural heritage of the Aro people through ancestor veneration, masquerading, sportsmanship, and other cultural practices. Despite the importance of the festival, there is a lack of research on its role in preserving Igbo religious and cultural heritage. This study contributes to a more in-depth understanding of the festival's significance in this regard. The Ikeji festival makes significant contributions to the preservation of Igbo cultural heritage, and its values need to be rekindled through greater recognition and digital promotion of the event.

The festival has the potential to attract cultural tourism and international recognition, thereby providing economic benefits that can transform the community and state. It is important to recognize that festivals are not just celebrations but have significant cultural significance. Therefore, it is essential to preserve this intangible cultural heritage by reviving the various aspects that make the festival and culture unique.

In summary, the study shows that the Ikeji Festival of Arondizuogu plays a critical role in preserving the cultural heritage of the Aro people. The festival has the potential to provide economic benefits to the community and state through cultural tourism and international recognition. It is essential to rekindle the festival's values and promote it digitally to preserve this intangible cultural heritage. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of festivals in preserving cultural heritage, and it highlights the need for further studies in this area.

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IGBOPHOBIA IN LAGOS AND NIGERIA 2023 ELECTIONS: MYTH OR REALITY?

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Abstract

Igbophobia or anti-Igbo sentiment has been identified as a phenomenon present during the 2023 presidential and gubernatorial elections in Lagos, Nigeria. The emergence of an Igbo, Peter Obi, as the presidential flag bearer of the Labour Party seemed to have fueled the feeling which peaked during the gubernatorial election. Igbos were reportedly identified, beaten and warned not to come out to cast their votes in the belief that they supported the Labour Party Gubernatorial candidate, Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour, who is part Yoruba (from his father's side) and part Igbo (from his mother's side). This study aims at establishing the reality or myth of Igbophobia as widely reported. Using the Sociological Model of voting behavior as theoretical framework, the research investigates the influence of ethnicity and religion in fueling this myth or fact of Igbophobia. The findings may serve as references to historians analyzing the elections for anti-Igbo sentiment. The study recommends that voting behaviour should be based on rational choice as an antidote against Igbophobia fueled by ethnicity and religion.

Keywords: Igbophobia, ethnicity, religion, voting behaviour, election.

Introduction

"Phobia" basically derives from the Greek word "phobos" which means terror or fear. And every word created from this root would embody this same anxiety. Igbophobia literally means "fear of the Igbo". This is also called anti-Igbo sentiment. This refers to a variety of unfavorable views and sentiments toward the Igbo people. Igbophobia can be seen in negative and unfriendly actions like violence against Igbos and political and religious discrimination (Kogbara, 2022) (Onwuka, 2022). The Igbo people are indigenous to south-eastern Nigeria and a portion of the south-south Nigeria geopolitical zones.

A look into history seems to justify Igbophobia in the past

The Igbo were so captivated of western education that it did not take them long to develop an unfathomable understanding of it. They acquired western education somewhat late (Dr.

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Nnamdi Azikiwe was the first graduate in 1930, long after Nathaniel King, a Yoruba of the Egba, graduated from the University of Aberdeen in 1876), but they quickly surpassed the Ibibio and nearly the Yoruba. Both the Yoruba and the Hausa were perplexed by this. In the majority of the prestigious Nigerian schools by the late 1930s, there were more Igbo than Yoruba students. As a result, the Igbo began to fight for positions that the Yoruba had controlled exclusively for more than 30 years. The Yoruba started to voice their concerns about Igbo dominance. The hostility was evident by 1948. The conflict between the Yoruba and the Igbo caused racial hatred and mistrust amongst them (Unaegbu, 2017).

The Igbo people were employed within colonial Nigeria by the colonial authorities and in the public sector in regions all over the country during the early years of Nigeria's colonial independence, which led to the Igbo being seen as a disproportionately-favoured ethnic group with wealth and multi-regional opportunity. This made some people angry with the Igbo. Popular evidence is the video clip of an interview granted by Ahmadu Bello, the former Premier of Northern Region to a European journalist. Here are excerpts of the text of the video:

White man: One thing I have noticed while I have been here is that northerners seem to have an obsession about the Igbos. Could you explain that to me?

Sardauna: Well, the Igbos are more or less the type of people, whose desire is mainly to dominate everybody. If they go to a village; to a town, they want to monopolize everything in that area. If you put them in a labour camp as a labourer, within a year, they'll try to emerge as head man of that camp, and so on. Well in the past, our people were not alive to their responsibilities; because, as you can see from our northernisation policy, that in 1952 when I came here, there weren't 10 northerners in our civil service here…and I tried to have it northernised and now all important posts are being held by northerners.
(Voice of the Sun, 2023).

In 1960 when Nigeria gained independence and many expatriates left, employers in business and government had to find educated Nigerians to fill open positions. But many Nigerians' educational backgrounds had been impacted by the Second World War's circumstances. As a result, there were few people who were well-qualified. Government development goals were sped up by the demand for more Nigerian specialists in clerkship and highly technical fields like engineering and medical (Crowder, 1978:250). The video interview granted by Ahmadu Bello could be understood under that circumstance, given that though there was the great need for experts, ethnic sentiment still rode high in choosing where one would have to work. Before this time, there were two mass killings of the Igbo already. They were the Jos killing of Igbo in 1945 and the Kano Killings of the Igbo in 1953 (Plotnicov, 1971).

Again, there had been mutual distrust between westerners and easterners mainly because easterners were occupying many sensitive administrative and academic positions in western Nigeria, especially in the two universities at Ibadan and Lagos. Prof. Kenneth Dike was Vice Chancellor at Ibadan. Cyril Agodi Onwumechili was already the Nigerian Professor of Physics at Ibadan. Anene was Professor of History at Ibadan, and so on. Earlier in 1965, the former Vice Chancellor of the University of Lagos, Prof. Eni Njoku, an Igbo too, was supposed to have been reappointed for a second tenure, but the Yoruba-dominated University Council going against the recommendation of the university senate and hoping (allegedly) that it would counterbalance the effects of having easterners in many sensitive positions, appointed a renowned Yoruba historian, Prof. Saburi Biobaku, as the new Vice Chancellor (Ijomah, 2011:457). Many staff and students of Eastern Region and even expatriates left the University as a sign of protest against Njoku's removal (Berrie *et al*, 1965:3). The University of Nigeria, Nsukka absorbed many of them (Ike,1986:36) (Unaegbu, 2008:81). Prof. Eni Njoku returned to the east to become the Vice Chancellor of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

A few years to the Nigerian Independence, Prof. Kenneth Dike, was made the Vice Principal of the University College, Ibadan, then he was promoted to Principal of the University College, and later, just after Independence, he became the first indigenous Vice Chancellor of the University of Ibadan. This University is situated in Yoruba land. After a while, Prof. Kenneth Dike was tired of the misinterpretations of his honest motives in his leadership style. After a tedious court case with the Registrar of the University, he took an accumulated leave and by the time he was about to resume after his leave in 1966, it was no longer save for the Igbo at Ibadan. He moved to eastern Nigeria with his family (Animalu, 1997:132).

The 1966 anti-Igbo pogrom further confirmed Igbophobia. The pogrom was a string of murders committed in northern Nigeria against Igbo and other individuals of southern Nigerian descent beginning in May 1966 and peaking after September 29, 1966 (Abbott & Anthony, 2003:133).

During this time, Hausa-Fulani soldiers and civilians who were seeking retribution for the 1966 Nigerian coup d'état, which was led by six Majors and three Captains of Southern Nigerian descent and resulted in the deaths of 11 Nigerian politicians and army officers of Hausa, Fulani, Itsekiri, and Yoruba origin, murdered 30,000–50,000 Igbo civilians throughout northern Nigeria (Ekwe-Ekwe, 2012).

A research asserts that the number of killing of the Igbo during the Nigerian Civil war were over 2 million people, including the massacre of Igbos at Asaba at the early stages of the war (Izundu, 2008). This war lasted from July 6, 1967, to January 13, 1970, when the Igbo-majority southeastern provinces attempted to create the Republic of Biafra in response to

the killings of Christian Igbos residing in the Muslim north. The lack of political power sharing in Nigeria further irritated them (Izundu, 2008).

Data of mass killings of the Igbo further showed that Igbophobia was a fact before now. Aside the killings before and during the Civil war, there were more than twenty recorded cases of mass killings of the Igbo. They include 1. Kano Killings of 1980; 2. Maiduguri Killings of 1982; 3. Jimeta Killings of 1984; 4. Gombe Killings of 1985; 5. Zaria Killings of 1987; 6. Kaduna and Kafanchan Killings of 1991; 7. Bauchi and Katsina Killings of 1991; 8. Kano Killings of 1991; 9. Zangon-Kataf Killings of 1992; 10. Funtua Killings of 1993; 12. Kaduna Killings of 2000; 13. Kaduna Killings of 2001; 14. Maiduguri Killings of 2001; 15. Jos Maiden Crisis and Killings of September 2001; 16. Jos Killings of November 2008; 17. Beheading of Gideon Akaluka in December of 1996 in a police station in Kano; 18. Igbo Driver who goes by the nickname, "Saint Moritz" Killed on 13th December 2001 for mistakenly driving his truck over the holy Quran; 19. Jos Christmas Eve Killings of 2010; 20. Madalla Christmas day Bombing of 2011; and 21. Mubi Killings of January 6, 2012 (Voice of the Sun, 2023). Even Igbo muslims and their relatives were killed in some riots (Uchendu, 2020:253).

In April 2015 nearing the 2015 gubernatorial election, the Oba of Lagos, Rilwan Akiolu, warned in a live audio that anyone (especially the Igbo) who failed to vote for the governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Mr. Akinwumi Ambode, would perish in the lagoon (Ameh. 2015).

Photo of anti-Igbo protesters in Lagos. Date unknown. Source: Onyinye Dike: https://republic.com.ng/february-march-2023/igbo-2023-elections/

The Boko Haram killings and Fulani herdsmen killings from 2001 up to 2022 were motivated by other concerns, including hatred for western education and corrupt Muslims (in the case of Boko Haram) and the desire to expand in search of fodder for cows and turf for family (in the case of the Fulani herdsmen). Furthermore, since the Boko Haram and

Fulani herdsmen killed members of other ethnic groups too, the motive for the murders cannot be entirely taken as Igbophobia.

It would appear that there is this power which typically pushes the Igbo ethnic group toward more individual freedom and prosperity rather than toward complacency and a leisurely way of life, according to learned observation of the Igbo ethnic group. The Igbo people's tenacity for surviving and propensity for independence have been proven in several historical incidents. Works have been written about the Igbo landing, in which Igbo slaves commandeered a slave ship in 1803 and chose to drown themselves rather than be sold as slaves after the ship grounded (Ciucevich, 2009) (Sieber, 1988).

In answer to this quandary about that force which influences the spirit of the Igbo man and breeds for him hatred and resentment, the researcher notes that philosophy, religion and culture (PRC) influence the behavior of humans. Reciprocal Determinism, a theory developed by the Canadian-American Psychologist, Albert Bandura, shows that a person's behavior influences and is influenced by personal factors (genetic makeup) and the social environment (Bandura, 1986). Thus, the Igbo had previously emphasized the Ikenga, or the personal culture of individualism. Whether the Ikenga culture was a product of this passion to succeed in the Igbo or it is the direct cause of it is open for research. There is evidence that the Ikenga culture may be the reason behind their aggressive rise in every endeavor, thus resulting in resentment in other ethnic groups (Okere, 2011).

It is in the light of this discomfort with the power of the Igbo that the actions of the Yoruba witnessed recently during the 2023 presidential and gubernatorial elections in Lagos, Nigeria, have to be appraised. The emergence of an Igbo, Peter Obi, as the presidential flagbearer of the Labour Party seemed to have fueled anti-Igbo sentiment which peaked during the gubernatorial election. Igbos were reportedly identified, beaten and warned not to come out to cast their votes in the belief that they supported the Labour Party Gubernatorial candidate, Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour, who is part Yoruba (from his father's side) and part Igbo (from his mother's side). This study aims at establishing the reality or myth of this Igbophobia as widely reported.

Theoretical Framework

In investigating the influence of ethnicity and religion in fueling this myth or fact of Igbophobia, this paper utilizes the analyzing tool of the Sociological Model of voting behavior as theoretical framework. The sociological model, frequently referred to as the "School of Columbia," is rooted in Columbia University's Applied Bureau of Social Research, whose work began with the release of the book, *The People's Choice* (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944), and which concentrates on the effects of social factors.
Aside from the book, *The People's Choice*, two other key books define the theoretical presumptions of the sociological model of voting behavior. They are *Voting* (Berelson,

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Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954), and *Personal Influence* (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955),. In their study of the 1940 U.S. presidential election between Franklin Roosevelt and Wendell Willkie, Paul Lazarsfeld's research team had two main goals: to study the effects of exposure to the media, that is, to understand how voters make decisions and the role of media in this process; and to test a new methodology of consecutive interviews with a panel of subjects and a control group. The findings of Lazarsfeld's research team were published as the book, *The People's Choice*. The team described the supporters of the two main political parties in the United States using a panel of 600 subjects who were interviewed seven times over the seven months of the campaign. To then identify the voters who changed their position during the campaign period, three groups were compared: those who made up their minds about their vote before the campaign began, those who changed their minds during the campaign, and those who did not cast their vote till later in the campaign.

According to Antunes (2014:146, 147), referring to Lazarsfeld et al. (1944):

> The main finding… was that the majority of voters voted according to their original political predisposition. Of the 600 subjects who were included, only 54 changed their position throughout the process. The association between electoral behavior and the social groups to which they belonged was so strong that it was possible to explain the electoral choices using only the three factors that defined the Index of Political Predisposition used in research: socio-economic status, religion and area of residence.

The last sentence describing the main finding of the Sociological Model of voting behavior is applicable to this present research of ascertaining the myth or reality of Igbophobia during the 2023 presidential and gubernatorial elections in Lagos, Nigeria.

According to evolutionary theories, moral inclinations, including xenophobic tendencies, are profoundly ingrained in the human psyche. Sociobiologists contend that "prosocial'" inclinations like altruism and empathy, as well as what could appear to be "antisocial" tendencies like xenophobic fear and hostility, are behavioral qualities that early humans picked and passed on to succeeding generations because they were important for survival (Peterie, M. & Neil, D., 2020).

According to this viewpoint, modern xenophobia is a result of human psychology's intrinsically tribal nature, or of a fundamental propensity towards "groupishness" at the cost of "outgroups" or members of other "tribes" (Haidt, 2012: 151).

Methodology

The study adopts the documentary research method. Data were derived through a meticulous review of existing literature, both as hard copy and on social media, that

followed personal narratives of individuals who witnessed the intimidation of voters in Lagos during the 2023 presidential and gubernatorial elections.

Presentation of Data/Findings

1. Scanning for Traces of Igbophobia in the 2023 Presidential Election in Lagos State:

The 2023 Nigerian presidential election aimed at choosing the country's president and vice president took place in Lagos State, as elsewhere in Nigeria, on February 25, 2023. With 582, 454 votes, which was roughly 10,000 votes, or a 0.77% margin over his closest opponent, Peter Obi, the Labour Party's nominee, defeated Bola Tinubu, the former governor of the state and a candidate for the All Progressives Congress (who got 572, 606 votes), to win the state in what was a major upset in history (Oluwakemi & Nike, 2023). Atiku Abubakar of the Peoples Democratic Party got 75, 750 votes.

Despite the fact that Tinubu is from Lagos State, both Abubakar and Obi worked to make the state competitive by focusing on particular demographics and employing the back-of-the-line candidates of their respective parties to spearhead the direct grassroots campaign. The majority of Lagos State's native inhabitants are ethnic Yoruba because the state is located in Yorubaland, the homeland of the ethnic Yoruba, but over a century of internal migration resulted in a sizable minority of non-Yoruba non-indigenes.

Report One of Ethnic Sentiment, Precursor to Igbophobia: During the campaigns preceding the election, precisely on November 16, 2022, a Yoruba writer, Eniola Akinkuotu, in his report entitled, "Nigeria: Obi, Tinubu, Atiku… Will identity politics trigger electoral violence in 2023?" revealed that Tinubu, who is ethnically Yoruba, and his surrogates used ethnic Yoruba **identity politics** while running for office throughout the South West. He also noted that these various ethnic dynamics had a significant impact on the state's presidential campaign. He asks:

> In order to gain political advantage ahead of the crucial Presidential election in February 2023, major contenders Atiku Abubakar and Bola Tinubu are using every trick in the book, including evoking ethnic and religious sentiments in the people. Will this trigger violence in a heavily divided country? (Akinkuotu, 2022) (Emphasis mine).

It is germane to bear in mind that this report came three months prior to the election. The ethnic sentiment ignited in the people through playing Identity Politics is a red alert towards confirming Igbophobia during the elections. This is in tandem with the Sociological Model previously explained. According to the model as aforementioned or as described by Haidt (2012: 151), there is the fundamental propensity towards "groupishness" at the cost of "outgroups" or members of other "tribes". In other words, the *existence of ethnic sentiment in a person creates the existence of anti-outgroup sentiment in the same person*.

Report Two of Voter Intimidation, Precursor to Igbophobia: During the campaign period preceding the election also, Ben Ezeamalu noted that opposition parties against the ruling party, APC, were worried over the history of voter intimidation in Lagos State. Reports from the LP and the PDP surfaced shortly after the campaign period started in September 2022 regarding persistent attempts at repression by attackers supported by the APC as well as partiality on the part of the state administration and local police (Ezeamalu, 2022). The state PDP campaign vehicle was ambushed in Badagry in October 2022, while free medical facilities affiliated with Obi's party, LP, were attacked in Eti-Osa in November 2022.

Report Three of Dirty Politics, Precursor to Igbophobia: LP and PDP both accused the state government and APC of destroying opposition banners and posters, attacking and intimidating opposition supporters, and continuing to forbid the use of billboards as the election in early 2023 drew near. The LP even claimed that the APC had infiltrated local INEC offices to throw out the Permanent Voter Cards of non-indigenes (Omobola, 2023).

Report Four: Igbophobia Case One: shortly before the presidential election, controversies involving INEC Resident Commissioner, Olusegun Agbaje, exacerbated the allegations of INEC infiltration; while some groups called for Agbaje to resign in response to his anti-Igbo statements on Channels TV. According to reports, the REC explained why residents of the Okota and Oshodi Local Government Areas could not obtain PVCs, He made it obvious that they cannot receive their PVC since many of them were from the South East region of the country, and so were only immigrants. The majority of the criticism directed at him was also because of his choice to use the Lagos State Park and Garage Management Committee to transport election materials and personnel on Election Day (Nwachukwu, 2023).

Report Five: Igbophobia Case Two: The musician Brymo made harsh remarks towards the Igbo people towards the presidential election. At first, he implied that the Igbo people were not ready for the presidency and that Peter Obi should keep to leading the eastern region where he is originally from. A few days after making this remark, he responded to a deleted tweet by screaming, "Fuck The Ndi Igbo!! To Hell With It!!" before making another Igbophobic remark. This led to a petition on change.org against his candidacy for Song Writer of the Year at the All Africa Music Awards. After issuing an apology, he continued to post the same divisive remarks on social media. Brymo's nasty remarks received a lot of applause from ethnic nationalists, who frequently backed the APC (Online Tribune, 2023).

Report Six: Igbophobia Case Three: in a news report by Obi Nwakanma, he revealed:

> On the eve of the Presidential election, Igbo voters were warned to vote the APC or not vote at all. Failure to vote the APC would, their adversaries warned them, result in dire consequences for the Igbo in Lagos. Those who keep point on all this recall the threat once made by the Oba of Lagos, that he would drive the Igbo population into the Lagoon in 2015, if they did not vote his preferred APC candidate.

On election day, Of course, a party thug called MC Oluomo was recorded on video threatening Igbo voters, about the dire consequences of not voting the APC. This brazen act, inside a polling booth, in the presence of a Law enforcement officer has not elicited any response by the authorities. They called it a joke. Of course, that threat was ignored by the Igbo in Lagos and by many other Nigerians, including the sophisticated Yoruba, who defied Tinubu's goon brigade, and voted massively against the APC in Lagos, and turned the party into ass-swipes in their so-called domain. That defeat stung.They had to quickly cook the numbers to reduce the extent of their loss. (Nwakanma, 2023)

2. Scanning for Traces of Igbophobia in the 2023 Gubernatorial Election in Lagos State:

There are numerous pieces of evidence for Igbophobia from the build up to and during the gubernatorial election in Lagos on March 11, 2023. The emergence of an Igbo, Peter Obi, as the presidential flagbearer of the Labour Party and his defeat of Tinubu in his stronghold of Lagos seemed to have fueled the feeling which peaked during the gubernatorial election. Igbos were reportedly identified, beaten and warned not to come out to cast their votes in the belief that they supported the Labour Party Gubernatorial candidate, Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour, who is part Yoruba (from his father's side) and part Igbo (from his mother's side).

Report Seven: Igbophobia Case Four:

Igbos in Lagos were forewarned by Bayo Onanuga to refrain from "interfering" with Lagos state affairs. Onanuga, the All Progressives Congress Presidential Campaign Council's director of media and publicity, sent out the alert via a tweet on his official Twitter account: @aonanuga1956. He wrote, "Let 2023 be the last time of Igbo interference in Lagos politics. Let there be no repeat in 2027. Lagos is like Anambra, Imo, any Nigerian state. It is not No Man's Land, not Federal Capital Territory. It is Yoruba land. Mind your business."

The tweet, which was left in place despite the uproar that followed it, has been criticized for being uncalled for and for being a threat to both the harmony and survival of the country (Nigeria, 2023).

Report Eight: Igbophobia Case Five:

In his report, Obi Nwakanma (2023) reveals:
> The governorship election was something else. The APC prepared for this, as if they were going to war. It was in fact war. On the eve of the election, they telegraphed their resolve by burning down a major Igbo spare parts market in Lagos. On election day, they sent an armed militia into the streets; they called out the Oro; they

macheted, beat up voters; they scaled up the violence, and they stole the elections at gun-point. They did not end there. Following the elections, they have mounted a campaign of terror against the Igbo, and those who look like the Igbo in Lagos.

Report Nine: Igbophobia Case Six:

Numerous anti-Igbo sentiment tweets and live videos confirming the existence of Igbophobia exist on social media. On March 26, 2023, the researcher joined in a twitter audio conference entitled, "Igbophobia: Myth or Reality. What are Before Ndigbo?". The researcher opposed the existence of Igbophobia in a bid to force participants to generate evidences during the twitter conference. Some participants confirmed being warned not to come out to vote during the gubernatorial election because they were Igbo (Igbo History and Facts, 2023).

Some of the anti-Igbo tweets found during this research, which are still visible on the handle of their owners include the following:

1.   From Kemi O. Magaji with the handle @MagajiKemi:

Labour Party recruited Gbedebo Chinedu Rhodes-Vivour (A.K.A. GRV) to hijack Lagos for the Ibo people. GRV is their governorship candidate. GRV mother is NKECHI, an Ibo woman, GRV wife is Ifeyinwa also Ibo from Anambra state. Yoruba youths please resist this Igbo ulterior motives.

2.   From Iyanuoluwa Bolarinwa with the handle @Bolarinwaiyanu

"I was told to go back to Anambra! How does Bolarinwa sound like an Igbo name? I was rough handled, beaten and sent out because I look Igbo? Because I was not going to vote APC? This evil fire will burn you and your generation!"

3.   From Dr. Olawale Ogunlana with the handle @olawalesmd:

"I was harassed today at the polling unit, told that I looked like an Igbo person. It's obvious that the ruling party plans to use intimidation, tactical disenfranchisement, violence, thuggery and tribal bigotry to hold on to power. This is not an election. This is a crime scene"

 According to a column by Nwabuikwu in *This Day* newspaper:
> Over the coming days, weeks, months and perhaps even years, there will be attempts to disprove, discredit and play down the facts and significance of what took place last Saturday in many parts of Lagos during the governorship and state assembly elections which are captured in the searing tweets above.

(Nwabuikwu, 2023).

Report Ten: Igbophobia Case Seven:

Immediately after the Gubernatorial election, the Igbo were attacked at Abule Edo (Odunsi, 2023). The anti-Igbo sentiments became violent and resulted in blockades and threats against Igbo people from accessing the businesses they owned (Raphael, 2023).

Analysis of Data/Findings

The ten reports above confirm that anti-Igbo sentiment is a reality. From the reports, it can be inferred that the brazenness of the propagators of Igbophobia is clear, and their unwillingness to desist from their preconceived notion against the Igbo ethnic group is real. The findings obey the Sociological Model and throw up the factor of clannishness as the fuel instigating identity politics. That the anti-Igbo sentiment exists in tweets, video and audio interviews, with no attempt to erase them shows the vibrancy of the existence of Igbophobia, though running mostly in subaltern level and making bold appearances during socio-political contests such as the presidential and gubernatorial elections in Lagos in 2023. The findings may serve as references to historians analyzing the elections for anti-Igbo sentiment.

Recommendations

The recommendations of former President of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo and the President-General of Ohaneze Ndigbo, Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu, could serve as antidotes to anti-Igbo sentiments. Obasanjo, who spoke in Awka during the one-year anniversary of Governor Chukwuma Soludo's administration in March 2023, said people should strive to be friendly with those who are afraid of them.

Obasanjo revealed that, while he was president, someone was not happy that he employed two Igbo people in his government, Prof. Charles Soludo as Governor of Central Bank, and Prof. Okonjo Iweala, as Minister of Finance. According to that person, the economy of Nigeria would be ruined. History has shown that this did not happen; rather the Nigerian economy received a boost by the talents of the duo. Obasanjo saw the action of this person who came to him as Igbophobia. He asserts in a recommendatory tone:

> I don't know why he said that, except for what I can call Igbophobia, and I don't take that lightly. It remains, it persists. But when you have that type of thing that was said to me and the type of thing that you know is going on, as I have just called it, what do we do with it? I believe we have to go back to the scripture, which says we must conquer evil with good. And whoever you are, wherever people are afraid of you, you must make yourself friendly to those who are afraid of you and earn

their friendship by being good to them, and that is what we have to do. (Ujumadu, 2023)

Also during the one-year anniversary of Governor Chukwuma Soludo's administration, Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu called those promoting anti-Igbo sentiments in Lagos "political rascals". He said there was no controversy between the Igbo and Yoruba (Ujumadu, 2023).

This study recommends that voting behaviour should be based on rational choice as an antidote against Igbophobia fueled by ethnicity and religion. The researcher also recommends the following antidotes to Igbophobia:

1. Education and awareness: Educating people about the Igbo culture, history, and contribution to Nigeria can help to break down stereotypes and misconceptions that fuel Igbophobia.
2. Political and legal measures: The government can enact laws and policies that protect Igbo people from discrimination and marginalization. Political leaders can also speak out against Igbophobia and work to promote unity and inclusion.
3. Dialogue and engagement: Encouraging dialogue and engagement between different ethnic groups is necessary to build understanding, respect, and camaraderie between them.
4. Media representation: The media can play a vital role in shaping the public narrative by focusing on positive stories about the Igbo people and their contributions to society, rather than perpetuating bias and prejudice.
5. Human rights activism: Protecting the rights of people through advocacy and activism can help curb any form of Igbophobia in various forms.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Igbo embody a sense of greatness that is deeply rooted in their history, culture, and traditions. Their sense of community values, respect for their ancestors, by which their traditions are passed down from one generation to the next, entrepreneurial and innovative drive and a reputation for being resilient and, though being the very qualities that incite discomfort in their neighbours, are the self-same qualities that enable them to thrive in difficult economic conditions and to succeed in a variety of fields, including business, medicine, and academia, despite facing numerous challenges throughout their history. There is no need to hate the Igbo. What is needed is to understand them.

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FEMALE GENDER AND POVERTY: A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This paper discussed the state of female gender in relation to poverty in Africa. It does not mean that in Africa only women are identified with poverty but statistics show that majority of women are poor compared to the men. The problem here is based on the link between gender, poverty and inequality. It is the inequality that has come to stay in Africa that creates the opening for poverty. This inequality has placed women at disadvantaged position in many parts of Africa. The paper therefore, tried to explore what it means to be a female, the meaning of this female-based poverty, its consequences and solutions. The paper thus, suggested the need to eradicate the traditional mentality, which presents women as inferior to men and strictly affirms that if achieved, it will go a long way to enhance the development of African nations beginning with the families.

Keywords: Poverty, Female Gender, Inequality Africa, Development

Introduction

Though this paper is directed to the African experience, poverty remains a global challenge that affects both men and women in different ways with experience and statistics showing the greater vulnerability of the female gender with regard to poverty. For example, Alice recorded that "today more than 1 billion people worldwide, the majority of whom are women, live in unacceptable conditions of poverty, mostly in developing countries".[1] Also, "according to a survey from 2020, globally, 247 million women aged 15 years and older will be living on less than 1.90 U.S. dollars per day in 2021, compared to 236 million men. The gender poverty gap is expected to increase by 2030 as women will still be the majority of the world's extreme poor"[2]. In like manner, World Bank report says that about "1.29

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[1] Alice P. Tuyizere, (2007). *Gender and Development: The Role of Religion and Culture.* Fountain Publishers, Kampala. Pg. 242.
[2] Statista Research Department (2022), "Gender poverty gaps worldwide in 2020 and 2021 (with a forecast to 2030), by gender". Available at https://www.statista.com/statistics/1219896/gender... Sourced 13/05/23

billion people live in absolute poverty; the sad fact is that about 70 per cent of them are women"[3]. These are indications that academicians should not fold their hands on this subject matter because what affects the eyes, affects equally the nose and mouth as the case may be. The paper is not advocating that it is better for men to live in poverty. No, rather, the emphasis lies in equilibrium or equality. Both genders are humans. Therefore, based on the ontological nature of the human person, every human person is equal and deserves equal treatment in justice and fairness. Hilda analysed Tahira Abdullah's quote, which says that poverty has a woman's face with the following words: "Women face the triple burden of child-bearing, child rearing, and domestic unpaid labour; they have been denied opportunities for growth, they are without access to adequate healthcare, education or income, and simultaneously forced to live in the tight bind of culture"[4] Though things are gradually changing, more needs to be done. This is because it has entered into the bone marrow of many African cultures that a woman deserves less, since men are superior. For example, during the homily delivered by Bishop Wilfred Chikpa Anagbe CMF, at the Chrism Mass of 2023, while discussing the contributions of the Church in transforming our society, he mentioned the impact of the church in transforming the status of women in our society. He illustrated it with the following statement:

> The Jew in his morning prayer thanked God that he had not made him a Gentile, a slave, or a woman. In Greek civilization, women lived life of utter seclusion, with nothing to do beyond the household tasks. Women were considered as non-entities. It was often possible to see a family on a journey, the father mounted on a donkey, and the woman walking. One demonstrable historical truth is that Christianity transformed life for women. Let us take Benue State as a case study, about what Christianity, (the Church) has done towards the liberation of women. At a time, not too long ago in Tiv Land or in Idoma Land, or Etulo Land, let's say, in the 1940's, it was a taboo to train "A Girl Child" in school. The first Girl Child Schools in Benue were not built by the government etc.[5]

A lot of debates have been going on about the fact that women are no longer being marginalized. Such persons might be right but what percentage? This is one of the major concerns of this work. Some claim that the structure has been there and cannot be changed. Opinions like this has kept women as the "poorest of the poor"[6]. They are treated as people of the 'Fourth world' from the view point of be it development through income, education, inheritance etc.[7] The disadvantaged position which women have found themselves in many

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[3] Hilda Saeed, (2013). "Poverty has a Woman's Face" Available at https://www.dawn.com>news>poverty-has-a-woman's-face. Sourced on 15/04/2023. DAWN is regarded as the most leading Newspaper of Pakistan.
[4] Hilda Saeed, (2023). "Poverty has a Woman's Face"
[5] Wilfred Chikpa Anagbe, (2023) "The Transforming Power of Christ" A Homily Delivered at the Celebration of Chrism Mass at our Lady of Perpetual Help Cathedral, Makurdi
[6] Restituta B. Igugbe (2004*). Women and Gender Studies.* Sir Kuf Ventures Ltd. Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria. Pg, 198.
[7] Ibid.

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parts of Africa has indeed deprived them of manifesting their full developmental and transformative potential. In the midst of other reasons, this whole bias seems to be borne out of the traditional mentality in which men see women as being inferior to men, and therefore, should always play a second fiddle to them. The implication of this attitude therefore contributes in depriving many women the opportunity of playing central and significant roles in the building and development of our nations.

The feminization of poverty is a combination of factors ranging from traditional gender norms, practices and stereotypes to legal barriers, which prevent women from acquiring wealth in their own name. These and other factors such as restricted access to education, to labour market, being confined to unpaid domestic and caregiving work and thus being highly reliant on men for their survival and prosperity are constantly working towards keeping women statistically poorer than men. This is quite evident in several countries in Africa.[8]

The Concept of Poverty
In a layman's expression, poverty simply refers to the condition of one that does not have the basic needs of life, one who lacks adequate resources or money to take care of himself/herself. Poverty has been described as the following: the monetary approach, the capacities approach, and the social exclusion and participative approaches.[9]

The monetary approach, which defines poverty as a decline in consumption or income, and is based on a poverty line, is doubtless the most commonly used. However, other approaches have gained increasing acceptance insofar as they have revealed the limitations of the monetary perspective in defining poverty, and have contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the issue. The capacities approach, pioneered by Amartya Sen, rejects monetary income as the sole measure of wellbeing, which he defines as the freedom of individuals to live a life that allows them to fulfil their capacities. Poverty is interpreted as a lack of resources impeding people from engaging in certain basic activities such as staying alive and enjoying a long and healthy life, reproducing and transmitting their culture to future generations, interacting socially, having access to knowledge and enjoying freedom of expression and thought. According to this approach, the fight against poverty consists of identifying and increasing people's capacities to improve their wellbeing. The social exclusion approach studies the structural characteristics of society, which engender processes and dynamics that exclude individuals or groups from full social participation. It makes particular reference to the distribution of opportunities and resources needed to overcome exclusion, and to the promotion of inclusion in both the labour market

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[8] Robert Fisher (2016). "Womanhood and Poverty: Implications, Experiences, Emotions available at https://networks.h-net>node. Sourced on 15/04/2023
[9] Mujer y Desarrollo (2004). *Understanding poverty from a gender perspective Women and Development Unit* Santiago, Chile, United Nations. Pg. 10

and social processes. In the participatory approach, the poor define poverty based on their own analysis of their reality, by including aspects they consider to be significant. From this point of view, overcoming poverty entails empowering the poor[10].

This is why we hear people say 'money is everything', especially in Africa. But Jean Jacques Rousseau said "for although money buys everything else, it cannot by morals and citizens"[11]. "Poverty is a state of living that generally many people perceive as being without a job, homeless, hungry or something that only touches developing countries, certain races or generations – but poverty does not discriminate, instead it targets people".[12] Poverty affects many aspects of human life, such as physical, moral and psychological. Scholars have analysed it in different ways. Some follow the conventional view as it has been described above by seeing poverty as a result of insufficient income for securing basic goods and services. Others view poverty, in part, as a function of education, health, life expectancy, child mortality etc.[13] Poverty is about not having enough money to meet basic needs including food, clothing and shelter. However, poverty is much more than just not having enough money. The World Bank Organization describes poverty and outlines the features of poverty as: hunger, lack of shelter, inability to pay for medical services when sick, lack of access to good education which leads to illiteracy, lack of adequate job, fear of the future and living one day at a time because of lack of adequate resources. So, poverty is a call to action -- for the poor and the wealthy alike -- a call to change the world so that many more may have enough to eat, adequate shelter, access to education and health, protection from violence, and a voice in what happens in their communities.[14]

Poverty can further be described as a phenomenon of severe deprivation in well-being, which results in the lack of basic means of subsistence and denies one voice, power/influence and leads to social exclusion.[15] "The worst forms of poverty are those that combine all four of these aspects: income poverty, asset poverty, opportunities poverty, and access poverty".[16] Though there are different dimensions of poverty, this paper for the want

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Stumpf, S. E. (1994). *Philosophy and Problems: 5th Edition*. USA: McGraw-Hill Inc.pg.293.

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[15] Restituta B. Igube, (2004). *Women and Gender Studies*. Sir Kuf Ventures Ltd. Gwagwalada-Abuja, Nigeria. Pg.206

[16] McFerson, Hazel M. (2010). Poverty Among Women in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Review of Selected Issues. Journal of International Women's Studies, 11(4). Pg. 1. Available at: https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol11/iss4/4. Sourced 08/05/2023

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of space will not discuss them but will rather identify the root causes of poverty among the female gender.

Causes of Feminizations Of Poverty

The phenomenon 'Feminization'[17] was first coined by Diane Pearce in the late 1970s when she pointed out that women represented a disproportionate percentage of the world's poor and named the phenomenon "the feminization of poverty"[18] Feminization of poverty refers to the presence of poverty within female-headed households. It is a specific term that encompasses the intersectionality of gender, class, socioeconomics, and culture to refer to the experiences and measure of how women experience poverty.[19] The 'Feminisation of Poverty' started gaining ground mostly around the early 1990s, although as it has been mentioned. the coinage goes back to the 1970s.[20] Questions such as whether this gendered or sexual division of labour between men and women has been there from the beginning or not? Below is the response.

The beginning of human societies started with tribal culture, mainly hunting-gathering and agricultural. The primary, tribal societies-maintained equality in terms of labour. In agricultural societies, both the men and women were equally involved in the sowing, watering, harvesting, and transporting tasks. Among the hunter-gatherers, there was a basic division of labour in terms of allocating tasks in a manner that did not imply the upper hand of one gender over the other. Usually, the men would go hunting, while the women would be in search of stuff to gather, for preparing their regular meals. As societies started moving forward in time, various changes in practices started taking place, the most important one being segregating the home and the outer world. That is the point from which gender-based labour and differences came to the forefront, the major characteristics of differentiation being class, caste, race, and sexuality. With the advent of industrialisation, urbanisation, modernisation, and westernisation, with the Europeans colonising most places around the globe, the sexual division of labour started to gain ground more rapidly along with the development of capitalist institutions. It has

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[17] Feminization of poverty refers to a trend of increasing inequality in living standards between men and women due to the widening gender gap in poverty. This phenomenon largely links to how women and children are disproportionately represented within the lower socioeconomic status community in comparison to men within the same socioeconomic status. Available at Wikimedia project. Accessed on 13/05/23.

[18] Brooke Uken, (2018). "The Feminization of Poverty: A Gendered Underclass. North Carolina State University. Pg.3

[19] Kristen N. Dickens & Candace N. Park, (2023) Feminization of Poverty. Sage Publications. Available at http://sk.sagepub.com/reference/the-sage-encyclopedia-of-marriage-couples-counseling/i5618.xm

[20] Orpheus Sen, (2018). "The Feminization of Poverty: The Link between Patriarchy and Capitalism". The Breakthrough voice. Available at https://inbreakthrough.org/feminisation-poverty-capitalism. Sourced 15/05/23

to be understood that the State is another capitalist institution that chooses to promote patriarchy and marginalising women.[21]

Some of the factors responsible for feminization of poverty includes the family structure, culture/tradition, property rights, weak governance, civil conflict, employment, gender violence, climate change, health, femonomics[22] etc. All contribute to the greater number of women in poverty and these interactions have a severe negative impact on the status, condition, and welfare of women.[23] Some of these factors are briefly discussed.

Family Structure/ Property Rights: The place a woman is expected to occupy as she participates in the life of society is rather ambiguous, sometimes she is considered very highly, taken to be very important and at other times, she is looked down upon as one that has no value in the society. Sometimes tradition oppresses her as well as a certain philosophical and even religious way of thinking.[24] African family is made up father, mothers and children. Polygamy is acceptable in the African culture, so African men derive joy in marrying many wives. Though through the influence of Christianity, there is much difference now. The question to ask here is, how does the family structure contribute to the poverty state of the woman? The primary role of married women is to be wives, mothers and "companion to men… that command the highest social regard. For any woman to pursue any professional career, she must do so within the limits set by these primary roles, otherwise she is likely to be seen as wayward or a social misfit and her professional achievement considered as having little worth".[25]

In Igbo culture, which may be applicable to other African cultures, a woman is considered as nobody if she refuses to marry. Marriage already conditions a woman's opportunity. Secondly, the family structure encourages gender bias. In most families, a girl child is not

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[21] Orpheus Sen, (2018). "The Feminization of Poverty: The Link between Patriarchy and Capitalism". The Breakthrough voice. Available at https://inbreakthrough.org/feminisation-poverty-capitalism. Sourced 15/05/23

[22] Femonomics is a term used to describe the economic empowerment of women. It is a concept that focuses on the role of women in the economy and how they can contribute to economic growth and development. It is based on the idea that when women are given equal opportunities and access to resources, they can make significant contributions to the economy. This can be achieved through policies that promote gender equality and women's empowerment. In the context of poverty, femonomics can help reduce the feminization of poverty by providing women with access to education, employment opportunities, and resources that can help them become financially independent. https: //www.investopedia.com/terms/ e/economics.asp.

[23] Brooke Uken, (2018). "The Feminization of Poverty: A Gendered Underclass. North Carolina State University. Pg.21.

[24] Bernadette Mbut-Beya (1998). *Woman who are You? A Challenge.* Paulines Publication Africa. Nairobi, Kenya. Pg. 15

[25] Michael Muonwe (2016). *New Dawn for African Women.* Xlibris, United Kingdom. Pg.2

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valued like the boy child. "The traditional stereotyped roles and stigma of the lower status she holds is continuously being reflected"[26] in all that she does.

In fact, by assigning the domestic sphere to women, the gender based division of labour causes an inequality of opportunities for her. Since the woman is responsible for household activities, it makes it difficult for to gain access to material and social resources such as ownership of productive capital, paid labour, education and training, and to participate in decision making in the main political, economic and social policies. In most places in Africa, a woman has no access or relatively fewer material assets and fewer cultural assets.[27] Feminization of poverty has helped in revealing that gender biases go a long way in depriving women the opportunities to pursue their careers.

Gender Violence:

> Violence against women is a serious human rights violation and a public health problem of global proportions. The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993, defines violence against women as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.[28]

Violence against women mostly in different parts of Africa is based upon cultural practices. Few examples are battering, sexual violence/abuse, female genital mutilation, child marriages, forced arranged marriages, bride kidnappings, which is still taking place till this day etc. One of my young friends approached me this January in 2023, telling me how she ran away from her village, because one of her friends was kidnapped into forced marriage. She is from the Igede part of Benue State.

Poverty is one of the consequences of violence. A hungry man/woman as it is said, is an angry man/woman. A home where there is no peace and happiness will hardly prosper.

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[26] Philomina D'Souza, FMA, (2005). Woman Icon of Liberation. A Work-Book for Exploring and Achieving Total Liberation. Better Yourself Books. Bandra, Mumbai. Pg. 89.

[27] Mujer y Desarrollo (2004). *Understanding poverty from a gender perspective Women and Development Unit.* Santiago, Chile, United Nations. Pg. 13

[28] Robin N. Haarr (2023) "Global Women's Issues, Women in the World Today: An Extended Version". Pressbooks. Available **at** opentextbc .ca/women intheworld /chapter /chapter-1-women-and-poverty/

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That is to say violence impoverishes people and slows economic development. The reasons being that (a) families which indulge in domestic and sexual violence may likely be spending their resources in settling their cases with police or paying hospital bills. and (b) women victims of domestic violence, specifically, are less productive in the workplace, which causes a direct loss in national production.[29]

Culture/Traditions: In most African cultures, gender norms define women's role as largely relegated to the home, as mother and caretaker. While men's role is seen as responsible for productive activities outside the home. There is no doubt that these norms influence institutional policies and laws that define women's and men's access to productive resources such as education, employment, land and credit[30]. In most African cultures gender inequality remains high, and little progress toward gender parity has been made. No matter the level of enlightenment of a woman, men will always tell her that she is nothing but a woman. "This is a large missed opportunity for African societies and for the continent's growth prospects. Advancing women's equality can deliver a significant growth dividend. In a realistic "best-in-region" scenario in which the progress of each country in Africa matches the country in the region that has shown most progress toward gender parity, the continent could add $316 billion or 10 percent to GDP in the period to 2025"[31] Thus,

> In Africa—and indeed around the world—unpaid care work tends to fall to women. Africa's GPS on this metric is 0.39, near the global average of 0.33. The largest gender imbalance within Africa on unpaid care work is in North Africa where women perform 6.7 hours of unpaid care work for every hour done by men; the gap is much narrower than this in West Africa. Cultural attitudes are a key factor, and inadequate provision of public and social services also plays a role…. One study estimated that African girls and women spend more than five billion hours a year on fetching water alone. The fact that women disproportionately undertake unpaid care work matters for their economic opportunity.[32]

The same culture/ tradition has affected the training of girls/women in school in most part of the continent. And we forget that "educated women are more likely to have fewer, healthier,

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[29] Ibid. Pg. 15

[30] Geeta Rao Gupta, (2023). "Global Women's Issues, Women in the World Today: An Extended Version". Pressbooks. Available **at** opentextbc .ca/women intheworld /chapter /chapter-1-women-and-poverty/
Geeta Rao Gupta is a senior fellow at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Development Program and an internationally recognized expert on gender and development issues, including women's health, economic empowerment, poverty alleviation and gender equality. Prior to joining the foundation, Rao Gupta was president of the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW). She also serves on the Steering Committee of aids2031, an international initiative commissioned by UNAIDS, USAID's Advisory Committee for Voluntary Foreign Aid and the boards of the Moriah Fund, the Nike Foundation, the MAC AIDS Fund and the Rural Development Institute.

[31] Lohini Moodley, et.al, "(2019). The power of parity: Advancing women's equality in Africa" McKinsey Global Institute. Pg. 12.

[32] Lohini Moodley, et.al, "(2019). The power of parity: Advancing women's equality in Africa" McKinsey Global Institute. Pg. 23.

and better-educated children that will survive into adulthood and ultimately contribute to economic growth".[33]   Research carried out by the World Bank (WB) and other organizations has shown that training more girls' in education can boost women's wages and lead to faster economic growth than educating only boys. Moreover, experience has established that when women earn more money, they are more likely to invest it in their children and households, which, therefore enhances the family wealth and well-being. Because, they think of their children more than men do. Sometimes, some men spend their money on frivolous matters unlike women.

Women's Health: One may be wondering how women's health contributes to both poverty and development in Africa. It is obvious that women's health serves as an indicator of political, social, and economic development of any nation. Since women are more populated, their poor health reduces productivity. It has been recorded that nearly 380,000 women die from preventable causes that are related to pregnancy each year.

Another factor that causes poor health in women is early or child marriage. Child marriage leads to adolescent childbearing. This poses health risks and limits life prospects for the teen mothers and their children. Another factor that endangers women's health is undernourishment. If women are undernourished, especially those of them involved in child marriages, it poses risk of having low birth-weight babies who, in turn, face a higher risk of poor health and early death. Since women are responsible for the preparing food and of the entire family, if they are unhealthy, their productivity is lowered and their children and families are less secure. This has an economic impact. So, investing in women's health makes sense from both an economic and a human rights perspective.[34]

Conclusion

It has been demonstrated that ontologically men and women are created equal. Hence, they should be equally valued and respected. We are first human persons created to complement each other. Therefore, it becomes very important that we address the issue of gender inequality. When handled, it will certainly remove the underlying barriers that affect women and girls. When that is done it will equally unlock their potentials.

Education is one of the keys to freedom from poverty. Many women are not educated and that hinders them from knowing their rights and opportunities. More effort should be made by governments of the various nations in Africa to increase the literacy level of girls and women in general. Furthermore, "in order to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development, women and men must participate fully and equally in the formulation of

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[33] Geeta Rao Gupta, (2023). "Global Women's Issues, Women in the World Today: An Extended Version". Pressbooks. Available **at** opentextbc .ca/women intheworld /chapter /chapter-1-women-and-poverty/
[34] Ibid.

macro-economic and social policies…. Eradication of poverty… will require democratic participation and changes in economic structures to ensure access for all women to resources, opportunities and public services".[35] Finally, in the words of Hillary Rodham Clinton**, "**however different we may appear, there is far more that unites us than divides us. We share a common future, and we are here to find common ground so that we may help bring new dignity and respect to women and girls all over the world".[36] Furthermore, there is need for the existing organizations such as the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), Kenya, the African Women Development Fund (AWDF), Women in Successful Careers, (WISCAR) and other NGOs to rise up. This is because it is women that will struggle to see to the improvement of their fellow women. If they do not raise their voices, the problem will persist.

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AFRICAN RELIGIONS, CULTURE AND THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY IN A WORLD OF CHANGE

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Abstract
The interconnectivity which underpins human relations in the world today is operating at a light speed. In today's world, time and distance are no longer a barrier. Individuals, groups and organizations reach out or connect within a twinkle of an eye. Similarly, cultural practices, ideas, opinions, and issues now cross international borders without passing through the ordinary checks which humans go through in their international travels. This paper critically examined the prospect of African religion, culture and the global community in a dynamic world of change. The research adopted the world culture theory of Robertson as the framework for this study. It employed the phenomenological approach in data collection, presentation and analyses. The work observed that African religion and culture have migrated to different parts of the world and are making waves. The practitioners are so devoted that one wonders if their counterparts in Africa are so committed given the in-road of foreign religions. It concluded that African religions had become a world religion as a result of globalization.

Keywords: African Traditional religion, Culture, Global Community

Introduction

The visibility of African religion and culture in the global scene introduced another dimension to the religio-cultural pattern of thought in the global community. Before this in-road, the impression of Africans in the Western world was that Africa had no form of religion, nor could they think for themselves, as can be versed by Leo Frobenius, as cited by Obodoegbulam (2021), who quoted Idowu (1973). As it were, those who brought Christianity and Islam to Africa with the impression of bringing civilization to their perceived dark continent ended up taking African religion and culture to Europe and America. However, these cultural imports and exports took weeks and months as shipping was the major means of transportation.

Given the above scenario, science and technological success have bridged the gap which existed between the West and the rest parts of the world. The interconnectivity which underpins human relations in the world today is operating at a light speed. In today's world, time and distance are no longer a barrier. Individuals, groups and organizations reach out or connect at light speed. Similarly, cultural practices, ideas, opinions, and issues now cross international borders without the checks which humans go through in their international travels.

The presence of African religion and culture in Europe, America and the far east has not only changed the perception of these people about Africa, but it has also influenced their cultural lifestyle. Scholars of Anthropology, history, sociology, culture, music, and allied disciplines have integrated African religion and culture into the global patterns of thought. Similarly, some universities outside Africa have departments of African and Oriental studies. African cuisine, dress patterns, festivals, health and healing process, communalism, traditional administration and gender roles form parts of the world culture.

This paper critically examined the prospect of African religion, culture and the global community in a dynamic world of change. The research adopted the world culture theory of Robertson (1992,1997) as the framework for this study. It employed the phenomenological approach in data collection, presentation and analyses. The work observed that African religion and culture have migrated to different parts of the world and are making waves. The practitioners are so devoted that one wonders if their counterparts in Africa are so committed given the in-road of foreign religions. It concluded that African religions had become a world religion as a result of globalization.

The theoretical framework

The world culture theory of Robertson (1992, 1997) forms the lens of this discourse. The theory provides the framework for the interpretation of globalization, which focuses on the way participants in the process become conscious of and give meaning to living in the world as a global community. Here, globalization "refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole" (Robertson, 1992). In another respect, it speeds up the process of global interdependence and enhances the growing awareness of the concept of the world being a global village (Robertson 1997). This involves the crystallization of four main components of society viz: socialization, internationalization, individuation, and generalization of consciousness about humankind (Robertson,1992).

Taking cognizance of the above argument, globalization blends or coagulates the contents of the cultures of the world into one uniform pattern. This invariably is driven by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the European Union and the World Trade Organization at the expense of the United Nations and its specialized agencies like

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UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, FAO and UNDP (Robertson, 1992, 1997). Before this era of globalization, each state composed an integral cultural pattern. It adopted one or more official languages, sometimes established official religions, and introduced uniform educational systems for its people. As a result, cultures boast of their unique characteristics based on the comparative advantages of the society in question. However, the impacts of globalization are challenging this situation.

In Robertson's assessment, the globalization process poses a challenge to the diverse ethnic cultures within each nation. He argued that this development frequently invades and transforms the forms of indigenous culture which were established by ethnic groups and nations. Unfortunately, Robertson (1992, 1997) contends that the process of globalization appears incompatible with the maintenance of indigenous cultures. He asserts that cultural globalization will share certain characteristics of other globalization processes, namely the weakening or disappearance of borders between nations, societies, and ethnic groups and a simultaneous unfolding of events on a global scale.

The relevance of this theory to the subject of African religion, culture and the global community in a world of change can be appreciated, given the fact that African religion is now counted among the major world religions. It has, over the years, made a significant impact on the global community in many ways. Religion commands considerable followership from almost all regions of the world, as the succeeding discussion shall show.

The tenets of African religions and culture

African religion is one of the indigenous religions of the world. It originated in Africa, where it has its root. However, as of the first quarter of the twenty-first century, the religious tradition has numerous Followers who are not Africans, as is the case with other world religious traditions. African indigenous religious tradition is not a religion of the books. Mbiti (1969, Ikenga-Metuh 1991), among others, submit that its tenets are not contained in any one document. Its doctrines, principles, values, ethics, and precepts are preserved in symbols, songs, myths, folk tales, legends, rituals, proverbs and riddles. This suggests that to study the religious tradition; one has to master the cultural traditions of the African. According to Mbiti, African traditional religion permeates all aspects of African culture. Similarly, A. G. Leonard, as cited by Ejizu (1986), puts it thus: "The Africans eat religiously, dress religiously, dance religiously and die religiously". In this way, their religion is their existence, and their existence is their religion.

The spirit of Africanness encourages communalism. What belongs to one belongs to all, and vice vasa. Premised on this position, every individual is bound by a filial responsibility. As Mbiti (1969, Ikenga-Metuh, 1991) argued-- In a typical African society, no one asks a young person his father's name. Rather, the question is usually, "Which family do you come from, and which community is it". This position among Africans is based on the

understanding that while spouses give birth to an individual, the child's upbringing and socialization are the responsibility of the entire community. While parents give the child the name he bears, society inculcates morals, values, and precepts to him (Mbiti, 1969).

Communalism is the main thrust of African religion and culture. Ejike and Mmoneke (2022) assert that Communalism is widely held as the specific and intrinsic nature of traditional African society. In Africa, everyone is his brother's keeper. From Cape of good hope to Cairo, Somalia to Darkar, every African holds each other in high esteem.

In the spirit of communalism, it is a common practice to see two, three or more Africans eat the same dish. Among them, the cultural practice of caring and sharing is the watchword. No African lacks what his brother has. The wealth or property of any individual is usually placed at the disposal of the rest members of the kin group. This practice is responsible for the absence of extremely poor or very vulnerable groups in Africa. Though some may not afford three square meals daily, no African goes to bed on an empty stomach.

Whether dead or alive, there exists a synergy of Africaness among the people. As noted earlier, the birth of a child in any African society is usually welcomed generally in the community. Opoku (1978), corroborating Mbiti (1969), writes that among the Mende tribe, everyone in the community rejoices at the birth of an infant because a new member of the society has just been introduced, and in Ogba Obowu (1972) argued that this calls for a big ceremony among kinsfolk. Here, it is perceived that the absence of the young is an eventual notice that such a society is threatened by extinction.

In Africa, communities go to extra mile to ensure that their young wives give birth. They also take care to prevent the death of infants (Awolalu and Dopamu, (1979). Supporting the above, Obodoegbulam, Joel and Amadi (2021) stressed that in Ogba, Enginnie and Ikwere, elaborate rituals are performed to welcome and guide the birth of children.

Communal labour and common participation in communal activities were considered a virtue. Failure was regarded as deviant behaviour. Parents encouraged their children to learn the habit of working with other members of the community. This was regarded as a way of fostering the spirit of brotherliness. From a very young age, a typical African is made to identify his age grade. This is because communal services were conducted based on the age grade to which an individual belongs.

At the passing of an African, an elaborate funeral which often stretches into days, weeks, months or years depending on the age and socio-religious status, is conducted by the entire community and beyond. Sympathizers, Friends and well-wishers join the bereaved family in mourning the departed. It is considered a moral responsibility to participate in the funeral of a departed by way of paying him their last respect. At the funeral, Kinsfolks employ the

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opportunity to send messages to their departed members. The fellow takes such a message to their forebears.

There exists a very strong tie between the living and the departed in Africa. Here, death does not mark the end of life. Almost in all parts of the continent, death is seen as a transition from this visible world to the world of the invisible. This explains the rationale behind the so much elaborate funeral which Africans call to play when their kin pass. In some instances, these ceremonies start long before the individual's last breath. Osifo (2021) contended that Africans spend so much time and resources burying their dead because they believe in life after life. This supports the earlier position that in Africa, no one dies but just transits from this visible, tangible world to the world of the spirits, which is the world of the invincible.

The ancestors occupy the fourth layer in the African pantheon. According to Mbiti (1969, Ikenga-Metuh 1991, Obodoegbulam 2013,2019). In the opinion of these scholars, the living shows so much respect for the departed because of the belief that whatever treatment one gives to them will be counted for both the departed and his survivors. Perhaps, that is why the survivors of diseased kin take extra care in burying their dead.

Any departed who was not given the proper funeral will not be accepted by the ancestors. Such an individual will continue to roam about in the spirit world without a final resting place. This category of spirits constitutes what appears to be evil spirits. They marline their survivors and often inflict harm on them.

The ancestors serve as the policemen of the African world. Ngbara (2018), commenting on what obtains in Gokana, held that among the people, the ancestors protect their living kinsfolks who uphold the precepts of morality. Anyone who turns out to be a deviant was severely punished. Such a fellow was visited with unprecedented sickness that can only be cured with rituals of purification. This check on the people serves as a guide for the survivors. Everyone was usually mindful of his conduct.

Otite and Ogionwo (2006), writing about marriage among the Urhobo, argued that in Urhobo marriage, the ancestors play such an important role that if they are not included in the relationship through a ritual, there is bound to be chaos in the union. The same obtains in Gokana, where a Nanny goat is required to be slaughtered and a ritual performed by way of informing the ancestors of the new relationship; such marriage will not be blessed with any child (Ngbara 2018). Owing to the above, marriage is usually a societal affair among Africans. This also informs some of their religio-cultural practices such as levirate marriage, ghost marriage or wife inheritance. The widow is not left uncared for. In the traditional African setting, these practices were instituted as a way of ensuring that the widow was included in the scheme of things. This inclusion will remain till any of her male children grows to fill the vacuum.

Traditional medicine: Africans have a good idea of health and healing (Owete 2005). Earlier, Mbiti (1969, Awolalu and Dopamu 1979, had stated that Africans make use of plants, roots, herbs, stagnant water, running water, animal fins, scale, purs, and back of trees, among others, in the preparation of medicine.

Peter in Tasie (2009), as cited by Edum (2018), mentioned that one interesting feature of African religion is the practice of magic and medicine as a basic structure of the religion. the reason for this is that Africans believe that the universe is saturated with diverse capricious spiritual forces which man cannot adequately combat.

Opoku (1978) earlier asserted that although the practice of medicine is religious, there is also a scientific aspect to it. A vast knowledge of plants and roots and their medicinal properties has been acquired through close observation of nature and practical experience. Some medicines were discovered by watching animals treat each other with certain herbs or plants.

For instance, one of the most potent anti-snake bite medicines in Ghana was obtained by a hunter who watched two snakes fight till the stronger overpowered, the weaker, and it plucked a leaf and put it into the other's mouth to revive it. The hunter took some of the leaves home and began to use them in treating snake bites. Observation of pregnant goats about to deliver their kids showed the bark of a particular tree among the Ashanti. It was found that the bark had the property of checking bleeding after delivery, and this medicine is used by some herbalists to stop excessive bleeding after childbirth.

The concept of a global community

In the view of Joel, Oziezi and Jacob (2021), "The World history can be classified in different periodizations such as the ancient, modern, contemporary ", etc. As it were, a significant development in all these culminates in globalization which has impacted the narratives of the world. They hold that, over time and space, the world has passed through various civilizations characterized by major developments.

The concept of the world being a global community was first presented by those who conceived the idea of the League of Nations in 1919 and, later, the United Nations in 1945. These organizations saw the world as one united, indivisible entity. Here, strong and weak nations of the world were brought under one umbrella.

Perhaps, the idea behind the above, among others, maybe to redress the injustices done by the strong nations of the world to the weak. In this regard, it was obvious that peoples of Africa and some indigenous peoples of the Americas were inhumanly dealt with.

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The main objectives of the global community were mainly to harness the potential of the different parts of the world to the fullest for the benefit of humanity. It is understood that different parts of the world are endowed differently. With the idea of the world being a global community, resources deposited in any part of the world will be made available to other parts. This invariably will reduce the challenges faced by the different peoples of the world.

The world is a simple human community that supports the movement of people, culture or cultural materials from place to place, from one country or continent to another, without restriction.

One of the blessings in disguise to Africa was its forceful exportation to Europe and from there to the Americas. While the perpetrators had the objective of emptying the continent of its cream of human and material resources, they, against their wish, popularized the African religion and culture by carrying the custodians of the religion to foreign lands.

Ijekeye (2022) contends that migration has been a constant and persistent feature in the history of humankind. The reasons why people migrate are varied and constantly changing. Moreover, the individuals who migrate are not easy to classify because they come under different circumstances, from different environments and with different individual characteristics.

Wairimu and Wachira (2022) avowed that the way forward for Africa is to embrace the concept of Afrocentricity. This philosophy lays heavy stress on the African person and African communities wherever they are found in the world as being in the best position to help Africa. This concept is projecting all matters of life, placing the African notion ahead, experience and ideas at the centre of the process of decision-making. Firmly focused on Africa and African interests, Afrocentricity posits that the means of protecting African interests is through harnessing African potential in a competitive global arena. This will enable Africans to define, assert and protect their identity, history, anthropology, theology and epistemology. Ejike and Mmoneke (2022) Communalism is widely held as the specific and intrinsic nature of traditional African society.

African Impact

The presence of African religion and culture in the global community is not without an impression. One of the contributions of African religion and culture is the evolution of Pentecostal Christianity. In Africa, spirit possession is an integral aspect of their religious life. In the celebration of candomblé and practice of Umbanda and cantimbo, elements of spirit possession are visibly exhibited. The blacks who found themselves outside the shores of Africa took along with them these religio-cultural practices.

At different times, an African will be possessed, and he will manifest different characteristics typical of the African spirit of mediumistic divination. Through this medium, an African will receive or deliver divine messages from the spirit world.

This is unlike what obtains in orthodox Christianity, where only hymns will be sung by the choir, and the officiating priest performs all major functions in every worship secession.

In arts and crafts, African works of art constitute the largest collection of archival materials in many European museums. Commenting on the Benin arts, Irabor (2019) contends that the arts of Benin are a significant part of the Benin culture as culture forms an important aspect of rituals and ceremonies. He quotes the British high commissioner Thorold Masefield who, during the Great Benin centenary, confessed that: "In the late twentieth century, there have been a number of art exhibitions featuring the wonderful creativities of Benin artists. The most recent and, in some ways, the most striking, was the exhibition at the Royal Academy assembled in London as part of Africa 95---The above confession does not only apply to Britain but to other European countries like Italy, Germany, Netherlands, France, Belgium and Portugal.

Right from the early 1970s, when Afro-music first hit the world stage, African brands of music continue to make waves in the global music scene. Before this era, Reggae Music had demonstrated the uniqueness of African rhythm. This African brand of music is encapsulated in the music amplified and embodied by the Ras Tafari movement.

African music is clerical and more of the narrative of a life experience. African music is used to praise, censor, eulogies, mourn, deride or forewarn of impending danger in people's actions. Jamaican Rastas are descendants of African slaves who were converted to Christianity in Jamaica by missionaries using the text of the King James Version of the Bible.

In the area of communication, the world is now becoming a global village, making interconnectivity very simple. Without the traditional barriers associated with the traditional communication system, the Internet highway has limited, if not eliminated, those impediments. With the internet, it is now easy to connect with anyone outside one's place of residence with very little difficulty. According to Ojukaiye, Kooro and Oburunwoke (2021), the internet is now the world town crier.

In this regard, social media has now come to take the place of the traditional town crier. Messages that would have taken days, if not months, to get to their receiver are delivered in a matter of seconds.

Recommendations

Given the above arguments, this paper makes the following recommendations.

(i)   Africans should consolidate on the areas they have a comparative advantage in the religio-cultural activities of the world.
(ii)   Since the world is now a global village, Africans should explore any opportunity that may present itself to them.
(iii)   Indigenous African languages should be developed to be able to compete effectively in the global arena.
(iv)   Africans should watch their back in the international arena so that the world superpowers will not overrun the continent in the guise of the world becoming a global community.
(v)   Funding of education and other social services should be stepped up to keep pace with best global practices.

Conclusion

Without a doubt, African religion and culture have firmly entrenched itself on the world map of religious traditions. The impact of the religious-cultural tradition among the African diaspora and other devotees leaves no one in doubt that this religious tradition aptly possesses all the intricacies of a religious tradition.

Given the arguments espoused in this paper, the discussion aligns itself with the world culture theory of Robertson above. As canvassed by Robertson, globalization has invariably brought world culture under one broad umbrella. Unfortunately, despite the large size of the umbrella, it still manifests different colours, representing diverse interests from different parts of the world.

While globalization may promise many benefits, this article agrees with Robertson that it will dispossess the different ethnic groups, cultures and nations of their distinct identity and peculiarity.

Premised on this last position, this discourse holds that Afrocentricity is the way to go for Africa. The African-centered approach to the issue of globalization is, therefore, a clarion call. This should galvanize everyone, whether in Africa or the diaspora with African blood, to bear in mind that while we play along with the concept of globalization, every ethnic group, nation and continent will not lose sight of their comparative advantage.

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REDEFINING AFRICAN RELIGION IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN LITERATURE

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Abstract

Various postcolonial critics have addressed the issue of undermining African traditional beliefs and viewing them as inferior to Western values. Both Bhabha and Said have approached this issue in terms of the rejection of polarization which ultimately favours the majority, and have, in their writings, challenged some assumptions and canon that, under the pretext of false universality, push Western ideas as the basis of judgment. The consequence of this is the inferiorisation of the values of the postcolonial subjects, which include their culture, religion and other aspects, rooting in their minds the assumption that their practices are superstitious and evil. This paper seeks to redefine the African Traditional Religion in Contemporary African literature, examining its representation by the selected contemporary African authors: Adichie and Emezi while attempting a criticism of its role in the fictional contemporary African societies presented by these authors. It takes the postcolonial approach to deconstruct the negative assumptions provided in the process of polarization and redefines the African religion not as impeccable but as one also worthy of the same regard given to Western religion.

Keywords: Postcolonialism, Religion, Polarisation

Introduction

Homi Bhabha posits that what is 'theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences (The Location of Culture 2). Based on his argument that cultural difference has taken precedence over cultural diversity, with the former accommodating the stereotypes and prejudice associated with cultural contact, Bhabha opines that there is a need to take into consideration these differences articulated at the point of contact. For him, cultures are never 'unitary in themselves, nor simply dualistic in the relation of Self to Other' (Bhabha 52). This is in accordance with Frantz Fanon's perspective of culture as a political struggle, the 'zone of occult instability where the people dwell' (Quoted in Bhabha 52). The implication of this is that culture changes and, therefore, cannot be seen as authentic in regard to cultural diversity. However, it cannot also be described by placing it as an opposite of another culture, bearing in mind that this has been the practice of the Western metatheory, consequently pushing the minority to a position of inferiority. Fanon addresses this in The Wretched of the Earth, where he identifies the colonial world as a Manichaen one, where 'values are, in fact, irreversibly poisoned and infected as soon as they come into contact with the colonized' (53). Similarly, Edward Said recognises this in Orientalism, where he explains the concept of Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (3). Whether it is termed: Orientalism, binary opposition, Manichaeism or polarity, a similar idea is projected by these postcolonial scholars and critics who play a vital role in the process of decolonisation. As is seen in 'The Ekwensu Semantics and the Igbo Christian Theolinguistics,' a criticism of Opata's Ekwensu in the Igbo Imagination: A Heroic Deity or Christian Devil, 'Religion is a cultural product' (Ezeh 476) and each culture answers the 'questions posed by religion in its way' (476). This paper derives a good part of its analysis from this idea posed by Opata, whereby there is a need to deconstruct the canonical judgment of viewing the African culture as a foil to the Western, with a focus on the African Traditional religion which has borne the brunt of this binary opposition. However, Bhabha's key idea of defining theories in the now also plays a crucial role in this paper. Bearing in mind that the African traditional culture cannot be completely defined as its original self since it has encountered other cultures by virtue of colonialism, this present study seeks to redefine it in terms of its representation in selected contemporary African literature texts. It does not return to the precolonial era to examine works like Things Fall Apart but rather aims to locate the place of African traditional religion in contemporary African literature.

Theoretical Framework And Methodology

This paper makes use of postcolonial theory, which is a counter-discourse, to deconstruct the idea of the African traditional religion as an embodiment of evil by bringing in the contributions of postcolonial critics like Bhabha, Said, Fanon, Opata, and others who have

made vital contributions to this field of study. It employs the qualitative research method, which calls for subjectivity based on the researcher's perspective. An in-depth analysis of the primary texts: Adichie's Purple Hibiscus and Emezi's The Death of Vivek Oji, will be carried out, along with the contribution of scholars who have studied the postcolonial theory. The documentation will be MLA (Modern Language Association) style, and the analysis will be based on the aforementioned primary texts, capturing the representation of African Traditional Religion by these authors, examining the polarity which has cast it into inferiority, and elevating it as one worthy of reverence.

Textual Analysis

Before delving into the analysis of the primary texts, it is important to examine Opata's argument, which falls in line with Mbonu Ojike's idea that the 'division of humanity into racial categories is futile and in bad faith' (Quoted in Ezeh 473):

Races that are categorized along colour lines are conceived…to make possible the stereotyping of the desirable or undesirable along colour lines. In such a racial equation, black is evil and white is good. (Ezeh 473)

As Lance Morrow posits, evil is 'anyone outside the tribe. Evil works by dehumanizing the other'(Ezeh 478), and this goes in accordance with Bhabha's rejection of polarization and Said's identification of Orientalism as a will to govern over the Orient. The need to divide the self and the other consequently leads to a loss of the authenticity of the other since they are constantly placed as a contrast to the self, their difference-making them an object of mockery and inferiority. The representation of African Traditional Religion by Contemporary African authors takes an approach of deconstructing these negative assumptions described as 'racist biases and Negrophobic mindsets'(Quoted in Ezeh 473). In Adichie's Purple Hibiscus, the character of Eugene Achike is described as 'white skin, black masks'(Wa Thiong'o 160) in 'Writing Against Neocolonialism.' He is a man who derives his 'character, power and inspiration from their guardianship of imperialist interests' (160). While it could be reasonably argued that Eugene's incorruptible nature depicts him as a patriotic person, a deeper reading of the work exposes where his loyalties lie, ultimately, with Western ideologies.

At the beginning of the work, the readers are introduced to Eugene, a man who looks up to Father Benedict, a Western priest, who deems the African language unworthy of being used during the liturgical celebrations. Father Benedict insists on having the kyrie and credo sung only in Latin, with the belief that 'Igbo was not acceptable'(Adichie 12). Papa, who lives his life in mimicry, equates speaking the English language with sounding civilised, and this mentality of his makes him enjoy it when 'the villagers make an effort to speak English around him. He said it showed they had good sense' (68). It is this mentality of Western superiority that drives him to view Father Amadi as someone who is a problem to the church and should be remembered in prayers, all because the young visiting priest breaks

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into an Igbo song in the middle of the homily. Although it is not made clear whether Papa's issue is with the song or the language, it is obvious through his other encounters what he thinks of his native language, which is part of his culture. Papa is akin to the class Bhabha describes as 'almost the same but not quite'(127) in The Location of Culture. As a mimicry man who can never be the same as the Westerners he tries so hard to imitate, he shows his excesses and slippages and ends up making a mockery of himself in many instances. One of these is seen in the way he suddenly changes his accent while addressing the Western Reverend Sister at Kambili's school and his religious fanaticism, which ends up making him into an object of mockery. He is the 'outsider who wept louder than the bereaved' (Achebe 148) as he goes through extreme measures to fit into the Western system to a point where he not only places himself in a false position of emulation but also begins to judge and views those with different opinions as evil.

The relativity of what is seen as canon and what Adichie terms 'the danger of a single story' comes into play in the mentality held by Kambili for a good part of her life, which centres around traditionalists going to hell when they die. The first mention of Papa-Nnukwu, which introduces him to the world of the novel, is Kambili's recollection of Eugene telling her and Jaja that 'nobody had spent money on his schooling, especially not his Godless father, our Papa-Nnukwu' (47). As is seen not long afterwards, Eugene speaks of his father again in the same negative manner, 'my father spent his time worshipping gods of woods and stone. I would be nothing today but for the priests and sisters at the mission' (55). This creates an image of an embodiment of evil and wickedness in Kambili, who only hears her father's side of the story, making Papa-Nnukwu into a stingy man who would rather spend his time being ungodly than provide for his son. It is, however, ironic that Papa, who accuses his father of not spending money on his schooling, becomes wealthy and treats his father with disdain, banning him from entering his luxurious house, which can 'fit in every man in Abba'(91) in the words of Papa-Nnukwu, and until Papa-Nnukwu complains to the Umunna, stops his father from having contact with his children. Even the money Papa sends to his father is described as 'slim wads of naira through Kevin or one of our Umunna members, slimmer wads than he gave Kevin as a Christmas bonus' (70). It is just akin to the twenty naira notes he throws to the children running after his car on their way to Abba, and to Papa, the traditional religion is equated with evil, a danger to his offspring, which is why he says to his children, 'I don't like to send you to the home of a heathen, but God will protect you' (70).

The power of the narrative makes a dynamic shift to the side of the 'other,' Papa-Nnukwu, who has only been shown all along from the perspective of Eugene when Kambili and Jaja visit his home. There is no reconciliation between what she has come to believe and the reality before her, and what the readers see is a frail old man who has been struck by age and poverty. It is like the symbolic lowering of the high walls of their luxurious houses, which do not let her see the perspectives and sufferings of other people. Outside these high silent walls are cries of suffering people like Papa-Nnukwu and Anikwenwa, who are

victims of Papa's negative narrative and discrimination. Papa-Nnukwu's house is described thus:

Papa-Nnukwu's creaking wooden gate, which was so narrow that Papa might have to enter sideways if he ever were to visit. The compound was barely a quarter of the size of our backyard in Enugu…The house that stood in the middle of the compound was small, compact like a dice, and it was hard to imagine Papa and Aunty Ifeoma growing up here. It looked just like the pictures of houses I used to draw in kindergarten: a square house with a square door at the centre and two square windows on each side. (Adichie 71)

Papa-Nnukwu's house is so uninhabitable that the first time Kambili and Jaja visit, the latter walks in looking for the bathroom, only to be shown to the outhouse, a 'closet-size building of unpainted cement blocks with a mat of entwined palm fronds pulled across the gaping entrance' (71). Even his singlet is 'browned by age and yellowed at the armpits' (72), and his food is 'flaky fufu and watery soup bereft of chunks of fish or meat…' (72). Kambili finds herself searching for signs of 'difference, of Godlessness' (71), but she does not see any. However, due to the strong mentality which has been rooted in her by Papa, she believes that they are somewhere, that they 'had to be' (71). By implication, Kambili is at crossroads as she is unable to reconcile the beliefs she has been taught with the reality of Papa-Nnukwu simply being an old man who worships his gods and stays out of others' ways. He is not the evil sinner who would be banished to hell, but she starts to see him as a person.

The words of Aunty Ifeoma to Kambili come into place here, 'sometimes what was different was just as good as what was familiar' (173), and Kambili understands this when she has the opportunity to live in the same house as Papa-Nnukwu and witnesses his itu-nzu, his declaration of innocence where he prays for his children, including Eugene who abandons him. Kambili is surprised to observe that Papa-Nnukwu prays for Eugene with the same sincerity he uses to pray for Aunty Ifeoma. On the one hand, therefore, is Eugene, a self-acclaimed moralist who fails to exercise the words written on Mama's shirt, 'GOD IS LOVE' (15), but is a perpetrator of domestic violence and discrimination, while on the other hand is Papa-Nnukwu, an old man whom Eugene is bent on tagging an embodiment of evil, but not once is he seen judging people or praying for the death of his enemies. Kambili sees similarities between his shrine and that of Our Lady of Lourdes, just as Aunty Ifeoma tells her that his morning prayer is like when they say the rosary. Until his last breath, Papa-Nnukwu believes it is the missionaries who have misled his son, thereby laying the blame off Eugene, an adult capable of making his own decisions. However, just as Aunty Ifeoma tells him, she also attains a high level of education but does not judge people of other beliefs or insult her father. Her garden in Nsukka is symbolic of her generosity and open-mindedness, where both Catholics and protestants are allowed to pluck flowers for their service. The result of this is seen in her children, who freely express their opinions without fear, unlike Eugene's house where Mama is beaten till she has a miscarriage because she

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admits to feeling too sick to greet the priest, and Kambili and Jaja live in fear of their father, whispering and communicating with their eyes.

Similarly, Father Amadi, who plays a significant role in Kambili's emotional growth, is portrayed as an individual who can balance a human heart with morality. It is pertinent to note that although he is a missionary priest, he never demands of Papa-Nnukwu to convert and does not share Papa's beliefs that Papa-Nnukwu is going to be doomed for following the ways of the ancestors. Rather, he speaks to Papa-Nnukwu with respect and even helps Aunty Ifeoma transport him to Nsukka when he falls sick. He is attainable, a person, which goes in contrast with what Kambili has grown to associate with priests due to people like Father Benedict. He plays football with the boys at the stadium, and as he tells Kambili, he sees Christ in their faces. However, Kambili is again conflicted due to her beliefs, such that she is unable to reconcile the 'blond Christ hanging on the burnished cross in St. Agnes and the sting-scarred legs of those boys' (185). Kambili's formation under the guidance of her father and Father Benedict prepares her to form a mindset of viewing God as a Western man, evidence of which is observed in her thought of God laying out the hills of Nsukka with 'his wide white hands' (138). It is also of this mindset of God as Eurocentric that Kambili is surprised when Aunty Ifeoma prays that the Blessed Virgin intercedes for Papa-Nnukwu, and the Angels take charge of him. This leads her to pose the question of whether 'Our Lady' can 'intercede on behalf of a heathen' (173).

Opata posits in Ekwensu in the Igbo Imagination: A Heroic deity or Christian Devil that the God-Devil binary in the Judaic and Christian worldviews is absent in the Igbo traditional religion, and the Igbos approach the problem of evil from an 'engagingly original position to which the most respected of thinkers anywhere on this planet should doff their hat' (Quoted in Ezeh 474). As he opines again, religion is a 'cultural product' (Ezeh 476) and 'each culture answers the questions posed by religion in its way' (476). The need for polarization to inflict what Opata calls a 'cultural intimidation' (Qtd in Ezeh 475) coupled with mistranslation is what led to the association of evil with Ekwensu, a deity in the Igbo traditional religion, known for generosity and benevolence. The implication is that everything about the African Traditional Religion becomes associated with evil, placing it as a foil to that of the Christian religion.

In accordance with Opata's postulations about each culture answering the question of religion in its way, we examine Afigbo's idea of the appropriation of heaven and hell where he writes:
The Igbo cosmogony has a totally different view of the after-life. Life simply continues and to die was simply a transition that made the deceased an incorporeal member of his/her kith and kin. (Qtd in Ezeh 477)

Afigbo's idea of reincarnation is where the central idea of Akwaeke Emezi's The Death of Vivek Oji is located. Vivek is born with a scar on the feet of Ahunna, his grandmother, and

when his father, Chika, holds him in his arms, it is described that Chika feels 'something building in him slowly…'(15). However, he ignores this feeling, and the next day, a messenger comes to announce the death of Ahunna, who passed away the previous day. Throughout the short life lived by Vivek, the signs of his difference from the rest of the people are there, but unfortunately, the methods used to attempt to make him fit in are not effective because everyone turns away from the possibility of the reality which they deem superstitious. It is, however, ironic that Mary's church would employ the method of extreme exorcism aimed at beating the demon out of him, but no one would consider him a reincarnation of his grandmother. It is a case of viewing evil as 'anyone outside the tribe' (Qtd in Ezeh 478). There is belief in demons and angels, but the idea of reincarnation becomes controversial and superstitious for the sole reason of it not being a part of one's faith.

The effect of this lack of acceptance as the grandmother who has come to life again in Vivek is that Vivek feels like a 'piece that didn't match anything else' (Emezi 79). He tells Osita about his dream where he is their grandmother; he looks in the mirror, and she is there, just like in the pictures, and she speaks to him in Igbo, saying, 'Hold my life for me' (Emezi 115). He goes further to ask if Osita believes in reincarnation. There are so many signs that Vivek is different, but his father is only focused on having him look masculine and cutting his long hair, while his mother is afraid of how people would hurt him for looking the way he does. Even at his funeral, the programme is designed with pictures of him as a child, as if the person behind it intends to pretend as though he were someone else (Emezi 146). In the end, when the truth about his death starts to unravel, it is discovered that he lived his last few moments in his true skin, as a reincarnation of Ahunna, and tells his friends to address him as Nnemdi, a name Ekene suggests at his birth as an Igbo middle name, a name which refers to Mama because of the scar on his feet (157). When Chika and Kavita, his parents, first hear this, they believe it is a mental illness that drives Vivek to dress that way, a denial which stems from their lack of understanding of a belief they do not share.

In the end, Vivek is finally able to bear the name, Nnemdi when the inscription on his grave is changed to 'Vivek Nnemdi Oji Beloved Child' (172). He mentions that his 'grandmother, floating somewhere here with me, is happy to be acknowledged at last' and goes ahead to say, 'I was born and died. I will come back (172).

Conclusion And Recommendation

The acceptance of a different belief system is quite difficult, especially when one already has a strong ideology, but as is observed in this study, the difference does not imply a threat or evil but rather could be viewed as another perspective. The similarity between the characters of the two primary texts could be seen in their struggles to come to terms with an idea which does not go in line with ideologies rooted in their mentalities all their lives. However, like Aunty Ifeoma, Father Amadi and Vivek's friends, there is a need to strike a

balance where one can choose to have their own beliefs but understand and respect a different one. The findings of this research paper have proven that evil can be relative, and what is not understood does not imply the presence of evil. There is a need to redescribe the African Traditional Religion in its authenticity, ridding it of polarity, which forms negative assumptions. Therefore, other scholars could as well continue with this research in other aspects and deconstruct other canons which place the culture of the postcolonial subject in a state of inferiority. By doing this, many other good practices could be upheld, and it will improve the mindset of the postcolonial subject, to have the awareness that their own culture deserves the same level of reverence given to the Western, for both are not impeccable, but have their beautiful aspects.

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CRACKS IN THE EDIFICE OF WESTERN GLOBALIZATION – THE SPECTRUM OF UBUNTU AND AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

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Abstract

Achille Mbembe noted that "...history and all things flow toward us now. Europe is no longer the center of gravity of the world". He recognized "the becoming black of the world". The "broken promises" of globalization and "its discontents" are clearly evident. Widespread inequities, and what Felwine Sarr refers to as "envelopment" have been trailing globalization. The "envelopment" is the enclosure of non-western societies in modes of being and organizing themselves which disqualify who they are and what they value. The disqualification attempts have been unmatched by globalization's claims of improving lives. The ensuing disillusionment have reawakened indigenous modes of being and interacting that are proving to be more integral and fulfilling - individually and collectively. The awareness is increasing that the survival of human society globally in this century will largely depend on the rediscovery of the power of human community and solidarity known in Africa as Ubuntu. Globally, there is a craving for a world with a more human face. Indigenous spiritual philosophies such as Ubuntu propose this desired world, where conviviality, fluidity between sacred-profane and consubstantiality of life would epitomize human interactions. It is a world which operates with the insight that we cannot exist without one another. It is a world where a sense of a shared existence, destiny and humanity is valued. The mainstreaming of this spiritual philosophy in Africa has the potential to trigger African Renaissance. In this case, globalization in the African sense would be about inclusivity and mutuality, positive-sum game, as opposed to the advancement of global partisan capital interest and agenda. The paper proposes to look through some of the cracks in the edifice of Western globalization and opens up to the new dawn of the Ubuntu humanizing model.

Keywords: *Ubuntu*, African spirituality, African renaissance, globalization, universe.

Introduction

Forms of Western globalization have been imperialism, slavery, racial capitalism, colonialism and neo-colonialism (Mbembe, 2017). They are all fruits of Western expansionist ideologies and ambitions. Though the use of the term globalization is fairly recent and linked to the global proliferation of technology (Taylor, 2012), its drive to surpass human boundaries is ancient. In its simple assertion, globalisation refers to the worldwide interaction of human beings, the ease of changing locations and exchanging goods, cultural values and artefacts. The current tempo of globalization is driven by technological advancements in transport and communication. Globalization has meant that people across the globe can hold the same conversation almost simultaneously. However, the issue with globalization is the drive of conquest and imperialistic tendencies that have characterised its Western form in the last two millennia. This paper would like to pay special attention to the new energy of globalisation that is grave for a world with a more human face, as epitomised in the concept of *Ubuntu* and indigenous communitarian spiritual worldviews.

Throughout the world today, there is a real social exasperation about the Western model of globalization. The sentiments of domination, exploitation by invisible global forces and the urge to get out of the grip of this system are quickly spreading, hence "the becoming black of the world" (Mbembe, 2017, p. 1). The "broken promises" of the expiring model globalization and "its discontents" (Stiglitz, 2002) have left a trail of widespread inequities and what Felwine Sarr (2016, pp. 21-28) referred to as "envelopment". The "envelopment" is the enclosure of non-western societies in modes of being, organizing and becoming themselves, which disqualify who they are and what they value. The disqualification attempts have been unmatched by globalization's claims of improving lives. The ensuing disillusionment has reawakened indigenous modes of being and interacting. The latter are getting out of the informal spaces where they used to be relegated for centuries. These modes of being and interacting are also proving to be more integral, convivial and fulfilling, individually and collectively.

The awareness is increasing that the survival of human society globally in this century will largely depend on the rediscovery of the power of human community and solidarity. This is the power that *Ubuntu* brings as a civilizational model. The *Ubuntu* civilizational model matches the global craving of humanity for a convivial, fluid and inclusive world. It is a world where there is an increasing awareness that we cannot exist without one another. It is a world where a sense of a shared existence is valued. Thus, the spiritual philosophy that African indigenous communities have been cherishing and nurturing for centuries is resurfacing as the most viable way of life globally. It is what this paper refers to as the spectrum of *Ubuntu* and African Renaissance in the dying bed of Western globalization. The paper looks through some of the cracks in the edifice of Western globalization and

examines what could be the new dawn for humanity if the *Ubuntu* civilizational model is considered.

Observing Cracks in the Edifice of Western Globalization

The convoluted history of humankind seems to have reached a turning-point necessitating finding new ways of living together. Though capital still largely dominates such pursuit, important cracks are appearing in the edifice of Western globalization. Defining characteristics of the Western model of globalization include the impoverishment of the majority of people on the planet by dispossessing them from their lands, weakening their ability to feed themselves, heightening the cost of living and turning the people into a mass of desperate labourers. Enslaved is what the majority of the people have become, to the minority of the people who control the supply of money. This system attempts to keep all the people on their toes. In the name of profit, the majority are robbed of their freedoms, their livelihoods, their dignity and their cultures.

The most self-cannibalising characteristic of the Western globalisation model is the displacement of the innate value of human beings by making them mere instruments at the service of capital. As a consequence, material possessions become more important than people, thus leading to the threats of a crumbled society. Another defining characteristic of this system is exclusionist, whereby families and communities are excluded, by the mighty, from accessing vital resources as per their natural right or contribution to the production of these resources (Brotons, 2021; Koot, 2020). However, this system was normalized, as if by divine order; the continuous suffering that it imposed on the majority of the world population could not leave it unquestioned. Precolonial Africa and other indigenous communities offered a counterexample to the Western way of handling resources. It appeared that it was possible to avoid huge disparities and unhealthy competition for resources in society. The trail of misery, violence and hostilities caused by the unequal distribution of resources in the society was not, therefore, natural but manmade.

The globalisation that is fashion in Western imperialism tended to establish one uniform world with similar political and economic systems under the control of the magnate of finance. This system opposes and undermines a world based on self-determining communities, even though the rhetoric of freedom is part of the camouflage of the system's exploitative machinery. Despite the control mechanism of this establishment, cracks are developing therein, and a shift is taking place. People and their human habitat are increasingly taking centre stage again instead of money. The importance of social units of solidarity is increasing in the rejection of large and anonymous structures and organizations at state or interstate levels. There is a rise in the consciousness that it is because we are that I am also (Mbiti, 1969). Interdependence, interconnection, collaboration and cooperation are emphasized. Human beings' ways of living do not have to be at war with each other and nature. Instead, it should they should inspire each other and be inspired by nature and the

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harmonious interactions therein. The battle to reinstate the free flow of persons, goods and shared value, characteristic of the natural way of living, is resolutely engaged by the people against systems of confinement. This was evident when people worldwide fought against the politics of confinement imposed during the Covid 19 years. An indoctrinating school system that offers no livelihood for youth is also questioned in place of nurturing natural talents and putting them at the service of the community.

Globally, people are moving away from the superficial divide based on race imposed by a system of divide and rule. They are awakening to the innate and most ancient indwelling conviction that we are one human species and children of the same natural habitat, the earth. For millennia, cooperation, not cut-throat competition, has ensured the survival of the bigger majority of the people in the terrestrial globe. The same could be said about the connection and positive human interactions with nature. Without them, the inhabitant of the earth would not have survived. Feeling and living in harmony with nature and other forms of beings have been the path of and to life, not the addiction to divide, conquer, subdue, exploit and possess. Living in close but open communities has also nurtured meaningful life and the joy of living instead of being forced into anonymous, faceless and life-sucking states and corporations with their taxation systems.

Witnessing a New Dawn - the *Ubuntu* Humanizing Model and African Renaissance

African indigenous communities have always been preoccupied with a unifying principle that presides over the material and the spiritual world (Bisseck, 1999). *Ubuntu* is such a principle which brings forth a humanizing model of society. Unearthing this principle, aligning policy and vital choices on this principle, signals the beginning of a new epoch for Africa – the African rebirth referred to here as the African Renaissance. More than a concept or what van Binsbergen calls a semantic complex, *Ubuntu* is a living praxis that has characterized generations of indigenous Africans (Stuit, 2016). Though it originates from the Nguni language in South Africa, it finds its equivalence in all Bantu and even non-Bantu languages in Africa. The reference to *Ubuntu* meant placing the human being and life at the centre of any endeavour. This principle rehabilitates human aspiration towards transcendence as the primary cause of achieving well-being, justice, peace, goodness and fairness in society (Bisseck, 1999). It leads to the recognition of the relational, emotional, and affective values, alongside dry reason, as provisions of nature to the human being to contribute to a functional and better-performing society (Bisseck, 1999). It places the shared search for value (not profit) as what holds the world together. Value-inspired and oriented action is fundamental to achieving excellence (Bisseck, 1999). Achieving excellence through *Ubuntu* is part of the African Renaissance. *Ubuntu* illustrates a worldview that is built around interactive or reciprocal activities between the individual and the community, the particular and the universal (Mabingo, 2020). The meaning of *Ubuntu*-related activities in the past, present, and future is weaved in altruistic and interpersonal processes of connecting people, things and epochs. It is through various interactions, like storytelling,

farming, wedding, dancing and other activities, that the communities and individuals organize and express their interwoven existence that permits the sustainability and flourishing of life. These interactions tend to stimulate and nurture a humanistic experience that enriches the individual and the community (Mabingo, 2020).

Many indigenous cultures in the world have developed systems and philosophies of living together, which could inspire the search for mutually beneficial global interactions. In Africa, the *Ubuntu* philosophy recalibrates the human pursuit of collective survival. It is critical to note the centrality of the human person in this pursuit. Second to the human person's importance in the concept of *Ubuntu* is the connection with the soil, the land, the farm, agriculture and the feeding system, which require mutually beneficial actions. The mutually beneficial actions that the *Ubuntu* principle drives emphasize the strengthening of small units, specific communities and villages. Mainstreaming this principle would eventually lead to more inclusivity in bigger socio-political units at the metropolis or megapolis levels. Neatly tight small units thus feed bigger units that are integrated and rooted. An African Renaissance that is an offshoot of this evolution sees a reconnection with the earth, which results in more unity and abundance for all, as well as more sustainable living and self-reliant communities. Surpluses that emanate from this sustainable living and self-reliance are mutually exchangeable. Reconnecting with the earth and sustainable living also means that people have more time on their hands to socialize, innovate, create, empathize and build harmonious communities. In this case, diversification from agriculture occurs naturally since all skills and talents are required to build thriving communities. Skills in medicine, science, technology, trade, art and architecture also develop naturally, as every member of the community is encouraged to deploy their passion for the good of the community.

The atmosphere that *Ubuntu* creates allows for a flow of constructive energies between people, which could lead to mutual human progress (Mabingo, 2020). Participating in communal activities, sharing what is available and cultivating a sense of belonging are some of the humanizing pedagogies that underpin an interwoven existence and strengthen a constructive flow of energies between people. African indigenous communities have thus successfully put in place a system that emphasizes fostering collaboration and inclusion between people, which could be referred to as '*ubuntuesque*' lifestyle (Wright, 2002, Mabingo, 2020). This lifestyle evokes all forms of mutual and inclusive engagements that exemplify interdependent, intercultural, interracial, interhuman and intercontinental initiatives. Through *Ubuntu*, like the Ma'at in Ancient Egypt, Africa proposes to the world, again, a principle of life, truth, justice and reconciliation that encompasses everything visible and invisible. This principle carries one of the noblest human aspirations for a better world for all. It advocates for progress that is harmonious and serves all parts of our ecosystem (Bisseck, 1999). It offers an excellent response to a world threatened with runaway progress that is endangering all forms of life and fuelling enmity between the inhabitants of the earth.

The *Ubuntu* principle supports negentropy as an environment where harmony and balance prevail and where life flourishes. The contrary - entropy, reflects a situation where the rule of might, enmity and arbitrariness prevail. The latter is a situation where the current self-cannibalized globalisation process has led us (Bisseck, 1999). Even in the field of science, especially in quantum physics, enmity or antagonism is seen as anti-life and contra-nature as opposed to cooperation or harmony. This is what the African indigenous universalistic thought system expresses in a concept like *Ubuntu*. It is a deep-seated intuition of a unified and interrelated reality (Bisseck, 1999). In this thought system, artificially erected borders between countries do not make sense because they spread the politics of enmity. Some African thinkers have advanced that the best and most effective way to inhabit our world is to allow a free circulation of people, goods and services (Sarr, 2016, Mbembe, 2017). Such a way of thinking requires that we transcend the irrational and imaginary fears created by the capitalist mindset. This mindset is haunted by the crimes of its raids and the self-appropriation of the common heritage of the world. Instead, the African way of thinking aligned with *Ubuntu* is what allows life to flourish. The Bassa of Cameroon expresses the same idea in the concept of '*Mbog*', which means the Universe is an organic unity of complementary elements. It is the Universe as an order of reality that is rhythmic and gives a chance to all things to blossom now and in the future in an autoregulated manner.

From lower antiquity, ancient African myths of origin like the Theban and Heliopolitan cosmogonies evoke a unique and universal entity out of which all things and beings come through a process of differentiation (Diop, 1981). A single origin, from the African perspective, is not antithetical to plurality. The latter is constituted by the multiple manifestations of the Unique and Universal entity, which does not oppose or limit the various manifestations. The various manifestations are autoregulated enough to keep the necessary rhythmic order that keeps their origin significant as a source of their strength. Though seemingly apart, the fact that the multiple manifestations are all under the same natural law and rhythm of life and death and harmony of the opposite is bound to unify them further. The concept of unity in diversity as quintessential to *Ubuntu*, finds its source in this thought system and could inspire another approach to globalization.

Viewing globalization from the African thought system perspective permits a mind shift from conceptualizing the world as a totality of separated and unrelated elements to conceptualizing it as a totality made of diverse but interconnected and integrated parts. The African conception of the world is grounded on a very diverse continent that could produce an approach to globalization at the service of all people. Africa is the host of and used to a diversity of people, cultures, climates, languages, skin colours, religions and ideologies. It is open and gives room to a variety of contributions of each and all people, be they indigenous or foreign.

The African system of thought is essentially constructively pluralistic and all-encompassing (Vernicos, 2002; Ebale, 2019). All the principles of a plural society advanced, if not

imposed by Western powers, have already been in operation in the '*Ubuntuesque*' lifestyle. The principles of equal participation or representation of respect for fundamental rights of shelter, food, education, association and protection have been golden rules in the African indigenous lifestyle. This lifestyle is, however, being threatened by the Western style of urbanization and allocation of resources. Incidences of xenophobia in South Africa, ethnic and armed violence, genocide, terrorism and blatant theft of national resources in other parts of Africa are clear signals of mental and behavioural alterations. These incidences demonstrate and warn sufficiently that they may not be such a thing as a "petrified African psychological nature" (Anta Diop, 1981, p. 362). Indeed, "the sense of solidarity so dear to the African could very well give way to an individualistic, egocentric behaviour of the Western type if conditions were modified" (Anta Diop, 1981, p. 362). But the warmth of Africa's social fabric is still strong enough to avert scourges of Western individualism. The latter is not geared towards solidarity. It is not wired to take others into account and build structures that can cater for togetherness, common good and common interests. Its concept of globalization can only serve partisan interests. On the contrary, the African systemic worldview, be it in *Ubuntu* or the *Mbog*, allows for the creation of nests of solidarity that could culminate in a world as a big nest or web of human warmth and solidarity.

In the African systemic worldview, the Universe - Nature constitutes a perfect model for human organizations - socially, economically and politically (Ebale, 2019). It is from the Universe or Nature that African indigenous learnt that nothing can operate optimally in an isolated manner. All things and beings are parts of a complex and complementary web of interactions and interrelatedness that sustains life (Ebale, 2019). This observation calls for a moral imperative of mutuality, humaneness, care, and socio-economic and socio-political responsibility on every person towards every person and everything that exists (Ebale, 2019). The moral imperative of care is fundamental because everything that exists is a component of the One Essence. Anything done or undertaken by one of the components affects positively or negatively the whole structure of the existing—human, non-human and Nature's layers of reality. Pollution in one corner of the planet equals pollution in all corners of the planet, no matter what the trades in carbon units are. Similarly, single acts of conservation and protection of the resources of our planet in any of its corners benefit the whole planet, at all corners.

From the *Ubuntuistic* perspective, a just and cohesive social, economic and political order, modelled on the Universe or Nature, is an act of an ethically sound human being referred to as the *MuNtu*. The latter is a product of an initiatic learning process that awakens the sense of a human being's responsibility as part of the community or the whole. He or she is prepared to move from his/her undifferentiated to his/her differentiated state. He/she is made aware of his/her individually as an "I am"-*MuNtu*, but in connection with the "we are", the community or the essence of the totality –the *Ntu*. The *MuNtu* is thus a wise human being, fully reconciled with himself and with nature or the infinite expanse of existence (Diop, 1981). It is a human being who has developed an elastic reason, a reasoning reason

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that accommodates the excluded third (the Invisible) and is capable of completely opening up to the unsurpassable order of the Universe (Bassong, 2007). It is a human being who broke through the prison of 'organized reason" with its logic and grammar of all forms of exclusions that categorize what is unfamiliar as alien and treat it as non-existent (Diop, 1981). It is a human being whose reason and actions are determined by what is good and beneficial to the whole species. It is a human being who understands the importance of goodness, fairness, cooperation, and human and communitarian solidarity for the advent of an ethical world. The *MuNtu* understands the importance of *Ubuntu* Economics or *Ubuntonomics* as a system of organizing and managing resources for the service of the people instead of their enslavement to the mainstream economy (Edozie, 2017). He or she understands the need of conceptualizing and conceiving a global world which is a collective advancement of humanity.

The Globalization of *Ubuntu* Values

Ubuntu stands for a world with an enhanced sense of responsibility and solidarity with fellow human beings. Contrary to a world dominated by exacerbated drive for profit, political partisan interests, religious separatism, and runway industrialization, *Ubuntu* proposes a world where sensitivity to humanity and genuine communication is taken seriously (Jolley, 2011). A world where *Ubuntu* prevails has the responsibility to enhance the development of human-based life coping skills embedded in African values (Broodryk, 2006). Some of these life skills are: facilitating togetherness, endorsing sharing, expressing sympathy, practising empathy, honouring compassion, maintaining respect, allowing tolerance, saluting humanness, propagating harmony, as well as living happily (Broodryk, 2006). If mainstream, these human-based life skills could influence the global governance system in a way that would not cater only for the needs of a few privileged people but for those of the majority of disadvantaged people (Broodryk, 2006; Jolley, 2011). The current global governance system has produced extreme stress, material greed, power lust, threat of mass destruction, political, economic and religious exclusion and violence around the world.

Contrary to such a system, *Ubuntu* could inspire improved global communication qualified as humane. And, as a central point of African spiritual philosophy, with a deep concern for morality and humaneness, *Ubuntu* could also inspire relations among nations as opposed to the current global paradigm of international relations, which dismisses the possibility of morality among nations (Jolley, 2011). In the currently dominant paradigm of international relations, the recourse to inflicting pain and punishment in handling conflicts and disagreement is influenced by "the politics of enmity" (Meka et al., 2018). There is very little effort to consensually seek to transform conflicts through recourse to a humanizing process, as would prescribe an *Ubuntu* perspective (Nabudere, 2005). From the *Ubuntu* perspective, the world could "transition from a culture based on force and

imposition towards a culture of peace, dialogue, justice, equity and solidarity" (Shumba, 2011, p. 89).

The human-based life skills proposed by *Ubuntu* flow from deeply felt connections and have the potential to re-create a world that works for all (Nussbaum, 2003). In such a world, people may have to re-learn how to live together with respect and dignity and re-organize their resources accordingly (Nussbaum, 2003). In the African context itself, the *Ubuntu* perspective on global affairs may be understood and its values reclaimed. However, its conscious and purposeful application may still be wanting. The translation of the *Ubuntu* perspective into policies that run African nations could be an important path towards African Renaissance. It is not enough for a system of values like *Ubuntu* to be an innate, unconscious and intrinsic character of Africans. If it is not mainstreamed in the political and economic life of nations, this value system runs the risk of erosion. African peoples and nations themselves need to upscale to *Ubuntu* through the way they interact among themselves and make it a basis for interacting with the rest of the world. This may increase the chances for Africans to contribute to the change of heart needed in the world. For Africa to renew her worldview, an ethical regeneration is needed in the public sphere, especially in the area of social justice. This may increase the global relevance of the *Ubuntu* value system. The social philosophy of *Ubuntu*, especially its emphasis on our common humanity and the need for solidarity among all human beings for collective improvement, are some of the key ideas which could inform a social justice discourse and the hope for the African Renaissance.

Ubuntu, Social Justice and African Renaissance

Based on the *Ubuntu* worldview, the White Paper on South Africa's Foreign Policy (2011) states the willingness of South Africa "to contribute towards the transformation of the global system from power-based to the rules-based system in a just and equitable global order" (p. 7). To make this contribution, South Africa, or any African nation, would need to internally exemplify *Ubuntu*-inspired policy choices (Thomas, 2008). South Africa, like many other African countries aligned to *Ubuntu*, would need to shift its policy choices from a neo-liberal economic policy framework to policy choices in favour of the less fortunate (Thomas, 2008). *Ubuntu-inspired* policy choices could lead to a greater realization of constitutional rights for all (Thomas, 2008). This is possible because *Ubuntu* emphasizes fairness, humane-ness and social justice while liberalism emphasizes private interests, profits, and individual rights.

The *Ubuntu* paradigm reintroduces the importance of practising politics with principles, which are respect for human dignity, fairness and inclusivity (Murithi, 2006). For instance, the *Ubuntu* perspective on Human Rights can contribute to a deeper understanding of and commitment to the Universal Declaration of human rights (UDHR) (Murithi, 2007). The promotion of human rights can thus be based on the principles of inclusivity, reciprocity and

a sense of shared destiny between people (Murithi, 2007). Africans have an opportunity, in the *Ubuntu* paradigm, to articulate, develop and codify ethical frameworks that can inform institutions that govern them and constitute the basis for the African Renaissance. These ethical frameworks contain key elements that could promote community development work and social welfare, social capital and collective advancement (Hailey, 2008).

One of the challenges in the institutionalization of the values of *Ubuntu* for social welfare and the African Renaissance is that the concept of *Ubuntu* has been appropriated by pro-market interest groups, especially in South Africa (McDonald, 2010). These groups include proponents of *Ubuntu* capitalism and good governance initiatives. They advocate for the development of a home-grown corporate management culture that would be people-centred, participative and that would combine social and economic justice with improved profits (McDonald, 2010). However, such initiatives have served to diffuse opposition to the underlying neoliberal agenda on the enhancement of market opportunities.

Instead, an effective and progressive revival of *the Ubuntu* worldview would require a serious analysis of how market forces operate and how *Ubuntu* economic structures can be constructed that will collectively empower the people as a counter-weight to these market forces (McDonald, 2010). This goes beyond simple rhetoric on *Ubuntu* or simply relying on people's willingness to opt for *Ubuntu* ideals. Advocating for *Ubuntu's* economic structures also goes beyond prevailing management theories, which hold that market forces should operate to maximize owners' and stakeholders' wealth (Lutz, 2009). The emphasis of *Ubuntu's* economic ideals is on sharing, a sustainable lifestyle, and the common good as the good of the community and each of its members (Karsten and Illa, 2001; Lutz, 2009; Shumba, 2011).

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to look into the broken promises of Wester's globalization against a world proposed by the *Ubuntu* principle and paradigm. Western globalization has left trails of unsurmountable disparities between the haves and the have-nots. It has lowered barriers between countries only for the interest of capital and facilitated the continuous exploitation of the resources of the earth for the profit of a certain category of people whose appetite is insatiable. The Eurocentric globalization model has entrenched the privileges of a few wealthy people and impoverished the majority of the inhabitant of the earth. Situations of inequities resulting from these disparities have led to heightened violence in the world and threats of a self-inflicted holocaust. A world proposed by the *Ubuntu* principle intends to bridge the gaps between peoples and increase a sense of one humanity, where everyone is supported in their efforts to secure a decent life. People's aspirations worldwide to inhabit a friendlier world resonates with *Ubuntu's* humanizing model and indigenous convivial philosophies, thus announcing the African Renaissance. A world with a more humane face

would enhance sustainable living. The latter is increasingly perceived as an imperative if mutual survival is to be guaranteed.

With the booming and energetic youthful African population and the traction that African ways of being are having, African Renaissance will be actualized in the foreseeable future. The international social, political, economic and cultural balances seem to be shifting in favour of Africa. However, the advent of the African Renaissance would depend a lot on how strongly African present themselves as Africans and their humanistic traditions to articulate autonomous thoughts and praxis on Africa and her chosen destiny. This destiny would be a project of a new civilization where human beings and their connection to reality as a whole (visible and invisible) regain the central place in all political, economic and social endeavours.

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NDIGBO AND NIGERIAN NATIONHOOD: SEARCHING FOR THE DEFINITIONAL INDICES OF UNCOMMON PATRIOTISM

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Abstract

Nigeria remains a country of multifaceted nations. Among these major nations or rather the ethnic kingdoms or tribal groups and nationals in Nigeria as Ndiyoruba, Ndihausa and or Ndifulani nations, Ndigbo nation, unfortunately, stands out vituperatively in the midst of and very close to the complex national indices for true Nigerians. That is, Ndigbo are the most significant patriots among other members of Nigerian nations. The entity referred to Nigeria as such, in her true meaning and authentic understanding, exists by the forceful amalgamation properly acknowledged as the annexation of nations or protectorates. Using the method of critical exposition, the researcher reiterates that Ndigbo as a national cum political entity in Nigeria is very much interested in the continued existence of Nigeria their country as well as a country of nations. That is to say, Ndigbo characteristically known for their ubiquitous lifestyle and gumptious spirit remain the genuine symbols of true citizens of Nigeria in their gypsy-tic ordination, versatile orientation and influencing enterprise.

Keywords: Ndigbo, ndihausa, ndiyoruba, ndifulani, nationhood, Nigeria

Introduction

This paper sets out into a definitional appreciation of Ndigbo as a people easily misunderstood and misinterpreted in many affairs amongst other tribes and ethnic groups in Nigeria. Yet Ndigbo remains a nation so blessed with such an enterprising and cohesive spirit with much love for their fatherland amidst many struggles of the past and even in the present or any impending attempt shortly. Ndigbo nevertheless believe in Nigeria and are well scattered all over Nigeria as their only country.

Unfortunately, many unhealthy sentiments have made many Ndigbo question their nationhood in Nigeria as a country of nations. Looking at the indices that contribute to the growth of any country as well as what it means to be a citizen of any country, one questions the reality of Nigeria's *unity in diversity and diversity in unity*. Equally, after the civil war

of 1967-1970, Ndigbo still doubt that they were not a conquered nation, a defeated people as such. Despite the maxim of *no victor, no vanquished!* Yet, there are glaring indices that show that some sections of Nigerian especially the Igbo nation are continued marginalized.

Ogbonnia, SKC in his online article titled *Nnamdi Kanu: Suffering for the Sins of Igbo Leaders* in *Premium Times Newspaper* of July 27, 2021, writes thus: the…sin of the Igbo leaders is their nonchalant attitude towards the long-standing policy of the federal authorities to reduce the Igbo nation to a mere "dot in a circle." What most people do not know is that Nnamdi Kanu's biggest crime against the Nigerian state is his doggedness in exposing the major truths of why the country does not promote the teaching of *history* in its schools.

There were naked threats to marginalise the Igbo region of Nigeria simply because they are a people. The "dot in a circle" was a calumny against Ndigbo as a people. This propaganda is, of course, the scripted drama scheming the Igbo marginalisation scheme that began before, during and after the Nigerian-Biafran civil war that was said to have ended but silently in many forms of marginalization. There are today many glaring policies within the boundaries of nonchalant attitude towards the long-standing policy of the federal character and authorities to reduce the Igbo nation to a mere "dot in a circle." This paper is trying to understand the place of Ndigbo as a nation in Nigeria while it searches for the possibility of true Nigerian nationhood which has continued to be typified like Ndigbo as a potential vibrant nation. Ndigbo are a people who are ready to build. They are a people who have the nature of establishing themselves and developing others. Ndigbo have the natural endowment and potential disposition of reshaping their environment. Ndigbo are a people who are more Nigerian than any other nations of Nigeria by their nature and existential lifestyle.

Understanding the History of Ndigbo

An Igbo is a native inhabitant of Nigeria. The Igbo is among other nations and ethnic groups that make up the entity created *via* the purported 1914 amalgamation of the Southern and Northern protectorates by Lord Laggard and infamously named as such as Nigeria by the creator's mistress.

The Igbo nation or tribe is very indigenous to the South-Eastern part of Nigeria. The Igbo nation remains an ethnic group well-known for their enterprising spirit, independent disposition and adventurous nature. The Igbo people are natively referred to as Ndigbo. This nation of Igbo people has a great value system embedded in their cherished culture and adorable tradition and popularized more in their variety of food, dance, music, musical instruments and diverse symbolic festivals. Ndigbo have this admirable resilience typified much in the reflection of their *Ikenga* symbolism. Many scholars and researchers have severally demonstrated that the Igbo people descended from *Eri*, a divine figure who

according to folklore, was sent from heaven to begin civilization. *Eri* was the son of Gad and Gad was one of the sons of Jacob from his concubine, as mentioned in the Bible. Folklore has it that *Eri* lived in Egypt.

In his classical book *Igbo Mediators of Yahweh Culture of Life,* Philip Chidi Njemanze exposed the link between the Igbo people and the Jews with compelling arguments. This is a book about the Culture of Life of Igbo People, the Chosen People of God. The Igbo people were Pharaohs of Ancient Egypt, Kings of Ancient Israel, Phoenicians, Greeks, Etruscans, Iberians, Carthaginians, Ugaritians, Lemnians, Mayans, Olmecs, Ancient Chinese, Extraterrestrials in UFOs, Babylonians, and Jewish authors of the Holy Bible. The Igbo people built the pyramids and invented electricity, the computer, the automobile, aeroplane, helicopters, and submarines. Igbo Orie–Mediators of Almighty God. The Chosen People of God! *Yahweh, Ya IHo Wụ IHe,* meaning, 'God, the Divine Light that enlightens'. This renowned Academician Dr. Prof. Philip Njemanze has described the Igbo people as the only ancient Jews as he gave a lecture on the occasion of the *Igbo Hebrew Cultural Heritage Organization* in partnership with *Impact Africa Educational Foundation International Gathering For Peace and Human Rights and The African Diaspora Union*. For him, the Igbo people are genetically ancient Jews and not modern ones.

However, the Igbo people are natively found in Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo, Delta, and Rivers State. The Igbo language spoken in many dialects though with what they regarded as central Igbo language, is predominant throughout these areas, although Nigerian English (the national language) is spoken as well. As a result of years of transatlantic slave trade, Igbos have migrated to other countries including Jamaica, Cuba, Barbados, Belize, and the United States among others. Elements of Igbo culture have been found in many of these Countries as well as in Jamaican patois. Nevertheless, the Igbo political system differs significantly from most of its West-African neighbours. With the exception of a few major Igbo communities which have an Eze, Igwe or Obi (king), Igbos have a traditional republican system of government, which is a consultative assembly of people, which guarantees equality to citizens. This is why Ndigbo have the practice of a system of government in the form of Ohacracy as *Ohazurume* with principles of *Onyebiribeyabiri* as well as *Igwebuike* and *Ibunanydanda* as different expressions and forms of *Egbe Bere Ugo Bere* expressing the singular fact of Belongingness as the African-Igbo Metaphysics of *To Be.*

Understanding the Concept of Nation and Nationhood

Nation etymologically is from the Latin word *natus* meaning the root, made, produced by nature. In our context and usage, it has to do with people from the same root having the same language, habits of culture in their dressing, type of food and so on. An online Cambridge dictionary defines a nation as the fact of being a nation (a country with its government, language, traditions, etc.). Moltchanova (2007), in the paper *Nationhood and*

Political Culture, gave a new definition of nations thus: "Nations are groups whose members share and identify with a particular kind of political culture, or a set of beliefs and attitudes concerning politics. Basic to this political culture is the belief that membership in the group defines the bounds within which political authority can originate meaningfully for those it governs". This is why nations in this line of thought are seen *as substantial entities; 'nation' is a category of practice, not (in the first instance) a category of analysis." The sense of a nation gives the idea of nationhood. Therefore. Nationhood is a result of a proper understanding of a* nation. Nationhood is the status of being a nation. In the article *Nationhood and Political Culture*, Moltchanova (2007), maintains that "Nationhood is a complex phenomenon that includes aspects of personal and group identity, history, culture, and political preferences".

Nation and nationhood are carefully expressed within the bounds of love for the fatherland. Hence, the idea of a nation as well as the concept of nationhood is linked as one entity in trying to identify a politically independent community with citizens from the same root in terms of origin. Nigeria in this regards with her multifaceted ethnic groups properly described as a nation. Nigeria has many nations with different languages and other peculiar lifestyles with regard to eating habits, dressing and other aspects of cultural dispositions. Theo Nwalor, in his preface to Jude Uwalaka's book, *The Struggle for An Inclusive Nigeria: Igbos To Be or Not To Be? A Treatise To Nwaigbo,* however, refers to Nigeria as a three-legged structure. Hence, he reiterates that "this tripodal structure, Nigeria, is made up of Yoruba Nigerians, Hausa Nigerians and Nigerian Igbos. To be authentic Yoruba or authentic Hausa or authentic Igbo and authentic Nigeria, are not mutually exclusive". These differential varieties ought to be the beauty of one country with many nations. And these varieties express in a very deep sense the often glorified maxim unity in diversities and diversity in unity.

Politico cum Geography of Nigeria and Igbo Nation

Nigeria is blessed with rich natural resources and abundant human resources. Nigeria is located between latitude 4^0N and 14^0N of the equator and between longitude 3^0E and 15^0E of the Greenwich meridian. Therefore, the latitudinal extent of Nigeria is about 10^0 (14^0N-4^0N) while the longitudinal extent is 12^0 (15^0E-3^0E). Nigeria is in West Africa and centrally located in Africa. Apart from the Atlantic Ocean in the south, she is surrounded by francophone (French-speaking) countries. She is bounded in the west by Benin Republic, in the north by Niger Republic, in the east by Cameroun Republic, in the northeast by Chad Republic and in the south by the Atlantic Ocean. Nigeria is the fourth largest country in West Africa in terms of land area after Niger, Mali and Mauritania. The total land area of Nigeria is approximately 923,768 square kilometres. The greatest distance from east to west is approximately 1,300km while from north to south is about 1,100km (Wikipedia, 2022).
In terms of population, Nigeria is the most populous single country in Africa and the seventh largest country in the world with a population of about 220 million persons based

on the United nation recent estimate. The country, Nigeria, came into existence in 1914 as a result of the acclaimed amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates. She became independent in 1960. As at independence, the country had three regions namely, North, East and West. The Northern region had its headquarters in Kaduna, East in Enugu and West in Ibadan. In 1963, Nigeria became a republic and the fourth region known as Mid-West was created from the then Western region with its headquarters in Benin City. The political divisions remained four until 1967 when the country was further divided into twelve states. In 1976, the country was further divided into 19 states. On September 23*rd* 1987, two more states were created, making the total number to be 21. Nigeria presently has thirty-six states and a Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja which is the federal capital of Nigeria. Nigeria as a member of the African Union has been regarded as the giant of Africa. Studies show that Nigeria has over 500 indigenous languages are spoken in Nigeria and more than 250 ethnic groups. Lagos is Nigeria's largest city as well as its former capital.

Nationhood remains a complex phenomenon that includes aspects of personal and group identity, history, culture, and political preferences. All of these features are shared by several kinds of groups, not only by national groups (Moltchanova, 2007). Nigeria is often called the *Giant of Africa*. This name comes from the vastness of its land, the diversity of its peoples and languages, its huge population (the largest in Africa), and its oil and other natural resources.

The Igbo nation has a traditional religious belief that there is one creator called *Chineke* or *Chukwu*. The creator can be approached through many other deities and spirits in the form of natural objects, most commonly through the god of thunder called *Amadioha*. Other gods include *Ala*, the feminine earth spirit, *Anyanwu* (meaning 'eye of the sun') a deity believed to dwell on the sun, and *Idemili*, the water goddess whose symbol is that of a python. After Nigeria was colonized, most Igbos (more than 90%) became Christian, which is still the predominant religion today. Many Igbo artefacts were discovered by Thurstan Shaw in 1959 and 1964 at archaeological sites in Igbo-Ukwu, including more than 700 high-quality artefacts of bronze, copper and iron, as well as stone beads, glass and ivory. Igbo bronze artefacts are said to be the oldest in West Africa. Five of the bronze artefacts from the dig are presently in the British Museum.

However, one of the enduring events in the life of Ndigbo as one of the nations in Nigeria is the Nigerian-Biafran civil war or rightly regarded as the 1967 massacre of the Igbos. It is estimated that during the civil war, more than one million people died in the battle, as a result of ethnic cleansing referred to as civil war, or because of starvation claiming the vast majority of lives. After the war, bank accounts owned by Biafrans were seized and a Nigerian panel resolved to give every Igbo person with an account with only 20 pounds. This is history, a painful one at that. However, most of the Nigerian-Biafran War stories can be read from many other literatures as authored as such.

Review of Frederick Forsyth's *The Biafran Story:* **Ndigbo's Search of Nationhood in Nigerian**

The book, *The Biafran Story,* is a 1969 non-fiction book by Frederick Forsyth about the Nigerian Civil War (1967–70) in which Biafra unsuccessfully attempted to secede from Nigeria. Frederick Forsyth, journalist and author, was one of the earliest eyewitnesses who gave a succinct account of the gruesome war from the Biafran perspective. His book of 1967 was revised and published after the war in 1977. *Wikipedia* was apt in writing about *The Biafra Story* thus: the book was originally written by Frederick Forsyth who has been working as a correspondent for the BBC Africa Service in Enugu but he quit the job and left for Biafra after becoming "so disgusted" with the BBC's "lies and distortions". The civil war nevertheless ended unceremoniously. On January 11, 1970, Nigerian forces captured the provincial capital of Owerri, one of the last Biafran strongholds, Ojukwu was forced to flee to the Ivory Coast, and Biafra surrendered to Nigeria. In the final few weeks of the war, Forsyth returned to Biafra and substantially expanded his original manuscript. The revised edition of the book was published in 1977 under the title *The Making of an African Legend: The Biafran Story* and includes in its prologue and epilogue a history of post-Civil War Nigeria up to the year of publication. In another review *Spectator* by Auberon Waugh praised the first edition of *The Biafran Story* as "probably the best we shall see on the war" and "by far the most complete account". The *Making of an African Legend: The Biafra Story* reflects the problem of nationhood of nations in Nigeria. Ndigbo being one of the nations in Nigeria have struggled to exist as Ndigbo both within and outside Igboland.

Review of Chinua Achebe's *There Was a Country*

It is a personal history of Biafra by the literary icon Chinua Achebe. It's like telling the story of the Nigerian-Biafran civil war from the horse's mouth. Noo Saro-Wiwa in his description of the autobiography and memoir of Achebe writes thus:

No writer is better placed than Chinua Achebe to tell the story of the Nigerian-Biafran war from a cultural and political perspective. Yet, apart from an interview with *Transition Magazine* in 1968 and a book of Biafran poems, Nigeria's most eminent novelist has kept a literary silence about the civil war in which he played a prominent role – until now. In his engrossing new memoir, *There Was A Country*, Achebe, now 81, finally speaks about his life during the conflict that nearly tore Nigeria apart in the late 60s

Achebe, as a gifted writer, showed Nigerians' efforts towards the needed independence. The optimism was great and high. With the independence in 1960, among the three largest prominent ethnic groups, Ndigbo has shown their stuff, domineering in commerce, especially with their world-acknowledged *Igba Boi* or *Imu Ahia*. This flair for commerce

and economic passion of Ndigbo were never in any bid to dominate and control other Nigerian Nations.

The sad story of 1967 starting with the first coup and the murder of northern Nigerian leaders that led to the pogroms in which decades of thousands of Igbos living in the north in the Gen Emeka Ojuwku declaration for the south-eastern region's secession from a country in which Ndigbo *felt unwanted* was not necessary if the needed intervention was respected. The war broke out and was waged by Nigerian Federal General Yakubu Gowon and was heavily supported by the UK government whose interest was in our oil. It was the crudest war as Biafrans fought Britain with partially empty hands for good three years even though her engineers in their ingenuity tried to make something like the infamous *Ogbunigwe* (Ojukwu Bucket Bomb). The war in the expressions of Achebe was out of sheer ignorance amid their ego-driven policies. Other sections of the book tell the story of Achebe's productive life despite the war and its aftermath effect and die-hard consequences. Most horrible events during the war tore Achebe emotionally and otherwise leading to writing some poems *Refuge Mother* and *Child, Beware, Soul Brother.* The senseless war left many with starvation, *Kwashiorkor* and other health challenges devastating the Igboland. The tragedy of the avian prognosticators of death hit international cry as some parts of the war scenes were even televised live. The civil war ended as Biafrans counted their human losses to the tune of *circa* three million while Nigeria was about 100, 000 casualties. The war was simply a calculated genocide that victimized Ndigbo to date. However, Onyebadi (2019) quoted Saro-Wiwa's observation Achebe's general comportment throughout the whole episode thus:

> Achebe…became Biafra's international envoy, promoting the cause in Canada, Europe and Senegal…Biafra's communication minister, writing a manifesto for the republic. He describes being part of an intellectual elite that came together to recreate a Biafran microcosm of Nigeria's early spirit, their ideals drawn from a mix of traditional Igbo philosophy, US-style liberalism and socialism.

Even though there was this pronouncement of *no victor, no vanquished*; even though Ndigbo were reintegrated into Nigerian society, they are still faced with vagaries of marginalization and all forms of economic discrimination as every Igbo man, no matter what you have in the bank then was offered £20 flat fee as well as those wanting to convert their Biafran currency into Nigerian *Naira* amidst other policies of abandoned properties. Yet Ndigbo are true Nigerians in every sense of the word and in every part of Nigeria to date. Achebe's book looks forward to a better Nigeria where justice, fair play, good governance, productive spirit will replace corruption, religious bigotry, good leadership and a spirit of consumerism.

Review of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*

Half of a Yellow Sun is a novel of politico cum historical fiction by a Nigerian Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. The title of this book reflected the flag of an independent Biafra as the rising sun. The colour yellow always seen in the early morning or evening sun, is the colour most strongly associated with liberalism and right-libertarianism. It was published in 2006 in London. The novel tells the story of the Nigerian-Biafran Civil War, 1967-1970 through the perspective of some personified characters. *Half of a Yellow Sun* remains a post-colonial fictitious novel that cobwebs different characters in a story of complicated love as the hub probably leading to the wrong marriage of nations.

The central issue in *Half of a Yellow Sun* is colonization with all forms of exploitation. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (born 1977), seven years after the end of the war seemed to possess the knack for weaving a story that over-shadowed her and has been handled by the literary genius like Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart.* Adichie in her epic politico cum historical novel presented the Nigerian Biafran Civil War story with a very lucid demeanour and in a very comprehensible style; in an admirable fashion of a sort. The backdrop of the civil war was painted well with the independence of 1960 amidst power struggles in the administrative centre anchored in ethnic rivalries with existing social classes and the oil boom, the Republic of Biafra was just good to go. The war came. But Biafra didn't come after years of that mindless massacre. *Half of a Yellow Sun* with five personified characters from the Igbo nation displayed as such who tried to be independent. Odenigbo, Olanna, Kainene, Richard and Ugwu were from the upper and middle class and were the main characters in the fictional book *The heart and soul of the story* is Ugwu; he begins and ends the novel, and he ties everything together. He experiences the most changes in the story, going from houseboy to cook to being a teacher and a writer. Olanna and Richard, along with their respective partners, Odenigbo and Kainene, also established themselves as unique characters. It is not just about the impact of starvation, as the story is developed around normal lives dealing with relationships, family and job issues. The fictional characters and civil war events tried to bring the story therein in *Half of a Yellow Sun* to a personal level. People from all echelons of society are presented in the story, not always likeable, and the struggles they endured. In highly dreadful situations, *Half of a Yellow Sun* presented the best and worst of humanity, that is man's inhumanity to mankind with a kind of national starvation program.

Summary of Rev. Fr. Tony Byrne's *Airlift to Biafra: Breaching the Blockade*

This is another masterpiece by Fr. Tony Byrne in his accounts of the Nigerian-Biafran Civil War of 1967-1970. Airlift recounts the effort of some group of people for the dying population of Biafra when the Federal Military Government of Nigeria used hunger as a weapon of war by blockading every avenue for food and other humanitarian services. However, relief aid into Biafra began arriving by land, sea, and air soon after the start of the

civil war. Reports of widespread famine began emerging, many from *NGOs* participating in the relief aid efforts. Relief flights ramped up after Nigeria's land and sea blockade of Biafra became near-impossible around 1968. Nigeria demanded all relief flights be subject to their control, and the ICRC (International Church Relief Organizations) suspended their flights from Cotonou and Santa Isabelle.

Therefore, in early 1968, Anthony Byrne, an Irish missionary who was active in Onitsha before the war, began a relief effort based on the island of Sao Tome under the aegis of the Committee of International Church Relief Organizations. The committee included *Caritas Internationalis*, the World Council of Churches, Catholic Relief Services and Nordchurch-aid (a collective of Scandinavian Protestant groups). An online source maintains that the airlifts or flights were undertaken under cover of darkness and without lights to avoid the attack of Nigerian aircraft that maintained air superiority during the day. Each aircraft made as many as four round trips each night into Uli. These flights were mainly under the auspices of the ICRC, with Norchurch-aid being a major donor. Airlift in supplying relief aids to Biafra helped with lifting the children with *kwashiorkor.* They were flown to the Island for medical treatment. Nevertheless, the Nigerian government with unsubstantiated facts accused these humanitarian organizations of supplying Biafrans with arms. Many of those personnel lost their lives and their Air-crafts damaged.

Airlift to Biafra happened despite the blockade. It is a story of the die-hard commitment of people with human faces and humane organizations who set out to save Ndigbo from mere extinction as a result of the mindless war of 1967-1970. Thank God that the world was able to have televised info as the horror and disturbing images of that war were televised. Airlift extols the individual generosity as well as the institutional magnanimity of Ndigbo in the merciless killing by the Nigerian Government under the watch of Britain and Her Imperial Majesty whose end was heralded with shameful memoirs and robust outcry of unimaginable regard and unprintable remarks across the globe. Her death was simply mocked with the revival of the ills of the British empire through their exploration and exploitation alongside slavery bedevilling the history of colonialism. Many refused to mourn HEM, Queen Elizabeth 11 on the ground that during her reign British Empire was simply responsible for the senseless deaths of millions of people across the globe starting with all the countries they colonized.

Review of *The Struggle for Inclusive Nigeria: Igbos To Be or Not To Be? A Treatise to Nwaigbo* **by Rev. Fr. Jude Uwalaka**

This book is addressed to *Nwaigbo* and every Igbo person. It is a treatise on Igbo political personality and survival in Nigeria. This book is a clarion call for the Igbos *to be* despite the experiences of the past as well as their present condition in Nigeria. Self-identity is paramount in this struggle of *being*. For Nwaigbo, there is this great need to rethink and redress many issues that border progress and development.

Divided into sections, Uwalaka tried to show the journey of Igbo nationals as a people trekking for an abiding and significant presence in Nigeria as a country of nations which the Igbo nation is one of them now. *Section one* deals with the destiny of the Igbo nation in Nigeria as regards the pre-war experiences and the Nigerian war moment and all forms of postwar predicaments on Ndigbo amidst the integrating false slogan of *no victor, no vanquish*. The situation and place of Igbos in Nigerian socio-political affairs show there is a victor and there is a vanquished in the last Nigerian-Biafran civil war. This can be seen in the non-realisation of their promises to Igbos from the Reconciliation, to Rehabilitation and Reconstruction. What beautiful theories and stories that touch the heart. *Section two,* however, dwelt so much on the utopic idea of one Nigeria as expressed in *unity in diversity and diversity in unity*. The aftermath effect of the civil war experiences made the Igbos lose most of their core social values system and economic prowess seen in many forms de-Igbonization and a great penchant for the un-igbo. Equally, there is this nauseating attitude of the Igbos that borders on the act of *just forgetting easily* and the refusal to learn from past experiences. This is for me grave lack of functional historical consciousness. *Section three* of the work was all about ill-treatment and pure exclusion of Igbos from almost all Nigerian projects. The *last section* deals with the struggle for a form of inclusiveness of the Igbo nation in pan-Nigerianism. This ought to start with Igbos themselves through education, human resources, development and genuine leadership. Behind this is the idea of *Akurueuno*! This book lamented the sabotage of the saboteurs that seems to be inherent in the socio-political structure of Igbo people that left Igbo nationals wounded and defeated. Nevertheless, the author saw light at the end of the socio-political tunnel of the Igbo people through necessary political renaissance and liberation.

Nigeria: Country of Nations

I have to reiterate once more that Nigeria is a country of fragmented nations. The much-lauded amalgamation of the southern region and northern protectorate in 1914 and the inherent disunity, as well as the intrinsic acrimony in Nigeria among the major ethnic groups, raises dusty questions on the need for ever coming together of Nigeria that has been existing as protectorates and ethnic-tribal kingdoms.

This amalgamation of the southern region and northern protectorate was claimed to have taken place in Nigeria, by Nigerians and for Nigerians when most of our national heroes, the supposed frontiers and historical figures like Nnamdi Azikiwe (who was born in 1904) 10 years old, Obafemi Awolowo (who was born in 1909) was 5years old, Abubakar Tafawa Belewa (who was born in 1912) was 2years old, Ahmad Bello (who was born in 1910) was 4years and even Michael Okpala, (born in 1920, that is, 6years after) were all toddlers. Who then were the informed Nigerians that signed the much-acclaimed amalgamation treaty? Can we see the almighty pact? The whole idea of amalgamation as creating a country of *unity in diversity* and country of nations is to have a viable strong comity of nations or a workable country of great possibilities and immense potentialities for the masters.

Research has shown that the nations of Nigeria were forcefully annexed and then amalgamated to have an entity called Nigeria for some interests beyond her shores and waters; all for the mere benefit of the proponents of the purported amalgamation. However, more than 107 years after the most acclaimed amalgamation, Nigeria still battles with simple political leadership as she continues to suffer years of accumulated leadership failure while corruption has continued to colour every facet of her politics, economy and other national human endeavours.

It is now clear that after many years of amalgamation and consequent independence that amalgamation was created in the interest of the British and the Jihadists, never for Nigerians. Equally, popular opinion, however, had it that, the so-called amalgamation was an illicit agreement between the Jihadists who were on the mission of dropping their Koran into the Atlantic Ocean as the colonial masters were trying to move up North in conquering voyages. That is, it was the movement of the Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio to dip the Koran in the Atlantic Ocean while at the same period, the Colonial Masters alongside their Christianity, Schools, Hospitals and Market which already had started in the South, were moving northwards to the tip of the desert. The meeting of these giants: the Jihadists and Colonial Masters, after years of struggle for supremacy and possession, led to a kind of agreement known and purported as Amalgamation, all for their mutual interest. It was likely an annexation. In short, it was mere incorporation. So the middle belt was the meeting point for this agreement instead of the seeming war of scrambling for the regions. The masters, Colonial Emperors and Jihadist Warriors agreed to annex or amalgamate the protectorates peacefully. Hence Nigeria was born.

Whichever way you view it, you must acknowledge that *Nigeria* as a concept or country of nations was never instituted with the consent of our forefathers when it came into being at the dawn of the 19th century as well as the beginning of the 20th century. Otherwise, why was it Flora Shaw's responsibility with her inglorious identity and ignominious role with the Chief Colonial Master Lord Lugard that ought to give us a name at our naming ceremony? Note also that the present core North was formerly called *Western Soudan* until 1900. The people presently answering and have answered *Nigerians* up till today merely inherited an economic-colonial empire (Niger Coast Protectorates) belonging to the British people and were forced to make a *Nation* out of it.

Ndigbo as a dot

Words we must acknowledge are very powerful. Through creation, the impact of word is ever seen. Many proclamations are as effective be it in the law court or as authority. Nwachukwu, J. O. states that Buhari during an interview with Arise TV on Thursday, June 10, 20121 said that the "IPOB is just like a dot in a circle. Even if they want to exit, they will have no access to anywhere. And the way they are spread all over the country, having businesses and property, I don't think IPOB knows what they are talking about."In any case,

we say we'll talk to them in the language that they understand. We'll organise the police and the military to pursue them." However, Nwachukwu maintains that *Afenifere,* the apex socio-cultural organisation in the South West berated President Muhammadu Buhari for his recent offensive comment against the Igbo nation noting that "the President takes delight in ridiculing the Ndigbo which he used IPOB to represent." One must note that the Ndigbo or the Igbo Ethnic bloc who have business all over Nigeria is different from the secessionist group known as the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB. On another note, the *dot-in-a-cirlce* seems to give Ndigbo their ubiquitous nature knowing that a dot shows all round of a thing. Hence, the angle at a dot is 360 degrees. A dot, therefore, shows the completeness of a sort.

Aroh, C maintains that "Since these phrases and words birthed, every Igbo man seems to be interrogating their meanings, both from academic and layman's perspectives. The deconstruction has become an all-comers' affair". Some people for the fun of that comment are branding their wears and other things: Dot-in-a-circle. Aroh maintains that "the average understanding is that Mr President used a figurative expression called synecdoche—taking apart (IPOB) for a whole (Igboland)". Continuing Aroh stressed that "Igbo learned men have also interrogated the president's expressions, re-echoing how Ndigbo deconstructed the mantra that 'only the victor write their history'. Facts show that core literature of the Nigerian civil war is products of Ndigbo that were defeated". In line with one Dr E. Edoga in this online paper, "The president may be right in his categorization of Igboland as a dot, but let someone remind him that this dot in a circle is our home. It is the land handed over to us by our ancestors long before Nigeria was conceived". Great acknowledgement this dot in a circle gave birth to a great many significant figures in Nigeria as Nnamdi Azikiwe, Odumegwu Ojukwu, Alex Ekwueme, Michael Okpara, Dennis Osadebe, Akanu Ibiam, Olaudah Equiano, Chinua Achebe, Chris Okigbo, Flora Nwapa, Chimamanda Adichie, Kenneth Dike, Elizabeth Isichei, Alvan Ikoku, Frank Ndili, Ifeajuna, Dick Tiger, Christian Chukwu, Nwankwo Kanu, Jay Jay Okocha, Chioma Ajunwa, Innocent Egbunike. The paper concludes by recognizing that this dot in a circle has the highest literacy rate in Nigeria, the highest per capita income, the highest percentage of graduates in all fields of learning and the highest concentration of entrepreneurs in the whole of Africa.

Understanding Patriotism

According to an on-line source *Wikipedia,* the word *Patriot* was derived from the word *Compatriot* and medieval French *Patriote* in the 15th century. The French words *Compatriote* and *Patriote* originated directly from Late Latin *Patriota* "fellow-countryman" in the 6th century. From Greek *Patriotes* "fellow countryman," from *Patrios* "of one's fathers," *Patris* "fatherland." The term Patriot was "applied to barbarians who were perceived to be either uncivilized or primitive who had only a common *Patris* or fatherland." The original European meaning of Patriots applied to anyone

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who was a fellow countryman originated from that country regardless of the social-economic status.

Patriotism is simply love for the fatherland. In lexical parlance, patriotism is the quality of being patriotic; devotion to and vigorous support for one's country. It is the sacrifice one makes for one's nation or country. Patriotism is often related to nationalism and may be reduced negatively to ethnicism and tribalism as well as town-ism and *familism*. Patriotism is the feeling of love, devotion, and a sense of attachment to one's country. This attachment can be a combination of many different feelings, and language relating to one's homeland, including ethnic, cultural, political or historical aspects. Often there is this idea about false or excess patriotism as many take pride in their national identity, national religion like the Theocracy of the Israelite and political culture. Hence, in the book *The Patriot*, published by Samuel Johnson in 1774, there is this famous statement that "Patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel. However, there is this fear of the excesses of patriotism in the defence of a nation which is called chauvinism or fundamentalism, another related term is jingoism as well as other forms of patriotic movements.

Patriotism nevertheless gives us the idea of compatriot-ism or rightly put, compatriot. Compatriot like colleague is the co-citizen or national of a country. It is a person born, residing, or holding citizenship in the same country as another. Compatriot is synonymous with all forms of fellow citizen, landsman, national, townsman, kinsman, a close relation at any level of geo-relationship. There is yet this nuance of differences between patriots and compatriots thus: a compatriot is a person that has the same citizenship as you, sharing the same country with you, while a patriot means someone with notable love for his country. The word compatriot is often used to suggest an automatic sense of friendship. Great nations are always in need of patriots and compatriots.

Patriotism in the long run is the undying love for the fatherland. However, there are those even though they live beyond the shores of their fatherland or country, they remain very patriotic. Patriotism is very much possible within and outside any country and Nigeria to be precise. This is the idea behind the bilateral exchange program between Nigeria and many willing countries. An Igbo adage has it that *dike na-agba agu na asaa na mmiri na asaa, wee chuta akunuba, nata wee zaa 'aku rue ulo'*. (A strong man passes through seven deserts and seven rivers to bring-back-home wealth and then be able to answer when wealth gets home). People must go out to learn other people's way of life or culture and otherwise but never to the detriment of losing focus of their fatherland knowing full well that East or West, home is the best. The people in this regard are simply patriotic professionals, the *aku rue ulo*.

Ndigbo and National Patriotism

It is a verifiable fact and truism of a sort that in any part of Nigeria you get to and you fail to find an Igbo man just know that place is not habitable as such. The simple advice is to leave the place. Ndigbo are the gipsies of our time. Ndigbo are ubiquitous in Nigeria. Coincidentally President Buhari once made a cynical comment that Igbos are just a dot in Nigeria. But that statement was a blessing in disguise. When the Nigerian population began to interpret the actual meaning of *a dot,* it became clear that the supposed presidential derogatory remark on Ndigbo was a benediction of Ndigbo. This is so because every great beginning starts with a drop of *a dot*. And in mathematics, the angle at *a dot*, point to be precise is 360 degrees, a circle of course.

The patriotic nature of Ndigbo is seen in this known fact, in all the nations and ethnic groups in Nigeria, only Ndigbo can travel and settle with landed property in all the corners of Nigerian With this our forefather's maxim that *ala wu otu* (land is common to all). Go to the cities in Nigeria especially the cities outside Igboland and behold the mansions of Ndigbo with their lucrative business. And once they settle they become one with the people speaking their language as well as even engaging in marriage with them. How many of the Nigerian ethnic nationals have landed property in Igbo areas of Nigeria?

Review of Few Papal Teachings on Humanism

Crawford (2017) maintains that "humanism is a way of looking at the world that places man in the centre of the frame". Throughout history, humanism has been at odds with organized religion, specifically with the Roman Catholic Church, which was predominant in the Roman Empire and then in European culture from the Middle Ages on. Humanism is based on liberal principles and heritage of philosophical thought concerned with ethics. There are secular and Christian versions of humanism. Humanism in Renaissance continues to encounter as it tries to bring protestant reformation that later broke the Church. Christian humanism begins with the moral teachings of Christ and embraces a religious belief that affirms humans are made in the likeness of God, which is the basis for personal worth. Christian humanism argues for the compatibility of Christian and humanist principles as opposed to the negative views about religion in secular humanism. Secular humanism is, as its name suggests, non-theistic. The philosophy that humans are the basic measure of everything has its roots in the rational thinking of classical Greece and the teachings of Socrates and Plato. *Man is the measure of all things* is a classical statement by the ancient Greek philosopher Protagoras. It is usually interpreted to mean that the individual human being, rather than a god or an unchanging moral law, is the ultimate source of value.

With many nuances of humanism, there is a papal call for a proper and new understanding of humanism in a world threatened by extremes of Humanism. An on-line source has it that Pope Benedict XVI (2008) wants to end proliferating warfare by declaring a new age of

humanism. The pope defined humanism as a moral and spiritual mission to create a culture of peace, to rededicate resources from military spending to solving global economic and environmental problems and to agree to universal disarmament.

Accordingly, it was the Papal directive for *a new humanism* that "personal development and the elimination of violence are essential components of this *new humanism*, as are compassion and a widespread commitment to solidarity in working for peace and social justice". This papal stand makes a lot of sense as he tries to find a way to reconcile secular ethics and scientific knowledge with a belief in God and fidelity to the core teachings of the Church with great regard for humanity.

Equally, in his Homily, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (2005) during the Mass "for the election of the Roman Pontiff" in St. Peter's Basilica, before the conclave 2nd April 2005 in which he was elected the Bishop of Rome, was captioned *Jesus Christ: The Measure of True Humanism.* This form of humanism especially True humanism is related to true existentialism. This is why Existential Philosophers noted that the basic tenet of Existentialism is "a philosophical approach which emphasizes the existence of the individual human person as a free and responsible agent determining their development through acts of the will". *Wikipedia* defined existentialism as a form of philosophical inquiry that explores the problem of human existence and centres on the subjective experience of thinking, feeling, and acting. Existentialist thinkers frequently explore issues related to the meaning, purpose, and value of human existence.

Biafran War as Ndigbo's Struggle To Be or Not To Be

Nigerian-Biafran war remains the struggle of Ndigbo to exist as part of Nigeria. History attests to this singular but unique fact. The pogroms or Massacre of 1967 to 1970 perpetrated against the Southerners especially the Igbos by the Northerners before and after the military coup in which the former Head of State Aguiyi Ironsi was killed remains a major incident that had so many effects on Nigeria's socio-economic trajectory. The Igbos believed that any Government that cannot guarantee the primary duty of protecting its citizens is not worthy of any allegiance from them. This is the bedrock of the causes of the civil war as a result of the inability of the New Federal Military Government under the Gowon administration to stop the pogrom against the Igbos by the Northerners and to guarantee the safety of life and property of the Igbos living in the Northern regions. The failure to address such a sensitive issue at such a perilous time inadvertently changed the war. Such escalating impunity was summarised in the domination of and introduction of Northern oligarchy into Nigerian polity. It was resumed by Edeh Samuel Chukwuemeka (2020) on *The Major Causes of the Nigerian Civil War* thus:

The failure of the Aburi Accord. In the Aburi Accord conference, it was agreed that Nigeria will adopt a con-federal system of government where there will be strong federating units

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with a weak centre. The implications are that freedom of secession will be predominant and that the Easterners can easily secede at will. But instead, Gowon created more states in Nigeria.

Ndigbo Nationalism Within Nigerian Nationhood

Ndigbo is among the most vibrant and very significant nations in Nigeria as country of nations. By and large, no nation in Nigeria is more enterprising and integrates easily among other nationals than Ndigbo. The slogan *ala bu otu (land is one)* is very popular and peculiar to Ndgbo, hence, they settle anywhere they found themselves making their living and improving the place. This is why their worldview is quite different and very unique from others. This is why it is of great popular opinion and that of PLO Lumumba, (in his famous speech at the *Face of Okija and Cultural Festival in Nigeria 2019,* celebrated at Okija, hosted by Obijackson), acknowledged that anywhere you go in the world and you don't find Ndigbo or Onyeigbo, leave the place as it will not be a good place for human cohabitation enterprise. Prof. Lumumba eulogized with a great sense of nostalgia the *weltanschauung* of Ndigbo extraction in their different peculiarities amongst other nations in Nigeria. These are a prelude to Ndigbo Nationalism.

It's very unfortunate that decades after the annexation and or creation of Nigeria as well as her independence and the unfortunate Nigerian-Biafran civil war pogrom, Nigerian unity and continued existence as a country of nations we still battle as Ndigbo to be and not to be in Nigeria. The President General of the Ohaneze Ndigbo, Professor George Obiozor, has stated that Nigeria's unity is negotiable and must be re-negotiated for the country to stand the test of time. In his words: "Nigeria's unity is negotiable. You either negotiate it or we will continue to manage the crisis because nations are very fragile or delicate living things and you have to nurture them and pay attention to their weaknesses and strengths from time to time or they break. We are at a breaking point. Anybody who takes the unity of their country as non-negotiable is not talking about a human entity created by human beings."

Ndigbo Global: The Slavery Impact

Ndigbo characteristically known for their ubiquitous lifestyle and enterprising spirit remain the genuine symbols of true citizens of Nigeria in their gypsy-tic ordination, versatile orientation and influencing. Hence, Ndigbo are ubiquitous and are by design or chance scattered across the globe. However, slavery more than anything helped in scattering Ndigbo across the globe. Slavery as a loss of freedom and any seeming natural right as human beings and legal rights citizen of any human institution, remains an ancient inhuman practice. *Wikipedia* alludes to that evidence of slavery which pre-dates written records. The practice has existed in many cultures and can be traced back 11,000 years ago due to the conditions created by the invention of agriculture during the Neolithic Revolution. Economic surpluses and high population densities were conditions that made mass slavery

viable *History press* has it that the oldest known slave society was the Mesopotamian and Sumerian civilisations located in the Iran/Iraq region between 6000-2000 BCE. The oldest known written reference to slavery is found in the Hammurabi Code of 1754 BCE which states "If anyone takes a male or female slave of the court, or a male or female slave of a freed man, outside the city gates, he shall be put to death."Egypt was also another civilisation whose economy also depended on slavery. Scripture in Genesis 37:12–36 recounts how the sons of Jacob sold off their brother out of jealousy instead of killing him thus: When those traders came along, the brothers pulled Joseph up out of the pit and sold him to them for twenty pieces of silver. And the traders took Joseph to Egypt." There is also the famous biblical narrative of the Exodus whereby the Israelites were led to freedom by Moses with archaeologists theorising that this may have happened in the New Kingdom period (1550-712 BC). This old testament narrative is one of the earliest known written records of slaves attaining freedom. Ancient Greece could be argued to be the world's first true 'slave society' whereby the majority of the economy was dependent on slave labour. With the decline of Greece and the expansion of Rome, slavery also expanded. At the height of the Roman empire, up to 30% of the total population was enslaved with the majority being made up of conquered peoples. The fall of the Roman Empire led to what is commonly known as 'the dark ages' or the medieval period. With the decline of the Roman empire came the decline of slavery. Slavery has existed for millennia in varying forms in all parts of the world until it was globally outlawed in 1948 with the United Nations General Assembly adopting the declaration of human rights specifying that freedom from slavery is a universal human right.

In 1434, the Niger coast was the scene of contact between the Portuguese, the European merchants and the local African kingdoms. Portuguese slave traders established factories and started to purchase enslaved Africans from the region, transporting them across the Atlantic to different colonies in America. Slave traders from other European nations soon followed, and the region of the Niger coast became a vital hub of the transatlantic slave trade. European involvement in the Atlantic slave trade was gradually outlawed during the 19th century, and as such Europeans in the region started to shift their focus away from trade and into colonialism

Chambers (2002) argues that many of the slaves taken from the Bight of Biafra across the middle passage would have been Igbo most of these slaves were usually sold to Europeans by the Aro Confederacy, who either kidnapped or bought them from Igbo villages in the hinterland. Chambers (2005) thinks that Igbo slaves may have not been victims of slave-raiding wars or expeditions but perhaps debtors or Igbo people who committed within their communities alleged crimes. With the goal of freedom, enslaved Igbo people were known to European Masters as being rebellious and having a high rate of suicide to escape slavery. Lovejoy (2005) alleged that European slave traders were fairly well informed about various African ethnicities, especially the Igbo. Hence they become their target and most preferred slavers to plantation owners. Particular desired ethnic groups consequently became fairly

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concentrated in certain parts of the Americas. Elizabeth Allo (2002) alludes that the Igbo were dispersed to colonies such as Jamaica, Cuba, Saint-Domingue, Barbados, Colonial America, Belize and Trinidad and Tobago, among others. Elements of Igbo culture can still be found in these places. In the United States, the Igbo were imported and constituted the largest group of Africans. Today, there is an area called *Igbo Landing* where a group of Igbo had tried to drown themselves, rather than become slaves when they disembarked the slave ship.

The Igbo people are an ethnic group in Nigeria. They are primarily found in Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States. A sizable Igbo population is also outside the country. ethnic Igbo populations are found in Cameroon, Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea, as migrants as well as outside Africa. In Jamaica, the Igbo were often referred to as Eboe or Ibo. There are a substantial number of Igbo language loanwords in Jamaican Patois. Igbo people mostly populated the northwestern section of the island. Some are also found outside Africa as a result of the Slave Trade. Many have migrated to other parts of the world for many reasons within the ambience of greener pasture and professionalism. Nevertheless, There has been much speculation about the origins of the Igbo people, which are largely unknown. However, King Eri, like many, claims that the Igbo are the Jews of West Africa. They believe they are descendants of at least one of Israel's lost tribes. In the eighth century B.C., the Assyrians invaded Israel's northern kingdom forcing 10 tribes into exile. Igbo Jews are members of the Igbo people of Nigeria who practice Judaism. Jewish life has been documented in parts of Nigeria since the precolonial period, but it is not known whether the Igbo have claimed Israelite descent or practised Judaism in pre-colonial times. This historical excursus explains the reasons why Ndigbo are Gyps and are in diaspora around the globe in their professionalism amidst their undying patriotism.

Ndigbo in Diaspora and Their Unique Characteristics

The global presence of the Ndigbo community has sparked significant interest, as their unique characteristics and contributions have undeniably left an indelible mark on the societies they inhabit. Delving into the nature of Ndigbo in Diaspora offers a compelling insight into their historical background, cultural practices, economic activities, and the challenges they encounter, while also highlighting their profound impact on their host countries.

The Ndigbo people, an ethnic group from Southeast Nigeria, have a rich history of migration, demonstrating their unique characteristics. Renowned for their entrepreneurial spirit, Ndigbo individuals have ventured into various parts of the world, including North America, Europe, and Asia. To comprehend their distinct qualities, an exploration of their historical background and migration patterns proves crucial. One significant influence on their dispersion across the Americas was the transatlantic slave trade. Moreover, the Biafran War in the late 1960s compelled numerous Ndigbo to seek refuge in various countries,

leading to the establishment of thriving Igbo communities in the diaspora., Ndigbo in Diaspora perpetuate their rich heritage and create a profound connection to their roots. Therefore, the distinct social organization and cultural practices exhibited by Ndigbo in Diaspora signify their unwavering commitment to their heritage and represent an integral part of their identity. Transitioning to the next paragraph, this exploration of the nature of Ndigbo in Diaspora sets the stage for a deeper understanding of their contributions and impact on their adopted countries hence they possess a multitude of unique characteristics that distinguish them from other diaspora communities.

Additionally, the Ndigbo communities in Diaspora often form close-knit networks that serve as sources of emotional and social support. These communities not only strengthen the sense of belonging but also provide a conducive environment for fostering deep connections among its members. Research reveals that these communities often establish dedicated organizations and associations that promote unity and collaboration among individuals of Igbo descent. This collective identity and a strong sense of belonging play a crucial role in shaping the unique characteristics and unity of Ndigbo in Diaspora. Equally, Ndigbo communities abroad frequently partake in cultural festivals, host language classes, and conduct traditional ceremonies, all of which contribute to the preservation of their cultural heritage. Through these endeavours, Ndigbo in Diaspora demonstrates their unwavering commitment to their cultural identity while simultaneously embracing the host culture. It has been shown that the fusion of cultures allows them to feel a sense of belonging to both their host country and their Igbo heritage. The Ndigbo community in the Diaspora (often under the umbrella of the Igbo Unios and World Igbo Congress) stands as a resilient and cohesive group, thriving within the global diaspora, fuelled by their strong identity, deep sense of belonging, and rich cultural traditions. Remarkably, these organizations of Ndigbo promote unity, cultural preservation, and advocacy for Ndigbo's rights and welfare, while also actively engaging with their host societies

Ndigbo in Diaspora has demonstrated their unique financial wizardry in the economic sector through economic indices that Harvard School of Business acknowledge Igba-boi or Imuahia phenomenon with such lively entrepreneurial spirit by establishing successful businesses, creating job opportunities, and boosting the local economy around the globe. For instance, an online study shows that Ndigbo-owned businesses in the United States generate millions of dollars in revenue annually, emphasizing their significant economic impact. Furthermore, Ndigbo professionals have excelled in diverse fields such as medicine, technology, academia, and arts, thereby enriching and advancing their host countries' knowledge and expertise. One remarkable example of this is a Nigerian-Igbo Computer scientist who developed a ground-breaking procedure that revolutionized computer practice. *Naira-Diary* (2023) in its *Celebrity Profile* maintains that Philip Emeagwali's breakthrough came in 1989 when he used a Connection Machine supercomputer to perform the world's fastest computation of 3.1 billion calculations per second. This achievement earned him the Gordon Bell Prize, which is considered the Nobel Prize in computing. His accomplishments

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serve as a testament to the intellectual prowess and innovative mindset of Ndigbo in the Diaspora. These remarkable contributions underline the meaningful impact of Ndigbo in their host country.

According to studies Ndigbo in Diaspora readily embrace the local languages of their host countries, establishing bonds with members of the host society and actively contributing to community development projects. In line with this, the Ndigbo community in Diaspora has exhibited tremendous potential for future development and engagement, bolstered by their entrepreneurial spirit, strong cultural identity, and adaptability to new environments. Equally, Ndigbo in Diaspora have proven themselves to be resourceful and resilient in seizing economic opportunities. This is evident in their establishment of thriving businesses and their high level of self-reliance. Accordingly, their active participation in philanthropic efforts and social initiatives reflects their commitment to contributing to the development of their host countries.

Conclusion

Ndigbo nationalism in Nigeria is not questionable nor doubtful. Ndigbo are the most significant patriots among other members of Nigerian nations. Ndigbo as a national cum political entity in Nigeria is indeed true Nigerians by all standards. That is to say, Ndigbo characteristically known for their ubiquitous lifestyle and gumptious spirit remain the genuine symbols of true citizens of Nigeria in their gypsy-tic ordination, versatile orientation and influencing enterprise. Ndigbo nevertheless despite their profession and global dispersions and taunted being *dot* maintains the needed patriotism.

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I-DI-ADISM:TOWARDS AN AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY OF AUTHENTIC
EXISTENCE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract
It is pertinent that in the discourse concerning the African, the definition of who he is must start from him. Unlike the Cartesian methodic doubt where he goes through the process of thinking to assert an Existence, the African must define and assert himself and without doubts, in order to make out not just existence but an authentic existence for that matter. This kind of project has become necessary especially with the identity questions ever increasing and the crisis of relevance almost becoming a mainstay in the African conversation, across the globe. Every Philosophy is a product of an environment, an age and the contribution of a philosopher. African Philosophy like Olusegun Oladipo admonished must move beyond the question of what it is or if there is such a Philosophy to doing and practicing it. This itself asserts its existence, especially to those who view it from outside and doubtful of its sustainable veracity and operative condition. While other African Philosophers have interpreted a lot of African realities, there is still a missing gap of what it means to be an African: especially with being Black in a White World. Is the African actually black, brown, which? Who is White or who is black? Are these not mere nomenclatural constructs? Across the epochs and historicity of the African, the stakes are high that Africa remains the cradle of man and that civilization began along the Nile, where Egypt sits. For Africa to be actualized, it must first realize itself. The questions: Who is the African? What is in Africa? How ontologically self-aware is the African? These have become important and engaging questions in a changing World on the move. What is the African contribution to this change? Is he an onlooker or a participator? How developed is the African mentally, politically, religiously, economically, technologically and in all aspects of his reality? How can this be Sustainable? How can he rise like

the rest in the present milieu and dust himself of the chains tied around him. How can the African move towards Authentic Existence? These are the realities, the present currents in African Philosophy should address with profit and this present study summed this up with the conceptual framing of I di-adi. I di-adi is an Igbo word for to be; to exist. But any type of existence will not usher an Africa whose present potentials do not match with its credentials and vice-versa. The African Declaration is such that an Authentic Existence should bring about an Africa where the idea of mmadu (personhood) has enrobed dignified essence and both human and natural resources developed to the fullest in projecting Africa as the destination of the next man—technologically, philosophically, politically, religiously, culturally, in the process of history. The study engages the philosophic methods of hermeneutics, analysis and phenomenology to create a new paradigm in the crisis of identity and relevance in an ever-changing World, where the African is useful elsewhere but arguably in his homeland. I DI-ADISM is an African Philosophy of self-realization, through the path of assertion, contribution, authentication, in order to arrive at sustainable development and actualization. The idea of I di-adi would become that the African is, both in potentials and credentials, identifiable and relevant in the comity of human communities.

Keywords: Idi-adism, African Philosophy, Authentic Existence, Sustainable
         Development.

Introduction

A topic and article of this nature falls within the purview of African philosophy and Studies. Over the years, African philosophy has been a fertile ground for engaging Africa, its values, traditional systems, politics, strengths and weaknesses, possibilities in the now and future. Many have doubted the idea of African philosophy. Some others argue for its existence. They believe and argue that if there have been other philosophies in Western and Oriental parts of the World, then, Africa, reputed to be the cradle of man and of civilization cannot be secluded from philosophy, rationality and intellection. If there is man anywhere, civilization happens and community, culture and thought begin.

The contention in the now is no longer about the validity of an African philosophy but rather the engagements of pressing issues in the continent. African philosophy, for instance, began with the argument of its existence and the reclaiming of the 'Stolen Mandate.' At least, the work of Innocent Chilaka Onyenwuenyi (perhaps his *magnum opus*)—*The African Origin of Greek Philosophy: An Exercise in Afrocentrism*—was an *apologia* for the African continent. From political thoughts of Nkrumah, Sedar Senghor, Nyerere and Azikiwe, to the African notable philosophers like Hountondji, Wiredu, Oladipo, Sophie Oluwole, among

others, they have all shared their thoughts on the fruits, merits and validity of the African philosophic intellection and enterprise. African philosophy moved from reconstruction of African forklores, proverbs, belief system, magic, traditional and cultural patterns to the need to start doing it and treating other aspects of the African reality, especially the socio-political and socio-economic realities with profit in a world of emerging and changing trends. This was the position of Olusegun Oladipo with his *The Idea of African Philosophy.* This present study is in obeisance to the admonition of Oladipo. We see reasons with him. The existentialist movement generally is one that focused on human existence with its attendant condition. The pursuit of an authentic life is one of the core tenets of Existentialism.

Africa as a continent is not exempted from the pursuit of an authentic existence in a world of change. The pursuit of this authenticity would nip the crises of identity and relevance in the bud. Apart from the fact that Africa is the cradle of man and of civilization, how can continental Africa challenge and dust itself of the many external and internal chains on her way in the present milieu? Africa needs to contribute immensely to the world in the area of science and technology. Mbiti has described the average African as notoriously religious. Being religious is not bad in itself. Religion in an important aspect of the human phenomena or realities. However, being religious is not enough for the African. He has to balance his religion with education, growth, development and progress. This is how he can become better and authenticated.

Economically, Africa despite the huge potentials and natural resources at her disposal, continues to suffer underdevelopment, exploitation from within and outside. From within, the political class embezzle the treasury and mismanage the resources. They impoverish their country men and women at the expense of national development and an egalitarian society built on values, enterprise and reward for hard work. Externally, Africa's raw materials are sold or forcefully carted away, produced and resold to Africa. Africa has the largest market for most European, American and Asian products, while Africa's products struggle to find a market in these places, except for Africans who sell to their country men and women over there, especially the food materials. This is the sorry story of Africa. Taking Nigeria as an example, none of Nigeria's four refineries are working. Nigeria still imports oil. Stockfish, otherwise, known as okporoko in Igbo or panla in Yoruba is being largely imported from Norway. How can Africa's local industries grow to a level the World needs more of Africa's products, instead of the scramble for her raw materials? These are some of the issues this paper seeks to address.

The idea of *I di-adi* is an Igbo nomenclature signifying existence or to be. This study will treat it in the subsequent sub-theme. The overall goal of this paper is to drive and stimulate an intellectual revolution for the African continent in pushing for continental authentication in individual/collective/communal life, society, governance and public affairs, in order to awaken the desire for continental-realization needed for continental-actualization.

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I-Di-Adi: Conceptual Clarification and Delineation

I di-adi is an Igbo word for existence. *I di* means either one is or to be, depending on the intonation or how it was pronounced or used in a sentence. *Adi* also means to be. It means having an existence. *Adim* means I am. *Gi* or *I di,* means you are. *Ha di*, means they are. *Anyi di,* means, we are. *O di,* means it is. *Ga-adi* means it will or shall be. *Di* means it is. Although, it can also refer to husband, depending on usage, because it is same spelling. All these aspects are summed up in *I di-adi*, which is to be. It is metaphysical and ontological.

The African continent has its notion of existence. Existence, for the African is a summation of the life-process. To exist in Africa is existing as a "being-with-others." It is never in isolation. Man, it is viewed to be part of nature. Nature has a high tide in the African metaphysical conversation. The African, without prejudice, reverences nature. In nature, God is found, life is grasped and meaning revealed. Anything, not natural is ontologically un-African. For the African, existence implies spiritual and physical components. Nature is only a physical manifestation of what the spiritual entails. Existence for the African remains a spiritual component made manifest in the physical. It carries with it a moral responsibility, in order to fit into the communal life of the community.

Corroborating this, C.B. Okolo noted that: "Being-with" is a characteristic of the African mode-of-being-in-the-world means also openness to nature in positive and sacred relationship.[1] For the African person, nature is sacred and mystifying. The African seeks harmony with it by sharing in its life, its spiritual and material blessings… the task of man is however to exploit nature and to the full, too.[2] Hence, A. Ugwu noted that Man is, therefore, a being whose existence is defined as ontologically interrelational.[3]

According to Akinola, African Conception of the nature of man is influenced by African worldview and understanding of human existence. Man in many African societies is perceived as instinctively spiritual, communal, deterministic, both emotional and rational.[4]

When we talk about Existence as epitomized by the Igbo word *I-di-adi,* it portrays Existentialism. The difference though is not in the individual as envisaged by Western philosophy. African has its own mode of existence. Existence in African perspective is made meaningful in "shared-ness." It is more of "we" than "I." Existence is emotional and married to culture and the community. From here, the idea of communalism springs. However, there is the part of Existentialism, in a generic sense that should affect and concern the African. It is in the area of freedom and authentic life. That is, pulling off shackles and limitations to determine what one wants and the type of life envisaged. Overcoming fear, dread, anxiety, forlornness, angst, in determining to exist, which comes by realizing and actualizing.

It is at the heart of this, that the idea of *I-di-adi* emanates and would hold intellectual water. While the African is communalistic in nature, therein lies his strength to achieve great things. The idea of *Igwebuike*—strength in collectiveness—has been severally espoused by Prof. Kanu. Each unique existential component, in this sense, the human person, combines to utilize their uniqueness in pulling something powerful. This is what the African needs.

According to Kanu, 'To be' in Igbo ontology is *idi*. The operative word in *Idi* (to be) is di (be), and it comes from the word *odi* (it is), which is the third person of the singular *idi*. It means 'to exist' or 'to be'. It is an adjective and can be suffixed to anything to show that it exists. For instance, Okwute di(stone exists), Nkita di (dog exists), Kanu di (Kanu exists), Uwa di (the world exists).[5]

Again, in the words of Kanu:

> The expression, Igwebuike, is a combination of three Igbo words. It can be understood as a word or a sentence: as a word, it is written as Igwebuike, and as a sentence, it is written as, *Igwe bu ike*, with the component words enjoying some independence in terms of space. Literally, Igwe is a noun which means number or multitude, usually a large number or population. The number or population in perspective are entities with ontological identities and significances; however, it is part of an existential order in which every entity is in relation to the other. Bu is a verb, which means is. Ike is a noun, which means strength or power. Igwe, bu and Ike put together, means 'number is strength' or 'number is power.' However, beyond the literal sense of Igwebuike, it means otu obi (one heart and one soul) – *cor unum et anima una*.[6]

Sharing further on this communitarian stance, as regard existence in Africa, Ugwu, Ozoemena and Ngwoke noted that:

> African worldview has always been perceived in terms of the other". Existence is existence-in-and-among-and-with-others-in-and-within-communities. No being is existentially conceived in isolation from the other; and drawing from that, existential quiddity is enshrined in the community where every member-being lives and fulfil its destiny and aspirations. Thus, the value and essence of community places a high influence on the African experience; hence, the position that communality best describes the African personality. This „communality-phenomenon" has been designated with some terms by some African scholars like Senghor and his „Negritude, Nyerere and his Ujamaa", Nkrumah and his Consciencism", Azikiwe and his Eclecticism", Mbiti and his I-and-We Existential mantra", Okolo and his Being-with", Asouzu and his Ibuanyidanda-Complimentarity", Ozumba and Chimakonam and their Njikoka-Amaka Integrative-Humanism," Nze and his Communalistic-Brotherhood", Edeh and his EPTAISM of Mma-di-in-Closeness-not-Closedness.[7]

Like Akinola noted, the beginning point of any discussion about human existence in Africa is the origin of man. Unlike the Western existentialism that pay no attention to man's origin, it is an important part of African existentialism. In Africa, man is a product of something and did not just drop from somewhere. The Pre-existence of man has direct relationship with his practical existence. This African perspective can also not be separated from their belief in God. God to many African people is supreme, stable, reliable and dependable and the creator of man and the universe. He is the creator and the sustainer of the universe and everything therein including humanity.[8]

However, the foregone analyses portray the idea of being—what it means to be and exist in Africa. Unlike Western Existentialism, the African is not in isolation. He is a being towards others with an "*Ubuntuan*" disposition. The idea of *Ubuntu*—an African universalistic philosophy of sharing, human connectivity and bond—is the fulcrum of the African idea or gateway to reality, especially as it concerns human existence and relationship. While it is true that there is a dichotomy between African and Western existentialist discourse, there is a connection especially in relation to human freedom and authenticity. In the course of this study, it shall be treated. Summarily, the concept of *I di-adi,* apart from the exposition of what being is in Africa, carries a slightly different meaning in conveying contemporary construct of what it means to be or exist in Africa, as of today. The idea of *I-di-adi* for today's Africa is not just to exist but to exist with all freedom and authenticity. Pulling off from age long traditions, cultural limitations, external and neo-colonial influences that no longer serve the contemporary African, going forward. It is not enough that it is often perceived that the African is a being with others. In the same regard, it can be like other developed parts of the World. It should not be in isolation in poverty, sickness and disease, malnourishment, backwardness, underdevelopment, dearth in science and technological know-how and epistemic groundings, poor politically and a non-liberal democracy. This is not how the contemporary African can be. *I di-Adi* is an affirmation, a declaration, a revolution, a mindset shift, a progressive thinking and approach towards betterment and egalitarian/just society in Africa. The idea of *I-di-adi* is a process of history and the next man, who would be an African ruling the world. This is possible. Simply put, I-*di-adi* is a revolutionary and reactionary African Philosophy of change, geared towards curbing the problems of identity, relevance, backwardness and underdevelopment for the African people. Africans' existence would be made meaningful when they rise up to confront their socio-political challenges and contribute in a World, where for the most part, they often look like Spectators, and following Fanon, looking truly like the 'Wretched of the Earth.'

Who is an African? Debate and Designation.

It is important to treat this theme because of the way the African is often described, which points to a problem. The general perception of the African is a backward and underdeveloped person, who is inferior and lacks a thinking faculty. He is seen as full of emotions and highly superstitious. Often times, when fellow African wants to denigrate

themselves, especially Africans who feel they have attained some exposures and travelled to different parts of the World, they call their fellow Africans: *ndi ishi oji*. It is an Igbo word meaning black headed people . Referring to people who do things bizarrely, without reason and anything goes. Again, there are questions begging answers, which for long time, there is the lack of willpower to interrogate. Is the African actually black? Black as in the literal sense of black? However, we have come to see that it is a racialized way of classifying people from African and others elsewhere sharing same skin colour. The argument is that the black coloration tag is from the dark hair of Africans. Some see nothing wrong with it, especially as it helps to group a particular class of people with same skin colour. In that case, it is arguable that not everyone in African continent would pass as black? Would Africans of the Maghreb be called Arab Africans? That is those in Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya.   If so, how then can we say Africans are part and core of the black race? This is part of the crises of identity, Africa suffers today.

There are those who believe that using the term black was derogatory or reductivist or should one say racial reductivism. M. Levinson noted that some perceive the term "black" as a derogatory, outdated, reductive or otherwise unrepresentative label, and as a result neither use nor define it, especially in African countries with little to no history of colonial racial segregation.[9]

Contemporary anthropologists and other scientists, while recognizing the reality of biological variation between different human populations, regard the concept of a unified, distinguishable "Black race" as socially constructed. Different societies apply different criteria regarding who is classified "black", and these social constructs have changed over time. In a number of countries, societal variables affect classification as much as skin color, and the social criteria for "blackness" vary. In the United Kingdom, "black" was historically equivalent with "person of color", a general term for non-European peoples. In other regions such as Australasia, settlers applied the term "black" or it was used by local populations with different histories and ancestral backgrounds.[10]

This also creates further problem. If as the foregoing stated or read that non-Europeans are referred to as persons of colour, what colour then are the Europeans? If they are humans, then, they cannot be secluded from racial coloration. The funny thing though is that these classifications often come from Europeans, not helped by exploration, later conquest and slavery, follow-up colonialism and a continuous neo-colonial disposition of perpetuating control over others—all pointing to delusions of grandeur and racial chauvinism. Others cannot be people of colour while they are not. It is a contradiction and against the law of thought.

It is in things like this, that the idea of *I-di-Adi* emanates. Africans need to truly rise and exist. The civilization of Egypt that heralded as the first civilization in known history made Africa once a beacon of light for the human race. There is need to intellectually return, to

reclaim such a rich past, even if in the present, scholars argue that such a civilization was primitive and esoteric and has been improved upon. But the refusal to acknowledge the origin remains what Africa is being denied of thousands of centuries after. The Mystery systems in Egypt and all the recorded facts that many of the Greek philosophers studied in Egypt attest to the fact that Africa lost track in the process of history and even so, lost identity and designation, which resulted in resignation. Africa for no reason ought not to be where it is now. It ought not to have any business with poverty or the underdevelopment tag. Africa has all the potentials to have advanced in all facets of existential and cosmologic reality. Although, it is clear, it has an unpleasant history which affected a lot of things.

Despite all these, the question remains: who is an African? Africans are people who are native to Africa and can trace their ancestry or lineage to it. It is often understood as someone who comes from Africa or is born in it, so long as there is rooted connection to the community, the person is from.

J. Adibe corroborates this sentiment, when he noted that:
> At face value, the answer to this question seems obvious. Surely, everyone knows who the African is, it would seem. But the answer becomes less obvious once other probing qualifiers are added to the question. Are White South Africans really Africans? Are Moroccans, Egyptians and other Arab Africans as much Africans as say, Nigerians or Ghanaians? Is Barrack Obama an African? Do all categorized as African or as having an African pedigree perceive themselves as such? Are all who perceive themselves as Africans accepted as such? Are there levels of "African-ness", and are some more African than others? Who allots this African-ness, and why? How does African identity interface with other levels of identity and citizenship in Africa? In short, how is the African identity constructed in the face of the mosaic of identities that people of African ancestry living within and beyond the continent bear. For some, the African is simply a racial category - a Black man with certain Bantu features.[11]

Adibe further noted:
> Again if we use race alone in the delineation of the African, a legitimate question is raised about non-Blacks with African citizenship, say, the White South Africans, who never knew any other country but South Africa. Are they Africans? Some have tried to use territoriality to define the African. For those who adopt this perspective, all it takes will be to look at the map of the world and categorize all who were born in the continent of Africa or who hold the citizenship of one of the countries that make up the continent, or has ancestry in the continent, as African. This option however has equally a number of problems. For example, if we choose to call all who have 'African' ancestry Africans, how far back in time should we go? This perspective also wrongly assumes that all who are citizens of the countries that make up the continent of Africa accept that they are 'Africans'. Even within sub-Saharan

Africa, sections of countries like Somalia, Mauritania, Niger and Sudan would prefer to be called Arabs, not Africans.[12]

Citing another parameter through which one can claim to be an African, Adibe again notes that:

There are also those who believe that consciousness of being an African, or commitment to the cause of Africa should be the only or main criterion for delineating who the African is. This form of classification is quite popular with the remnants of the African ideological left and those eager to wear the toga of universalism and cosmopolitanism. One of the weaknesses of this classificatory scheme however is that it is so fluid that any one expressing any sort of interest in African affairs could, by this definition, legitimately claim to be an African.[13]

Eminent African political scientist Professor Ali Mazrui made a distinction between "Africans of the blood and Africans of the soil". For him, Africans of the blood are defined in racial and genealogical terms. They are identified with the black race while Africans of the soil are defined in geographical terms. For Mazrui therefore, both territoriality and race should be used simultaneously in identifying the African. A major problem with this view however is that it seems to imply a hierarchy of Africans since someone who is both an African of the blood and an African of the soil could legitimately claim a higher ranking than those who have fewer attributes such as those who are only Africans of the soil or of the blood.[14]

In this context of this study, an African is someone born in Africa or has African roots even when not in Africa but shares a negritudinal identity. It is important to emphasize on the insistence on Negritude. Negritude involves the affirmation and consciousness of the value of African cultural identity. It is in taking pride in African cultural heritage without feeling shame. Without wanting to be another. According to E.M Ome, Negritude constituted a dream and above all a philosophy of action for the black people as a race of discriminated and exploited humanity. Negritude contained in its vision a new African personality, African world-view, and a path to authentic black existence.[15] To be in Africa is not just any form of existence but an existence that would be counted as revolutionary, progressive, developmental, ideated and having all positive attributes necessary for the actualization of the African potentials. It is a project that must begin and be completed. Anyone who shows genuine commitment to it has Africa at heart. Africa is a continent of promise. It only needs introspection in order to find solution to its myriads of problems.

The Problems of Africa and Implications for Sustainable Development

Africa is a continent blessed with rich human and natural resources. This is not in doubt. Apart from its historical composition as the cradle of man and the *primus*, in terms of civilization, Africa has everything to suggest that it is a blessed continent. The problems of Africa apart from slavery, colonialism and the argument that Europe underdeveloped Africa,

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among others, contemporary Africa is case of Africans underdeveloping Africa. Chief among Africa's problems is the problem of mindset. The way most Africans think has long term consequences in relation to sustainable development. Explanations suffice: An African leader goes to developed places and sees how things are done there but would struggle to replicate such in his home country. The wealthy African is interested in widening the gap between the rich and poor in his society. The wealthy African thinks if other Africans become wealthy, he cannot be able to lord it or exert his control over them. This same mindset is utilized in establishing a business or running an etablishment in Africa with a killing capitalist tendency. Workers are paid peanuts and the working conditions poor while the organization amasses profit upon profit. People cannot boast of decent living. In Nigeria, for instance, instead of Nigerians to question why there is no steady electricity despite the billions spent on electricity, over the years, it was hardly an issue. Instead a generator set was nicknamed "I better pass my neighbour." Again, the problem of mindset suffices in Education and Religion. Education became reduced to nothing that in Africa today, with Nigeria as an example, Education is being viewed as a scam. Fraud, questionable source of wealth, unaccountability in public offices, lack of values, among other vices are promoted today above intellectual and cognitive abilities. Religion, today in Africa, is being used as a tool to manipulate. It has also been monetized. The essence of religion which is to help man form a personal relationship with God imbued with moral rectitude is missing and almost extinct. Government and stakeholders on their part use religion to fuel a political agenda. Another mindset issue of the African is the inability to have a clean environment. This is summed up in the slogan: "dirty no dey kill African man." The slogan portrays that the African is so accustomed to dirt that it has become part of him. The consequences of this are that we do not see clean cities in Africa, channels built for water to flow during rainy season are blocked. Dirts are dumped in non-designated places. This problem follows also to public infrastructures which are messed up, destroyed and hardly maintained because of this culture of not good in keeping things tidy and neat. As minute as these things, when development is being talked about, these are the things that add up to say that a country is developed or not or that a country is cultured or not or a tourist destination or not. Another mindset problem is that most Africans beginning with the leaders are not futuristic and hardly plan ahead. They are myopic and hardly patriotic. When something is discovered, what quickly comes to mind is to share the proceeds from it without processing it to see how many ways, it could serve the country and for how long. Without the thinking of what good, it can bring into the country. Africans and their leaders, it is arguable or it seems, mostly think of amassing wealth and looting. It is a poor mindset!

Another major problem of Africa is leadership crisis. In fact, it is the root of all other problems. Contemporary Africa, for the most part, lacks visionary leadership. This is why many things go wrong and underdevelopment remains a mainstay. This bad leadership crisis makes most African leaders cling to power and the sit-tight syndrome being witnessed. In the past was military take-overs which were undemocratic. Now, democracy has almost come to stay in most African countries, even though not liberal but bad leadership remains.

Most elections conducted are usually not credible. The recent concluded elections in Nigeria point to this fact. Africa cannot attain sustainable development with bad leadership crisis. It has remain a teething problem for long.

Another factor is corruption. Corruption like poison kills a nation. Most African countries continue to experience corruption on large scale. The issue though is that, realistically speaking, there is corruption in other continents of the World. There is corruption in America and Europe but there is still a wide gap to it. Corruption in Europe or America will not bring about bad roads or bring about a non-functional health system, poor educational system or dilapidated public infrastructures. But corruption in Africa can bring about all these. This is really where the problem lies. Corruption in Africa literally kills. The chief cause of contemporary Africa's underdevelopment is bad leadership married to corruption. They go hand in hand like lovers in bed.

Religious Conflict and ethnicism are two other problems. The religious conflict come from either manipulation or misdirection. Religious leaders aid religious crisis sometimes through their utterances and politicians manipulate religion for their selfish gains. Misdirection or wrong use of religion comes from not being educated. An Educated person cannot be manipulated. They are so intellectually saturated that all they seek out is nothing but truth. The truth in things and pragmatic cum utilitarian consequences of reality.

Today in Africa still, another teething problem is the problem of brain drain and lack of opportunities for personal growth which can bring about human capital development. Whether we agree to this or not, there cannot be sustainable development without human capital development. It is first step to securing and achieving sustainable development. Hence, advanced countries of the World build up their educational system to enviable heights and do everything through funding and innovative ideas, to sustain it. Little wonder, Universities in Europe and America, and now Asia, have become some of the top academic destinations in the World. The problems of brain drain and lack of opportunities continue to increase by the day. As of today, brain drain is a bane to Africa's developmental potentials. According to the African Union, about 70,000 skilled professionals emigrate from Africa every year. Currently, Africa is the world's youngest continent, with an estimated 10 to 12 million young Africans joining the labour force each year. Yet the continent is able to create only about 3 million jobs annually.[16]

Most countries in Europe and North America continue to come out with immigration policies that attract others from other parts of the World, Africa especially. A visionary leadership in Africa can reduce the problem of Brain Drain. However, it must begin with a credible election that produces credible candidates.

An important problem in Africa we often do not talk about or turn blind eyes to are traditions and cultures that impede growth and progress in Africa. While we will agree that

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cultures differ and every culture must not be the same, for the sake of growth, Africa must overcome some cultural patterns. Take for instance, burial rites and the amounts expended to bury the dead. They say it is culture but go to Europe and America to see the simplicity of burials and other ceremonies. The monetization of Age grades, Town Unions and other Cultural Associations in Africa can sometimes become too exorbitant and no longer portray what they ought to represent or the reason for their establishment. People pay through their nose, in order to belong. This is not right and against the feeling of *Espirit de* corp This kills the feeling of pride and loyalty to a group one belongs, because it is against humanism.

The problems of Africa are manifold but these ones mentioned at least, point to the fact that if these ones are solved, Africa's teething socio-political problems, would have been reduced by half.

Africa: Towards the Path of Authentic Existence

Two key factors in the existentialist current especially the Existentialism of Kierkegaard and Sartre is in freedom and authenticity. While the slogan of 'anonymous mass of they' may have some contradiction when applied to Africa, because of the community-ness of Africa cultural life, the ideas of freedom and authentication are important for Africa, especially in dusting itself of the many chains holding it down from actualizing its huge potentials.

When we look at the African story: its past, present, there is need to reconstruct a future we would want to see. Africa's past is one of mixed feelings. At the Western front, it is argued that Africa was barbaric, backward and a continent in darkness. Then, came the Europeans who brought light, civilization and exposure to Africa and had to colonize it indirectly or via assimilation to bring it up to civility and modernity. However, no one talks about the exploitation, the slavery, the take-over of people's lands and resources, the dehumanization and denial of what is rightly for Africans. It is not an exaggeration that Europe underdeveloped Africa, even though contemporary Africans are also underdeveloping Africa. The colonization and domination which have ever remained so point to the fact that Africa would continue to play second fiddle, if it refuses to develop. Despite the independence of African countries, they are still nowhere in terms of development. If we take away North-Africa and South Africa, we will see that the rest of Africa is still struggling to be called developed. The problem, like already noted, is not for lack of resources but for lack of visionary leadership in changing the status-quo for good.

How can Africa attain the path of Authentication? How can Africa be free from all western domination? The Chinese and Arabs have started a revolution. Take the example of football, how many Chinese players or Arab players play in Europe? The entire number of Asian players who have played in Europe can be counted. On the contrary Asian Leagues like the Saudi Pro League have become a place that attract established soccer players. Only recently

Cristiano Ronaldo, Benzema, Ngolo Kante, among others, currently ply their trade there. This shows that a revolution is ongoing in the area of Sports there.

Africa hardly attracts such big names. Most African leagues apart from those in North Africa and South Africa, remains unattractive. The key issue though is how can Africa become the next destination, in sports, science and technology, in terms of development, among others. This is the chief purpose of this paper. The primary task is to fight poverty. Poor people only think of survival. Wealthy people thinking of growth and diversification. They think investment and multiplication.

Today, Africa has become a dumping site for most contraband goods in Europe. Raw materials are carted away from Africa, manufactured and resold to Africa. Most African countries, with Nigeria as an example continues to suffer currency devaluation partly because they borrow to consume and produce almost nothing to export. Another thing is excessive importation into African countries, which further place value on the currency used to import. Africa is last in terms of the global scheme of things. But a cursory look at Africans shows that they are among the most intelligent people in the World. Some of the recent discoveries in the World were done by Africans. However, they are Africans in foreign developed countries, where they had the opportunity to develop and to do wonders. Where they had the enabling environment. This is at the heart of what fuels brain drain in Africa. The whole of the French National team that won the World Cup in 2018 in Russia were 70% of African origin. From Mbappe to Pogba to Kante, among others, these are all people of African ancestry.

At the global level, Africa is usually derided. When George Opong Weah won the FIFA World Player of the Year and Balon D'or in 1995, he said won those amidst years of suffering from racism. He noted that the *La Gazetta dello Sports* ran a headline: "And Oh, the black wins the Golden Ball!" Even in his team of Milan, he was asked if he sold it to buy bread for those in Africa. This is mockery! It shows that nothing done by Africans is often recognized. There is the pity feeling or sentiment, once it is an African.

But Africans are to be blamed and this is why there is need to pursue the path of authentication. How can this happen? It can happen by Africans primarily correcting their mindset and thinking independence in everything they do. This is part of the decolonization agenda. For instance, in Nigeria, most names of places were adulterated by the colonial Master and till date, no Nigeria leader has thought it wise to correct those names. For instance, Awka in Anambra State is originally Oka. Onitsha is Onu-icha. Owerri is Owerre or Owerela. Awkuzu is Oka-uzu. Enugu is Enu-ugwu. In Delta State, Ibusa is Ibu-uzo or Igbu-uzo. Usiefrun is Urhiephron. Warri is Eware. These names were adulterated and have never been reversed post-independence. It shows that the African reality is often defined from outside and Africans become more or less people who are incapable of defining their reality.

The path of authentic existence for the African would be hinged on the deepest construal of what it means to have authentic existence. An authentic existence is rooted in freedom. Development is freedom. To be free is to be developed. Authentic Existence is rooted in self-awareness. It is in defining reality in one's own terms. It is in the thinking of original ideas that can serve the World. It is in the hard work to see that Africa is regarded across the globe. This can practically be done by African leaders fighting poverty, creating access to opportunities in the home front, which invariably reduces brain drain. The truth remains that for as long as thousands of Africans migrate to developed countries of the World annually, Africa can never be regarded. African leaders need to stop the culture of borrowing from international financial institutions. If they plan well and become domestically prudent and productive, there would be products to export, which reduces the import deficit and the continuous devaluation of currencies of some African countries. Part of the development agenda should be to run a knowledge economy. Africa will do better from there. The globe today is running on a knowledge economy. Science and technology have advanced. There are now electric cars. The World is ruthlessly advancing in the area of technology. Today, we are in the conversation for necrobotics, this is turning dead bodies to robots, 3D printed bones and foods, natural language processing, Boom free supersonic flight, digital twins that track one's health, direct air capture necessary to turn carbon dioxide to synthetic fuels, energy storing bricks, sand batteries, car batteries that charges in 10 minutes, brain reading robots, artificial neurons on silicon chips[17] and a host of others. Indeed, the World is on a fast lane!

The question becomes: how can Africa be relevant in the scheme of things. How can Africa contribute? Admittedly, Africans in Europe and America have done well in the area of Academics, science and technology but the glory goes to these countries who see these Africans as their adopted own or their products. However, this is not what continental Africa needs to attain sustainable development. Africa, in times past is known for some technological know-how. How can this past be replayed? The Sphinx of Giza, the pyramids in Egypt, the Goldsmith at Oka (Awka), Anambra, Nigeria show that the African is not bereft of ideas, given the right conditions. It is this right conditions that Africans must fight and ensure they have visionary leaders who can bring about this authentic existence and development. The idea of *I-di-adi* is for the African to exist authentically, with sense of wellness and freedom in a World on the move. Africa must contribute its quota to changing the World. This is possible if African leaders start doing the right things by developing Africa with all sense of Afrocentrism and to make Africa, one of the most vaunted continents in the near future. A continent that is epistemically grounded (knowledge economy) and African traditional knowledge converted to suit the postmodern World.

Conclusion

So far, in this paper, there has been the emphasis for an authentic existence of the African continent rooted in freedom and a progressive mindset to things. Africa needs to dust itself

of whatever holds it down in relation to underdevelopment, poverty, backwardness, a non-functional system. African needs workable institutions to realize and actualize its massive potentials.

I di-adi is an African philosophy of understanding what it means to exist as an African. To exist as an African is to align with nature, have the deepest understanding of things, utilize and convert the forces of the universe to the African good. It means taking advantage of the African qualities—raw energy(stamina, strength, endurance), rich social life, communal life, religious leaning, respect for elders, dedication to hard work, love for truth and being a brother's keeper, among others. When these are converted, it would imply using the unity and bond available from social and communal life, to labour for a society rooted in moral rectitude and justice that could lead to transformation in improving the lot of such a society. Africa needs to rise up and stop playing second fiddle to the World. It needs to contribute. The World should not always milk Africa. Africa should give the World something that can make it ever dependent on Africa, without compromising its freedom. There is nothing incomplete about the Africa in terms of being a normal human being. It is only that the mess in his environment limits his potential and ingrains in him a feeling of inferiority complex to think that others: Europeans, Americans, Asians have better ability than him and that he cannot transform his environment to look like those of other countries. Authentic Existence in Africa as conceptually framed in the idea of *I-di-adi* can set up the template that can help Africa become the next destination, politically, economically, scientifically and technologically. Proactive citizens that can enthrone visionary leadership is all that is needed to take Africa from where it is to the next level. Conclusively, as far as contemporary African philosophy can interrogate, the idea of *I-di-adi* is envisioning an Authentic existence that could lead to sustainable all-round development in Africa.

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EXPLORING THE METAPHYSICAL DIMENSIONS OF AFRICAN MIGRATION AND THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY

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Abstract

This study delves into the metaphysical dimensions of African migration and its impact on the global community. Departing from a conventional understanding of migration as a mere physical movement, this research explores the deeper spiritual, cultural and philosophical aspects that underlie this phenomenon. Drawing upon perspectives from anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies, this study examines how African migration transcends borders and shapes the metaphysical experiences of individuals and communities. Employing the analytic method, it investigates how migration engenders to endanger or sustain ancestral connections, spiritual continuity and collective consciousness within the global African diaspora. Furthermore, the study explores the formation of sacred spaces, rituals and artistic expressions that arise from the fusion of African traditions with new environments. The research also investigates the role of spirituality, indigenous knowledge systems, and alternative forms of wellness in fostering healing, empowerment, and resilience within migrant communities. By delving into the metaphysical dimensions of African migration, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics that shape the experiences and interconnectedness of individuals and communities in the global community. The findings can contribute to a deeper appreciation and understanding of the diverse cultural and spiritual practices within the African diaspora. This can promote cross-cultural dialogue, tolerance and respect, fostering a more inclusive and interconnected global community.

Keywords: African, Migration, Ancestral, Spiritual, Metaphysical, Anthropology, Transcendence.

Introduction

Migration has long been a defining feature of human history, driven by a multitude of factors that encompass economic, political, cultural, and social dynamics. Within the context of African migration, a captivating dimension emerges; one that transcends the tangible and delves into the metaphysical realms. This article sets out to explore the

profound metaphysical dimensions of African migration and their far-reaching impact on the global community. By delving into the spiritual, cultural, and interconnected aspects of migration, we can gain a deeper understanding of its transformative potential and profound significance.

In *Recovering the African Diaspora: Cultural and intellectual legacies*, (Myers, 2015), opines that African migration encompasses diverse experiences, with millions of people of African descent dispersed throughout the world, forming what is commonly referred to as the African diaspora. Yet, beyond the physical dispersion lies an intangible legacy, a metaphysical path woven with the threads of history, identity, and spirituality. The experience of African migration, driven by both forced movements during the transatlantic slave trade and colonialism, as well as voluntary migration for economic opportunities and education, has forged unique connections among individuals, communities, and nations, shaping the metaphysical landscape of the global community.

At the heart of this exploration are the ancestral connections that migrants carry with them, regardless of the physical distance from their homelands. African migrants maintain a profound metaphysical bond with their ancestors, seeking to preserve cultural practices, spiritual beliefs, and a sense of identity. This deep-rooted connection extends beyond geographical boundaries, allowing individuals to draw strength, wisdom, and guidance from their ancestral heritage as they navigate the challenges and opportunities of their migratory journeys. Spirituality plays a pivotal role in the lives of African migrants, providing a source of solace, resilience, and adaptation in the face of adversity. From the ancient traditions of the Yoruba and Akan people to the syncretic religions that emerged in the African diaspora, such as Vodou, Santeria, and Candomblé, metaphysical practices have become a cornerstone of migrants' lives. These practices offer not only a means of connecting with the divine but also a pathway to cultural preservation, community cohesion, and personal empowerment in unfamiliar surroundings, (Mitchelle, 2006).

Furthermore, (Freire, 1970), African migration acts as a catalyst for cultural exchange and the emergence of syncretic traditions. As Africans settle in new lands, they encounter diverse cultures and belief systems, leading to the blending of ideas, rituals, and philosophies. This cross-pollination of spiritual and cultural expressions results in the creation of unique syncretic traditions, enriching the global community and fostering a deeper understanding of our shared humanity. The metaphysical dimensions of African migration also hold transformative potential for healing and reconciliation. Migration becomes a vehicle for addressing the wounds of colonization, slavery, and historical injustices, as individuals and communities reconnect with their ancestral heritage, seek reconciliation, and forge new relationships across borders. In this sense, the metaphysical dimensions of African migration offer pathways to collective healing that transcend historical divisions and foster a renewed sense of interconnectedness. By recognizing and valuing these metaphysical dimensions, we open ourselves to the profound insights and

contributions of African migrants to the global community. Through embracing interconnectedness, promoting inclusivity, and honouring the multifaceted experiences of migrants, we can work towards dismantling systems of oppression, fostering social change, and cultivating a more equitable and empathetic world.

From here, we will delve deeper into the various sub-topics within the metaphysical dimensions of African migration, shedding light on the ancestral connections, spiritual beliefs, cultural exchange, healing processes, and contributions that shape the global community. Through this exploration, we hope to gain a more nuanced understanding of the transformative power of African migration and its significance for our shared human experience.

Historical and Contemporary African Migration Patterns

African migration is one of the most significant demographic movements in modern times. For most of the 20th century, Africa was primarily a continent of emigration, where people left in search of better economic opportunities, education, and generally better living standards. However, political and social upheavals have led to significant numbers of people migrating within and out of the continent. The history of African migration is linked to several historical factors, including the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism, and post-colonialism conflicts.

Throughout the history of Africa, migration has been a significant feature in the African history. This involves the movement of African people to migrate within their continent or to other continents around the world. From time immemorial, people have always migrated from one place to another in search of better opportunities or better living and also migrate to other places to escape from persecution or oppression. Human beings always have this urge to explore and they can do that through moving out from their current location to achieve their goals. Again, no man would ever stay in a place where he is being oppressed. As a rational being, he must surely move away to be free from these shackles, and this is more familiar to the African people. Therefore, African migration is one of the distinctive features that make up African history. These migrations help to shape social, economic, political development, and environmental factors. (Kasinitz,1992).

Some historical factors shape African migration which include the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism, and post-colonial conflicts. The Transatlantic slave trade for instance is one of the most significant migrations in African history from the 16th to the 19th century. It is one of the factors that shaped African history. This involves the forced migration of millions of Africans to America as slaves. During this period, millions of Africans were forcefully taken from their homes; some were abducted on their way and transported across the Atlantic. Some of the slaves were used as a tool for trade by barter for the Americans to take them to their place for them to work in their farms or homes. This forced migration for

Bakewell *et al* is one of the darkest periods in African history. Some of the slaves were being maltreated, giving hard labour. Some were even killed while some of them died during the process of escaping. This can be seen as an involuntary migration because it was not their will to migrate rather they were forced and were therefore taken as slaves. This migration had a profound impact on the African continent because it led to the depopulation of many areas in Africa and was busy contributing to the growth and development of the European economies. This forced migration led to the destruction of the traditional way of life.

Colonialism also played an important role in shaping African migration. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, European powers colonized Africa and this led to significant migration of Europeans to the African continent. This migration was motivated by economic opportunities, religious missions, and administrative tasks. This made them partition Africa into colonies and this led to the displacement of thousands of people. The Europeans who are already in Africa as migrants introduced new economic systems that resulted in labour migration. (Odey, 2018) captured it well that Labour migration is the process whereby people move from their rural areas to urban areas seeking work. Many Africans were forced to move from their homes to work in the agricultural sectors, mines and industrial sectors of the colonial masters. The colonial era made a great impact on migration as people in rural areas migrate to urban areas, making cities grow, by seeking better work education and better opportunities and also better living conditions. Let us examine some contemporary reasons for African migration.

Recently, African migration is being characterized through the movement of people from rural areas to urban areas within Africa or to other parts of the world. The reasons for this migration are diverse, such as economic opportunities, environment, education, and family reunification. All these factors continue to shape African migration patterns. One of the most contemporary migration patterns is the movement of people from Africa to Europe. This migration is caused by a range of factors such as poverty, conflict, and political instability. Many migrants are forced to flee from their homes due to persecution, violence, and discrimination, while some are simply searching for better economic opportunities. Africans in Europe also faced some challenges like xenophobia, language barriers, religious problem, and discrimination. Therefore, some of them take their religion with them during this migration to avoid such challenges. Economic opportunities are also an important reason for African migration. So many workers migrate to other places seeking well-paid jobs to foot their bills and be free from poverty. This often happens in some of the African continent, Nigeria as a case study, where corruption, limited infrastructure, and economic opportunities are the order of the day. They tend to move out of the country to where there is better economy and good infrastructural facilities. Another example is those in the professional lines, who also migrate to another place where they are being offered a nice working environment and earn higher wages for work well done.

For Odey in his wisdom, another reason for African Migration is Education. Many Africans migrate to other countries to get a better and sound education in the field that is lacking in their country. In some African countries education system is not what one can take home. The education sector is very poor, not well organized and even ignored. The reason is that those who are in the education sector are not being paid well and sometimes they are not being paid at all because the government does not care about this sector. The learning environment is also another problem because it is not conducive to learning; there is no equipment for practicals. That is why they migrate to get what they couldn't get in their country and also for a secured job after education. Family reunification is also considered another vital reason for African Migration. Many Africans migrate to other countries where one of their family members has already migrated to, to reunite with them. A case study is Europe, where people who have established themselves, bring their family members to come and stay with them due to the nice environment and opportunities there. These African families who migrated there can decide to live permanently after reuniting with their families.

Ancestral Connections and Spiritual Beliefs

Ancestral connections are one of the important things that make up the African Tradition. African ancestors are their forefathers who are long dead and are now being perceived as spirits. What then are the connections that the African people have with these forefathers? The Africans believe that the spirits of those who are long dead in one way or another other influence the living. In the thoughts of (Henze *et al*, 1999), these ancestors practice so many things including their way of living, their religion, their beliefs and also what guides them. These things they practice are being passed down to their children down to their other generations through their traditions, myth, and belief. Therefore, the ancestral connections now act as a link between the past ones and the present ones for them to maintain their heritage, maintain what they believe in, and preserve their cultural heritage. And this link is a spiritual link because it is between the dead and the living. Africans value these ancestral connections more than anything because they believe that their ancestors always intercede for them in different ways, mostly in times of trouble. Africans always carry these connections to wherever they are going because for an African to lose an ancestral connection is like one being exposed to any physical and spiritual harm. One can see here that ancestral connection is interwoven with spiritual beliefs.

Scholars like (Paragment, 1999), gave an understanding that Spiritual Beliefs involve the agreement that there is something superior to us, a being that is bigger and greater than us. This involves the belief in something that is not physical but spiritual, therefore it is a spiritual belief. And there is a relationship between us and that being. In African cultures and other cultures around the world, they believe that there is a supreme being which they always look up to and who acts as a guide when called upon. The Africans believe that their

ancestors are spiritual and that is their spiritual belief because their ancestors protect and guide them in their day-to-day life.

The African people who have migrated to other continents sometimes find it very difficult to adapt to the cultures of those people who they came to their countries. It is always a great challenge for an African migrant to abandon his belief and start another thing. To tackle this challenge, an African migrant will want to maintain his ancestral beliefs and will try to reconnect with his ancestors. Maintaining his ancestral heritage and connecting with his ancestors in the place where he migrated is the only option for a migrant. And the migrant does this by trying to create a bridge between him and his ancestors through ritual practices and ceremonies. Rituals and ceremonies are essential parts of cultural heritage, carrying significant symbolic meanings that allow individuals to connect with their ancestors and traditions. These practices may include offerings of food, meditation (yoga), prayers, and songs, and are often performed in communal settings. Engaging in these activities helps the migrants to form solidarity with others from their cultural background and provides a sense of belonging, which is critical for their emotional well-being. Spiritual practices are also important in the life of a migrant because it helps in grounding them in their ancestral spirituality and they practice this spirituality through praying to their ancestors to reconnect spiritually with them.

The African migrants as well use divination and Spiritual guidance as tools to navigate their migratory journeys and seek directions in their lives. Divination is the process of seeking knowledge or insights through the use of rituals and symbols. Some divination instruments include; artefacts, round stones, cowries, teeth and bones of some wild animals, gong, bell, calabash etc. The migrants interpret the significance of these instruments and symbols with the help of a diviner. Sometimes it can be in the form of a dream or a sign. Through this, the migrants consult their ancestors in whatever they are doing in order not to go the wrong way. They connect with their ancestors spiritually for clarity and their essence in terms of their movements in life and ask for spiritual guidance. (Ojo, 2019)

Influence of African Spiritual Traditions in the Diaspora:

African Diasporic religion is the spiritual religion practised by those Africans who were forcefully taken from Africa and brought to the Americas during the Transatlantic Slave Trade. (Murphy, 1995) observes that these religions developed in the Americas through the combination of African beliefs with the practices of European colonizers and the indigenous peoples of the region. Among the most prominent African diasporic religions are Vodou, Santeria, and Candomblé, which continue to have a significant impact on African American and Afro-Latinx cultures today. Vodou also spelled Voodoo or Vodun, originated in Haiti and is one of the most misunderstood African diasporic religions due to inaccurate media portrayals. In Vodou, there is a pantheon of spirits called law, which represent different aspects of the natural world and human experiences. Practitioners believe that the lwa can

help them connect with ancestral spirits, heal illnesses, and obtain success in life. However, Vodou is often associated with dark magic and zombies. In reality, Vodou is a religion that emphasizes community, healing, and reverence for the (Mbiti, 1969).

Santeria, also known as Lukumi, is a religion that emerged in Cuba and is a blend of Yoruba beliefs from Nigeria and Catholicism. In Santeria, practitioners worship orishas - deities that represent natural forces, ancestors, and human traits. For example, Oshun is the goddess of love, beauty, and femininity, while Chango represents thunder and masculinity. Santeria involves ceremonies that incorporate dance, drumming, and chanting to invoke the orishas and seek their guidance. Santeria has faced some controversy due to animal sacrifice being a part of some ceremonies, but it is deeply rooted in Afro-Cuban culture. These thoughts are explained in (Murphy,1995) *Santería: An African Religion in America.* Candomblé is a religion that originated in Brazil and is influenced by Yoruba, Fon, and Bantu traditions. Candomblé is similar to Santeria in the sense that it revolves around worshipping orixas, but there are some differences in the way that ceremonies are performed. Candomblé practitioners often use white clothing and jewellery to honour the orixas and call upon them through spirit possession. Like Vodou and Santeria, Candomblé emphasizes the importance of community, ancestral connection, and honouring the natural world. (Matory, 2005).

All these religions have metaphysical dimensions in which practitioners seek to connect with higher powers and the spiritual realm. For example, in Vodou, the lwa are believed to be intermediaries between humans and the spirit world, and practitioners often seek their help through offerings or rituals. Santeria and Candomblé both involve drumming and dancing, which are believed to create a trance-like state that allows spirits to enter the body and communicate with the practitioner. Additionally, all three religions place great importance on ancestor veneration, as they believe that ancestral spirits can offer guidance and help connect practitioners to their cultural heritage. These religions offer unique perspectives on the world and provide spiritual and cultural connections for their practitioners. The metaphysical dimensions of these religions are a vital part of their practices, allowing practitioners to connect with higher powers and the spiritual realm. (Brown, 2009).

Syncretism of African Spiritual Practices with Other Religious Traditions in Diaspora.

Religion has always formed the basis of society. It did not only provide the ideologies, social, economic and political structures of society but, in some cases, was the sole basis for community life. This is the case when considering the traditional religions of those who inhabit the African continent. Religion is a general belief in a spiritual world that helps to guide and give meaning to the living. Africans, in this sense, were religious people; their religion was the central institution around which communities were built. Each African migrant group consists of a complete social, economic, religious and political entity - their religions, however, were not universally held beliefs.

Thesaurus (1991) observes that from the moment enslaved Africans were brought to America, they were forced to adapt to new cultural and religious environments and also were forced to accommodate certain necessary traditional beliefs. However, rather than completely abandoning their ancestral beliefs, they often found ways to incorporate them into their new circumstances. Thus syncretism comes into play as a working solution for religious institutions to accommodate each other's belief systems. Syncretism is an attempted reconciliation of conflicting or opposing beliefs, the development of religion by the subsuming of older forms. Syncretism is the blending of cultures and ideas from different places. The Principle of Religious Syncretism holds that when any two cultures meet and interact they will exchange religious ideas with the dominant culture prevailing in the exchange. This process of syncretism of African diasporic spiritual traditions continues to thrive to this day.

John Mbiti in his work, *Introduction to African Religion,* is adamant that African Traditional Religion is never truly gone when he says:

> African religion developed together with all the other aspects of heritage; it belongs to each people within which it has evolved. It is not preached from one person to another…Even if they are converted to another religion like Christianity or Islam, they do not completely abandon their traditional religion…When Africans are converted to other religions, they often mix their traditional religion with the one to which they are converted. In this way, they think and feel that they are not losing something valuable but are gaining something from both religious systems. African Religion functions more on a communal than an individual basis…it does not matter much whether or not the individual accepts all beliefs.

A good example of syncretism in the African diaspora is the fusion of African spirituality with Christianity which took place within the context of colonialism when European missionaries attempted to convert Africans to Christianity. Rather than completely rejecting their ancestral beliefs, Africans often incorporated elements of Christianity into their traditional practices. This can be seen in the practices of many prominent African Diasporic religions, such as Vodou and Santería, which combine aspects of Christianity with African spiritual practices. Syncretism can also be seen in the blending of African spiritual practices with Islamic and Hindu traditions. For example, among the Afro-Brazilian community, there is a syncretic practice called Candomblé, which combines elements of Yoruba spirituality with aspects of Islam and Catholicism. Similarly, in Trinidad and Tobago, there is a syncretic religion called Shouter Baptists, which incorporates African spiritual practices with elements of Hinduism. (Matory et al, 2005)

Contributions of African (Spiritual) Traditions in the Diaspora to Cultural Expression, Identity Formation, and Social Cohesion.

African Spiritual traditions have endured since antiquity and have proved to be resilient over time in the face of systematic suppression by colonial powers and the transatlantic slave trade. The African diaspora, as a result of this, has created a rich connection of African Spiritual traditions around the world, including Latin America, the Caribbean, North America, and Europe. These African diasporic practices are a blend of African spiritual practices and the influences of colonial cultures. They are widespread and have been observed as vodun, Santeria, Candomble, obeah, and many others, depending on the region and context. These religions have been critical in playing an essential role in cultural expression, formation of identity, and social cohesion.

Cultural expression is an important aspect of African Spiritual traditions. (Guest, 2007), maintains that it is this cultural expression that makes individual of different cultures express their spiritual traditions freely. In African diasporic religions, practitioners express their spirituality through music, dance, and various rituals. Music is a huge component of cultural expression and cultural identity. It is through music that these religions communicate and express their beliefs and traditions. Identity formation is another critical aspect of African diasporic religions. Practitioners of these religions are typically descendants of Africans who were taken away from their homes and forced into slavery. They endured the loss of their original identity, culture, and traditions. African Spiritual traditions provided a renewed sense of identity, as they allowed the enslaved people to express their African heritage in a new environment. African diaspora religions allow African people to reconnect with their past and to share a social bond with others that they once lost. This sense of identity is an essential driver of social cohesion among African diaspora communities.

Social cohesion is the third aspect of African Spiritual traditions. These religions provide practitioners with a sense of belonging and contribute to building stronger communities. Bonding around religious practices helps to develop a sense of trust and familiarity among community members. As a result, it builds a shared perspective and contributes to the overall stability of the community. According to (Mason, 2002):
The African diaspora religions have been able to reconstruct and consolidate cultural memory within diaspora communities, hence enabling the emergence of viable communities that could resist the fragility and fragmentations imposed by the conditions in which they lived.

Cultural Preservation and Adaptation

Preserving one's culture while living in a new environment can be a challenging task for many reasons. One of the reasons is language barriers. Language barriers are a very great

challenge for migrants to preserve their cultural practices. Migrants find it very difficult to communicate with individuals who do not speak or hear their languages. And this makes the individual not understand the person's cultural practices and talk more about joining them in the practice. It is also a problem in trying to pass down these cultural practices to their children or grandchildren if they are not fluent in their native language. Another challenge is the new environment. Migrants find it challenging to adapt to their new environment because some of the environments are not conducive to the preservation of their culture and traditions. The reason might be the lack of a place of worship and also the environment in which the migrants might not have anyone who also has those same cultural practices making him be the only ones practising that culture. This can make the migrant abandon his culture because they are in a hostile community.

The economic and societal pressures for migrants living in a new environment are also a challenge for migrants to preserve their cultural practices. Migrants have to work long hours in other to meet up to standards and to be able to provide all that is needed for their survival. This makes a migrant not have the time to practice his cultural heritage because he will be tired to engage in any cultural activities after the day's work. Moreso, the younger generation of the migrant community may find it difficult to fully embrace their cultural heritage. Growing up in a different cultural environment, they may view their parents' cultural practices as outdated and irrelevant to their lives. This may lead to a loss of interest in cultural traditions, making it difficult for families to pass on their cultural heritage. This is the reason why they end up practising syncretism because migration is a process that involves various changes, including the adaptation of cultural expressions to accommodate new cultural contexts. Culture can be defined as the learned behavioural patterns and beliefs shared by a group of people. Culture provides people with a sense of belonging and identity, and migrants often face the challenge of adapting their cultural expressions to the new cultural settings while maintaining their metaphysical connections. (Hall, 1990)

Migrants often find themselves in a new cultural context that is different from their original cultural context. The new culture can be different in terms of religion, language, values, and beliefs, among other aspects. Therefore, migrants have to adapt their cultural expressions to fit into the new cultural context. For instance, a migrant from an Islamic country may have to change their dressing style to match the new cultural context where the dressing style is different. Similarly, a migrant may have to change their food habits to match the new cultural context where the food is different. However, for Willy Brandt et al, adapting cultural expressions does not mean abandoning the original cultural context. Migrants maintain their metaphysical connections to their original culture in various ways. For instance, they may continue to speak their native language at home, celebrate their traditional festivals, and practice their original religious beliefs. In this way, migrants maintain their connection with their original cultural context while accommodating the new cultural context.

An example of how migrants adapt their cultural expressions while maintaining their metaphysical connections can be seen in the South Asian community living in the United Kingdom. This community consists of people from various South Asian countries such as India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. The South Asian community in the UK has adapted to the new cultural context while maintaining its metaphysical connection to its original culture. For instance, they have opened Indian and Pakistani restaurants in the UK, which serve traditional South Asian food. Similarly, they have organized South Asian festivals such as Diwali and Eid, which are celebrated in the UK. An in-depth understanding of this can link one to, *The Cultural Adaptation Process Among International Students* By Jennifer A. Rudolph and Laurie L. Hazard.

Contributions of African Migrants to the Global Community

It is no longer the case that the problem of migration has been increasing rapidly over the years as there are huge numbers of people who now move from one country to another. Migration becomes a common thing now for the African people. It is already established also that African migrants' played a significant role in the cultural enrichment and diversity which they brought to their host countries. They came in with different kinds of traditional practices, cultures and beliefs that seem to act as important and valuable to the community to which they migrated. Therefore, Migration, whether forced or voluntary, changes culture. Some of these changes can be objectively bad while some can be objectively good. Some might be in the middle i.e. good and bad, depending on the context.

There are different ways in which African migrants enrich their host communities through the new languages they brought, new foods, new religions, new styles of music and dance, and so forth. Places that accept cultural diversity as a benefit don't see this as a problem but rather a natural process. In terms of new foods, African migrants' cooking styles and recipes have been welcomed in many countries, introducing new flavours and foods to the local cuisine. For example, African restaurants and food markets have become quite common in cities across the world, such as New York, Paris, Rome, and London. In addition, African migrants have also contributed their knowledge of agriculture and farming practices to their host countries, which has helped to diversify the crops and plants grown in these regions. (Ericksen, 2018).

Another example of the cultural enrichment brought by the African migrants is music and dance. Africans have their traditional music and dance which they now brought to their host communities. We can see that some of our African music and dance are being displayed in some of the talented shows, events and festivals. Sometimes it is being displayed by those that are not Africans but they got that from Africans.

Another cultural enrichment is through our arts, sports, and literature. One example of this is the works of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a Nigerian writer who is rapidly making waves

in the literary world with her books such as *Half of a Yellow Sun, Americanah* and *We Should All Be Feminists*. Her works mainly focus on the cultural and social perspectives surrounding African life, making her works a tremendous resource for understanding African history, culture, and people. Chinua Achebe, for instance, is one of the most influential African writers of all time. In his book, *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe presents a vivid picture of pre-colonial Africa, and his insights have helped to reshape the Western world's understanding of Africa. Similarly, Wole Soyinka is another African writer who has made significant contributions to literature. Soyinka was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1986 for his plays and essays that reflect the African experience (Soyinka, 1986). Significant enough to mention one of the most notable intellectual contributions of African migrants is in the field of mathematics. Among the many African mathematicians, S. Ramanujan stands out as one of the most significant contributors to the field. In his book, *The Man Who Knew Infinity*, Robert Kanigel describes the life of S. Ramanujan and his contributions to mathematics. He notes that Ramanujan's work changed the course of mathematics and that his ideas continue to influence the field even today (Kanigel, 1991).

African Migrants' Experiences and Promotion of Social Justice, Equality, and Human Rights Globally.

African migrants are important contributors to the promotion of social justice, equality, and human rights globally. Their experiences and voices offer valuable insight into the systemic injustices and barriers they face when migrating to other countries. These experiences shed light on the need for greater social inclusion, diversity, tolerance, and respect for human rights across cultures and nations.

According to United Nations (2018) International Migration Report 2017, African migrants constitute one of the largest groups of migrants globally, and they face significant challenges, including discrimination, racism, xenophobia, and violence. These challenges are often compounded by social, economic, and political factors such as poverty, conflict, human rights abuses, and lack of access to education and healthcare. Nevertheless, they have remained resilient in the face of these challenges and have continued to participate actively in the promotion of social justice, equality, and human rights in their host countries and globally. They have formed various community organizations, advocacy groups, and civil society networks aimed at advancing their rights and addressing the challenges they face. For instance, in South Africa, migrant organizations such as the Zimbabwe Exiles Forum and the Somali Association of South Africa have been at the forefront of advocating for the rights of African migrants, including access to education, healthcare, and legal protection from violence and discrimination. These organizations also provide social and psychological support to migrants who have experienced trauma and abuse. (Adebayo et Adepoju, 2016)

Similarly, (Crush, 2017) identified that in Europe, African migrants have formed various associations, religious fronts and networks aimed at promoting their rights and advocating for social justice. For example, the Voice of African Migrants in Italy is a self-organized platform for African migrants to share their experiences and participate in advocacy campaigns aimed at improving their living conditions and protecting their rights. Same thoughts shared by Valdez that migrants' voice has also contributed to shaping global policy debates and initiatives on migration, diversity, and human rights. The Global Compact for Migration, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2018, recognized the contributions and challenges faced by African migrants and emphasized the need for greater protection of their rights and well-being. (Valdez, 2019).

Conclusion

The exploration of ancestral connections and identity within the African diaspora reveals a profound and transformative metaphysical tapestry. This tapestry weaves together the threads of history, culture, spirituality, and resilience, creating a collective narrative that transcends borders and spans generations. Through recognizing and harnessing the power of ancestral connections, individuals and communities within the diaspora can reclaim their identities, forge a collective consciousness, and drive social change. Ancestral connections serve as a lifeline, linking the present to the wisdom and experiences of the past. They offer a source of guidance, protection, and inspiration, enabling individuals to navigate the complexities of their lives with a deep sense of purpose and belonging. By honouring and celebrating cultural heritage, the diaspora affirms its unique contributions to the global community, challenging stereotypes and reclaiming narratives that have been marginalized or silenced.

The metaphysical dimensions of ancestral connections foster a sense of interconnectedness and collective consciousness. They remind us that the struggles and triumphs of ancestors resonate within us, binding us together as a resilient and powerful diaspora. Through this collective consciousness, the diaspora can mobilize, unite, and advocate for social justice, equality, and empowerment. It becomes a force for positive change, amplifying voices, dismantling oppressive systems, and shaping a more inclusive and equitable world. Ancestral connections also hold transformative potential for healing and reconciliation. By acknowledging historical traumas and engaging in restorative practices, individuals and communities can embark on journeys of healing and collective well-being. Rituals, ceremonies, and practices become spaces for acknowledging pain, seeking forgiveness, and envisioning a future grounded in justice and harmony.

Navigating identity in the diaspora becomes a journey of self-discovery and empowerment. Ancestral connections provide a foundation for individuals to construct multifaceted, authentic identities that reconcile diverse cultural influences. By drawing upon the metaphysical dimensions of ancestral connections, individuals navigate the complexities of

their experiences, embracing their heritage while forging new paths that honour the past and shape the future. Preserving and passing down ancestral knowledge becomes a vital responsibility within the diaspora. Intergenerational transmission ensures the continuity of cultural practices, oral histories, and ancestral wisdom. This knowledge transmission strengthens the bond between ancestors and descendants, fostering a sense of pride, continuity, and cultural stewardship.

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ABOUT THE BOOK

AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS IN A GLOBAL COMMUNITY

The 2023 Annual Conference of the Association for the Promotion of African Studies was held at the University of Nigeria Nsukka. It focused on the relationship between Africa and the global community and aimed at retelling the African story in a unique African manner. This is very important as the African continent has been presented and described in the global space, most times negatively and by non-Africans. This APAS conference, therefore, told the story of Africa from within Africa and in rare African voices - to counter erroneous ideas and projections about Africa. The Conference brought together progressive visionaries from across the continent to reflect critically and discuss theoretical and empirical perspectives on African landmark achievements, setbacks and future developments. The multidisciplinary conference facilitated conversations across a broad spectrum of disciplines and generated robust engagements. This enabled the forging of ambitious but concrete paths that will catalyse Africa's prosperity.

The present work on *African Philosophy And Religious Traditions In a Global Community* is a collection of papers presented at the conference bordering on African philosophy and religious traditions. Through this piece, the Conference shares the fruits of her research wi th the rest of the academic community.

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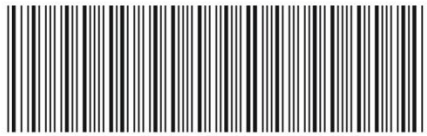
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