



AFRICAN THEOLOGY AND CULTURAL IDENTITY 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

Editors

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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 Theology And Cultural Identity In a Global Community* is a collection of papers presented at the conference bordering on African theology and cultural identity. 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

DIGITAL ARCHIVING OF UNCOLLECTED AFRICAN HISTORICAL SOURCES: AN IMPERATIVE INNOVATION

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Abstract

The place for primary sources for historical sciences is sacrosanct. Africa, African History and Historians need to search for the unadulterated primary sources and save them from impending extinction. The current rapid loss of irreplaceable documents among African societies put in limbo the re-writing of authentic African history. By and large, the larger African population is at a crossroads from overreliance on oral historical heritage to written literature. The written documents containing African history are expediently documentable, easily preservable and constantly verifiable. Satirically, the global north, racing miles ahead, is speedily shifting from physical to digital preservation of archival materials to evade the risk of invariable obliteration. African archival practices have experienced deficiencies ranging from poor preservation to privation of historical intuition on the invaluableness of historical documents. Urgent digital intervention is not a choice lest history sinks into oblivion. Digital archiving of uncollected African historical resources is one of the most secure ways to immortalize the sources thus furnishing history with a future. This academic corpus seeks to appraise the purpose, nature, methods and practical approaches for the collection, preservation and rendering of uncollected historical documents available for researchers and educators on a digital platform with universal accessibility.

Keywords: Archives, digital archives, historical research, African history, repository, written documents, records, and historical sources.

Introduction

According to *Data Reportal*, a total of 5.18 billion people, which translates to 64.6 per cent of the total world population, were able to access the internet by the second quarter of the year 2023. According to International Telecommunication Union, internet usage has surged from one billion people in 2005 to 5 billion in 2023. These statistics confirm that the world is exponentially becoming technologically connected. If all factors remain constant, the world shall not resist becoming technologically dependent. Additionally, the statistics

inspire confidence that the internet is the infrastructure to chase after while internet-based services have seized the future. Online absence shall virtually be the same as absence from humanity. Regrettably, the African continent trails behind in the access and usage of the internet. In fact, according to *the International Finance Corporation-World Bank Group*, only 22 per cent of Africans have access to internet connections. It is worth noting that, despite having the lowest percentage, Africa has had the fastest growth in regional connectivity and the future can only get brighter. Verily, the advent of satellite internet rescues hinterlands from isolation.

Given that the internet infrastructure has reached out to over two-thirds of the world's population, the time has also dawned for the world to invest in its utilization in all spheres of human life. This academic corpus seeks to explore ways and means that can be employed to initiate, promote and sustain the digitization of archival materials for research and other noble purposes. Digitization is the process by which analogue content is converted into a sequence of 1s (ones) and 0s (zeros) and put into a binary code to be readable by a computer (Hughes, 2004). Digital documents created by converting documents originally in analogue media are often described as born analogue or reborn original. Digital documents created in electronic form are described as born-digital (R. P. Moses, 2005). In a nutshell, digitisation is the transformation of analogue information from any form and support to digital code using technological appliances. Digital archives are collections of numerical data, texts, images, maps, videos, and audio files that are available through the Internet. An archival information resource is a retrospective resource. Its essential attributes are originality and recordability.

Heidi Abbey notes that Archivists have long been progressive stewards of our society's cultural and intellectual heritage. He continues to argue that the Archivists as curators of artefacts, ephemera, manuscripts, records, and digital assets in various formats, are deeply rooted in the theory and practice of preservation and care for the long-term needs of primary resources in their custody (Heidi, 91). The Archivists of all times, therefore, have a noble mission rightly placed on their hands to up their game on environmental stewardship.

In the global north countries, physical materials are gradually giving way to electronic print and online public access catalogues (OPAC) hence obliterating the need for users to physically visit the library or archival buildings to access their collections (Asogwa, 2011). Exploratory studies within Africa confirm that the Continent is already predisposed to tread on the same path as technology diffuses into the interior and hinterlands. Despite the African unique reality, the digital culture is a global language that none would wish to remain dumb.

In the African context, B. Amollo observes that digitization is a topic that is on the agenda of most forums for librarians and archivists, as a tool for enhancing the capture, dissemination, retrieval, storage and preservation of information (Amollo, 2011). Africa is

at crossroads as it migrates from oral literature into literacy. The latter requires materials that may contain the history of people, things and places to be collected and preserved for consultation. In the yester centuries, oral narratives transmitted and conveyed the histories with a degree of success. Without prejudice to the dynamism of raw human memory in Africa, such methods are not only getting outdated but also, their demerits are too costly to ignore especially as pertains to the loss of irrecoverable materials or information. To guard our history from oblivion, the acquisition and preservation of archival materials need to be given ruminative attention and more importantly, the digitization process should be embraced as a categorical imperative.

African Traditional Archival Methods and Evolution from Oral Literature to Literate Literature

It is undeniably true that enormous quantities of historical materials remain uncollected within Africa. Prof. Mazrui poses to wonder and argues; why was the archival tradition weak in Africa? Firstly because most indigenous African cultures refuse to regard the past as a bygone or the present as transient. The ancestors are still with us and we will be ancestors. If the present is not transient why bother to record it? (Mazrui, 1985). He implied that the reality of transiency and our nature as mere mortals can easily escape our attention and run business with faux confidence at the expense of the history of man. In his originality, the African man needs to record his story and preserve historical documents as well as tap oral information received from the natural custodians and convert it into digital forms. In addition, the widespread documentary deficit within Africa due to the late assumption of Western methods of literacy has been partially occasioned by being oblivious to the uniqueness of African history. Since not all the traditional methods are contemporarily tenable, spirited efforts are necessary to salvage whatever little or much that has survived and jealously preserve it as a cultural heritage.

Bisschoff attests that digitization has the potential to new kind of relationship between place and time (Bisschoff, 2017). When applied in the development of history, digitization evolves as the new link between today's man and the past man, today's culture and yesterday's one, today's understanding and the mindset of the men and women who lived before. Moreover, as the world moves towards the actualization of a borderless world, the digitization of histories shall render a generous opportunity for man to adore his common thread. As the contemporary generation adjusts to the beauty of the digital world, the history of man shall not be left behind.

Brendan Asogwa confirms that information emanating from governments, institutions, organizations, scholars as well as private individuals, is increasingly appearing online and being demanded electronically consequently creating a new environment that challenges libraries and the archival profession (Asogwa, 2011). It is time for the paper-archival practices to evolve into digitization or resign to the fate of obsolescence. Paperwork that

happens to be electronically generated should overpass the printing phase and directly move into a digital file and later mature into an archival record. Besides time-saving, the resources spared by sidestepping the handling of physical papers are enormous. If the same resources would be channeled to digitization for archival purposes, then the evolution would also qualify as a profitable venture.

Biographical writings have gained popularity not only within Africa but globally. As genres of reflective narratives, they provide insights into the magnitude of available historical documents that are preserved, or worse, jumbled up within private homes and offices. Grateful that the biographies provide secondary sources of information within private archives, it is uncertain whether, after the demise of the biographers, their families shall attach any value to such historical materials or they shall face extinction. The digitization process shall thus become the rescuer of records otherwise marked for ruination.

Decay and Involuntary Destruction of Unpreserved Historical Materials

All over the world, persons of public stature, at a particular moment of their lives, nobly commit themselves to the publication of biographies. These publications come with superabundant information that baffles many given their originality, context and influence. By and large, the contents of their publications reveal that they hold into their private use thousands of records, documents and archival materials. These sources could be reserved in their family archives, offices, and other places that are inaccessible to the public. Of concern is the fact that such documents may be lost upon the demise or descension of such personalities from places of societal influence. Strategic digital archiving should therefore be embraced as a necessary and archival indemnity.

Technical knowledge is not common sense since it presupposes an explicit process of cognition. Innumerable primary historical sources have been condemned to extinction as victims of ignorance since not all and sundry have the aptitude to apprehend materials of historical importance from otherwise. Where such requisite knowledge is absent, annihilation happens through dumping, discarding, committing to fire, and the reuse of physical copies for other incongruent needs, among others.

A person devoid of historical intuition can easily think of any printed material lying in a heap as good and ready for destruction unless there is a spirited effort for supererogation. Such involuntary destruction of primary sources has cost humanity an unimaginable information deficit. Digital archiving of historical materials shall help not a little in the reduction of such irrecoverable destructions. Furthermore, more than imaginable, a huge percentage of precious historical records undergo natural decomposition without notice. Such happens when records are heaped into certain locations without sustained vigilance. Others are escorted into oblivion by natural disasters such as fire, landslides, hurricanes, floods and other catastrophes.

Digital Archiving

Digital preservation is defined as long-term, error-free storage of digital information, with means for retrieval and interpretation for the entire time span the information is required (Osedo, 2013). There are all indications that in future, all records shall be exclusively digital and their storage shall demand a digital preservation. Electronic records and the born-digital (digital records) appear to be the language of the future. Already, today more than ever before, the majority of techno-savvy persons prefer digitally transmitted documents to physical records. Given that history is the storyteller of all generations, it would be an agonizing kick in the teeth if the primary historical sources do not make it into the digital world. The day has dawned for record experts to prepare and trek the path of digitization since the era of virtual archives is as unstoppable as the wind.

Prof. Ali Mazrui describes Archives as a cultural preoccupation of keeping records, a tradition of capturing the past through preserved documentation (Mazrui, 1985). His description denotes archival preoccupation as a cultural undertaking and since no human can exist devoid of a culture, then archiving is indispensable for man. Some cultures have made giant strides in embracing technological archival science from digitization to green archives. While there have been laudable efforts on erecting eco-friendly structures and practices, digital archiving, which is a sublime achievement, is yet to become the much-desired paradigm shift. However, it is worth noting that every innovation comes with its share of obstacles and hurdles. It is not unsurprisingly to note that, U.K. National Archives, as of now, has only managed to digitize approximately 5 per cent of its collection.

The establishment of digital archives favours the improvement of efficiency, modernization of archives, ascertaining permanent storage of digital archives, improving security, promoting the expansion of public archive service capacity and realizing the social sharing of archive information resources. Established archives are better placed to continue scanning and uploading their relevant archival materials and thus rendering them borderless available to researchers and learners. Each digitized item shall have to be catalogued and arranged in a vast online cataloguing system. In the case of fragile records, the digitization, above making them digitally alive, also imparts a preservation quality thus increasing their lifespan.

The order, integrity, readability, and security of the material contained in the archives must be improved, which necessitates making full use of database technology to rationally arrange and handle the resources (Antonacopoulos & Karatzas, 2017). Xiao underscores that any system security of digital archives should mainly include three aspects: information content security, system security, and network security (Xianghua Xiao, 2022). These are highly recommended and plausible cautions that aim at insulating digital archives from malicious intruders. In an absolute sense, documents are sacrosanct and therefore deserve

elaborate protection. While cyber security is not inexpensive, the cost of repairing the damage emanating from negligence is non-proportional.

It remains an uphill task for Archivists to discern and determine what materials qualify for digitization and which among them should enjoy priority. Some materials, though archived, may have lost their historical or cultural significance. Given the arduous nature of digitization work, such materials may be condemned to oblivion to offer chances to those that are extremely pertinent and can potentially fill in an existing knowledge gap.

Providentially, the technology has developed archival software or Enterprise Information Archiving (EIA) systems that have become propitious in promoting archival technology. There exists a significant dissimilarity between archiving software and backup software. The latter deals solely with original historical data while the latter duplicates files and data from one system to another with the aim of swift restoration in case of foundering. The archival software is the game-changer tool for records and files that carry the histories of the people.

Authenticity and genuine information happen to be the efficacious factors that beget true and reliable research conclusions that are meant to fill the ascertained knowledge gap. Digitizers are implored *ex abundatia cautela* to critically examine the credibility of every source before approving the uploading processes with both scrupulosity and fastidiousness. In instances of suspected documentary inauthenticity and there exist no immediate solutions for ascertainment, such a source may be uploaded with a terse-worded disclaimer. Such a precaution alerts any researcher of the grey areas that come along with the particular document. If authenticity is established at a later date, the disclaimer should be pulled down.

The commanding majority of African countries underwent the colonial epoch in the 20th century. Given that the colonizers descended from countries with archival civilization, they committed a sizeable amount of their time and resources to the collection of African historical patrimony. The good news is that a vast majority of such items and documents are safely preserved and the sad news is that they are largely inaccessible to the bona fide proprietors. Since they are preserved in archives and museums spatially away from the African populace, then their expected service to the continent has been minimal hence objectionable. It, therefore, becomes imperative for the African governments to swiftly begin the process and procedures for repatriation. In the previous decades, a clarion call for repatriation would not have been feasible given the infrastructural developments needed to host the retrieved documents. With the era of digitization, then the exigency can be justified given that the fear of repatriation for disintegration shall be dissipated.

Merits and Demerits of Digital Archiving

The environmentally friendly revolution earnestly calls for sustainable paperless practices in all branches of science and liberal arts. Archival science, which largely deals with paperwork, cannot be exempt. It is certainly a herculean task given that over 99% of admissible archival materials survive on paper. Remarkably, the library and museum sciences have made giant strides towards establishing and sustaining green practices by going digital. Archival science, understandably though, is swiftly keeping the pace given the onerous work that has to be done to turn green and rightfully assume the title of an eco-friendly science.

In the 1960's, the reality of *global village* as understood by M. MacLuhan, sounded like a far-fetched technological achievement. Today, the world is more closely knit than ever imagined. Branches of knowledge too should imperatively make learning become an essential element of what constitutes a stable global village. Archival science too, through digitization, shall be an added building block in the realization of a global village. Practically it means that historians, scholars, researchers and interested persons shall be able to access digitized archival materials from their geographical comfort zones and with convenience. Besides the comfort, the accessibility shall also immensely contribute towards the promotion of research hence the growth of knowledge for humanity. One of the greater goods for digitized archives can be attributed to the convenient accessibility that comes without border straitjacketing.

Affordability in a research project is a factor that affects the exercise and the outcome. Researchers with meagre resources end up limiting themselves to secondary sources in places where obtaining primary sources costs a fortune. It is imaginable why a poorly funded researcher, who needs to travel miles away to obtain primary sources yet cannot afford the costs, settles to consult and work with secondary sources. In such cases, where research ethics are shrugged off, the researcher falls into the temptation of overreliance on secondary sources or at worst, tailoring of information. While the ephemerality of such academic dishonesty is certain, the harm caused by providing incorrect information can only be graver. The alternative for honest researchers has always been to abandon otherwise precious research or resign to the employment of secondary sources thus compromising the quality of research. The digitized archives provide solace for deprived researchers as well as enable well-funded researchers to double or triple the magnitude of their work if not adding quality to their research findings.

Digitization contributes to the preservation of fragile objects that can thus be protected from wear and tear. Among the fragile, some fall within the category of precious, priceless, valuable, and or, irreplaceable. Additionally, an increase in the longevity of such information material is secured. While digitized materials cannot perfectly replace the original texts and materials, the former complements the latter by reducing manual manipulation that easily accelerates the rate of deterioration. In cases where certain

materials have partially decomposed, digitization can render them more legible not excluding those that have been grossly damaged or whose ink has faded (Ogilvie, 2016).

On the flip side, Osedo observes that digital obsolescence is a major setback in digitization given long-term access to data. Needless to mention, digitization is not an inexpensive pursuit, however, the benefits outweigh the cost. Digital information is also threatened and risks loss due to technological obsolescence whereby the physical supports, logical formats, as well as software for searching and displaying the information fall into disuse. Considering that digital technology mutates daily, retrieval and playback technologies can become obsolete in a matter of few years (Osedo, 2013). The advanced technology yields faster-enhanced capabilities plus a less expensive processing and storage capacity. The older versions are subsequently condemned to obliteration. Such an effacement sounds like the death knell for records contained in outdated technologies. This fatality is known as digital obsolescence. To evade the loss, Archivists shall require to be well-funded to keep the appliances in use ever upgraded to the ever-evolving technology. To achieve this, lots of resources are certainly required hence ballooning the cost of digitization.

Inversely, the digitization of archives shall yield loss of employment to some archives-attendants and officers given that the human resource required to manage an archive shall be significantly reduced. Observably, the world job market has embraced a working-from-home model buoyed by internet infrastructure. Archival science cannot afford to be an exemption. With capitalism at the helm of global business practices, every employer shall gladly embrace digital archiving which, in the long run, shall be a cost-effective undertaking. However, human potentiality is infinite and thus, those affected can smoothly transition into consilient specializations and technology. More constructively, the excess archival human resource could venture into the privatization of archives. With digitization, individuals can seize the opportunity and impactfully run private archives containing records collected from the community or about a specialized category or persons.

Rustic researchers too are highly disadvantaged due to lack of technological infrastructure within their geographical locations. Accessibility of digital archives requires the availability of the internet and possession of requisite gadgets. In places where such infrastructure is unavailable or unstable, then the efficacy of digital archiving can be greatly reduced. Nevertheless, the world is becoming more connected through technology and thus such a challenge is not insurmountable.

The legal issues of archives involved in digital archives from the aspects of the legal definition of digital archives, legal documents, utilization, publication, utilization fees, and the protection of copyright and privacy can create hurdles in the actualization of digitized archives. The setback emanates from the dearth of policies, laws and particular regulations that ought to address matters of archives and digitization. While the law of the jungle is unwelcome, certain grey areas have always turned to become battlefields. As technology

continues to build up, those whose responsibility it is shall have to provide the necessary and comprehensive legislative framework. Purposively, professional archivists should continue employing archival creditable practices that are both progressive and globally accepted.

Digital archivists shall require compound skills serving as a hybrid of archival science and technology. It would be a waste of time, resources and even a generation if any institution until now remains traditional in the archival academic programs. Tertiary institutions shall need to imperatively create academic programs that prepare graduates with the aforementioned training. As the world moves into the paperless epoch, spatial archives shall become obsolete. Longsighted archivists need to sight the unstoppable wind of change and warm up for a new world order in archival practices.

It should be borne in mind that when we approach the digitization of artefacts via their simulacra, some natural elements are lost. In particular, their three-dimensionality, physical characteristics such as paper quality, watermarks, the ways a letter was folded, and even inserted objects cannot be captured through the digitization process (Ogilvie, 2016). Despite that, to commensurate permanent loss of a record with loss of physical characteristics can only be a comparison of odious.

Archivists are alive of the fact that some branches of knowledge, such as diplomatics, palaeography, codicology, philately, and sigillography among others, require interaction with physical records or artefacts. While future technology has the potential to surprise, the requisite interaction with records shall keep the doors of the physical archives wide open. However, the multitude of persons seeking physical documents shall diminish significantly. Factually, the actual physical archives shall remain non-abolishable but the change of business model is on the offing.

Research Through Digital Archives

Just as a laboratory is a temple for scientists, archives are the temples of a historian. In conducting research based on primary sources, a historian finds archives indispensable. Besides, qualitative history research depends on how the researcher utilizes the available credible sources. M. Bolick argues that conducting historical research with primary sources has been traditionally reserved for scholars who had the means to physically visit historical sites, libraries, and archives (Bolick, 2006). It happens that Africa has remained largely dependent on the Archival sources preserved by countries in the global north, some of which are yet to be declassified. One of the dynamic solutions should be the establishment of African digital archives for preservation and research purposes.

Digital archives provide a progressive model of how technology can be used in the historical and related fields of knowledge. Its realization renders learning and teaching

effective and convenient. Imperatively, technology has to become an integral part of the learning process as well as research where the latter is the noblest chore of a scholar. M. Bolick observes that the creation of digital archives has shifted the dynamics of doing historical research by changing who can conduct the research and how historical research is done (Bolick, 2006).

Digital archiving, among other meritorious potentials, seeks to democratize the doing of history. It means that doing historical research shall no longer remain a prestigious sphere of professional historians, rather, with sources available to rank and file, historical research becomes utterly a liberal art. Indiscriminately, the empowered passionate researchers shall embark to conduct research without demurring on the authenticity of their primary sources.

At the epoch of widespread intellectual dishonesty including plagiarism, dedicated researchers have developed cold feet in dealing with uncertified historical sources. Research conducted through digital archives shall have to augment surveillance on the authenticity of the uploaded sources. Given the existence of deregulation on uploading of sources where there is little or no commitment to veracity, an incautious researcher may conventionally utilize uploaded historical sources and end up drawing spurious conclusions. It is, however, a noble obligation among researchers to promote a sense of fidelity to uploaders to curb the proliferation of distorted or mismatched sources. Such efforts shall contribute a great deal to ridding the internet of littering.

Concluding Remarks

Huge investments have been made that are intended to have outer space becoming the next internet. The satellite internet brightens up the world with the far-fetched locations lying in the peripheries of civilization making it in the list of beneficiaries. Based on the projected exponential growth of internet infrastructure in Africa, digitized archives are going to become the next revolution in research. Digitized collections can be made accessible in a reformatted/refined way which allows both simultaneous and faster browsing on the Internet by millions of users in different and remote locations.

Africa has millions of uncollected archival materials that, if no action is promptly taken, might be irrecoverably extirpated. Tertiary institutions within the Continent should keenly consider investing in the digital preservation of research materials. One of the initiatory staircases would be the establishment of a digitization team which should be led by a project manager. Among other fundamental duties, it should upskill the students and staff on the indispensability of digitization and its overwhelming merits. Furthermore, the lead-team should expeditiously formulate policies and strategic plans for the entire project.

Institutions within Africa should embark on collaborative missions to bring together their efforts and resources into a common pool. Given that the African Continent is the most

diverse in terms of cultural mosaic, the same wealth can be found in the documentary evidence. Additionally, among all the Continents, Africa leads the list of the continents with the least collected historical sources. On a scholarly level, the shortfall is directly proportional to the inaccuracy of the historical narratives of our people and culture. Needless to mention, both the exaggerated or mean historical narratives prevalent in the continent may continue unchallenged as a result of a deficiency of primary historical sources. A combined approach shall certainly yield results that are favourable to persons within and without the Continent. Thus, consolidated efforts are imperatively needed to collect and digitize African historical sources.

It should be borne in mind that any loss of a historic document shall not only be tragic for whichever generation but also a great disservice to humanity. The irreplaceability shall be the ever-pricking thorn in the conscience of men and women of the generation that sacrificed the future on the altars of contemporariness. The future generations shall describe the loss as emanating from either selfishness or short-sightedness or, worse still, both. Additionally, in case of inaction, authentic African history risks remaining marginalized. There is no better way to leave a legacy other than securing primary sources for generations to come through digitization.

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AFRICAN LIBERATION THEOLOGY: ITS ROLES TOWARDS ACHIEVING AUTHENTIC AFRICAN LIFE

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Abstract

Africans and African theologians are faced with many conflicting world views and bad conditions of life in general which range from racial segregation, political instability, religious and ethnic clashes, lack of harmony with African religion and Christian religion, Modern culture (globalization), socio-economic exploitation, oppression of Africans by their colonial masters and oppression of Africans by Africans themselves, in the course of living out their authentic life as an African people. To achieve a better and sustainable way of living in this age of globalized world, there is a need to employ the principles or the tenets of African liberation theology, to minimize the sources of tension from the emerging issues emanating from conflicting world views and bad conditions of life. These salient or emerging issues confronting living authentic African life will be managed or enhanced properly with the tenets of African liberation theology. African liberation theology and its tools are employed here to redirect the life of Africans and their social, economic, and political well-being for better living and purposeful life. This write-up draws up data, heavily from the experience of African people within and outside African societies. This shows that African people are treated in an exploitative manner both as individuals and as countries all over the world in many areas of life hence the emergence of African liberation theology.

Keywords: Liberation, Theology, Social, Political, African

Introduction

The African continent has suffered and has been marginalized greatly for years and even today by their colonial masters and through some activities of the missionary enterprise though not intentionally intended by the missionaries themselves. Within these years of suffering and oppression which is still going on in different forms, their lives kept changing from one degradation to another. The economic activities, political, social, human

interactions, culture, and religion changed from their originality to forced modern life or put bluntly to march the way of life of their colonial masters without checking or evaluating their life situations or world views. Africans are always under pressure to assimilate the culture of other continents of the world while other continents assimilate new cultures willingly. Though, some changes or transformations were for better living while some came as a result of racism, oppression, and domination. The African continent was seen by colonial masters as a virgin land to be exploited hence the sharing of African nations by the world powers occurred in the Berlin conference without involving the Africans themselves. The world powers never considered Africa to be in the same class as them because of racism. Ojukwu (1969) during the struggle for Biafran freedom cried out that:

I have for a long time thought about this predicament- the attitude of the civilized world to this conflict. The more I think about it the more I am convinced that our disability is racial. The root cause of our problem lies in the fact that we are black. If all the things that have happened to us had happened to other people who are not black, if other people who are not black had reacted in the way our people have reacted these two long years, the world's response would surely have been different. (p. 5).

The above explanation or insight given by Ojukwu explains, on the contrary, the urgent attention being given to Ukraine due to the invasion by Russian country, but this urgency to stop the war and supplying of international aid cannot happen or take place when any of the African countries are involved in any invasion or genocide whether from within or from outside of the African countries, rather fueling of the crisis will be in their mind in a shrew way so that the world powers will be supplying arms and ammunition to the detriment of the developing countries. Again, the above statement shows how Africans are treated in the issues concerning their development physically, economically, socially, and culturally. African liberation theology therefore was born out of pity or it came as a movement or struggle to liberate Africans from all sorts of oppression found among them and from outside of African continents, be it from political, social, racial, or economic oppression and so on. The African liberation theology as proposed by some scholars aims or struggles for total and vehement rejection of all sorts of evils that wreck, or ruin the authentic existence and life of African nations and the revival of African heritage in all forms.

The African liberation theology in the course of history was seen as a kind of movement that metamorphosed into African nationalism, Pan-Africanism, the Negritude movement, and African personality, designed to ensure the full realization of authentic African existence in their march to self-determination. This is important to be noted, judging from the attitude or treatment of the European world since the 15th century toward Africans in terms of exploitation, racism, and their economic policies which were geared to under-develop Africa, this affected and oppressed the fundamental human rights of the African continents even till today, hence the need for African revival. For the Europeans started with the transportation of millions of Africans using them as slaves for different purposes.

They justified this slave trade with reference to biblical passages violently applied out of context. When the depopulation of Africa became no longer profitable due to sanctions from other world powers, they started to exploit the natural resources of the African continents.

To continue with this exploitation, they hoisted or install puppet African administrations to create the illusion of political independence, while retaining the control of the government and the economy of the African continent. This of course bred many consequences seen in the African continents today which led to political instability, cultural degradation, epileptic power supply, epileptic economic growth, and unending killings going on in different countries of Africa, in the African land in the name of religious and ethnic clashes. This is what Rodney (2009) described as the perpetual developing of the African continent. While some argued that the African continent will perpetually remain the world's underdogs in everything since they are still in the bondage of the social, political, and economic growth of their oppressors.

The above situation in the African continent has generated many kinds of conditions which have caused ripple effects on the mentality or worldview of Africans. This made the Africans reduce all their problems to the point of view of religious factor which is to say that any bad condition is caused by the devil or have the devil's manipulations. These of course gradually snowballed into a growing number of churches in African continents daily. This again revitalized the worship of African Traditional Religion by the youths who believes that it will help to solve their economic hardship because the Gods have been abandoned and they want to return. Going further, its effects like in Nigeria have bred many issues like banditry, unknown gunmen, herdsmen, bandits, terrorist attacks, ritual killings, trafficking, and organ harvesting. This in turn accounts for the excessive brain drain taking its toll on African nations to another part of the world, either for safety or for economic growth (Nnoruga and Osigwe, 2023). African liberation theology tends to restore the natural and human capital development of Africans through its principles. This is part of the struggle that was fought by most African nationalists so that the African continent will not be swept down or away by the stronger governments and other continents of the world.

Towards the Origin of African Liberation Theology: An Overview

Liberation theology is a theology that originated from the perspective of the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized, the wretched, and the voiceless of the world. For Umeh (2017),

It is a theology that recognizes the social aspect of the gospel and the need for social actions in the alleviation of human suffering. It is equally a theology that takes seriously the political dimension of the Christian faith, which... can be understood in the world of the poor. The world of the poor ...is the key to understanding the Christian faith, to understanding the activity of the church and the political dimension of that faith and that ecclesial activity. (p. 87).

This means that liberation theology is a guidance and reflection of Christianity that is identifiable with those who suffer, that represents freedom of transformation. As already hinted earlier, liberation theology is a situational theology that can originate anywhere but, historically it originated in Latin America. As a historical theology, Umeh argued that it is rooted in the practical faith of the believing community to transform the world with the liberating message of the gospel. It calls for authentic solidarity with the poor by analyzing with them the reasons or causes of their poverty and suffering. From all these explanations, it can be understood that the interest of liberation theology is to let the Gospel shine on earthly realities so that human beings, especially the poor, may be liberated from poverty and miserable life.

The biblical foundation of liberation theology can be ascertained from the actions of Jesus Christ both from the Old Testament and the New Testament. Liberation theology entails any action in favour of the poor as a practical expression of Christian love. Umeh (2017) expressed the biblical foundation thus:

In the Bible, God is presented as upright and just. He is presented as God interested in the well-being of all especially the poor (cf., Ps 94, Deut 10;18; 24: 14-18; Ex 22: 21-24; Si 35: 12-19). God reveals himself in the Old Testament as the liberator of the oppressed and the defender of the poor, demanding from man faith in him and justice towards man's neighbour. It is only in the observance of the duties of justice that God is truly recognized as the liberator of the oppressed....Almost all the prophets of the Old Testament from Hosea to Malachi stood for the just treatment of the poor, the weak, and the disadvantaged members of society. In the New Testament, the dignity of the poor and the entire human person is practically expressed in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ....The essence of Incarnation, God's self-manifestation in the world, is to save the entire human race from powers of darkness and sin...He is the fulfilment of the prophecy to the Israelites: the spirit of the Lord is on me, for he has anointed me to proclaim liberty to the captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord (Luke 4, 18). (pp. 94-95).

As stated earlier, there are many trends or strands in African theology which keep emanating as history or events as time goes on. As of now, there are many currents in the theology of liberation in Africa which include: - African liberation theology, African women's liberation, African cultural liberation, South African Black theology, and a host of others. It is in this sense that one can add or say Biafran liberation theology that is using the instrument of theology as a module to solve the problems of the Biafran agitations. For liberation theology according to Oborji (2005):

...seeks through the gospel, to address the oppressive elements in a traditional culture, and focus on the political and economic situation of the particular cultural context to liberate the people from the forces of sin and death, reinforce their

identity, and give a new orientation to their advancement....The theology of liberation in Africa therefore, in its various expressions, arises out of the concern of the theologians to address the people's experience of exploitation, oppression, and injustice. (p. 155).

Since the emergence of liberation theology and other currents in theology, Cone (1979) and most scholars have been asking what has the gospel message to do with the oppressed Blacks or Africans in their struggle for liberation. Most scholars especially European scholars did not conceive nor do they assume that meaningful dialogue can come from black people or oppressed people of the world in the search for a contemporary understanding of the gospel message. Unfortunately, Oguejiofor (1996) queued into the same thought pattern as thus:

That African Traditional Religion cannot play the role philosophy naturally plays in the elaboration of theology. Moreover, most of what we have today in the studies on African Traditional Religion hardly goes beyond phenomenological studies and is not yet critical enough to provide the basis for speculative theology. Hence, like African Christian theology itself, many theories are left untested, uncriticized, and reflected. Furthermore, studies in African Traditional Religion are yet to reach the level of showing how this religion still influences the life of Africans. (p. 26).

This shows that most of the new theological ideas came from the Europeans and Africans, though more from Europeans with a racial undertone. This explains again that the experiences of the people must be evaluated or looked into which most scholars did not put into consideration, hence before any liberation can take place and be worth fighting for, or be denounced as seen above, their experiences from all forms must be considered and taken into account and these experiences differ greatly from one continent of the world to another. The experiences of the Black Americans among the whites are different from the experiences of the Blacks in South Africa and Africans in general differ from each other. But at the foundation of it, all is the use of the Gospel message as a tool for liberation, just like the people of Israelites were liberated from the land of Egypt by God. The contents of liberation must come from the oppressed, which must be understood by the people liberating the oppressed in line with the gospel message. Hence, Oguejiofor (1996) confirmed that "theology that can be a response to the African's yearning for God, for salvation, should be embedded in his culture, and also rise above that culture" (p. 25).

In the course of liberating Africans through history, to become independent and authentic nations, Africans struggled from time to time as a group of Africans coming together in and outside of the shores of Africa, and as African continent coming together again to liberate the African continent. This struggle went through processes or stages undertaken by the African people themselves. According to Han (2013),

During the period of agitation for independence, early African intellectuals were concerned not only with political matters but also with the promotion of the African

cultural-religious heritage. Although the main goal was to regain political self-control in Africa, cultural liberation was not excluded. African intellectuals and nationalists recognized that there would not be genuine political liberation without cultural liberation. The negation of African culture, to the African people, meant to deprive African people of their very identity; the revitalization of African culture meant to recover African identity. (pp. 23-24).

The struggle for self-affirmation and independence by Africans became a matter of priority among African intellectuals. This liberation of the African continent from the destructive influences and bondages of Western colonization touched all faces of African life. The above struggle in Africa to gain independence in political and cultural life gave rise to major categories of movements:- Pan-Africanism and African nationalism, and the Negritude movement and African personality. Pan Africanism according to Legun (1966) is the expression of a desire for African unity among the Africans whose ancestors originally came from Africa. This refers to the earlier assertion made above that the African liberation struggle was started or carried on by Africans in diasporas and later joined by Africans in their homeland.

The reason for Pan-Africanism according to Legun was very easy to understand because the blacks were seen as slaves who have been made homeless by their transfer to foreign countries and subjected to alien cultures from all ramifications. This shows that they are outcasts who are only good at labouring on the plantation of their masters, being robbed of their dignity as human beings, being used as machines, and with no claim of being of equal value in the sight of God. On this last premise, African theology employs the Gospel message as a tool for liberation in the African continent. Ajala (1973) referred also to the emergence of Pan-Africanism as a recognition of racial solidarity due to racial discrimination under the pressure of colonialism, led by Africans themselves in different parts of the world, to the awareness of their blackness and common heritage. From the perspective of movement, Obijekwu, Muomah and Onebunne (2018) expressed that:

It becomes a trend in human affairs and society at large; a movement, towards freedom or total independence. Pan-Africanism was championed by African descendants, or African Americans, who had like minds towards the liberation of Africa and securing freedoms, justice, and equality for themselves in their sojourn land. Its thrust was to fight against racism, colonialism, slavery, discrimination segregation, social justice, inequality, exploitation, dehumanization, and all other sorts of social evils that came with the colonizers. (pp. 223-224).

From the above explanation, it means that Pan-Africanism aimed to fight for African independence, or rather it involves the reposition of African sovereignty. It is purely a movement for African liberation and independence and proper repositioning.

The Pan-African Congresses reached another dimension or stage of development when African nations began to gain their independence one after the other. But it reached its apogee with the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in May 1963 with the view of achieving genuine African unity. With the end of the Second World War, African people according to Legum (1966) who by the accident of colonial expansion, happen to find themselves in a particular territory become the constituent elements of the new nation. The focus started shifting from Pan-Africanism to African nationalism on the African continent. African nationalism arose in response to African demands for independence and freedom from foreign rule. This was a kind of unifying factor among the African people who transcended tribal or ethnic interests. Geiss (1968) observed that Pan-Africanism and African Nationalism were interconnected even though they were not identical.

The combined forces or influences of Pan-Africanism and African Nationalism are seen in the writings of the early African theologians, that is, their emphasis on political self-determination, and the preservation of the African cultural-religious heritage, these inspired the early African theologians who were influenced by the political domination of the Western world meted out to Africans (Muzorewa, 1985). These movements provided the general basis and context upon which liberation theology is done by African theologians. So, ideally speaking, Pan- Africanism and African Nationalism are the most important factors that contributed to the emergence of African liberation theology because they involve or express the desire for African unity among all people whose ancestors originally came from Africa. This has helped Africans to stimulate and rediscover their values, at the same time relate the Christian Gospel to African culture.

The Roles of The Concerns of African Liberation Theology Towards Being Authentic African

As earlier noted, African liberation theology emerges and seeks to reflect and solve the problems of millions of African people oppressed in various ways in and outside of the African continent. Having based its reflection on the gospel and experiences of black people, it advocates eradicating injustices in all forms and establishing a society that is fair and just for everyone. This will lead to the building of a just society for human society where injustice is minimally reduced. Everything about liberation theology centres mostly on the well fair of the poor, uplifting the poor, and establishing the oppressed poor to the normal life of human dignity. So, liberation theology in general can be applied to several places and areas of life where minorities and poor people suffer oppression and injustices. This is why we can see or hear liberation theologies that emerged from different places as we rightly have today: Black liberation theology, Feminist liberation theology, Asian liberation theology, Biafran liberation theology, and hence African liberation theology.

As of today, these liberation theologies are no longer based on the foundation of fixed theological formulations but based on the ever-changing circumstances and human experiences undergone in the digitalized or globalized world daily. In the course of liberating African nations, many methodologies or means were applied depending on the type of condition or situation that existed in the place concerned. But at the root of all methodologies lies the gospel message as a means of liberation. According to Joseph (1970), this gospel message in the light of liberation theology seeks to interpret the condition of the oppressed people in the light of God's revelation in Jesus Christ. Here the theologians or the scholars are attempting to interpret the Christian faith (the gospel) to make it concrete with the African's quest for freedom and liberation. In this way, the dignity of Africans will be restored among the other continents of the world with equal status.

Describing the situation or the picture of the African continent in the past few years and even now by many scholars, it shows the sorry state of African nations. According to Oborji (2005), it looks like a scene from a horror film while Cone (1979) describes the African situation as being in a moral crisis, material crisis, and spiritual crisis. African people seem unable to effectively counter disruptive forces that undermine their quality of life. Africans seem unable to collectively define their situation, discover the nature of their problems, and develop sustained coalitions that can resolve their dilemma. In the same vein, Mbefo (1996) describes the African situation in terms of slavery and servitude which today is causing a brain drain all over Africa with its labour shortages as its consequence in different sectors of life. He described it as thus:

...the opening out into opportunities of enhanced socio-economic living linked to the high technologies of the Western countries should not be total nor unbridled. For an African without sufficient skills and qualifications to decide to abandon his fatherland in pursuit of low-grade jobs in Europe or America in the hope of cheap money would amount to a new form of enslavement, "slavery in reverse gear". It is an enslavement that is now freely chosen rather than unwillingly imposed. (pp. viii-ix).

This means that the African liberation theology is tackling the issues of racism meted out against Africans, political instability among African nations caused by bad government and dictatorial rule, poor economic conditions, mass illiteracy, manipulation of Africa by the industrialized nations, countless wars and massive corruption going daily in Africa.

African theology being a contextual theology aims to take African realities, conditions, and situations seriously, in terms of solving the crises bedevilling Africans. It also aims at motivating Africans to appreciate who they are and authentically live the life of Africans in all dimensions. According to Umeh (2017),

it is a theology that uses the past to build the present so that the future will stand on a solid foundation. It is a theology of the present because it takes the present realities seriously and tries to answer the question; what will Jesus of Nazareth do if he

should come to Africa now? He will not be happy with the miserable situation in which Africans live. (p. 97).

This means that it is a theology that argues that the situation of poverty, suffering, oppression, drain brain, and exploitation as they exist in African nations today. Some politicians in Nigeria recently repeated the above issue that God will not be happy that people are dying of hunger, banditry, and ritual killings, so they proposed a new Nigeria where all things can work again for the good of the common people. So African liberation theology helps Africans to revitalize or rediscover or reflect on their situation of things.

African liberation theology aims at purifying the cultural values of African people which in the past or even now were not in conformity with modern-day development but it seeks to purify or examine those elements of African culture that can positively contribute to the liberation of Africans and to project them with the other cultures of the world. This of course involves decolonizing the mental attitude being carried around by Africans in their way of thinking and having been subjugated for centuries and brainwashed for years that their culture is a bad or fetish one. Ekwuru (1999) expressed the above thus:

Through this type of ideological framework, the colonized were psychologically conditioned to believe the fact that they embodied a human nature that was racially and culturally deficient. For this reason, then, all the elements of their cultural civilization were condemned and discredited. In the mission schools, they were taught that their religion was paganish and heathen, In which case then, the only way towards cultural salvation was to wash themselves clean of every bit of their low and inferior cultural givens, to imbibe the perks of a higher and superior culture from the hands of the colonizer. (p. 40).

Uzukwu (1996) earlier expressed the same view that the Africans were treated as having neither culture nor religion nor social, economic, or political values worth preserving. This means a total change of identity of the African person, and culture and this led to the abandonment of the indigenous values to embrace those of the Western world. Indeed, most Africans as of today prefer to go back to those countries of the West and equally prefer goods made in foreign continents at the expense of made-in-African goods. African liberation theology seeks to restore confidence to the African people by reminding them that their cultural and religious values are good like other cultures of the world, culture can change and not be static.

African liberation theology aims at ending political instability and epileptic growth in economic growth in all African countries. The bad situation in African countries necessitated many African counties to keep borrowing for consumption, which leads to corruption, poor health care, brain drain, poverty, and so on. There is no economic plan for the future growth of the country, the African leaders try by all means to remain in power till death even when incapacitated. There are no strong institutions in African countries that can

support democratic governance rather what they have are strong individuals that steal and impoverish the country. The colonial masters continue to exploit the raw materials in the African countries, thereby continuing to under-develop the African countries. On how Europe underdeveloped Africa, Rodney (2009) commented:

It is also worth noting that Africa was denied the opportunity of developing healthy trade links with parts of the world other than Europe and North America. Some trade persisted across the Indian Ocean, but on the whole, it is fair to say that the roads in Africa led to the seaports and the sea lanes led to Europe and North America. That kind of lopsidedness is today part of the pattern of underdevelopment and dependence. (p. 280).

African liberation theology is a theology that deals or concerns itself with human development, evangelization, and growth of the Christian faith. Hence, it encourages people to take their political responsibilities seriously and merely wait for divine intervention (Umeh, 2017). This is also about taking up handwork and building small-scale industries than waiting for miracles to be millionaires without handwork or products. Equally, on the global level, African liberation theology calls for the need to dismantle the unjust existing world economic policies and political policies that are dehumanizing for immigrants, especially from Africa.

African liberation theology also concerns itself with the end of the wars and coups going on within the African countries. This forestalls peace and development in Africa in general. Okafor (1997) reported that:

For the continent of Africa, the year 1994 was a year of disaster. Across the continent, there was lamentation and great suffering caused by genocidal and fratricidal wars. It was a year of ethnic plague. In Rwanda, east of Africa, the ethnic conflict between the Tutsis and Hutus was climaxed by the gruesome massacre of thousands of Tutsis and moderate Hutus. On the west coast of Africa, Liberia was being ravaged by an internecine war. Nigeria, on the other side, was on the brink of civil war following renewed crisis on the annulled 12 presidential election results. In the northern fringes of Ghana, a bloody ethnic confrontation had erupted leaving many people dead. Northwards, Somalia was bleeding as the two rival factions engaged themselves in bloody combat. In Sudan, too, military operations were mobilized against secessionist groups, killing many and rendering others homeless. Thus, the ill wind of ethno-religious conflicts blew across Africa leaving in its trail unprecedented human, economic, social, and ecological disasters. (p. vi).

From the above, it is obvious that African liberation theology is advocating for the love of the neighbours which knows no limitations nor religious bounds but love that addresses communally the basic issues affecting Africans as a continent.

Conclusion

The struggle for African liberation theology as an ideology and as a movement ought to be continued to improve the living conditions or standards of the African people lavishing in poverty, injustices, poor health care, instability of all kinds, and so on. This of course when taken care will improve the freedom needed for proper development. Just like the church in Africa has been making efforts to address the issues of human freedom and rights which has been a mere fantasy in the African continent. The manipulative actions of some foreign countries for their selfish gain also need to be curtailed to achieve maximum peace and development among Africans.

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TRADITIONAL ART, MODERN AFRICAN ART AND AFRICAN MASKS: AN EXPRESSION OF GLOBAL SEARCH FOR THE ABSOLUTE

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Abstract

There is an apparent difference in the objective of creating artistic work. Artistic works, in general, are admired for their aesthetic values and their capacity to make human beings think. Gradually, people began to appreciate them because of the historical and lived experiences of people which they communicate. However, the African art called mask is unique in its capacity to elicit in human beings the desire for the Supreme Being. It expresses the spiritual consciousness, tradition and faith of a cultural group. The apparent difference in both forms of art is not only in the objective of producing them but particularly in the process of artistic creation and the lived experiences expressed through art. It is for this reason that I have chosen to examine Traditional art, modern art and African mask: An expression of the Global Search for the Absolute. My effort will consist in analyzing the meaning of the various forms of art mentioned and how they are connected to the spiritual experiences of the human person. I shall examine the impact of the displacement of African masks from their natural environment on the religious life of Africans.

Keywords: African art, African mask, African museum, Modern art, Traditional art

Introduction

Art, understood as all the artistic works of a country or an era, is essentially symbolic, that is, representative. It constitutes, in a particular way, mediation between the visible and the invisible. On the one hand, in Europe, art covers the so-called “fine arts” such as sculpture, architecture, graphic arts, music, dance, poetry and literature. We can add moving images (cinema, television), digital art, and live performance (theatre, mime).

On the other hand, in Africa, the mask is a typical object that best symbolizes African art. The African mask or traditional mask is an artistic creation based on a carved wooden object. Given its symbolism, we propose to talk about the African mask based on the thinking of Theodore Mudiji Malamba Gilombe. He particularly highlights the link between

the mask and religion. Mudiji shows how certain African masks are associated with initiation ceremonies, birth and death rites. It is in this precise context that African masks reveal themselves as a medium through which man advances towards the divine.

Moreover, while “the modern African’s view of the traditional mask is gradually fading away” (Mudiji, 1983, 25), Mudiji revalues it as a path leading to the Absolute. Through this article, I want to bring out his perception of the vocation of every work of art. My contribution is centred on the capacity of African masks to open the human person to the Absolute. This is a process that engages artists (creators of the masks) and readers (admirers of the masks). Mudiji’s works and religious vocation testify to his mission to open people to God. Do African masks have the capacity to elicit religious experience?

I think that African art and African masks provoke some religious feelings when there is contact with a subject. It is a feeling that develops as an attachment to God, returning to the source of life. The first part of this presentation will be devoted to a review of traditional and modern art through the thought of Mudiji. The second part will consist of an elucidation of African masks. The importance of the environment concerning African masks will be indicated. The third part will finally take into account the production of African masks. The meaning of rituals in the production of African masks will be explored.

Review of Traditional and modern art in T. Mudiji

Traditional African art

Traditional African art is often referred to as primitive art during the 19th and 20th centuries. During this period, the word “primitive” projected a pejorative idea like being underdeveloped and poor, non-Western and pre-historic (Myers, 2005, 268). Contrary to the negative connotation of this term, I propose the true sense of the Latin *primitivus* (Senghor, 1967, 7). That is to say, being the first, the oldest, and it is connected to nature. Traditional African art is also the favoured place where emotion and religious feelings are poured out, the desire to be with the gods or God. Sometimes it is called negro art, “exotic”, “magical”, and “ethnological” (Bonte, 1991, 81), in the sense that it is created by black people without aesthetic concerns. Traditional art is also called tribal art because almost every social group has its art. Contrary to this way of perceiving traditional art, I believe that the beauty of Negro art should be sought in the experience and faith of black people.

Traditional art is sacred in that it is meant to support religious beliefs and practices (Mudiji, 2002, 55). There are different types of traditional African art and different creators of traditional art with one motive: to draw the human spirit step by step to the contemplation of God. Often, African traditional art is a visible response to the search for an eternal Being with power over man. It is the visible presence of divinity among men and testifies to a heightened sense of man’s transcendence towards God. The religious process that

accompanies the making of traditional art makes it sacred; the creator is often an artist-magician, and its use in worship gives it its sacred character. Traditional art could also be accepted as a visible symbol of fertility, protection, progress and success. This conviction is based on the fact that Traditional African Religions are strongly linked to African art.

It is important to note that while those who are not initiated perceive traditional arts are mere objects, those who possess obscure knowledge related to the objects of art are conscious of the fact that they are not ordinary objects without meaning. Traditional art has the merit of being neither plaything nor purely aesthetic: but of the signifier (Senghor, 1967, 8). In other words, traditional African art reveals that statues are signs of Ancestors and genius. Certain sculpted figures indicate fertility, invisible forces, divinity and life. Although the statuettes are material objects, it “consists here in positioning the spiritual quest in inverse relation to the material monumentality” (Mudiji, 2004, 131). The observer of a work of art must look beyond the materiality; he must investigate beyond the form that appears to grasp the meaning and value represented. Traditional African art opens man to consider carefully realities not signified by a work of art. This application of the spirit exerts a force on man, plunging him into a supernatural world while remaining motionless.

Spiritual Setbacks and their causes

Traditional African art and masks have experienced historical crises. That is to say, attacks and events that have mainly affected the faith of black people and the meaning and significance of religious practice. One such interruption concerns the labelling of African worship as idolatry. While this way of thinking has led to the destruction of certain objects of art in traditional shrines (Odokuma and Aganbi, 2013, 58), I believe that the demolition of those shrines constitutes a spiritual break with the ancestors and the deity.

On the one hand, Odokuma and Aganbi (2013, 58) argue that art objects are displaced from their natural environment through trafficking. The forceful removal of the African traditional arts from their home turns them to be mere objects to be admired, mostly in European museums where they are to be watched without touching or personal religious/historical connection to them. On the other hand, Ukim (2020, 55) holds that some African masks were plundered by the colonialists because of their value as rare objects or souvenirs. Irrespective of the means through which they were taken away from their original owners, I think that the act of dislodging certain works of art and masks from the milieu and those who are connected to them would have caused a vacuum in the spiritual life of Africans who related to the divine through masks.

As soon as the African mask is removed from its environment, it loses its spiritual value and falls into the category of plastic art and becomes a selected object reduced to a face for decoration hanging on the wall, placed in a display case or simply on the shelves of museums. Due to the lack of aesthetics in comparison to the modern mask, African masks

can lose their value. This constitutes an uprooting that deprives them of the true meaning and significance of existence. This suggests why Mudiji (1983, 36) proposed that a complete reconstruction of their form, style, morphology and typology of parts and whole would be necessary for the mask to authentically manifest intelligibility and constitute a symbolic field of indigenous and human existence.

Contrary to Ukim's (2020, 55) point of view, namely that the Christian missionaries burnt African masks because they considered them a fetish, I would like to point out that it is the difference in the spiritual outlook of the objects between traditional Africans and the missionaries that destroyed African masks.

These and many other historical events have influenced the transition to an idea of modern art and aesthetic art. This shift gradually resulted in the fading away of the importance placed on the mystical and religious experiences associated with art. What do we mean by modern art? To what extent has it helped man to have a taste for the transcendental?

Modern African art

Modern arts are usually defined by their formal perfection and sophistication, their beauty and aesthetics and the fact that they involve the application of modern technique by an artist (Stefanescu, 2019, 260). This description of modern art is directly connected with the West, and it would seem that modern African art does not exist. However, modern and contemporary African art exists; it is very young and very little known (Gaudibert, 1992, 43). It has been inspired by several African traditions and by current events. But the difficulty of defining contemporary African art is due to "the tension between, on the one hand, the temptation of an indigenist reading carried by a paternalism of bad temper, and, on the other hand, the radically anti-colonial attitude tending to refuse on principle everything that could echo the dominant discourses during the colonial period" (Le Lay, 2016, 100). In other words, what we call modern African art developed after the colonial period. The artworks will try to project the faith, tradition, experience and hope of Africans through paintings that have certain European characteristics. The artists of this period are known individually and analyzed with a critical and rational mindset.

What defines modern African art precisely is the influence on Negro art. The creators of modern African art have integrated the specific ideas and values of traditional art to show the openness of the human spirit to other realities. This has led to reflections that bring about important changes in the way artistic objects are perceived. Modern African art describes the historical antecedents, current socio-political experiences and the future of the African people. Modern African art has been inspired by traditional religious experiences in connection with the creation of traditional art to penetrate the hidden truth.

In the same perspective, African traditional art has influenced modern European art. The latter is created no longer as a mere aesthetic object but with “full spiritual meaning” “of this dialogue between the dead and the living” (Mudiji, 1983, 30). This means that in addition to the aesthetic aspects, modern European artists integrate the historical side and the human experience. Pablo Picasso was inspired by African masks in the construction of his artistic imagination. By drawing his inspiration from ancient myths, this artist realized that the mask was the mental, artistic process for representing the world around him (Hourde, 2017, 5). From then on, Picasso leads the spectators of his works to an ambition to speculate on the relationship between the real and the Ultimate Being. The viewers are led to understand that Being exists in itself, independently of us, through imaginary invention. Reflection on a work of art suggests the existence of a perfect subject, which is higher in the scale of values.

It is necessary to note that modern art develops in the context of writing and is centred on an author. However, this gives rise to a possibility of documentary investigation on two levels: The first concerns the artist and the second concerns the work of art. With regards to the artist, this will focus on: the author, the influences received, the salient moments in his or her development, the school, the cultural concerns and those of the time. And concerning the work he created, information will be sought at two points: the first will be the formal description, such as the subject, the technique and the material used, the dimensions, and the year of creation. We will look for the elements used to express the meaning, the significance and the feelings. The second is the interpretation or hermeneutics of the work concerning the existential situation and functionality (Mudiji, 2004, 134). What is Mudiji’s understanding of African masks?

The notion of the African mask in Mudiji

The African mask is a wooden art object of different sizes, colours, etc. However, other elements such as metal, clothes and colour can be added to its creation. The objects used in making the African mask vary from one culture to another. While the Ibibio “employed nondurable materials for their art” (Ime Ukim, 2020, 55), the Benin and Igbo people of Nigeria employ more durable materials like Bronze.

Considering the materials used in making masks in Africa, Mudiji describes it as a work of art that serves to open man up to the Absolute. According to him, the African mask is “a transitional operator that allows us to mediate at any moment the irreducible worlds of appearance and to travel without hindrance from one world to another” (Mudiji, 2002, 66). On this matter, Rood’s opinion differs from that of Mudiji. He does not consider the work of art as a “transitional operator”. Using the mask of the Bété people in Côte d’Ivoire as an example, he thinks that the mask is a repository of all the spiritual forces of the village (Rood, 1969, 39). In other words, each mask is imbued with a particular spiritual force and plays a particular function in the life of the villagers. A mask, which is rarely used, could

play a protective role of all kinds. Through its different functions, it is possible to explain that the African mask is sacred.

The consideration of the African mask as sacred is a sign of the search for God. The search for God guides the traditional African man in the use of the mask to represent his creator. This is evident in the various works by Botembe (2001). The Africans find in the mask a device to reach their creator. They are convinced that the mask is a material work of art that inspires them to think about their divine origin, their ancestors, their religious life, worship and prayer. According to Luitfruid Marfurt, “African masks, on the whole, have a clear inclination towards the sacred: they want to connect with the invisible and sacred world beyond” (1968, 56). It is how people connect to a ‘world in depth’, a world where personal and collective divinity dwells. This is why black Africans have a great deal of reverence for masks, regardless of their origin.

Conversely, religions which favour “transcendental meditation” would not consider the mask as the medium of ascension to the Absolute. They would rather promote visualization, concentration, mystical contemplation, meditation and ascetic practices as a means of establishing a connection to the divine (Ezekwugo, 1992, 62-63).

The mask is an object of shore-up divinity. Lema Gwete relates the case of two in the Teke culture of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Ntswo is defined as the spirit of an ancestor whose abode is a statuette and a wooden box (1995, 68). This means that the mask as an object is the domicile of the divine and its means of manifestation to human beings. It must be emphasized that the wood only becomes a dwelling place of the godly through a ritual, prayer, invocation/incantation of the spirits that are added before, during and after it is carved into a mask. The African mask is a receptacle for the deities. It is a chosen, preferred and consecrated place to summon living beings to a special encounter with God. It is an encounter that renews human life, and the fruit is manifested in the spirituality and pious acts of man. The religious character of African masks arouses in man the desire to get closer to God and to possess certain traits of him. The sacredness of the African mask animates man to holiness.

From the above, the African mask has a material and an immaterial part. The first part is physical, and the second is spiritual (the notion of sacredness). This makes it possible to speak of two worlds of the African mask, namely: a surface world and a world in depth (Mudiji, 1983, 28). These two worlds explain our way of understanding realities. There is the form and the life it embodies. The form is the surface world, and life is the-deep-world. One is visible, and the other is hidden. The surface world shows an identifiable art object in terms of its quality, size, weight, length, colour, place or culture of origin. The deep world is about the meaning, significance, value and importance of a work of art. On the one hand, the surface world attracts man by its form and on the other hand, man strives to penetrate its

interior. Together, the two worlds allow the African man to access a spiritual reality, to pass from a physical level to an inner one, opening to the supernatural.

The strong representation of divinity through masks gives rise to the statement: “The mask is connatural to being” (Mudiji, 1983, 26). It is a Being that inspires man and draws him into the spiritual-extra-terrestrial life. Hegel explains how this process takes place. According to Hegel, the first manifestations of the Absolute are the phenomena of nature, which man presents as natural objects. Man reproduces himself in a mask at the moment when he begins to conceive an Absolute in the form of exteriority in himself and to realise by himself. There are two moments in which this reproduction takes place. The first is when man assumes the same characteristic as nature. He becomes an object of nature which has the quality of admiration. The second begins when a man breaks with nature, “removes himself from the purely practical desires that kept him in touch with it, overcomes nature and his particular existence, to seek only in things their universal, permanent side, their in-itself” (Hegel, 1979, 24).

The foregoing allows us to talk about the environment of conservation and the use of African masks. On this subject, Mudiji explains that the African mask can be understood in the African museum (1983, 31). The latter is an ideal space or environment in which the African mask is found. It is in its natural space, in the place of conception or configuration and in the specific but complex location that the explicit or tacit meaning is determined. The African mask is preserved in a traditional rural environment that allows the participation of everyone in a common history and gives the right to communicate with the mask that bears the lived experience and beliefs of everyone. As for its use, the natural condition facilitates an ascendance to the beyond. In this sphere, we can establish the important link between the mask, the people and their faith.

Moreover, Mudiji (2004, 135) thinks that there are two ways of looking at artistic activity today. Some artists opt for pure modernity, and others opt for creativity that enhances the traditional experience by enriching it with modern contributions. The proponents of pure modernity art focus on aesthetics and its impact on the mind, emotion and feeling. While the proponents of creativity that value a traditional experience focus on the deep experience of a group, a community, or a clan. It is more collective than individual. The understanding of a work of art depends on the method of reading applied.

The reading of art

A work of art is comparable to a printed text through which an author conveys a truth, knowledge, meaning and significance of reality. Thus, reading a work of art consists in understanding clearly what the artist has printed on an object: painting, sculpture, drawing, etc. It is also an exercise that allows man to enter deeply into what the artist wants to state, its content or meaning.

The effort to understand a work of art (traditional or modern) depends on several factors. The most important for us is the subject's contact with the object and the subject's initiation. Firstly, the relationship of a subject with an object is important. It requires special observation of the subject on the object and communication between the two. Once the relationship is established, the subject and object become the speaker and interlocutor, respectively. The exchange is not verbal but rather non-verbal. The latter forces the subject to decode the message sent by the interlocutor without using speech. The sending of messages (coded) requires decoding before the information (response) is understood. Everything happens at the metaphysical level. That is, thought, spirit or beyond nature. The man rises to read and apprehend the true meaning of the thing.

Secondly, the initiation of the subject is necessary to decipher an object of art. This implies a reception of the hidden knowledge. The initiated manage to read the message transmitted by a work of art. The uninitiated, on the other hand, have to rely on others for the meaning of things. Apart from the uninitiated, Mudiji mentions a certain category of people who are deprived of the cultural right to read, understand and appropriate messages conveyed through artistic work. They are denied the spiritual fulfilment of cultural and artistic goods. They are illiterate people cut off from the source of light and initiated persons who have an interest in updating their knowledge (Mudiji, 2004, 130-131). This rupture is because their heritage has been uprooted, displaced and transferred to the West; this prevents any tendency of man to cling to the divine.

The reading of art requires its methods to open man to the values hidden and transmitted by a work. The reading is done according to whether it is a work of traditional or modern art, and the reader is called upon to take this parameter into account. In this sense, Mudiji presents two types of reading of works of art: one will have before his works of art from the traditional framework where a) functionality and orality are very important, and the other will have before he works governed by the modern context where the b) written word and the search for beauty for its own sake constitute an indispensable reference (Mudiji, 2004, 131). Each reader adopts an attitude and a method to penetrate an unknown or lesser-known world; he or she obtains an insight into something unclear. In addition to this, reading a work of art leads to the development of feelings that often result in acts of a pious character. Our preoccupation is this: what materials are used to create the African mask? What are the rituals that accompany African mask making and the meaning of production?

Future Development: Mask production and the trend towards the absolute

The creation of African masks corresponds to a deeper need for man to go beyond the limits that nature imposes on him and offers him the possibility of becoming a god (Marfurt, 1968, 54-55). Perhaps Marfurt is exaggerating when he states the possibility of becoming a god, but I believe that imaginations or thoughts of the intentions of the world accompany the

production of African masks. By doing so, man intends to open himself to the Absolute, elaborate his spiritual life, and participate in the life of the supernatural. This is why the choice of the place of production, the elements of make-up, and the artist-magicians are important moments in the creation of African masks.

The first consideration in the artistic creation of African masks is that the process takes place in sacred places (isolated huts, forges outside the village, hidden altars) and has a mysterious character. The place is important so that the mask that comes from it would draw people together to God. I think that human beings manage to grasp the sacred through a symbolic or mediated way of an object coming from a place dedicated to God. The idea that the mask is produced in a holy place modifies the behaviour of human beings by bowing the bust and bending the knees. The contrast would be the studio, workshop or any room where artworks are produced. The environment neither elicits nor provokes the idea of the existence of a Supreme Being. Both artists and lectors should consider this perspective in the production and reading of works of art.

The second interest in the production of African masks concerns the ritual and the artist. Sometimes the artist has to make ritual sacrifices before, during and after. It is a question of presenting a gift to a deity by the immolation of a victim. It is an activity performed to infuse the mask with mysteriousness and strength (Sylla, 1989, 142). Thus, there are sessions of prayers, songs and incantations of ancestral spirits. The artist of the African mask is gifted with the magical-spiritual power to infuse the mask with supernatural power. The experience of the sacred is always through the perception of such a specially-made mask. Whereas modern artists are only interested in inserting elements to engage the human person in mental reflection on history, events or even aesthetic values of the object of art. The artist realizes his goal through the use of computers, software and modern technology.

The third point worthy of consideration is the make-up of African masks. This relates to the outfit or the basting of the body, the various coverings made of more or less elaborate materials (Mudiji, 1983, 26). The make-up brings out the set of spiritual power, the image of the sacred and connects the people to their ancestors (Carlson, 2019, 47). The make-up is symbolic and requires the search for mystical meaning. What the artist uses to dress the African mask addresses the spectators in a way that the mask “speaks through silence and says the ineffable, it communicates what words cannot or dare not pronounce: it shows and makes manifest by means of covering” (Mudiji, 1983, 26). The artist enters the culture to bring out the meanings of the materials to be used, such as the choice of colour but also the vertical, horizontal, leaning, and curved position of the masks, which reveals the existential situation of the man.

The fourth thing that should not be overlooked in the production of African masks is the existential situation of the people. In a world where it seems that the material and the

secular are taking over and the spirit, ethical and spiritual values are disappearing, the creators of masks bring mysterious elements into their production. Indeed, this leads the human being to “participate in an elaborate mythical vision mediated by the morphological and stylistic elements of the masks” (Mudiji, 1983, 30). It is in this way that human beings can transcend from the “surface world” to the “deep world”, from the physical world to the spiritual world, from the world of things to the world of the Absolute.

The processes that accompany the creation of African masks can be summarized as ‘ritual sculpture’. In other words, ritual is part of the production of African masks. This gives the masks a religious character and the power to take human beings to God. The Osaka World Exhibition in 1970 testifies to the fact that the production of African masks has a strong tendency to lead people to the Absolute. The site of the presentation of African masks and sacred effigies was named “Forest of Gods”.

Conclusion

Art is an intermediary between man and God. The mask is a typical object that best symbolizes African art. Traditional art is sacred and is a visible response to the search for an eternal Being. Mudiji perceives all works of art as having the capacity to open up to the Absolute, but this is based on epistemological principles. Modern art developed in the context of writing and centred on an author is intended to create the same effect of opening the human mind to contemplate realities beyond the physical world.

The historical crises experienced by traditional African art have inspired both African modern art and European modern art to orient their artistic work towards deep lived experiences, sometimes intrinsically religious. On the one hand, modern African art integrates the specific ideas and values of traditional art to show the openness of the human spirit to other realities. On the other hand, it has influenced modern European art. The latter is no longer created as a mere aesthetic object but according to the “full spiritual meaning”.

Reading a work of art is an activity that consists in understanding what the artist has imprinted on an object, or an exercise that allows man to enter deeply into the spiritual world, values and meaning conveyed by the artist. This presupposes contact with the object of art or initiation of the subject. The reader is transformed within his being. This circumstance claims to lead the human person to a state of being more human.

On the whole, African masks have a clear inclination towards the sacred. The African mask can be understood in the natural space or an ideal environment where it is conceived or configured. The creation of African masks corresponds to a deeper need for man to go beyond the limits that nature imposes on him and offers him the possibility of opening up to the Absolute, elaborating his spiritual life, and participating in the life of the beyond. The production of the mask reveals the important link between the people and their faith.

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THE BEAUTY OF IDENTITY IN AFRICAN CULTURE

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Naked woman, black woman
Clothed with your colour which is life,
with your form which is beauty!
In your shadow I have grown up; the
gentleness of your hands was laid over my eyes (Léopold Sédar Senghor).

In memory of the cultural and identity groups who are suffering from a meaningless sense of life caused by the predominant assimilating policies.

The Issue

Senghor's negritude poem reflects the beauty of original identity in African thoughts. Although the poet praises black women's elegance, in its spirit it asserts the idea that African culture is replete with the sanctity of the community, beauty of the nature, and perfectibility of the nature. Imperative in this culture is a deep mysterious appreciation of beauty striking everyone's heart. "Your beauty strikes me to the heart like the flash of an eagle". This exalted admiration of beauty connotes a spiritual journey touching the inner aspects of the life. "The spiritual song of the Beloved" with her "solemn contralto voice" is not a mere poem entertaining people. Rather, it reflects a deeper view of life around the apprehension of beauty of the beloved. This beauty is more than a word, a phrase, or a slogan. It is a manifestation of one's original identity attained through such a mysterious journey. Rumi, Persian poet says:

*Now the words are over
and the pain they bring is gone.
Now you have gone to rest
in the arms of the Beloved."*

Thinking about what the value of community is, and why communal life must be reckoned with the contemporary life, requires what are the constitutive elements of identity. Reflection on identity in the modern sense of the concept, as it is seen in the non-western cultures including Africa's view of life, cannot be abstracted from the communal context in which people express their identity characteristics. In fact, identity is constructed only in such a communal context where people express themselves. For this reason, the concept of identity is associated with cultural commonalities for self-expression.

This paper argues that the conception of identity is interwoven with people's right to express themselves. Such a connection provides an opportunity for people who suffer from assimilating policies to effectively accelerate the process of their liberation. This process, itself, is tied to the discovery of their original cultural identity. Africa needs to understand its originality, as Senghor beautifully and thoughtfully elaborates.

Identity and its Constituent Elements

In its simplest definition, the notion of identity depends on people's capability to express themselves as to who they are in a range beyond the abstract meaning of individualism. In this definition, identity, in the initial stage of its formation, originates from an attainment of oneself and proceeds towards the actualization of this perception through communication with others at the level of social relations. In fact, identity is not only a reflection of oneself at an individualistic level. Rather, it is a necessary requirement to express such reflection in the social context and in relationships with others. Such a definition of identity is accompanied by indicators and criteria that associate one's perception of oneself with cultural and social differences. For example, personal identity can be associated with ethnicity, race, religion, gender, language, and culture. At the intimate level of self-awareness, individual identity assumes the same, undifferentiated nature. This is why, for example, we say that we are all humans and have the same inherent dignity. This human dignity or value, which cannot be negotiated or bought and sold in the market, must always be respected in all circumstances. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights presents this basic level of identity definition: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and human dignity. All have reason and conscience and must treat each other in the same spirit; behave brotherly".

It is natural that identity at the individual level is universal and applicable to individual human beings and forms the foundation of the principle of non-discrimination. But in its social dimension, that is, the realisation of individuality in social relations, identity is associated with unique characteristics that are different from the first level. This second level is also explained in the second article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "Everyone may, without distinction of any kind, in particular as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, belief, or any other opinion, as well as origin, national or social, wealth, birth, or any other status, enjoy all the rights and all the freedoms mentioned in this declaration". Identity is understood through the connection of these two cognitive dimensions, individual and social.

Therefore, the constituent elements of identity can be defined by referring to three questions. "Who am I" and "how do I know who I am"? The answer to this question requires an intimate touch with one's unknown attained selfhood. This contact make sense through an inner dialogue with oneself, whereby the self tries to discover oneself. This inner (intuitive)

dialogue with oneself is the first stage in attaining one's selfhood, hence has an internal nature and impartial subjective individualism. According to Rousseau, at this level of attaining one's selfhood, the goal is only to perceive and feel one's being in order to find peace with oneself; a feeling that includes the sweetest and vital aspect of human being.

Le sentiment de l'existence dépouillé de toute autre affection est par lui-même un sentiment précieux de contentement et de paix qui suffiroit seul pour rendre cette existence chère et douce à qui sauroit écarter de soi toutes les impressions sensuelles et terrestres qui viennent sans cesse nous en distraire et en troubler ici bas la douceur. (Rousseau, 2012, 428).

There is a phenomenological interdependence tied with this sense of oneself, which is not still developed in the direction of becoming a social person in the outer space. This means that the inner self-perception reflects attainment of the selfhood without a social direction. The self is not yet placed in the horizon of group and collective meanings and values. This primary stage in understanding "who I am" lacks a historical dimension. I know only myself from within, and I attained my selfhood only, while not able to expand it to the social life. This is a primary theoretical "me" very far away for an "I" as part of a "we". This attainment of oneself assumes an impartial status free from moral and judgment about others since it has not still been able define itself as a social person. Such moral impartiality carries its connotation for the life in all moments and horizons. In fact, it is a human characteristic that is consistent with an intuitive feeling, but it is still far from being embodied in a social identity. Rousseau interprets this effort to perceive and feel as "self-love" and considers it a natural feeling and necessary for the authenticity and reliability of individual perception because it is an innate and primary feeling that always accompanies human beings (Rousseau, 2010, 363). This is as if a voice from the depths of the silence calls one to a sincere and direct concern for self-understanding.

Persian mystical literature is replete with this intimate dialogue with oneself and calls empathy; an inner co-linguism in the mystical sense of the term. Maulana Jalal al-Din Rumi, for example, says "Sharing the same heart is better than sharing the same tongue." or says "Stop the words now. Open the window in the center of your chest, and let the spirits fly in and out."

The second question pertaining to identity is: "Where I am"? This question guides us to delve into another constituent element of identity to know how to pass from one's inner attainment of selfhood toward the construction of social identity. In this move away from inner to outer layers of identity formation, the dialogue with oneself also switches towards a social dialogue with other selves; better to say a social dialogue.

This dialogue calls an active presence by the self at the heart of social interactions and binds him to a certain rights and responsibilities. In fact, with this dialogue, which takes place at a higher level than the intimate contact with oneself, individuality is dressed as a social actor

and elevates the inner selfhood to an outer interactive personhood as the complementary constituent element of identity. While in the first intimate dialogue the one seeks to attain one's selfhood and the inner discovery of oneself, in the outer dialogue, cultural identity and social characteristics are constructed, consequently the social personhood is formed and recognized. The first one is a direct and intuitive relationship with oneself, while the second one is a relationship with others to define and stabilize one's social position. At the individualistic level of dialogue, a person calls himself for his perception through a deeply internal and valid attitude. At the social level, this perception or self-discovery is achieved through interaction with others. At this second level, the potential characteristic of the individual is realized so that it can improve its inner talents as a social and continuously evolving being. It is for this reason that the second level of dialogue is an inevitable tool for the flourishing of individuality, and in better words, the formation of social identity.

Considering this move, one can approach a better understanding of the relationship between the sense of oneself and its social realization, and then, the evaluation of oneself with the social interlocutors in a joint horizon of meaning. This evolutionary stage in the development and construction of identity leads one from the direct field of dialogue with oneself to the definition and establishment of a concept of life through interaction with others, and in fact, it promotes the hypothetical "me", a disengaged self, to the presence of an interactive "I" which is part of a "we". As Ortega puts it, the one becomes oneself and others. (Ortega, 1969). Through this joint horizon of meanings and values with interlocutors, social identity is created; the self turns to be a socially constructed person and one's selfhood develops into a dialogical personhood. Indeed, this is a fundamental feature of human life that presents oneself as an inherently dialogical being and provides oneself with a true sense of being human.

The move from a pure and subjective sense of selfhood to development of personhood, transforms one's ability to act socially, accept roles, hold rights and bear responsibilities, and builds the foundations of social identity. In this definition of identity, human beings are to be considered inherently dialogical beings who transform their individuality into social identity through interaction with their interlocutors in the horizon of the shared meanings and values. This feature of dialogical being does not conflict with one's ability to express oneself authentically and in the original sense of being but is a fundamental and undeniable aspect of realization one's potential. Indeed, beyond the attainment of the sense of its selfhood in its originality, one can express oneself authentically if there is framework of interlunation through which one believes and can truly act as a social being. Through this framework, the sense of oneself, the selfhood, is extended to a social personhood, and a common space is created, where people not only recognize each other as the interlocutors, but also acknowledge the differences that characterize them. The existential dignity of man is aware of this omnipresent personality because this characteristic is the characteristic of human perception.

The third question raised is: “Where should I go”? The response to this question constitutes the third element in the definition of identity. This element reflects the mediating cultural explanation, which is related to the people's orientation in understanding common values in the very horizon of interlocution in the social context. Social life requires one to be in an interactive relationship with one's fellows to not only a proper understanding of oneself and the interlocutors is achieved, but also an opportunity is created to define an appropriate and constructive framework for a meaningful life. Therefore, the concept of identity cannot be defined solely based on individualistic grounds and cut from the social context, because even the authentic knowledge of oneself, which forms the foundations of human rights in its contemporary sense, cannot be independent of the field of social interactions. Therefore, the formation of social identity assumes a fluid nature and changes according to the requirements of the public sphere and its needs.

For this reason, it is not possible to abstract people from the social context and its requirements, or to put the immediate intuitive perception of one's originality in contrast with the collective and a consensus-based understanding of oneself. Human life cannot be understood solely from the point of view of intimate perception of oneself. Nor its realization can be reduced to representative systems, because a large part of the concept of human being depends on the individual's beliefs which are part of a more inclusive and organic whole, i.e., reliance on the "we". "Human beings are members of one body...".

Identity in the Global Community

The three elements that make up identity brings about a fourth question to the fore: "In which time horizon can social identity be maintained?" The answer to the question is more related to the second and third elements of the definition of identity. This means that if evolving the intimate dialogue with oneself is supposed to pave the way for the construction of personhood, its realization depends on the framework of the shared values in which everyone can enjoy the inherent value and the rights included in it. This social evolution empowers selves to express themselves in line with the shared norms and values in the horizon of meaning in which the framework of interlocution of actualized.

In fact, talking about a field beyond one's perception requires social conditions in which a person can play roles that lead to the formation of social life independently and in accordance with their own will and capabilities. In other words, the time horizon for the realization of social identity is associated with the enjoying the basic rights and freedoms of people providing them with the opportunity and motivation to choose. This is the condition provided to members of different frameworks of interlocution, horizons of meanings, cultural identities, and communal setting in which they can express themselves differently. As a matter of fact, in the current context of global community, the questions of "who I am", "where I am", and "where I am going" has become inextricably linked with the question of

"who I, as a member a larger we, am ". This "we" cannot be abstracted from the horizon of meaning through which the “we” constructs and express itself.

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EXPLORING AFRICAN SYMBOLIC EXPRESSION ON COMMON GROUND: A PANACEA FOR PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE IN A PLURALISTIC CONTEXT OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

There is no gainsaying that the need for peaceful co-existence is still dominant in human affairs and that has become all the more urgent whenever and wherever it is contradicted by opposite ideas or deeds. The necessity for peaceful co-existence in all spheres of human life is all the way and partly attributed to the pluralistic nature of the global community and how the diversities seem to have resulted in the contentious atmosphere in the most pluralistic-prone contexts of the world. The story of Nigeria cannot be told devoid of its pluralistic nature rooted in its diverse ethnic groups, multiple languages, cultural differences, multiple religions, and political and social diversities. The presupposition is succinct by the way and manner in which these elements of diversity are employed, upheld and considered as the determinant factor for human treatment irrespective of the codes that bind humanity religiously, politically, and socially. In the public discourse on the quest for peaceful co-existence in Africa, Nigeria being the largest country in Africa is rated among countries facing grave challenges to peaceful co-existence. Some of the systemic and symbolic violence against the dignity of human life experienced in Nigeria is attributed to the frictions, contentions and conflicts against peaceful co-existence aggravated by the pluralistic nature of Nigeria. While acknowledging the beauty in diversity, various responses to the misconceptions of this God's giving personality to humanity and the threats this misconception has posed to peaceful co-existence in Nigeria, this paper through an African symbolic expression of the Pyam ethnic group residing in Plateau state, Nigeria, proposed an alternative approach for peaceful co-existence in Nigeria. The Pyam symbolic expression is entrenched in its religio-cultural expression and adage "Do ta hoi na ram" which means humanity supersedes land. It is an expression within the Pyam language and system of thought which offers a symbolic response to the contentious and conflicting atmosphere aggravated by an abuse of the pluralistic nature of Nigerian society. This task is achieved through a systematic review of literature that has unpacked relevant ideas on the subject under consideration. The paper

concluded that the approach to building harmonious living in a pluralistic context such as Nigeria is not monolithic and that through exploring African cultural experiences more cogent approaches can be realized.

Keywords: Exploring, Africa, symbolic, panacea, common ground, pluralistic peaceful-coexistence.

Introduction

There is no conflicting thought on the quest for peaceful co-existence in any human community. It is undoubtedly dominant and is continually agitated and needful, especially in the face of threats that contradict it. The quest for peaceful co-existence is more pronounced in a pluralistic context. The nature of Nigeria cannot be told devoid of its pluralistic nature rooted in its diverse ethnic groups, multiple languages, cultural differences, multiple religions, and political and social diversities. The presupposition is succinct by the way and manner in which these elements of diversity are employed, uphold and considered as the determinant factor for human treatment irrespective of the codes that bind humanity religiously, politically, and socially. In the public discourse on the quest for peaceful co-existence in Africa, Nigeria being the largest country in Africa is rated among countries facing grave challenges to peaceful co-existence.

The nature of the violence against human life in Nigeria can best be described as systemic and symbolic violence. In other words, it is sometimes physical assault and sometimes psychological. They are mostly attributed to the frictions, contentions and conflicts due to the pluralistic nature of the Nigerian society. Couple with animosity, resentment, unforgiveness and bigotry which can be described as take away from the violent conflicts that irrupted Nigeria in the past. Due to the contentious atmosphere in Nigeria, different approaches to violence were socially constructed and demonstrated through systemic and symbolic violence depending on whether it is political, religious or ethnically inclined. The notion of two mediums of expressing violence in a pluralistic context such as Nigeria is made necessary in this paper due to the nature and manner in which violence is being carried out in Nigeria

Consequent to the critical analysis of the different approaches and responses by the Nigerian government and the Church to curb the scourge of violence in the pluralistic context of Nigeria, the paper acknowledged the contribution each has made and also identified the limitations of these responses with the view to explore other alternatives to violence against the dignity of humanity. Since approaches or perspectives to solving human problems are not monolithic, this paper explored an African symbolic expression which is rooted in the religious-cultural experience of the Pyam ethnic group residing in Gindiri, Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State Nigeria. The symbolic expression is entrenched in the adage “Do ta hoi na ram” which if translated into English means humanity is more

important than land. It offers a common ground for dialogue and can neutralize barriers relational that are socially constructed against peaceful co-existence in the pluralistic context of Nigeria. The research objective is realized through a systematic review of literature that has unpacked relevant views about the subject under consideration. The literature review will capture the fundamental elements of the research paper. These include the Nigerian context, the contribution of religion in building peaceful co-existence in a pluralistic context such as Nigeria, the use of African symbolic expressions in mitigating threats that deny the fullness of life in a pluralistic context of Nigeria, The Pyam system of thought

Nigerian Pluralistic Context

Nigeria is located within the Western part of Africa bordered by the Republic of Benin, Cameroon, Chad and Niger with the climatic condition that varies within the Equatorial, tropical and Arid respectively. The complexity of Nigeria as the most populated Nation-State in Africa is attributed to its multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-religious character. In all, it has about 500 ethnic groups. Three-quarters are from the Middle Belt and forty-four of these are from Plateau State. According to Habila Danfulani, the pluralistic nature of Nigeria contributed greatly to the religious and ethnic violence experienced in some parts of Nigeria (2006: 2)

According to Mwadkwon, Nigeria's complex socio-political identities have been exploited by those who wish to use its religious and cultural diversity as a reason to engage in violence against others that do not belong to their ethnic, religious or political group: Nigeria can be described as one giant tinder box of religious and ethnic intolerance. Sometimes it begins from a simple misunderstanding and consequently, metamorphoses into religious, communal, and ethnic conflagration Nigerian urban and semi-urban areas have been affected mostly by these religious and multi-ethnic conflicts. Whenever conflicts of this nature reoccur, they erupt much more and claim many more casualties (2001:1).

In light of this reality, violence in contemporary Nigeria is attributed to the contentious environment shaped by a multiplicity of religions, ethnic groups and different cultures that sometimes produce socio-economic conflicts. As Mwadkwon (2001) has shown, it is as a result of these affiliations, that conflicts are sown. Mwadkwon states that: In recent decades religious and ethnic affiliation have become major criteria for appointments to key offices, the military, the police force, the civil service, enrolment in schools, colleges and universities the military the police force, the civil service, enrolment in schools, colleges and universities, and so on (2001:2).

The effects of the pluralistic nature of the Nigerian context are expressed through the method of governance. Appointing people in public and private offices is carried out on the bases of religious and ethnic identities. Such partiality serves as an indirect contributor to

the emergence of physical and psychological violence in many communities that undermines human dignity and respect. Hurst argued that similar factors that create violence were also present in the socio-economic, religious and economic environment that resulted in the 'Biafra'/Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970. Indeed, throughout colonization in Nigeria that continued into the Independence era, the emergence of violent conflicts between the Hausa/Fulani in the North, Yoruba in the West and the Igbo in the Southeast each attributed to the complexity caused by cultural, ethnic and political factors. This situation presents an atmosphere of rancour and domination within the Nigerian community (Hurst, 2017: 1-2).

According to Arbuckle (2004:4), violence can be triggered through symbols because they can speak and provoke people's emotions which can result in violence. Accordingly, the violence in Nigeria does not only seek to destroy or cause physical damage to lives and properties but also has psychological connotations that undermine human dignity due to cultural, religious, or political affiliations. Hurst (2017:1) has further argued that such forms of violence were reflected in the course of the Nigerian Civil War of 1967-1970, which was also known as the Nigerian Biafra War. Part of what informed the contentious and violent atmosphere in Nigeria was the rise of religious fundamentalism as a political discourse towards solving issues related to identity politics. This paper draws attention to the Boko Haram insurgency which, according to Bagaji (2015), is an example of religious fundamentalism in Nigeria (2015:2-3). In other words, it is a sect that is against Western education, to enforce their brand of religious ideology/belief system in a country that is religio-cultural and socio-political (2012:33). According to Obaji, the reason for their persistent attacks on Muslims and Christians during divine worship is contained in a video by the Boko Haram leader where he states that, "whoever follows democracy is an infidel. This is Shekau; this is why I am in enmity with you" (2015:2). Obaji (2015:1) further argues that the idea of democracy, according to this sect, means that anything Western must be rejected. The outbreak of violence at regular intervals in Nigeria sometimes makes it difficult for observers to ascertain whether it is the result of religious, economic or ethnic factors. Mwadkwon (2000:56) has observed that peoples' social location influences their attitude in analyzing religious and ethnic violence in Nigeria. However, whether violence is religious or ethnic, it remains a factor that poses a threat to the life and security of communities. It is important for this present study that attention should be given to the response of the Nigerian government to violence within this context. The Nigerian military and police services are frequently used by the government at national and State levels to neutralise violence through the use of force. However, instead of using well-tested peace-building measures as central to their strategy of operation, they accused the public of exacerbating the violence through the collection of bribes (Danfulani 2006:21). According to Danfulani (2006:22), the Nigerian government claims to be building a society where individual rights are respected; whereas, it also engages in violent attacks through the military against the Boko Haram insurgency. The endemic prevalence of violence within society that denies the fullness of life within the country has led the Nigerian government to

appoint judicial commissions of enquiry on the causes of such violence within the nation and recommend ways of curtailing it (Danfulani, 2006:6).

Following the controversial atmosphere among religious and ethnic communities during the colonization and post-Independence eras, the civil war has been attributed to a complexity of issues, relating to the three major cultural, ethnic and political struggles between the Hausa/Fulani in the North, Yoruba in the west and the Igbo the Southeast.

Systemic and Symbolic Violence

The African symbolic expression as used in this paper aimed at doing a critical re-examination of the nature of the violence that erupted in Nigeria as a result of pluralism, identify the different responses and approaches employed by the Church and Government and consequently offer an alternative notion for re-building peaceful co-existence in Nigeria irrespective of the diversities. Linden (2012:2) argues that violence becomes systemic when it is widely accepted as a physical or psychological force employed to respond to a particular violence committed by a group of people. Systemic violence according to Torrance (2013:1) is a form of violence that has become part of a system within a particular community. He further argues that systemic violence can be informed by violence that features religious, ethnic, cultural, social, and political connotations and mostly takes root in remote causes that have links with historically unresolved social and political conflicts (2013:1).

The relevance of systemic violence to the pluralistic context of Nigeria cannot be underestimated. Violence becomes systemic because it is linked to unresolved religious, ethnic, and political conflicts within the religio-cultural and socio-political context of Nigeria.

Nicolaescu (2010:10) defines symbolic violence as a particular line of thought or perception that is imposed to marginalize or dominate a person or group of persons. De Haan (2008:32) on the other hand, argues that symbolic violence is an intentional effort to perpetrate psychological harm against a person or group of persons. According to Arbuckle (2004: xiii) and Kaunda (2015:4), symbolic violence seeks to cause psychological harm by dominating through action or failure of action and can be expressed in language, words, idioms, and concepts. Symbolic violence as defined and described by these scholars is thus relevant to the understanding and practice of violence in Jos because of the following factors:

The quest for political and ethnic recognition among ethnic groups in Nigeria is prevalent. The use of dominant languages to undermine the use of other languages by minority groups seems to have become the order of the day. The use of non-life-giving speeches and threatening letters creates fear and animosity aimed at undermining human dignity. Symbolic violence can be described as the medium

through which the use of religious or cultural language facilitates violence (Kaunda 2015: 5).

Effects Of Ethno Religious Conflict In The Pluralistic Context Of Nigeria

Ethno-religious conflict connotes a sharp disagreement between two religious groups combined with ethnic and cultural intolerance. It is a situation in which two different religious adherents coming from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds engage in a serious disagreement and opposition in their ideas, opinion, feelings, beliefs and values (Danfulani, 2006: 5). Danfulani and Fwatshak argued that this way of describing religious conflict seems to be the reflection of the ethnoreligious conflict between adherent of Christianity and Islam in Nigeria. They further noted that the opposition between the two religions is ethnoreligious because it has the connotation of both ethnicity and culture. The ethnoreligious conflict has continually become a grave concern in the development of Nigeria in all spheres of human life. Most national institutions which are the life wires of the nation have been weakened by this challenge thereby becoming impotent in delivering the expected services to the Nigerian society. One of the marks that define Nigeria is its educational system which is considered the bedrock upon which its national objectives can be achieved. However, the cumulative effects of ethnoreligious conflict seem to have devoured the tenets of the Nigerian educational system. The effects of ethnoreligious conflict can be highlighted post-serious challenges in the realization of Nigerian educational goals and objectives (Ngwoke and Ituma, 2020).

Government Approach Towards Peaceful Co-Existence in Nigeria

Following the quest to maintain peaceful co-existence in the pluralistic context of Nigeria, the Nigerian government have made attempts to curb factors that marred peace and good living relationship between the different religious, ethnic and political groups in Nigeria. The Nigerian government have employed the utilization of the military and police force as a measure for building bridges of peace in Nigeria. However, it was proved abortive due to religious, ethnic and political sentiments. The military and police forces were accused to have sided with their religious counterparts to fight the other. Furthermore, as a result of the influx of firearms and counterfeit uniforms within the warring points, the military and police lost credibility among warring communities (Krause 2010:49).

Another approach to building and maintaining peaceful co-existence in Nigeria is the declaration of a state of emergency. Danfulani and Fwatshak (2002:252) captured instances in a violent-prone context within Nigeria where the federal government had to declare a state of emergency as an intervention strategy. Examples of states that were victims of such intervention include Plateau, Kaduna, Borno, and Adamawa states (Krause 2010:21).

Judicial Commissions of enquiry were established for dialogical purposes. (Higazi 2011:31). However, Danfulani (2006:6) attributes the failure of the judicial commissions of enquiry aimed at peacebuilding in Jos to the inability of the government to arrest and charge the perpetrators of the violence and to try them in the judicial system where if found guilty they could be sentenced. The warring groups within the local context failed to cooperate with the government but rather protected the wrongdoers within their different communities and ensured that they were not handed over to the authorities to be prosecuted. Higazi (2011:31) has argued that the recommendations from the Commission of Enquiry seemed to exacerbate the violence rather than build bridges of peace.

The Place Of Symbols In Africa

African symbolic hermeneutics is an ongoing perspective within the African milieu that focuses on the African religio-cultural experience as a symbolic medium of communication. This perspective stemmed within the African system of thought on how myths and rituals can be informative and imaginative (Umeogu 2013:113) According to Louis-Dominique Komo, African symbolic hermeneutics is a paradigm in the African system of thought where African cultural experience is considered a medium to express human thought and creativity (2017:81). He adds that African symbolic hermeneutics is a perspective in Africa that explores meaning and symbols relying on African languages and cultural myths, proverbs and rituals (2017:81-82). Tsenay Serequeberhan delineates that African symbolic hermeneutics dwell on African culture and historical experience (1994:7-8). From the foregoing, it is clear that African symbolic hermeneutics is contextual. Although its construction and application can be utilised universally its particularity is within the context of Africa. African symbolic hermeneutics offers an alternative praxis where African religio-cultural symbols can be informative and imaginative while discovering and responding to the reality of life within the African context. African symbolic hermeneutical perspective is inculturation since it seeks culturally related symbols for the expression of human thought and creativity.

In his examination of the power of symbols in culture, Arbuckle (2004:4-6) states that: Symbols are at the centre stage of all cultures and are what give definition and limits to how people behave in a given community and they are not merely signs but mediums through which norms and values are expressed or media that define the way of life of a particular cultural people. According to Ott, it is through these symbols one finds deeper meanings of the African way of life (2000:332). In this sense, the use of African symbolic hermeneutics as symbols becomes relevant because it deals with how African people respond to situations based on the meanings they attached to such symbols. This perception is relevant to the paper because the mission-cultural lens used is an element of African symbolic hermeneutics through which the church's missional identity engages with the culture (2000:332).

In his way, Umeogu states, “symbol in the African philosophy is something, but it’s something for something; that is, something that stands with something, for something and to something. The symbol begins from something and ends towards something for which it is the symbol” (2012: 113). The philosophy of symbolism constitutes African philosophy and represents important and deeper meanings within the religio-cultural experiences of human life within the community. as regards communicative functions. The power of symbols is gotten from their ability to represent something that can effectively communicate meanings and information within African society (2012: 114).

The Pyam African Symbolic Expression

The use of symbolic expression within the Pyam ethnic group is entrenched in their system of thought which provides an enabling environment for peaceful co-existence in the context of plurality. Rooted in their system of thought is the idea that the human person comes before any other affiliation.

The Pyem system of thought takes root in the word *Ba-Pyem*, which is the name of the language of the Pyem people through which ideas, feelings, requests and knowledge are communicated. Symbolically, this reveals how language constitutes the way of life within any given community (Blench 2010:2). The Pyem ethnic group expresses ideas, requests and knowledge through its distinctive language and culture (Daspan 2002:1). Blench (2010:1) adds that language among the Pyem ethnic group serves as a medium for expressing matters that concern social, religious and cultural aspects of the community. Accordingly, the *Ba-Pyem* language of the Pyem ethnic group constitutes an integral part of their cultural experience, especially in times of prosperity and adversity (Daspan 2002:1-2).

It can thus be argued that since the Pyem notion of peacebuilding is dialogical, language serves an important role in communicating with warring communities. In other words, *Ba-Pyam*, like any other language, cannot be divorced from the culture of its people. Through this cultural symbol, this present study seeks to utilize the Pyam notion of *Do ta hoi na ram* which means “humanity is more than land” to translate the penal substitution theory in such a way that it can offer a religio-cultural understanding for peacebuilding in the violent context of Jos. Hospitality and tolerance are part of what informs the Pyam system of thought.

The widespread knowledge about Pyam hospitality and tolerance is rooted in the religious and cultural understanding that all of humanity comes from the same source (Machunga 1964). This paper argues that although there could be other ways of justifying this presupposition, the peaceful co-existence between the Christians and Muslims among the Pyam ethnic group speaks volumes about this system of thought (Temple 1965:120). The religio-cultural experience that informs this system of thought denotes that love within the Pyem worldview is supreme (Daspan 2012).

The Pyam Notion Of *Do Ta Chalai Ram* Humanity Is More Important Than Land

Following the Pyam symbolic expression and the connection of their system of thought to the land and language, the fundamental notion that this paper explored is rooted in the symbolic expression *Do ta hoi na ram* which if translated in English means Humanity is better than land (Daspan, 2012: 12). Pyam ethnic group as highlighted is among the minority tribes in Plateau State. However, migrants from other Local Government Areas and people from other states are currently residing in the land. Currently, it is composed of more than ten tribes. Furthermore, it was a missionary centre from the United Kingdom which resulted in the establishment of premier mission institutions that have produced some of the elites not only in Plateau but the whole of Nigeria. The hospitality the Pyam people are known for raises lots of questions about the motivation or secret behind their welcoming attitude (Temple 1965: 123).

The Pyem ethnic group is popularly known for their hospitality and tolerance. This is evident in the way they accommodated many other ethnic groups within the plateau state of Nigeria (Temple, 1965: 120). Machunga, (1964) noted that due to their hospitality, tolerance and love welcomed and received Christian Western missionaries especially under the Sudan United Mission (SUM) and Islam adherents from the far Northern part of Nigeria. Consequently, Christianity and Islam become predominantly the two religions practised among the Pyem ethnic group. Gilbert Diche (1991) noted that despite the religious differences among the Pyem ethnic group for more than a hundred years they have lived harmoniously. This could be attributed to their beliefs and practices which focus more on their understanding of God about life and humanity.

The welcome and hospitality offered to adherents of the two religions stemmed from the Pyam African religious and cultural *adage do ta chalai ram* which means “land must give way to humanity”. Harvey Sindima (1995) describes this cultural practice as ‘social bondedness’ enshrine in respect for human dignity. The cultural experience of the Pyam people seems to have empowered them to resist threats that deny the fullness of life. It is in light of this that Laurent Magesa delineates that the African religio-cultural experience like the Pyam people perceives religion in functionalist terms as being at the service of humanity to help realize abundant life (Magesa 1997). The Pyam African cosmology presupposes a distinctive way of understanding and interpreting reality. It is unique in the sense that their ethnic disposition seems to advance beyond the triumphalist and competitive tendencies noticed within the practices of Christianity and Islam in Jos that have led to colossal loss of lives and properties.

Although more of this religio-cultural representation of the Pyam people is reflected in the section that explained the Pyam notion of peaceful co-existence yet it can be argued that the hospitality and love expressed within the African religio-cultural experience of the people even before the coming of Christianity and Islam in the locality connotes that the Pyam

communities are peace-loving. Therefore, the hospitality and love expressed within the cosmology of the Pyam become favourable when applying the colonial ethics of conflict resolution through a pluriverse perspective. This approach can contribute towards neutralizing division and bigotry in a pluralistic context such as Nigeria.

The Pyam religio-cultural experiences in connection to the symbolic expression *Do ta chalai ram* affirms the Pyam perception that all forms of violence (such as domestic violence, sexism, verbal etc.) as being injurious to the humanity of others.

The Pyam notion offers as distinctive as it corresponds with the African notion of humanness as a common ground irrespective of the pluralistic nature of Nigeria. Humanity supersedes any other social construct and human treatment should be carried out based on the commonness that is entrenched in the symbolic expression of the Pyam system of thought. Scholars have warned that a failure to take cognizance of indigenous perspectives on reconciliation and conflict resolution has the unfortunate potential to perpetuate conflict as culture functions as a “control box” (Tafese, 2016). They stress that in the traditional African system of thought, there is a locus for the unification of the African people’s thoughts and ideas of life. Tafese (2016) highlights that indigenous knowledge for reconciliation and conflict resolution is an accumulated knowledge that emerged within the indigenous religio-cultural experience for maintaining harmonious relationships in the community. According to Tutu (2012), indigenous knowledge for conflict resolution takes root in the understanding of humanity as being ultimate in the quest for reconciliation in the African polity.

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THEOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN BIBLICAL ISRAEL AND THE CHRISTIAN IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN POLITICS

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Abstract

The Israelites initially had a theocracy (ruled directly by God) beginning with God establishing His covenant with Abraham through the days of Moses and Joshua. For example, God led the people out of Egypt and through the wilderness to the Promised Land using a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. Theocratic governance, the Biblical representation of God's relation to, and rule in and over Israel, provides a framework that is instructive for how present-day Nigerian Christians can be structured for political participation in politics. The Nigerian nation has multiple problems and challenges, ranging from bad and unchristian leadership and corruption. Different solutions have been proffered to solving the problem of governance concerning corruption in Nigerian politics but with little attention paid to a Biblically constructed solution as referenced in the theocratic governance of ancient Israel. Can the principles of theocratic governance, as seen in the Biblical account of God's relationship with the ancient Israelites, be applied to non-Biblically normed entities like Nigeria? Therefore, the paper descriptively interrogates theocratic governance in Biblical Ancient Israel to provide templates for contemporary politics in Nigeria. This is done by examining Nehemiah and Esther as political leaders. The findings show that Christian theology is capable of considering the political implication of its belief framework and serves as an example of theologically-based good governance. The paper concluded that in theocratic governance in Biblical ancient Israel, Nehemiah as a model perceptively masterminds directions and Christians' participation for good governance in Nigerian contemporary politics.

Keywords: Theocratic Governance, Theocracy, Biblical Ancient Israel, Christian Participation, Contemporary Nigerian Politics

Introduction

Nigeria is a Nation bedevilled with recurring regional and sub-regional conflicts, tension and crisis, which has become the definition of the continent among the comity of nations. Though, this situation is not peculiar to Nigeria, yet, ours seems more pronounced because usually, these identified characteristics escalate into full-scale conflicts and socio-economic cum political crises with seemingly unending attendant consequences. These crises threaten the capacity for the corporate existence and socio-economic sustainability of Nigerian states despite their enormous social, economic, human and resource potentials. But, God's polity, as evidenced in Biblical ancient Israel, serves as a profitable reference for present-day Nigeria that is retrogressing in social development, and it provides a veritable framework that is instructive for how present-day Nigeria can be structured for social and political developments.

The Israelites initially had a theocracy (ruled directly by God) beginning with God establishing His covenant with Abraham through the days of Moses and Joshua. For example, God led the people out of Egypt and through the wilderness to the Promised Land using a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. Theocratic governance, the Biblical representation of God's relation to, and rule in and over Israel, provides a framework that is instructive for how present-day Nigerian Christians can be structured for political participation in politics. The Nigerian nation has multiple problems and challenges, ranging from bad and unchristian leadership and corruption. Different solutions have been proffered to solving the problem of governance concerning corruption in Nigerian politics but with little attention paid to a Biblically constructed solution as referenced in the theocratic governance of ancient Israel. Can the principles of theocratic governance, as seen in the Biblical account of God's relationship with the ancient Israelites, be applied to non-Biblically normed entities like Nigeria? Therefore, the paper descriptively interrogates theocratic governance in Biblical ancient Israel to provide templates for contemporary politics in Nigeria. This is done by examining Nehemiah's leadership styles. Can Biblical cum Christian identities and involvement in politics become a proper response to the state of affairs in Nigeria? How can we take directions from the Bible in our efforts to achieve political and social development in Nigeria? Another posing question is whether theocracy, a form of government in a society directly ruled by God, is a desirable system in a society ruled by human beings. (Mitchell 2011).

Nigeria, before and immediately after independence featured many prominent Christians who contributed significantly to the principles of righteousness that exalts a Nation. This was to be expected given the role that ethics, morality, the principles of the Bible and Missionaries played in the development of the country before independence. In Northern Nigeria in particular, Western education, agriculture and medical services were initiated by Missionaries long before the Northern Government did. Across the Middle Belt Area, from present Kwara State in the South West up to Niger State and sweeping through Kogi, FCT,

Benue, Nassarawa, Plateau, Taraba, and Adamawa State together with the Southern fringes of Brono, Gombe, Bauchi, Kaduna and Kebbi States, Missionary established schools produced graduates that played active roles in education, politics and in the civil service and a whole range of services that sustained Northern Nigeria and indeed Nigeria as a whole (Dafwang 35).

Therefore, the paper descriptively interrogates theocratic governance in Biblical ancient Israel before the monarchical period to provide templates for contemporary politics and social development in Nigeria. This is done within the ambit of Bob Mitchell's theoretical proposition of Christian theology of change. Mitchell posits that it is God himself who brings about a change in the world, with humans aligning themselves as active participants in his redemptive purposes. The change that God seeks is the fullness of human life. This requires the promotion of goodness, wholeness and knowledge. It operates on the premise that God is continuously at work in the world to make it good as he created it and to restore a relationship founded on a loving communion between himself, humans, and the created order. The focus of this paper is on the history of God's relationship with Israel from the patriarchal period to before the establishment of the monarchy (Mitchell 2011).

Clarification Of Concepts:

Theocracy

The word "theocracy" originates from the Greek Θεοκρατία (*theokratia*), meaning "the rule of God". This in turn derives from Θεός (*theos*), meaning "god" and κρατέω (*krateo*), "to rule". Thus, the meaning of the word in Greek was "rule by god(s)" or "human incarnation(s) of god(s)" (Harper, 2017). A theocracy is a form of government whereby God sovereignly rules over the affairs of humans through divinely chosen human agents. This is explicable in the biblical account of ancient Israel. God's polity is seen through the construction of the covenantal community in ancient Israel. Thus, there is evidence of a society that prioritizes the well-being of the people and an effective response to their innate needs, whereas, in Africa, there is a situation of social imbalance resulting largely from bad governance. Under the theocracy, the work of human leaders is simply to enforce the laws and directions that God has given. It is not acceptable for them to direct the people in any way contrary to the directions of God (Spear, 2001). Theocracy restricts the power of human leaders to have control over the people.

A theocracy is different from an ecclesiocracy or hierocracy, whereby religious priests or churchmen assume a leading role in the governance of the state but do not claim that they are instruments of divine revelation. In sum, in a theocracy, the legislative, executive and judiciary power was rested in God and partially delegated to others to be exercised under a restricted form (Bookman, 2002).

Governance

Canadian International Development Agency 2013 (CIDA) uses the term good governance in its policy on Human Rights, Democratization and Good Governance, and defines the concept as follows: by good governance, we mean how power is exercised by government in the management of a country's social and economic resources. "Good" governance is the exercise of power by various levels of government that is effective, honest, equitable, transparent and accountable.

The World Bank uses the following definition: "By governance, we mean how power is exercised... in the management of a country's social and economic resources". Pokol (2016) defined governance as "governing or directing the affairs of a group of people which could be a family, a village, a city, a country, or groups of countries. It is the activity of rendering stewardship of human and material resources within a given place and time". Governing is an exercise of constructive power by exercising leadership through persuading & influencing people towards realizing their goals (Ruwa, 2001:27) as in Pokol 194. Power in this case means diffused power which is found everywhere instead of the analogue idea of concentrated power in an individual leader. People who engage in governing are people who are entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring the well-being of those under them. The governing mandate is a divine one as recorded in Genesis 1:26-27 (Pokol: 194). To govern is to direct the public affairs of a country. Governance is the activity or manner of governing by a structure of governance which is the government. A Government is a group of people governing a state or country. In all constituted communities, public affairs have to be directed, controlled, influenced and managed. Thus governing is the right or power to govern. Governing implies authority. Authority refers to the right by virtue of office and position to command obedience. Authority is necessary for the unity of the state. Its role is to ensure as far as possible the common good of society (Ruwa, 2001:26).

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in its 1997 policy paper, defined governance as "the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences ". This definition was endorsed by the Secretary General's inter-agency sub-task force to promote integrated responses to United Nations conferences and summits.

The 1991 World Bank report defined governance as "how power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development" (Al-jurf, 2017). Specifically, Nguyen states that governance is made up of aggregated elements including political leadership, bureaucratic capacity, representation and accountability, transparency and non-corrupt judiciary enforcing the rule of law, and participation. Also, the keys to good governance are leadership's political will and political capacity (Nguyen, 2016).

Politics and the Political Era

While the idea of politics has received a negative perception, and has, at the same time, come under sharp abhorrence and resistance by the Evangelical community, it is happily embraced by some other religious bodies such as the Muslims, much more, the politicians, whether they are professionally trained in the discipline of political science or are *intruding jumpers* who merely occupy political seats. Embedded within what is a beneficial political enclave is the concept of democracy, a concept that historically, according to Rev. Professor Joel K. Biwul quoted Professor Attahiru Jega, a renowned professor of political science of global repute, emerged as the attempt to reform, organise and manage a political community for good governance to attain a progressive and cohesive society for the common good (Biwul, 2022).

The Concept of Politics

After God created the world, we read in Genesis 1:26-28 that he commanded mankind to govern or rule over it in the sense of maintaining and taking care of it as we read in Genesis 2:15. And Exodus 18, we read of Jethro's comment concerning the leadership activity of Moses: *What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only water yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone... If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied* (vv. 17b, 18, 23, RSV). From this, we can say that in the Holy Bible, politics is the art of governing, leading people in such a way that the person who governs and the governed is not burdened or worn out in the process. It is the ability to provide people with the basic needs of life (Yamsat, 2011).

The concept of politics above is not far-fetched from what we read from the great ancient politician, Aristotle concerning politics. According to Yamsat quoting Aristotle, politics is the "science of man's welfare or happiness should be secured for the good of a given people through whatever form of government and social institutions deemed appropriate (Yamsat, 2011, pp 7-8). In other words, the ability to manage or for public or government affairs for the common good or the enhancement of the lives of all in a given state or nation, and not the ability to amass the wealth and power to oneself to the detriment of the majority of the people, as Nigerian politicians are known to do. As seen from the texts quoted, political leadership is not a human creation but is something rooted and initiated by God to bring order and progress in the world he created and recognized to be good, even though it was later marred by sin (Yamsat, 2011:8).

Without politics, there is nothing like government because it is the activities involved in getting and using power in public life and being able to influence decisions that affect a country or a state (Dajwan, 2020). Therefore, the concept of "politics" denotes honest and sacrificial leadership in the political space that is concerned with guiding and positively

influencing governmental policies. In terms of political aspiration and electioneering, politics is said to be the art or science that concerns itself with winning and holding control over a government like what obtains between the Democrats and Republicans in the US, or what the All Progressives Congress (APC) party, Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), Labour Party (LP), Social Democratic Party (SDP), and other political parties are practising in the case of Nigeria. Politics is conceptualised in its broad sense, as the communal life of the people in the society; but in its narrow sense, as an art of governance by appropriating specific national policies for national change (Biwul, 2022).

Contemporary or Political Era

An era concerns time fixation, referring to a fixed point in time; one that begins a new period in history. It is determined by historical data sequencing from one starting point to its closing parameter. The phrase, "political era", depicts a certain defined political period or dispensation. Contemporary is by implication current, present politics and a Christian was a name given to the follower of Jesus Christ. The name was first given as a nickname in Acts 11:26 because the disciples were "*like Christ*". The term Christian denotes two Greek perspectives which are: first is a perspective that a Christian is a possession of Christ and the second a servant of Christ. In the case of the Nigerian narrative, the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern protectorates in 1914 still placed the newly rearranged country under colonial rule until its independence on October 1, 1960. The political era which began from independence was soon disrupted by a military coup d'etat, plunging the new country into a long military regime era. The democratic experience for Nigeria only began in 1999 to date with two political eras - from 1999 to 2015, led by the People's Democratic Party (PDP), and from 2015 to date, led by the All Progressives Congress (APC) party (Biwul, 2022:5).

Theocratic Governance in Biblical Ancient Israel

The term "theocracy" does not occur in the Old Testament. However, we can deduce the governance of Israel by God through careful examination and analysis of the biblical texts that recorded the history of ancient Israel. The history of Israel is the history of theocracy (Kim, 1972). It is the account of the Old Testament representation of God's relation to and rule over Israel. This was possible within the sphere of divine revelation of God's will through divinely-chosen organs to divinely appointed persons (Deuteronomy 17:14-20; Judges 8:23; I Samuel 8; 12:12). Under the theocracy, the work of the human leaders was simply to enforce the laws and directions that God has given (Spear, 2001).

Some have traced the beginning of theocracy to the Garden of Eden where civilization was first established and governance was carried out by God himself with no human intermediary. While some others opined that theocratic governance began with Moses, whose claim to leadership is based on his connection with God. So, theocracy is understood as formally beginning with the ratification ceremony of Exodus 24:1-8, which is consequent

upon Israel's acceptance of the covenant relationship previously offered to them in Exodus 19:3-6 (Kim, 1972).

Essentially, God's theocratic governance of biblical ancient Israel has been identified in the constitutional framework of the different epochs of their history. Three different constitutional epochs have been identified in their history before the establishment of the monarchy. The first epoch was the period of the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob). Before the Egyptian sojourn, the Israelites had a pre- or proto-national existence. The patriarch was the sole repository of governmental powers. He was governor and military leader; he conducted foreign relations; received instructions from God; and made the covenants with God, which constituted the constitutional framework for the emerging Israelite nation (Kim, 1972).

The second epoch was when the families of the 12 sons of Jacob were in Egypt living under foreign rule as slaves. There were no more patriarchs but *zekenim* (elders) and *shofetim* (maintainers of peace). These officials administered the customary law of the tribes, perhaps subtly applying the patriarchal covenants (Mendenhall, 1954). And the third epoch began with the Exodus from Egypt up till the establishment of the monarch. The founding of the tribal confederacy immediately after the Exodus follows concurrently with the founding of the Israelite nation, while Moses became the recognized founder of the nation and its constitution-maker (Wildasky, 1984).

During this period, Israel was a loose union of 12 tribes bound together by a common constitution (the Mosaic/Sinaitic covenant). The constitution specified that God himself was the direct governor of the nation. He is assisted by the *Eved Adonai* (Servant or Prime Minister), who would be his representative and who, in turn, would maintain a core of judges and civil servants to handle the transmission of God's instructions to the tribal and family authorities. The Prime Minister, oftentimes and depending on the issue at hand, interacted with the Israelites at different levels: the assembly of the Israelites congregated as a whole (men, women and children); the assembly of all men of military age; a national council representing the tribes; or an *ad hoc* assembly of tribal elders (*zekenim*) or magistrates (*nesim*) for policy making (Elazar, 1989).

Moses was the first *Eved Adonai* and he was succeeded by Joshua. Moses and Joshua exercised authority over the 12 tribes of Israel on behalf of God. They served as God's messengers in governing the Jewish polity. Their principal task was to bring God's word to the Israelites. As the *Eved Adonai*, they likewise shared power with the priests, most especially Aaron and his sons, who were communication links between God and the Israelites. On the other hand, too, the *nesim* (magistrates) and *zekenim* (elders) were responsible for the day-to-day governance of the Israelites. They had a dual function in that they headed the individual tribes and also participated in governance as a whole (Speiser, 1965).

Consequent to the death of Moses and Joshua, regional *shofetim* (judges), who were also charismatic leaders, appeared from time to time, at least one in each generation, to act as proto-national leaders. According to the biblical account, they acted under God's sovereignty, primarily, though, not exclusively, in the military realm (Lindars, 1965). There were judges such as Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson and many others. Their duties may include the settling of disputes and the execution of God's law. This situation existed until the beginning of the monarchy.

It can therefore be deduced that the divinely chosen human representatives, the covenants, and the laws formed the basis for God's theocratic governance of biblical ancient Israel. There were three fundamental covenants and three kinds of laws through which God administered governance in ancient Israel. The covenants were the Noahic (Genesis 8:22 – 9:4, 8-17), Abrahamic (Genesis 12:1-3), and Mosaic covenants (Exodus 19:3-6) (Elazar, 1973). While the laws were also moral laws, which informed them of their duty towards God and other people; the ceremonial laws, which regulated their religious practices; and the civil laws, which were the state laws of the Israelites (Horton, 2006).

These laws became the standard for decision-making. They were rooted like God, the lawgiver and not in the unpredictable nature of humans or in the "natural order" of things as proposed by evolutionists, nor in the people's "collective conscience" as proposed by social contract theorists (DeMar, 1987). Through these laws, God prescribed rules for an ordered society and established a system that respects the life and dignity of fellow humans, as evidenced in the *Ten Commandments* (Exodus 20:2-17; Deuteronomy 5:6-21). For instance, the institution of the Sabbath is an instrument for the levelling of social difference, allowing servants and strangers to rest together with employees and citizens (Exodus 20:8-11; Deuteronomy 5:12-15).

Elazar points out two immediate consequences of this theocratic governance. Firstly, governance was not an end in itself in the Israelite scheme of things, but rather a useful way of serving divine purposes. Secondly, no leadership structure existed independently of its inhabitants. Even the entire body polity of Biblical ancient Israel was conceived as a kind of partnership of Israelites and not as an entity that existed independently of its people. Political institutions served this partnership and united the people with each other through their common linkage with God (Elazar, 1995).

Due to the theocratic governance of biblical ancient Israel, the community was unified, organized and well-structured. Also, governance was organized and efficient because there were no separate government branches unlike democracies, which often have legislative, judicial, and executive branches. Thus, directives and laws were easily passed from leaders to the general population. And the resources of the nation were easily distributed among the populace and properly appropriated.

Certain reasons have been deduced as resulting in the failure of the theocratic governance in biblical ancient Israel, whereby it gave way to a monarchy: the attempt to cope with the external pressure of Philistine military power, which called for an ongoing organized administration with a human administration that was readily available; the difficulty of communicating with God the king; the abandonment of God's direct rule over the people; the influence of the environment as seen in other nations having human government; a breakdown in the religious process and relationship with God that is necessary for a theocracy; and the inability of the people to trust in an unseen God (Elazar, 1995).

The Christian in Contemporary Nigerian Politics

Nigeria before and immediately after independence featured many prominent Christians who contributed significantly to the principles of righteousness that exalts a nation. This was to be expected given the role that ethics, morality, the principles of the Bible and Missionaries played in the development of the country before independence. In Northern Nigeria in particular, Western education, agriculture and medical services were initiated by Missionaries long before the Northern Nigerian Government did. Across the Middle Belt Area, from present Kwara State in the South West up to Niger State and sweeping through Kogi, FCT, Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau, Taraba, and Adamawa State together with the Southern fringes of Borno, Gombe, Bauchi, Kaduna and Kebbi States, Missionary established schools produced graduates that played active roles in education, politics and in the civil service and a whole range of services that sustained Northern Nigeria and indeed Nigeria as a whole (Dafwang, 2016: 35).

The first person to set up a political party in Northern Nigeria (the Northern People's Congress – NPC) was Walter Miller (an Anglican Missionary) trained and mentored Dr R. A. B. Dikko of blessed memory. It was after the colonial Government banned civil servants from associational activism (not Missionaries), that other people like the late Sardauna of Sokoto would benefit from the pioneering works of Dikko (Dafwang, 2016). Yamsat (2009) and Musa (2011) that Missionaries discouraging Christians from active participation in Politics is not general. Apart from Dr Dikko, the names of Pastor David Lot, Solomon Lar, Professor Ishaya Audu and Senator J.S. Tarka amongst others are written in gold in the annals of the history of Politics in Northern Nigeria. In the civil service, it is on record that the Sardauna (late Premier of Northern Nigeria) trusted Christians so much that he placed them in areas that required confidentiality, dedication and integrity. The role played by late Chief Sunday Awoniyi from the former Kabba Province in the administration of the office of the late Sardauna was remarkable. I listened to a lecture by Chief Sunday Awoniyi in the late 90s at Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) which greatly inspired me. In his words, "*The Sardauna trusted me and respected my Christian faith to the extent that he bought me a copy of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible when he was first launched in London*". The Sardauna had gone to London on an official visit and heard that a new

version of the Bible had been launched, so he bought one as a gift for his devoted Christian Secretary. What a Testimony (Dafwang, 2016: 36).

This study is addressed from the perspective of Christian tradition. Accordingly, the focus is on the Christian and his or her participation in Nigerian contemporary politics. It should be clear that all human beings are religiously conscious beings because they were created with such intrinsically embedded consciousness of divinity. Therefore, when any human person contemplates his or her origin concerning the divine, seeking a better understanding of the subject, such contemplation could be constructed as Biblically inclined. Consequently, theology is human's insatiable quest to know the divine and how human persons can relate to him either personally or corporately. Put within a Christian context, a Biblical Christian is intensely reflective by its nature and orientation. It is the deep reflective quest about the Being, Personhood, activities, and relationship of the creation of God to the human persons; and conversely, their search for a better understanding of how they could individually and corporately relate to him. Biwul quoted in A-listers. McGrath also follows this stream of thought by conceptualising theology as a reflection upon the God whom Christians worship and adore; and Christian theology as the systematic study of the fundamental ideas of the Christian faith (Biwul, 2022). Agreeably, Timothy Palmer also understood theology as our human reflection on the nature of God and his activities in the world and politics is one (Palmer, 2015).

Textual Historical Participation of Christians in Nigerian Politics

Nehemiah's leadership style is a remarkable one in that it provides a biblical example of a genuine leader who believes in participatory order of leadership, the book of Nehemiah generally talks about someone who determines to impact the society where he finds himself positively not minding the enjoyment he receives in a strange land, Nehemiah plan, strategize and execute positively for the betterment of the land of Jerusalem. The meaning of Nehemiah means (the Lord Comfort), this name shape the future of Jerusalem to the extent that the temple was rededicated for worship and the wall was rebuilt to safeguard the land from the enemy (Joseph, 2018).

The question such as should the Christians participate in politics or not. Should Christians be involved in politics? Are they under a moral obligation to do so? Are there any Biblical foundations guiding Christian sociopolitical engagement? What does the Bible have to say about political matters? Why do different groups interpret the Bible's teaching on the subject differently? These pertinent questions serve as our propellant to have recourse to the Biblical texts which serve as the primary source for Christian theologisation of politics. This is to identify some political characters in it and to also decipher their contributions to the political terrain of their time. The Biblical texts are replete with the participation of certain ancient forebears in the political reality of their day. This lays some beneficial background

framework for the contemporary Nigerian Christian to brace up for the reality of existing in the Nigerian political topography (Biwul, 2022).

True politics uses political power to expedite good governance promote the welfare of the citizenry and advance the course and progress of a state. This is what we see play out in the political participation of the sampled textual data. Two textual examples will suffice. First, Nehemiah the son of Hakaliah was an exiled Jew. He was a civil servant, serving as the cupbearer of King Artaxerxes I (464-424 BCE) in Susa, the capital of the Persian empire (Nehemiah 1:1-11). He was a godly person who revered the God of the Jews. Nehemiah was also a patriotic citizen of his ancestral nation and land (Nehemiah 2:1-9). His active political participation as governor of the Persian province of Yehud (Judah) for twelve years (445-433) brought significant religious and socio-economic reforms to the land (Biwul, 2022).

Nehemiah, being an excellent and self-sacrificing political administrator, was able to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem that were broken by the Babylonian invasion of 587/6 BCE amidst fierce enemy opposition (Nehemiah 2:17-20; 3:1-32; 4:1-3, 7-8, 11-21; 6:1-15). According to Katherine Southwood, he was confronted with the decision of humiliation by his opponents who used antagonistic tactics including anger, ridicule, conspiracy, sarcasm, coercion and pressurisation, and the threats of attack as well to obstruct the restoration of Jerusalem's walls (Southwood, 2016). Yet Nehemiah was focused, firm and resolute to achieve the goal of his refortification of Jerusalem. He was also able to correct certain acts of irreligiosity as well as acts of socio-political oppression and injustices by advocating for the disadvantaged and oppressed of the land (Nehemiah 5:1-13; 13:1-11; 13:15-28).

Biwul (2022) as in Tamara Cohn Eskenazi explains that tax payment to the Persian administration was aggravated and exploited by the wealthier Jews for their benefit. Defaulting citizens who were unable to repay their loans were at the risk of losing their property and pledging their children as slaves to their lending Jewish compatriots. Such greed-prone socio-political and socio-economic opportunistic exploitative attitude seems timeless in national politics.

Governor Nehemiah, in the face of such an ugly situation, became a compassionate philanthropist to the needy to redress the fractured economic situation (Nehemiah 5:14-19). He combated the situation by rebuking and challenging the wealthier upper class to right actions in favour of the needy. Nehemiah demonstrated his economic reform by practically contributing his funds to help the needy. Additionally, he gave hope to the downtrodden and guaranteed security for the land so the citizens could enjoy shalom (Nehemiah 6:16; 7:1-4; 13:13). The security of the city was guaranteed on the ground that rebuilding Jerusalem's walls would also reinforce the religious, political, and commercial power of the city (Biwul, 2022:16).

Second, Mordecai and Hadassah/Esther also stand as an amiable mirror for Christian participation in Nigerian contemporary politics or positive political participation for the Christians. While Hadassah/Esther, a cousin to Mordecai, was Queen in Susa, her uncle Mordecai was among the palace guards serving at the royal gate, possibly himself as a minor court official (Esther 2:5-7; 17, 21-23; 3:2-3). Mordecai was later elevated to the status of an honoured royalty as the second in command, Esther 6:1-11; 8:1-2, 15; 9:4; 10:3 (Leith, 2001).

Both Mordecai and Hadassah/Esther averted what Mary Joan Winn Leith describes as a genocidal scheme when they acted swiftly to obviate the annihilation plot, a self-centred act of injustice that was carefully orchestrated against the Jews by arrogant and power-drunk Haman (Esther 3:5-4:16). These two patriotic Jewish Diaspora heroes worked within the political system to secure salvation for their people (Williams, 2016). It was such political participation that saved the whole Jewish race from extermination when the enemy's plot was ironically reversed (Esther 7:1-6; 8:3-13, 17; 9:1-3, 5-19).

Gleanings from the above indicate that when godly, honest and selfless people who are firm on their stance on national issues speak out on behalf of the people as they engage in national politics and policies, the people as beneficiaries will rejoice. The nation of Nigeria needs active and positive Christian advocates (both from the clergy and lay persons) like Hadassah/Esther and Mordecai. This is what the examples of Nehemiah, Mordecai and Hadassah/Esther reveal. Conversely, when political power is either mistakenly or erroneously relinquished into the hands of sentimental, selfish, arrogant, corrupt, and people with indurate conscience, it is tantamount to killing a system and dwarfing the citizens. Biwul citing Nimmyel rhetorically ponders as affirmed by Biwul, "Is it not dangerous and risky to allow the wrong people take power, influence government policies that affect our collective wellbeing... [merely crying] foul about obnoxious policies [made by] the people ruling over us?" Upon such rhetorical intrigue, he contends that Nigeria is in a state of a political and economic mess "because good people or genuine Christians have refused to get involved to change the status quo. Unarguably, the majority of Nigerians are crying and calling for a change in the political system. Yet, changing the bastardised political landscape in Nigeria demands honest, radical, dogged, and forthright active participation with a people-centred agenda and not merely a bleating of the situation or taking the position of a barking dog (Biwul, 2022:17).

Therefore, if Nehemiah, Mordecai, and Hadassah/Esther we're not proactive in responding to the need of their contemporary nation and hour through active participation? Consider what might have happened to the Jewish race and Jerusalem's walls. There is an urgent need for Christian participation in Nigerian contemporary politics.

Brief Political Participatory Facts from History

History demonstrates the fact that Christian participation in national politics has great benefits not only for the Christian community but much more for the benefit of humanity. It is a realistic truism that "Our everyday relationships with other people are deeply shaped by how we see them-who we think they are, and who we think we are?" We must possess the African mentality and philosophy "I am because we are and we are because I am". This undergirding ideology was foundational as the causation of African Transatlantic slavery. Some whites considered black skin as subhuman people lower than them: hence, enslaved them to work on their plantations and elsewhere.

The agony of their brutalization, dehumanization, and wasting them both on sea and land ignited the spirit of agitation for its abolition by abolitionists, those initial white people who felt slavery to be a social wrong and resisted its power and perpetuity (Biwul, 2022:17). They regarded slavery as antithetical dehumanization of the human person, as an abuse of human dignity, and as an evil committed against humanity, who concertedly and vehemently fought against it through abolitionist societies and movements. Unarguably, religion had a remarkable effect on these abolitionists and Anti-slavery agitators because a number of the American abolitionists and their evangelical activities were leaders from Protestant denominations (McPherson, 1992).

Lessons from Experiences of Some Christians by Professor Istifanus Dafwang

1. Lessons from Reverend (Professor) Ishaya Audu

Among the Sardauna boys, I had the privilege to interact very closely with Professor Ishaya Audu, the first indigenous Vice Chancellor (VC) of ABU, Zaria. He was a VC from 1972-1975 and being a leading Christian in the North, believers had very high regard for him. General Murtala Mohammed took over the Government in mid-1975 and his appointment was terminated. It was in 1986/1987 that the HEKAN Church leadership in Samaru Zaria requested that Professor Dafwang should go and interview him, in connection with his desire to be ordained as a Reverend Minister by the Church. Dafwang was then a young academic and was greatly humbled by this assignment.

His Humility: Baba Ishaya Audu was humble and down to earth. He never applied for the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Vice-Chancellor (VC) job. He was doing his Ward rounds in the pediatric ward when he got a letter appointing him the Vice Chancellor of ABU. The Sardauna identified men of character and learning across the North, for appointments without discrimination of either religious or ethnic backgrounds. Today in ABU, and indeed in all Federal Tertiary Institutions, the story is different. The most outstanding Scientist in the North so far, a Nigerian National Merit Award Winner, an LNG Science Award Winner, a Scientist that was ranked among the top 20, in Africa and an indigene of Kaduna State,

applied for the position of VC of ABU, Zaria in 2009. At the interview, he scored 81% to beat his nearest rival who scored 63%. Despite his outstanding qualities, the candidate was rejected, obviously, because of his Christian identity. Sadly, though, that type of discrimination has become the order of the day in Nigeria (Dafwang, 2016:37).

His Standing up for Christ in All Situations: As a VC his Christian identity was known wherever he went. In recruitments, appointments and promotions, he insisted on merit and equity. He was well known for judicious management of resources. In order not to tarnish his name, his wife opted to resign from the University's employment to become a businesswoman, because one of her peers, who was less qualified than her petitioned against her promotion. Even then, he was accused of misusing university resources to support his wife's business.

Fortunately for him, he insisted on getting copies of all the documents about her business transactions. Twice, the Police CID visited him for investigation and the receipts of all her business transactions were given to them for inspection and she was cleared. The Church and Nigerian contemporary politics need many more Ishaya Audus, in all public and private offices and in the Churches of Nigeria if Nigeria is to be salvaged from its current self-inflicted degeneration (Dafwang, 2016:40).

2. Choosing to be an Active Partisan Politician

First of all, you must be born again, because that is the gateway. With Christ in you, you are the light of the world. Whatever may be your situation, you have been given the mandate to be the light of the world and salt of the earth. Secondly, it is important to identify God's purpose for your life and key into it. Prospective career Politicians and even those already in it will find these books very useful, *"The Purpose Driven Life"* by Rick Warren 2002, *"Christians in Politics"* by Danladi Musa, 2009 and *"The Christian Becoming a Political Leader"* by Pandang Yamsat, 2011. All the books emphasize the need to develop the Spirit of Servant Leadership as demonstrated by Jesus Christ as a critical precondition. The need for the Church to be involved in the decision-making, as well as initiating some kind of monitoring and evaluating the performance of such politicians is featured in the last two books (Dafwang, 2016:41).

With contemporary Nigerian politics, it is recommended that if possible, Church and Community leaders should be involved in recommending those assessed to be the most competent in their communities to the Political parties for nomination and election contests. The researcher learned that Chief Solomon D. Lar was nominated by the Church in Plateau State and contested the election and won. Again, his leadership witnessed infrastructural developments and always listened to the church. Mentioned has been made of how Professor Ishaya Audu emerged as the Vice Presidential running mate on the NPP ticket in

1979, based on the recommendation of four young men in ABU who had no biological or ethnic relationship with the Rev. Professor.

3. Love Not the World

Wealth accumulation at the expense of the poor is a sin. It is also characterized by the spraying of Naira or dollar notes at parties for people to dance on top. It is very pathetic that, even though there is a law against the spraying of Naira notes on people during parties, even those who enacted the law in the first National Assembly under President Obasanjo have no respect for it. Maybe the "Change Begins with Me" campaign should revisit that law. The massive accumulation of wealth is a clear indication of corruption, bad governance, oppression and so many of the like. Christian politicians should learn from Nehemiah who used his resources for the needy and poor in his day (Dafwang, 2016:43).

4. Formulation of Cooperative Societies and Non-Governmental Organizations for Community Service

Cooperative movements worldwide have been used by Governments to mobilize citizens through self-help initiatives to complement the development efforts of the state. If politics is the practice of the distribution of power and resources within a Cooperative creates an enabling environment for community-based mobilization of resources from within and without the community and for the equitable distribution of same to all members. Unlike in a Government Agency with a hierarchy of administrative officers, Cooperative Societies operate a democratic process in which all members have equal opportunities in taking decisions in managing the Cooperative. Christians can impact positively the lives of many by investing in the formation and management of Cooperatives (Dafwang, 2016:45).

Conclusion

God's rule over biblical ancient Israel from the patriarchal period to before the establishment of the monarchy was through human leaders (patriarchs, *Eved Adonai* like Moses and Joshua, elders and magistrates or judges) and the various covenants or laws. The theocratic governance in biblical ancient Israel reveals the following: human leaders were submissive to God's authority and not their self-will, which consequently resulted in accountable leadership; decentralization of power and authority that allowed for every substructure to actively participate in governance; leaders existed for the governed and not the other way round; and the laws (constitutional framework) were strictly adhered to with due punishment meted out to offenders without variance to status or gender.

All of the aforementioned improved the well-being of the Israelites and the quality of life was enhanced. God's rule over biblical ancient Israel through the various laws or covenants enacted through the human representatives made living better, created a cohesive society,

raised an accountable human leadership, prioritized human needs, enhanced interpersonal and communal safety, and accentuated social character concerned with achieving the good life. These are indices of a socially developed community and are instructive for an African continent that is riddled with factors militating against social development.

Therefore, the corporate existence of a self-governed people under the rule of God's law and sovereignty through divinely appointed human leaders can sustain social development in Africa. African countries can apply these aspects of theocratic governance in principle. Leaders should lead with a great sense of accountability because they occupy leadership positions for the benefit of the people; political power should be decentralized with every substrata of society participating in governance; and the rule of law should be maintained and enforced.

This article has shown that Christian theology is capable of considering the social implications of its belief framework and serves as an example of a theologically-based social investigation of human concern. Hence, as Bob Mitchell asserted in his proposition of Christian theology of change, Africa will achieve wholeness and be delivered from impoverishment when those who govern and the governed align with God's redemptive purposes in the world.

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CHRISTIANITY AND THE FUTURE OF IKEJI FESTIVAL OF ARONDIZUOGU

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Abstract

In pre-Christian Igbo-land, traditional religion played a significant role in shaping behaviour, social and cultural identifications, and principles of socialisation. However, with colonialism and the advent of Christian missionaries, Igbo-African cultural values were largely marginalized and viewed as pagan and fetishistic, largely due to their unfamiliarity to western missionaries. Despite this historical context, the Ikeji festival remains a culturally significant event among the Arondizuogu people of Igbo-land, despite being challenged by Christians as unchristian and superstitious. This paper advocated for a reconsideration of the relationship between Christianity and Ikeji festival. This reconsideration is based on the fact that, despite Christian disregard for the festival, it continues to hold a significant place in the cultural heritage of the predominantly Christian Arondizuogu people. As such, the paper called for a new approach that will facilitate the Christianization of Ikeji festival and the Igbonization of the Christian faith. It, therefore, adopted Inculturation as a theoretical framework, which served as a negotiation tool for the discourse. The hermeneutic and Igwebuiké theological approaches were also adopted for the interpretation of Ikeji festival and the establishment of a connection between Christianity and culture, respectively. This paper serves as a valuable contribution to the limited literature on the relationship between Christianity and Ikeji festival.

Keywords: Ikeji Festival, Christianity, Igwebuiké Theology, Igbo, Culture, Arondizuogu

Introduction

The African continent has more than 3000 ethnic groups and some 2000 different languages. This makes the continent home not only to amazing biodiversity and natural beauty, but also to cultural diversity expressed in rites, rituals, festivals and cultural ceremonies. During such festivals and cultural ceremonies, the African culture and tradition is manifested through a retinue of art forms, such as music, dance, art and celebrations. While some are mainly social, some are cultural primarily and others are religious in the main. This is not to say that the social, cultural and religious elements do not interact. In fact, among the African people, there is always an inescapable religious element in every form of festival. The social and cultural dimensions are also hardly lacking in presence.

Some of the festivals celebrated around the African continent include: Zimbabwe's Harare International Festival of the Arts, taking place in April, which showcases the creativity, resilience and strength of the Zimbabwean people; Morocco's Fez Festival, which is a world sacred music festival, garnished with Moroccan songs, Italian renaissance music, Balinese dance, and African sufism; Knysna Oyster Festival in South Africa, which focuses on Oysters; Ouidah Voodoo Festival, celebrated each January, which is in honor of traditional religion and the associated cults; Festival of the Dancing Masks in Burkina Faso, which celebrates history and music; Timkat in Ethiopia, which is an Orthodox celebration; Tunisia's International Festival of the Sahara, a four-day event which celebrates the rich culture of the Sahara Desert and its people; the Great Wildebeest Migration, which focuses on the great migration of natural wildlife that takes place through Tanzania and Kenya. These festivals provide great moments around Africa.

This notwithstanding, the present paper focuses on the Ikeji festival of the Arondizuogu people of Imo State, South East of Nigeria. It is a festival that makes a beautiful synthesis of social, cultural and religious elements, and which brings not only the sons and daughters of Arondizuogu back home, but also visitors from within and outside the country to witness the richness of the ceremonies that spice up the days of the festival. A cursory glance reveals that scholars from several disciplines have concerned themselves with the description, analysis, and more recently, the interpretation of Ikeji festival. Yet little explicit theoretical effort has been devoted to the future of Ikeji festival in relation to the advent of Christianity.

While focusing on Ikeji festival, the uniqueness of the present discourse is in its study of Ikeji in relation to Christianity. At a time when the Christian faith is predominant in Arondizuogu, many questions have emerged: what is the future of Ikeji festival given that it is considered by most Christians a pagan festival? In the face of the present concept of the festival as fetish, and given that participation has been on the increase, how can such a festival be Christianized so that it can be celebrated across religious borders? How can a

bridge be built between Ikeji festival and the Christian faith? It is within this context that the Igwebuike complementary concept of evangelization and culture is employed.

Theoretical Framework: Igwebuike Complementary Concept of Evangelization and Culture

The theoretical framework employed in this research is the *Igwebuike* wholistic and complementary understanding of evangelization and culture. *Igwebuike* as a thought current focuses on the bigger picture of reality and believes that all parts of reality are interconnected. How would this approach affect this discourse on the relationship between Ikeji festival and Christianity? There are two dimensions to this framework that are relevant to the present paper:

- a. *Igwebuike* understands culture as an incomplete enterprise that continues to evolve as long as the human person continues to adapt himself or herself to the environment. When this approach speaks of culture as incomplete, it means that even the Christian culture that was brought by the missionaries was not complete and thus needed the African incomplete culture for its completeness. For the grounding of Christianity in Africa, therefore, the African culture becomes the missing link. While the African culture finds completeness in the Christian culture, the Christian culture would reach its full potential in the African culture¹. The incompleteness of the Christian culture here referred to does not speak of the core of the Christian faith, it rather refers to the cultural garment in which it was clothed and brought to the African people. It is within this context that the Christianization of Ikeji festival becomes relevant.
- b. Within the context of the *Igwebuike* framework which is complementary, the African culture is understood as not only completing the Christian message that has been brought to Africa, but makes the Christian message richer and more meaningful to the African people than it came². Referring to the richness of encounter, Torrance writes that: "One becomes human by making use of the energy available from outer sources to become a better integrated personality, to interact at a deeper level with the environment, and to achieve greater fulfillment of his potentialities"³. One loses his or her humanness when he or she is estranged, isolated, rejected, and cut off from other sources of information, inspiration and spiritual strength. This also happens each time a culture denigrates the other rather than allowing the other to enrich her.

¹ Kanu, Ikechukwu A., "Igwebuike theology of Ikwa Ogwe and the Inculturation of the Gospel message". Published in OGIRISI: A Journal of African Studies. Vol. 16. No. 1. pp. 15-28. A publication of the Department of Philosophy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, 2020.

² Kanu, Ikechukwu A., "Igwebuike Theology of Udi: God's unchanging revelation and man's changing culture". Published in the *Catholic Voyage: African Journal of Consecrated Life*. Vol. 17. No. 2, pp. 12-24. A publication of the Conference of Major Superiors of Nigeria, 2020.

³ Torrance E. P., What it means to become human. In Scoby M and Graham G. (Eds.). *To nurture humanness* (pp. 3-13). Washington, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1970, p. 10.

This theoretical framework would help to advance the discourse on the connection between the African culture (Ikeji festival) and the Christian faith.

Ikeji Festival among the Arondizuogu People

Etymologically, the concept festival is from the Latin *festum*, which means “public joy, merriment, revelry”; a second Latin word *feria*, which means “abstinence from work in honour of the gods”. These concepts are used in their plurals, *festas* and *feriae* respectively, which suggests that festivals last several days and include many events⁴. From the Latin *festas*, we have the Italian *festas*, the French *fetes*, the Spanish *fiestas*, the Portuguese *festas*.

This etymological dimension notwithstanding, Alessandro Falassi defines festival as:

A periodically recurrent, social occasion in which, through a multiplicity of forms and a series of coordinated events, participate directly or indirectly and to various degrees, all members of a whole community, united by ethnic, linguistic, religious, historical bonds and sharing a worldview⁵.

Focusing on the relationship between aesthetics, tourism and festivals, Alessandro Falassi adds that:

The colourful variety of dramatic intensity of its dynamic choreographic and aesthetic aspects, the signs of deep meaning underlying them, its historical roots and the involvement of the natives have always attracted the attention of casual visitors, have consumed travelers and men of letters alike⁶.

Kurath H., Kuhn S. M., Onions C., Jose Machado and Babcock P.⁷, taking from the contemporary English understanding of festival, observe that it involves the following:

- a. a sacred or a profane time of celebration, marked by special observances;
- b. the annual celebration of a notable person or event, or the harvest of an important product;
- c. a cultural event consisting of a series of performances of works in the fine arts, often devoted to a single artist or genre;
- d. a fair;
- e. a generic gaiety, conviviality, cheerfulness.

⁴ Glare P. G., *The Oxford Latin Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982, p.686; Egidio Forcellini, *Lexicon Totius Latinitatis*. Padua: Typis Seminarii, 1940, p. 468; Charles Du Cange, *Glossarium Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis*. Niort: Favre, 1884, pp. 462-463

⁵ Alessandro Falassi, *Festival: Definition and morphology*, p. 2

⁶ Alessandro Falassi, *Festival: Definition and morphology*, p. 1

⁷ Kurath H. and Kuhn S. M., *Middle English Dictionary*. Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1952, pp. 451-529; Onions C., *Shorter English Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973, pp. 742-743; Babcock P., *Webster Third New International Dictionary*. Springfield Mass: Merriam, 1976, pp. 815-841.

From the following perspectives, it can be said that in every festival, there is always a social function and a symbolic meaning that are connected to a series of values that the community recognizes as essential to its history, identity, survival, ideology and worldview.

It is from the foregoing that Ikeji festival of the Arondizuogu people of Imo State, South East of Nigeria is understood as an annual religio-cultural celebration among the Arondizuogu people consisting of a series of events, performances and marked by special observances. The social functions and symbolic meaning of Ikeji festival is connected to a series of values that the Arondizuogu people recognize as essential to their ideology, worldview, social identity, historical continuity, and her physical survival.

The origin of the Ikeji festival in Arondizuogu is shrouded in mythology. Many versions exist. For some, Ikeji began as a ceremony to mark the end of one planting season and the beginning of another⁸. The festival has its roots from its variant celebrated in Arochukwu, the parent community of Arondizuogu⁹ long before Mazi Izuogu settled at Arochukwu. For others, it 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.

The next year, after visiting Mazi Izuogu, Mazi Iheme would return the favour by extending an invite to his master to the new settlement-Arondizuogu to officially seek his permission to till the land. 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 stay¹⁰. During this visit, Mazi Izuogu would bless the land before the people cultivate crops. After the death of Mazi Izuogu and Mazi Iheme, it became the responsibility of Iheme's descendants to fix the dates of Ikeji¹¹.

Ikeji festival, as it is normal with rural festivals is an old event that has lasted for about 300 years, it is agrarian and centred on fertility. It announces the culture of the Arondizuogu people and renews periodically the lifestream of the Arondizuogu community, thereby, creating new energy. It involves a rite of conspicuous display of symbolic elements, rite of conspicuous consumption of food and drinks, prepared in abundance and made generously

⁸ Uche Ohia, *Ikeji Festival of Arondizuogu: An Introduction*. Silverduck Publishing Press, Nigeria, 2014. P. 2; Kanu, I. A. and Precious 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; Aro People, culled from the Wikipedia Encyclopedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aro_people. Accessed on October 6th, 2022.

⁹ Nat Okafor-Ogbaji, *Ikeji Festival Arondizuogu, ancient and modern*. Lagos Printing Press, Nigeria, 1998. P. 11-12.

¹⁰ H. A. P. Nwana, *Arondizuogu Traditional Values*. Standard Publishers Ltd, Nigeria, 2005. P. 24 - 27.

¹¹ Kanu, I. A., *Ikeji Festival of Arondizuogu: Retelling the Stories and Rekindling the values of an Ancestral Homeland*. *International Journal of Religion and Human Relations*. Vol. 9. No. 1., 156-179, 2017.

available. It also involves ritual dramas staged at festival sites, and rites of competition, which often constitutes its cathartic moment.

Christian Perspectives about Ikeji: A Survey

The process of building a bridge between Ikeji festival and the Christian faith will require a survey that will present the way Christians feel about the festival. Thus, in other to get the feelings of contemporary Christians about Ikeji festival, the researcher engaged in a survey. 50 persons of the Christian faith from different Arondizuogu communities were interviewed regarding what they find in Ikeji festival that are incompatible with the Christian faith.

Results

The participants were slightly skewed in gender towards male. However, participants represented a range of ages and distribution across different communities within Arondizuogu.

Table 1: Gender and location of participants

Characteristic	Category	Number of participants (No:50)
Gender	Male	28
	Female	22
Communities	Ndiakuwanta	7
	Ndiakeme	7
	Ndiuche	6
	NdiAmazu	6
	Ndiawa	6
	Ndiejezie	6
	Ndinjoku	6
Ndimoko	6	

Table 2: The Major theme in participants' responses

Theme	Sub-Theme	Theme Dimensions	#Cited
1.	What do you think are the aspects of Ikeji festival that are opposed to the Christian faith?		

Indifferent	✧ Complete Indifference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They do not have the flare for festivals as such 	3
	✧ Partial Indifference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have other engagements that keep them away during the festival 	
Aware of contradictions but still participate	✧ Feel guilty afterwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They avoid the aspects of the festival which they suspect to have pagan elements 	13
	✧ Feel it's of no consequence on their faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand it more as an entertainment and the celebration of a local culture rather than a spiritual event • Are part of those who provide entertainment during the festival, and so participate by providing entertainment to attendees 	
Do not participate at all	✧ Consider it evil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is considered as paying homage to ancestors, and thus incompatible with Christianity 	6
	✧ Do not have the flair for festivals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involving rites and rituals and has got to do with the invocation of spiritual powers outside of Christ • Involves rites of competition that involves use of mystical powers and black magic • Involves masquerade rites • Involves visit to shrines 	

Interested in building a bridge between Ikeji Festival And the Christian faith	✧ Can be made a Christian festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement in sorcery can be removed 	24
	✧ Can remove elements that make it look like a pagan festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The invocation of spiritual powers and black magic can be removed • Christian elements like beging with prayer at Churches can be introduced to make Christians feel at home with the event 	
Do not believe that there is any cause for concern	✧ Understand Ikeji as related to Christianity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold that it promotes purity as in the Christian faith • The ancestors honored are like the Christian saints for African traditional societies 	4
	✧ Can be combined with the Christian faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a moment of thanksgiving which the scripture encourages 	

The responses from the respondents show that Ikeji festival is a very important event among the Arondizuogu people. Their responses is presented in the pie chat below.

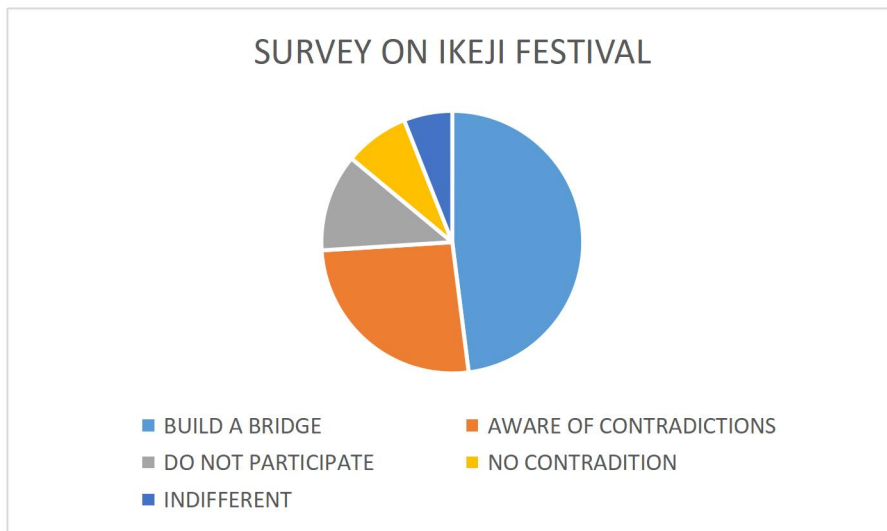


Figure 1: Pie chat showing the responses of respondents

From the survey carried out, that the people who do not participate in Ikeji festival are only 6% of the number of people who were interviewed shows that the festival occupies a very significant place in the life of the Arondizuogu community. The importance of this festival to the people is also evident in the fact that those who do not participate as a result of what they perceive as contradictory to the Christian faith are only 12% of the interviewed population. There are 8% of the interviewed population that are of the view that there is no contradiction between the Christian faith and Ikeji festival. Interestingly, 74% understand that there might be contradictions between Ikeji festival and the Christian faith but still fully participate during the festival. However, 48% out of the 74% are of the view that there is a need for building a bridge between the Christian faith and Ikeji festival.

Inculturation: Towards a Dialogue between the Christian Faith and Ikeji Festival

Based on the findings of the survey on the perspectives of Arondizuogu Christians on the Ikeji festival, it has become very important to initiate the process of building a bridge between the Christian faith and Ikeji festival, which is an aspect of the religio-cultural experience of the Arondizuogu people of Imo State, Nigeria.

In this section of this research, the researchers are not interested in pointing out the particular areas in Ikeji festival where such bridges can be built in relation to the Christian faith. Rather, the researchers are more interested in the proposal of a theoretical path or a concept that would guide such a relationship. And the theoretical path or concept that is proposed is the concept in Catholic theology which has served as an instrument for the reconciliation of faith and culture, which is INCULTURATION.

Inculturation was defined by Walligo as:

...the honest and serious attempt to make Christ and his Gospel of salvation ever more understood by peoples of every culture, locality and time. It is the reformulation of Christian life and doctrine into the very thought patterns of each people.... It is the continuous endeavour to make Christianity 'truly feel at home' in the cultures of each people¹².

Thus, inculturation becomes a process that plies the pattern of the 'Word made-flesh', which would involve the gospel taking life and flesh in the beliefs of people who welcome Christ and the values of the gospel. Just as Christ became man so as to win salvation for all, the gospel must become 'culture' so as to win the heart of 'local people'. John Paul II defined inculturation as "the incarnation of the gospel in autochthonous cultures, at the same time,

¹² Waliggo, J., *Inculturation: Its meanings and urgency*. Kenya: St Paul, 1986, p. 11.

the introduction of these cultures into the life of the church”¹³. Crollius and Metuh further stress the need for reciprocity in the relationship between the gospel and cultures¹⁴.

When the Second Vatican Council was formally inaugurated on 11th October 1963 by Pope John XXIII with different continents in attendance, Karl Rahner described it as “the beginning of a tentative approach by the church to the discovery and official recognition of itself as world-church.”¹⁵ Though the word ‘Inculturation’ was not particularly used in any of the sixteen conciliar documents, the Church treated inculturation as a major issue pastorally.

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (SC), was the first conciliar document that was approved by the Second Vatican Council. It was promulgated by Pope Paul VI on December 4, 1963. The constitution favored the revision and adaptation of the liturgy into particular circumstances and cultures because the Christian faith implanted in mission territories could no longer be confined to a Euro-centric cultural manifestation. Although *Sacrosanctum Concilium* upheld the use of Latin in the Latin rite, it favored the translation of liturgical texts from Latin to the vernacular language¹⁶. Thus enabling the people to hear God speaking to them in their own tongues and languages.¹⁷ Karl Rahner captures it so well when he observed that “the victory of the vernacular languages in the church’s liturgy is a clear and urgent signal of the coming-to-be of a world church, with its particular churches each existing autarchically in its own cultural group, rooted in that culture and no longer exported from Europe.”¹⁸

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (GS) was promulgated on December 7, 1965 by Pope Paul VI. *Gaudium et Spes* is the conciliar document that gave the highest attention to the topic of faith and culture and opened the floodgates for the proliferation of the theologies of inculturation within Catholic circles. The document gives room for the dialogue between the faith and the cultural value of different cultures. The document rightly noted that, “the human person can achieve true and full humanity only by means of culture.”¹⁹ The document did not only recognize the importance of culture within

¹³ Udoidem, S. I., *John Paul II on inculturation: Theory and practice*. Maryland: University Press of America, 1996, p. 2.

¹⁴ Metuh, I. E., Incarnating Christianity in African world-views. In Justin Ukpong (Ed.). *The Church in Africa and the Special African Synod* (pp.9-23). Port Harcourt: Ciwa, 1993; Metuh, I. E., *African inculturation theology: Africanizing Christianity*. Onitsha: Imico, 1996; Crollius, R., *Inculturation: Newness and ongoing progress*. Nairobi: Pauline, 1986, p. 43.

¹⁵ Karl Rahner, “Basic theological interpretation of the Second Vatican Council,” in *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 20, 1986, pp.77-89.

¹⁶ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, in Austin Flannery, (ed.), Documents of Vatican Council II, Vol. 1, No.36, Mumbai: St Paul Press, 2010.

¹⁷ Cf. Acts 2:16

¹⁸ Karl Rahner, *Concern for the Church*, trans. Edward Quinn, New York, Crossroad, 1981, 80.

¹⁹ *Gaudium et Spes*, in Austin Flannery, (ed.), Documents of Vatican Council II, Vol. 1, No.53, Mumbai: St Paul Press, 2010.

the church, but also outside the church. It holds that human identity and transformation is deeply rooted in culture.

The Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church (AG), promulgated by Pope Paul VI on December 7, 1965 principally opines that the church is missionary by nature. Though the term inculturation was not used explicitly, the document uses the analogy of incarnation to justify church among cultures. The document states that:

Christ's incarnation is the paradigm for the young churches, insisting that if the church is to be in a position to offer to all the mystery of salvation and the life brought by God, then it must implant itself among every group of people in the same way that Christ by his incarnation committed himself to the particular social and cultural circumstances of the people among whom he lived.²⁰

In 1969, at the closing session of the First Plenary Assembly of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) on evangelization and the cultural adaptation of faith, Pope Paul VI recognized the diversity of cultures and he urged African Bishops to recognize that:

An adaptation of the Christian life in the fields of pastoral, ritual, didactic and spiritual activities is not only possible, it is even favored by the church. The liturgical renewal is a living example of this and in this sense you may and you must have an African Christianity.²¹

The Pope recognized the presence of God in African cultures and the need to preserve African cultural heritage.

The Synod of Bishops on Evangelisation in 1974 was particularly concerned about the superficiality and shallowness of the Christian life in Africa caused by the lack of genuine dialogue between the Gospel and religio-cultural values of the people. This was the statement made by the Bishops at the Synod:

Our theological thinking must remain faithful to the authentic tradition of the church and at the same time be attentive to the life of our communities and respectful of our traditions and languages, that is of our philosophy of life. Following this idea of mission, the Bishops of Africa and Madagascar consider as being completely out-of-date the so-called theology of adaptation. In its stead, they adopted the theology of incarnation.²²

²⁰ *Ad Gentes*, in Austin Flannery, (ed.), Documents of Vatican Council II, Vol. 1,, No.10, 22, Mumbai: St Paul Press, 2010.

²¹ Pope Paul VI, address at the closing of the All-African Bishops' Symposium. (Cf also, Peter Schineller, *A Handbook on Inculturation*, New York: Paulist Press, 1990, p.129.

²² Aylward Shorter. *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, New York: Orbis Books, 1988, p.213.

The implication of this is that, the Bishops advocated for the incarnation of African cultural and artistic riches into the Christian faith so as to enable the Gospel to take flesh in the daily lives of Africans.

Pope Paul VI in 1975 issued an Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (On Evangelisation). In this document he showed how the gospel message could be integrated within any given culture by bringing the Good News of Christ into all the strata of humanity, so that humanity itself becomes a new creation. He Pope puts it this way:

Evangelization loses much of its force and effectiveness if it does not take into consideration the actual people to whom it is addressed, if it does not use their language, their signs and symbols, if it does not answer the questions they ask, and if it does not have an impact on their concrete life.²³

Saint Pope John Paul II was known for his extensive travels to the local churches around the world. These travels afforded him a firsthand encounter with diverse cultures. He is the champion of a dialogue between Christianity and the various religious-cultures of the world. It is the Pope who established “the Pontifical Council for Culture to help the Church be involved in the saving exchange in which inculturation of the Gospel goes hand in hand with the evangelization of cultures.”²⁴

In the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, he simply defined inculturation as “the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures.”²⁵ His definition points to a seamless dialogue between faith and culture. The implication of this is that, the gospel values purify and enrich the culture and the cultural values enrich the church in the areas of the liturgy, Christian life and theology.²⁶

However, in *Catechesi Tradendae* (1979) the word ‘inculturation’ was for the first time mentioned in a formal papal document. The document used inculturation and acculturation alongside, which is the encounter between cultures that leads to the birth of a new culture.²⁷ It is crucial to note that acculturation is a necessary condition for any inculturation process.²⁸

²³ Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, London: Catholic Truth Society, 1975, p.63.

²⁴ John Paul II, Address to the Pontifical Council for Culture, 14 March 1997, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 26 March 1997.

²⁵ Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Redemptoris Missio*, Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1991, no.51.

²⁶ Eugene Chianain, *Inculturation: A Conditio Sine Qua Non for Effective Evangelisation in Cameroun in the Light of the Light of the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, Ecclesia in Africa*, Unpubl. Ph.D. Dissertation, Univ. of Toronto, 2018, p.27.

²⁷ Gregory Olikenyi, *African Hospitality: A model for the Communication of the Gospel in the African Cultural Context*, Nigeria: Snaap Press, 2001, p.47.

²⁸ Ibid,

Saint Pope John Paul II on 6 January, 1989 made it public that there will be a Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops. The Pope in *Instrumentum Laboris* stated the *telos* of the synod as: “To assist the Church in Africa to deepen, her commitment to the mission of evangelization, taking into account her history and development as well as the whole cultural, social, political and economic context in which she lives.”²⁹

The synod deliberations were held in Rome from April 10th to May 8th 1994 and it represented the most important ecclesial gathering for Africa since Vatican II. It was the first time that the pastors of Africa gathered *cum et sub Petro* to reflect on new ways and means of carrying out the evangelising mission of the church on the continent that is highly religious and culturally immersed in their daily experiences on the one hand and full of social, political and economic problems on the other hand.³⁰ The outcome of the synod was the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa* that was given in Yaoundé-Cameroon on September 14, 1995 by Pope John Paul II. The main highlight of the document was its emphasis on inculturation as a necessary condition for effective evangelization.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, if the building of a bridge between the Christian faith and the Ikeji festival will be possible, as a conclusion, the researchers are of the view that certain proposals will have to be put into consideration. These include the following proposals:

- a. There is need for a better understanding of Ikeji festival and also of the history of Christianity as many positions are taken on the basis of ignorance.
- b. There should be a conscious effort towards the removal of prejudices from both sides about the understanding of both Christianity and the traditional culture and festivals of the Arondizuogu people.
- c. There is need for a complementary understanding of culture and Christianity. They are not enemies to each other but can complement each other for the building of a better humanity and society.
- d. There is need to identify the possible areas of connections between Christianity and Ikeji festival, so that inculturation can take place within a historical concrete experience.
- e. There is need for the identification of the possible elements in the Ikeji festival that require reform or change, or that needs the purification of the Gospel message.

²⁹ John Paul II, *Instrumentum Laboris*, of the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, Feb 1993, no.1.

³⁰Eugene Chianain, *Inculturation: A Conditio Sine Qua Non for Efective Evangelisation in Cameroun in the Light of the Light of the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, Ecclesia in Africa*, Unpubl. Ph.D. Dissertation, Univ. of Toronto, 2018, p.32.

- f. There is need to see how festivals can be employed as medium for the promotion of positive values, history, identity and the good of the human society, which the Christian faith also stands for and promotes.

It is believed that these proposals would assist in creating the mindset and the appropriate state of mind for negotiating between the Christian faith and Ikeji festival.

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TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS INVOLVEMENT IN GOVERNANCE: A PANACEA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The development and underdevelopment of any society are anchored on the capability and credibility of leaders in that society, coupled with the availability of both natural and human resources. Leadership/ administrative role, both in modern and traditional settings, cannot be undermined because it is pivotal in the development or underdevelopment of any society. The political structure and other structures must be carried along and work harmoniously for the betterment of society. The role of traditional institutions in governance cannot be overemphasized in the African political system if properly harnessed and articulated. This study ex-rayed the political development and administration in Rivers State, the role of traditional rulers in the political development and African culture. The study collected data through secondary sources and adopted the dependency theory as its theoretical framework. It was discovered that traditional rulers were highly respected sequel to the attainment of political independence and lost their respect as the event progressed. The rationale behind such ugly development was also enumerated. The study discovered that the more progressive African culture and traditional institutions are devalued or destroyed, the more the society is plough and prone to more serious atrocities characterized by the pathetic excruciating nature of unemployment and underdevelopment. The relegation and denigration of positive African culture and theology are dent to the wheel of progress, peaceful coexistence and sustainable development in Africa. The denigration of African culture to Western imperialism has increased suffering and led to corruption, insecurity, lawlessness, and underdevelopment. Consequently, the paper made recommendations on how peace, progress and sustainable development can be achieved through cross-fertilization between modern and traditional institutions. Africans, sciences, theology, typology, culture, and values should be employed positively in solving our myriads of challenges. Reorientation and reinvigoration of core progressive African cultures and values, to mention but few, are suggested as a panacea for peace, development and progress in African nations.

Keywords: African, traditional institution, sustainable development.

Introduction

African nations had a standard system of government that met the need of the people, guaranteed peace, stability and development of the society. The geographical entity called the African continent was formally inhibited by some empires, kingdoms, tribes, ethnic groups, and caliphates. These administrative units were subdivided into other parts for proper delegation, decentralization and administrative convenience before the advent of colonialism.

Africans were surreptitiously and subtly subjugated by the whites to establish their imperial policy. Forcefully Africans were dethroned by the Whites; there was resistance by some African leaders at the initial time the use of a sophisticated weapon by the Whites gave them the upper hand to defeat Africans and establish their colonial policy. African nations were made to accept colonialism at all costs despite stick resistance. For instance, Kosoko of Lagos, Jaja of Opobo, Oba of Benin and King Nana resisted colonial rule but were later subdued.

It must also be mentioned that the same people that came with force, on the one hand, had the Holy Bible on the other hand. The new religion brainwashed Africans and tagged Africa as a black continent. Africans were indoctrinated to believe what they didn't understand, eat what they don't produce and produce what they don't eat. That marked the genesis of Africa's problem of dependency to date.

African kingdoms had a structured system of government headed by a leader with one unique name or the others, such as Emir, Chiefs, Oba, Obi, Eze, Gbenemene, Oha, Amanyanabo, etc. They are saddled with legislative, executive and judicial power. The leader is seen as a representative of the gods standing between the living and the dead. He also performs some religious functions. They operated with an unwritten constitution. There was peace, stability and progress that ensured peace, unity, security and development as of then. There were some developed tribes and kingdoms in Africa, such as Sudan Empire, Mali Empire, Gold Cost Empire, Oyo Empire, Benin Kingdom, Akute Kingdom, Asante Kingdom, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Opobo Kingdom, to mention but a few. The above-named places were speedily developing before interception from the colonial masters with their imperial policy. Africa had a myriad of cultures that met the dear need of the people and the continent.

Colonialism came not only to dethrone African kingdoms it also destroyed most of her cultural heritages that met the need of the people and ushered in a new religion that encouraged stupendous, dogmatic belief and total submission of oneself, including the person's possessions. The educational system was ill-conceived as there was no emphasis on science and technology but rather on grammar and rectories; foreign languages formed the educational curriculum devoid of African inputs and interests.

The introduction of a new system of administration, culture, religion, language, belief and behavioural pattern completely left Africans in the middle of the ocean, not knowing what to do, either to follow the new culture or to go ahead with their own rich African cultural heritages. Leading to cultural dilemmas, cultural imperialism, religious dethronement, economic slavery, social servitude, educational stagnation, and cultural imbroglio, Chinnah,(2022). What a dilemma for an African child.

From the pre-colonial to the post-colonial era, traditional institutions had a very significant role to play in the day-to-day administration and governance system in the nation till the local government reform of 1976 that relegated, denigrated and reduced the power of traditional rulers and institutions in the country nationwide. The Local Government Reform of 1976 diametrically reduced the power of traditional rulers in Nigeria. Most of them were seen as mere paper tigers and puppets with their traditional title without roles and defined duties.

The African continent is endowed with numerous material and human resources that are capable and able to transform African nations to be among the best-developed nations in the community of nations globally. African countries have adopted so many development policies, initiatives and programs over the years, but no tangible result is on the ground as the continent still wallows in abject poverty, excruciating hunger, pathetic low investment, high level of insecurity, unfathomable rate of unemployment, and other features of underdevelopment as ostensibly seen in Africa nations. Development has been a problem for developing and developed nations of the world. All attempt made to develop Nigeria has remained fruitless as Nigeria was tagged headquarters of poverty in 2019.

Nigeria, as a nation in the African continent, is not exempted from the development quagmire that has gripped the African continent. Rivers State as a state is not excluded. The issue of sustainable development has remained a serious concern to both developed and developing nations, international organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations. There are a series of attempts made to develop African nations, Nigeria inclusive and Rivers state in particular. The dramatic irony is that the more policies, programs and initiatives for development are implemented, the poorer the nation gets underdeveloped every day despite resources put in place.

Politics in Africa determine and dictate every other structure and system, which is also replicated in Nigeria. It is seen as the superstructure that drives every other structure in the nation. The nation has, over the year, embarked on so many developmental initiatives since independence with little or no result. These were done with the total exclusion of traditional institutions in pursuance of development in the nation since the local reform government of 1976.

African traditional institutions played a very significant role in the development of the nation during the colonial and post-colonial eras till 1976. Over the years, precisely from the fourth republic, Nigeria has initiated some policies and programs for development without consideration of Africa's traditional institutions, the environment and culture. The study will examine the role of traditional institutions, why traditional institutions were relegated to the political administration in the country, reasons for poor implementation of sustainable development plans and why development has remained a mirage in Africa despite her human and financial resources. The study will draw the nexus between traditional institutions and sustainable development. Finally, the study recommended the integration of progressive African cultural practices in governance as a panacea for sustainable development in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Conceptual Explication

Traditional Institutions: The term traditional institution refers to indigenous and natural native cultural ways of doing things traditionally according to the culture and traditions of the people. The above definition etymologically captured the meaning of traditional institutions. Traditional institutions are administrative organizations in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras, headed by a traditional ruler; these institutions are rooted in the history, cultures and traditions of the people, Isaac (2018).

The stereotyped mantra peddled by some Whites and their black cohorts that anything bad comes from Africa and every good thing is from the Western nation is without verifications and proven and should be disregarded as we have uncounted good things from Africa from the pre-colonial era till date. Not to go into details about this because this paper is not fused on such a historical account of Africa. Achebe (2017) the institution of traditional rulers is an enduring part of our cultural heritage; it plays a critical role as the custodian of culture and traditions.

Orji & Olali (2010) averred that traditional institutions refer to the native political provisions whereby leaders with confirmed track records are chosen and turban in line with the requirements of their traditional customs and laws. Traditional institutions are the indigenous political arrangement whereby leaders with proven track records are appointed and installed in line with the provision of their native laws and customs, some divinely chosen and ordained by the gods and goddesses of the land. Traditional institutions are responsible for the day-to-day administration of the community, which also implies the preservation of the people's customs and traditions. Nweke (2012) posited that traditional institutions are the custodians of people's norms, cultures and practices. Furthermore, Orji & Olani (2010) posited that traditional institutions are symbols of indigenous peoples' rights, privileges, laws, customs, and traditions which include but are not limited to paramount rulers and their councils.

Traditional institutions in Nigeria's context are inclusive of the chiefs-in-council, elders-in-council, and title holders who may be appointed based on their contribution to the growth and development of their communities with little or no executive, legislative or judicial powers, Orji & Oladi (2010). The mode of selection or election of traditional rulers in Nigeria differs from one clan, ethnic group, or community. Some are hereditary, chosen by the gods and goddesses of the people, while some are elected based on basic requirements set by the community.

Traditional institutions, as headed by traditional rulers, are respected and revered to a great extent; some of them mediated between humans and gods as they performed legislative, executive, judicial and religious roles in the community. This was a much more prominent sequel to the advent of the white man. Colonialism and imperialism reduced the power of traditional rulers and distorted most of our traditional rich cultural heritages in the guise of civilization. The Local government reform of 1979 gave traditional rulers and institutions a technical knock on their role and powers in Nigeria.

Governance: What is good Governance? UNDP (2005) defined good governance as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. This includes mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and group articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences in pursuit of the collective good. Asian Development Bank (ADB 2009) Defined good governance as how power is exercised in the management of a country's social and economic resources for development. It is referred to as the quality of the institution to make, implement, and enforce sound policies in an efficient, effective and inclusive manner. World Bank (2004) defined good governance to mean promoting fairness, transparency and accountability. This simply means the ability of all the institutions in the polity saddled with various responsibilities to deliver optimally and meet up aims and objectives of that particular society.

Institute of Governance (IOG 2000) viewed good governance to mean an interaction among structures, processes and traditions that determine how power and responsibilities are exercised, how decisions are taken, and citizens or other stakeholders have their say. It is basically about how power relationships and accountability, who has influence, who decides and how decision-makers are held accountable. Boeninger (1992) Posited that good governance has to do with the capabilities of a political system to exercise authority, will legitimacy, adjudicate conflict as well as carry out effective program implementation. Kukah (1998) said good governance is a government that is responsible, accountable, and transparent in policy formulation and implementation. NEDA (2006) Postulated that the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a nation's affairs at all levels, which comprises mechanisms, processes and institutions.

From the above definitions of good governance, one can infer without equivocation that good governance has been a serious problem in African nations, Nigeria as a nation and Rivers state in particular, considering the level of natural and human resources in the State, revenue from the federation account and internally generated fund in the state yet nothing to show for it in terms of development, citizens welfare and unfathomable level of underdevelopment, Chinnah (2020).

Governance in Rivers State has been purely centred on the interest of the few ruling elites since 1960. The fourth republic became the worst. Only a few in power, their cronies and their children have dominated the political arena.

Kofi Annah (UN) posited that good governance ensures respect for human rights and the rule of law, strengthens democracy and promotes transparency and capacity in public administration. United Nations enumerated the following listed eight principles of good governance.

1. Participation; This principle states that people are free to express their views, opinions through legitimate organization or representation.
2. Rule of law. The legal framework should be enforced impartially, mostly on human rights.
3. Consensus-oriented; this means mediating different interests to meet the broad consensus on the best interest of the community.
4. Equity and Inclusiveness; people should have opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being.
5. Effectiveness and Efficiency: Processes and institutions should be able to produce a result that meets the needs of their community while making the best use of their resources.
6. Accountability: Governmental institutions, private sectors, and civil organizations should be held accountable to the public and institutional stakeholders.
7. Transparency: Information should be accessible to the public and should be understandable and monitored.
8. Irresponsibility: Institutions and processes should serve all stakeholders.

From what is visibly seen in Rivers state, good governance has been elusive since the creation of the state as it got worst from the fourth republic and the period under review. There is no accountability or transparency; people have not been carried along in the scheme of things, no empowerment and employment, to mention but a few. There is a high rate of unemployment and environmental challenges like bunkering, shooting and flooding. All these have stagnated and limited development in the State despite all the natural resources the nation is endowed with. The traditional institution was not also carried along; hence no result was achieved.

Sustainable Development: There are many definitions of what the concept of development according to scholars' views on it. For instance, Pearson (1992) averred that development involves an improvement in qualitative, quantitative or both in the use of available resources. He went further to say that development does not only refer to one particular perspective on social order, political and economic betterment, rather a hybrid of terms for myriads of strategies adopted for socio, economic and environmental transformation from current states to desired ones. Development is a process of having better use of human resources to create a desired improvement in making life useful and meaningful for humanity.

Development is the process that creates growth, progress, positive change or the addition of physical, economic, environmental, social, and demographic components. The purpose of development is a rise in the level and quality of life of the population and the creation or expansion of local, regional income and employment opportunities without damaging the resources of the environment (Sidi-israel.org 2021). Amartya (1997) defines development as a tool enabling people to reach the highest level of their ability through granting freedom of action, that is, freedom of economic, social, and family actions etc. United Nations Development Program UNDP (1990) stated the measurement index for the concept of development through what is called Human Development Index. The concept of development is ostensibly visible and imperatively useful to humanity and the environment, including future generations and can be measured and assessed.

Naomi (1995) posited that development involves economic growth notion of equitable distribution, provision of health care, education, housing and other essential services, all to improve the individual and collective. Chrisman (1984) viewed development to be a process of societal advancement, where improvement in the well-being of people is generated through a strong partnership between all sectors, corporate bodies and other groups in society.

Umezunke (2005) advanced that development connotes the transformation of the nature and living conditions of man as a consequence of his earlier confrontation with the constraints posed by his environment (political, economic, socio-cultural etc.). Rodney (1972) and Nnolin (1981) agreed that development shares the following things in common.

- (1) Human-centered rather than artifact-centre
- (2) Dynamic process rather than static
- (3) Involves a complex interactive relationship between individuals and society.
- (4) Predicated essentially on production rather than consumption.

Rodney (1972) said that development in human society is many side process that occurs at three levels, namely the individual, social group and society. At the individual level, it has to do with the increase in skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline,

responsibility and material well-being. Nnolin (1982) posited that development is a dialectical phenomenon in which the individual and society interact with the physical, biological and inter-human environment transforming them for their betterment and that of humanity at large and being transformed in the process. The lesson and experiences gained in the process are passed on to future generations enabling them to improve their capabilities to make further valuable changes in their inter-human relations and their ability to transform nature oriented.

Tadaro (1985) viewed development to be multi-dimensional nature focusing on re-organization and re-orientation of the entire economic and social system. Oghator & Kobo (2000) posited that development goes beyond the increase in per capita income or economic growth but also includes sustainable improvement in the living standard of the people, which is guaranteed through the provision of gainful employment coupled with the presence and availability of social; and economic infrastructure.

Ahmed (2007) posited development to mean the general uplifting of the material, social and psychological condition of a given society. Ajagun (2003) opined that development is a state of advancement which makes life more meaningful in its various aspects, which include the economic, administrative, political, social, and religious aspects, that development is encompassing and multi-dimensional. Onah (2010) averred that development is not static but a continuous improvement in the capacity of the individual and the society to control and manipulate the forces of nature for the enhancement of the living standard of the people in a society; it deals with human beings.

Rivers state, despite all her numerous human and material resources, is yet to have a glimpse of what development is as all characteristics of underdevelopment are on multiple dimensions in the state. Then we asked ourselves and our leaders what they have been using our huge numerous resources for. Is Rivers State allergic to development? It is a naked truth that the state is still wallowing with poverty and other agonizing torturous condition of underdevelopment despite all her richly endowed and exploited natural resources, namely, oil and gas, arable land and others too numerous to mention. No good road, no good pipe-born water, no employment, low per capita income, high infant mortality, no hospital, no infrastructural facilities and social amenities. The worst is that the natural environment is destroyed daily, Chinnah (2021).

The point raised above has degenerated into insecurity, frictions and crises, calls for secession, formation of ethnic militia, and the society engulfed with social vices and other anti-social practices perpetrated on daily bases as a result of the failure of the existing federal structure and system to produced desired dividend of federalism which is equity, justice, and sustainable development, Chinnah (2020).

African traditional institutions were denigrated and dislodged as a result of the crisis for equity, development and a better life for citizens of the nation, leading to development stagnation.

Sustainability

Jeffery Sacks (2018), in his work, promotes sustainable development as that which believes in growth and development to raise the standard of living for citizens of the world today through relating to the needs of environmental resources and the coming generation of the citizens of the world.

Stoddart (2021) viewed sustainability as the efficient and equitable distribution of resources intra –generationally and inter–generationally within the operation of socio-economic activities within the confines of the fitness ecosystem. Thomas (2015) posited sustainability brings into focus human activities and their ability to satisfy human needs and wants without depleting or exhausting the productive resources at their disposal.

Tjarre & Zenite (2016) averred that sustainability is a concept relating, connoting, improving and sustaining a healthy economic, ecological and social system for human development. Bein-Eli (2015) sees sustainability as a dynamic equilibrium in the process of interaction between the population and the caring capacity of its environment such that the population develops to express its full potential without producing an irreversible adverse effect on the caring capacity of the environment upon which it depends.

Furthermore, DESA-UN (2018) stated that the ultimate objective of the concept of sustainability, in essence, is to ensure appropriate alignment and equilibrium among society, the economy, and the environment in terms of the regenerated capacity of the planet's life-supporting ecosystem.

To understand the duo, concepts of sustainable development were best conceptualized by UNO (1987). Their definition is the most comprehensive and widely accepted by the World Commission on Environment and Development (UNO) in 1984 under the chairmanship Gro Harlem Brundtland, in October 1987, submitted a report which contained the definition of sustainable development. In that report, it defined Sustainable Development “as the development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs”.

This definition is measurable and focuses on two main points, namely, the environment and human beings. In qualifying and quantifying growth and development, the two must be taken into consideration in terms of developmental projects, programmes or policies aimed at improving the lives of the people and having a better natural environment for the present with the future generation not put in jeopardy Chinnah (2021).

Sustainable development has been a mirage in African nations right from the pre-colonial era till date. African nations are tagged developing nations or third-world countries by the Western developed nations of the world with little or no resources, but they parasitically depend on African nations for survival. What is wrong with African mentality and their leaders?

Methodology

The research made use of secondary data from textbooks, peer review journals, periodic publications, newspapers, and other relevant documented literature, both soft and hard copies; while content analysis was used to analyse data objectively.

Theoretical Framework

The dependency theory of development was adopted as the theoretical framework for this survey. The importance of a theoretical framework cannot be undermined in a study like this as it is seen as a road map for which the study is anchored; it gives credence to the paper. According to Nweke & Nyewesira (2009), dependency theory was developed by scholars from third-world countries and put together in the sixties by eminent writers like Luxemburg (1964), Frank (1969), Santos (1970), Rodney (1972), Ake, (1981) etc.

The theory is an offshoot of colonialism and imperialism. This Marxist theory averred that Global Capitalist System started as far as the 16th century via colonialism and imperialism whereby the rich nations of the world tied the economy of other less developed nations of Africans, Latin American and Asia countries in a relationship of exploitation and dependency directly and indirectly for the survival of the wealthy developed nations. The erstwhile colonial masters exploited and are still exploiting her colonies through neo-colonialism. This theory states that for so long as this dependency relationship exists, African nations cannot be developed, that for development to take place, there is an imperative need for that relationship to be broken or isolated and join the free market for them to develop.

The dependency theory of development attributes the lack of African development to the adverse effect of continuous endemic exploitation of exploration by powerful nations of the world even after independence. This relationship is a systematic process whereby Western developed nations (core) accumulate wealth by extracting resources from the peripheral developing nations for their own economic and social development. This unbalanced relationship accounts for African underdevelopment as African nations are left with pandemic excruciating features of pathetic underdevelopment.

Matunhu (2011:69) To succeed in the improvement operation, the metropolis destroyed the traditional pre-capitalist structure of Africa to pave the way for super-exploitation and appropriation of surplus value.

The powerful nations of the world used their sophisticated weapon to subtly subjugate African nations, established their dominance and imperilled policy based on economic exploitation. The centre nations saw the periphery countries as prey for their survival; hence the sources for raw materials, both human and material from them, were exploited by them.

Colonialism changed many things in African nations, altered the development system of Africa, distorted the organized political system, and changed the mode of dressing, feeding, farming, consumption, production, religion, culture and social activities. For instance, Africa was to produce what we don't eat and eat what we don't produce. Local Government reform of 1976 and the appointment of a warrant chief created problems in traditional African institutions. The new system of administration altered many things, from the policy of indirect rule to direct rule down to the attainment of political independence, not economic independence kept Africans in a dilemma, not knowing much about African culture and of what culture. This has quagmire development in African nations.

This dependency theory was inherited and transferred to African leaders by their colonial masters. This unbalance relationship is a dent in the wheel and progress of development in Nigeria. Imagine we produced oil in abundance here in Nigeria, but we don't have a functional refinery. The Ajokuta Rolling Mill is a clear point to buttress this point. The new system of administration in African nations created conflict and friction in African nations. Rodney (1972) argued that the political independence of Africa from colonialism did not alter the dependency arrangement. Rather, it deepened it; the end of colonialism has not deterred the imperialist from African domination.

Akani (2010:124) averred that it is plausible for one to argue that the intractable problems in Africa of late are precipitate of the merciless looting, imposition of assumed complexity and disorientation of the continent. African traditional institutions were destroyed and disorientated.

The relevance of this study to this survey is that the same dependent scenarios were inherited from our colonial masters and are still maintained to date. Exploitation has been the order of the day as big nations dictate the pace of progress in African nations.

The Role Of Traditional Institutions In Governance

For stability, peace and equity in any society, there are leaders; rulers saddled with the responsibility to legislate, execute and adjudicate in the society with other institutions through decentralization and delegations of authority. These leaders/leaders are headed by

traditional rulers in African nations with one nomenclature or the other, for instance, Emeir in the North, Obas in the West, Obi in the East, and Chiefs in the East, to mention but a few. The head of the traditional rulers ruled with his cabinet, and laws and order were maintained and development achieved. A traditional ruler is an individual occupying a communal political leadership position and enjoying the legitimacy of those particular communities to direct their affairs, Egwarabe (2018). In a similar vein, Gambari (2021) stated that traditional rules are not honoured, and honorary chiefs, he is a traditional heads of an ethnic community whose stool conferred the highest traditional authority on the incumbent. Traditional institutions are piloted by traditional rulers that rules according to the culture and custom of the community. The traditional ruler does not rule alone. He has his cabinets and delegated powers and authority when necessary for effective leadership to maintain peace, stability and harmony.

Traditional rulers were highly respected; their stool was a great symbol of power, authority and leadership. According to Sun news online (2016), Traditional rulers were not just monarchs but theocrats, as in Nigeria. To speak ill of them was regarded as a taboo. The chief's authority is sanctioned in religion, and it is a sacrilege to flout it, except in extreme cases of tyranny and oppression. They had excess power within their domain and were able to lead with ease.

Sequel to the advent of colonialism, traditional rulers had much respect and honour, saddled with greater responsibilities than we have in this current era. Traditional rulers are, by implication, traditionally the head of their ethnic group, clan, or community. They hold the highest executive authority in such communities and has been appointed to the position following the people's culture, custom and tradition, Igunbu,(2020).

In Nigeria, the local government reform of 1976 saddled traditional rulers (institutions) with the following function. As stated already, traditional rulers' powers were reduced drastically by the advent of imperialism and colonialism, which was transferred to the era of neo-colonialism.

Traditional rulers were no longer involved in the direct local government administration. They performed ceremonial functions by being present when an important personality visited the local government, for example, the governor or a minister etc.

He advises the local government officials on matters that concern the customs and traditions of the people. They mobilize people in their community to participate in government at various levels. As a custodian of the people's customs and traditions, he helps to preserve the customs and traditions of the people. They help to maintain law and order in their communities; they try and punish law offenders and settle disputes etc. They mobilize their people to engage in community development projects.

Traditional Rulers link their community and the government by explaining government policies and programs to the people and their problems to the government. Local Government Reform of (1976)

Traditional institutions (rulers) are elements of divinity; cultural custodians and embodiments of collective identity ascribed to traditional institutions are keys to the promotion and preservation of traditional institutions in Nigeria and beyond, Salihu & Yakubu, 2020). Traditional institutions preserve, conserve, protect and promote the culture and traditions of the people from going into extinction because of globalization.

Aafigbo, 1972 cited in Osakde et al. (2015) posited that long before the advent of British colonial rule, the government in diverse parts of present-day Nigeria was tantamount to traditional institutions and their rulers. The pre-existing administrative structure was derived primarily from traditional rulers who were considered the fountain and custodians of culture, parliamentary, executive, and judicial functions, thereby considering the basis of governance.

Cookey (2010) stated that traditional rulers are perceived as assisting the government in maintaining law and order in the communities as well as promoting the peaceful coexistence of people of different religions, ethnicity, and social background; traditional rulers treat people without discrimination, he added.

In traditional institutions, its authority is mostly unquestionably accepted and adhered to, and its principles are practised with reverence. Its practice reflects continuity with the past, for which its continuity is usually understood to link generations. Osakede et al. (2015) opined that pre-colonial Africa posse's visible, established and well-defined hierarchy of administration where acts of legislation were implemented and conflict and inter-tribal classes were resolved.

The above-narrated functions of traditional institutions via traditional rulers in the pre-colonial, post-colonial and neo-colonial. Society will degenerate into a state of nature, as posited by Hobbes, without traditional rulers. The functions of traditional rulers cannot be circumvented by either Western civilization or the effect of globalization; any attempt or group of attempts will end up in friction, anarchy and underdevelopment of the community.

Challenges Of Traditional Institutions (Rulers) In Governance In Nigeria

African organized traditional institutions that met the need and development of African nations, tribes and ethnic groups at that material point in time met stick opposition and were challenged as a result of the imperial colonial power of the Western nation domination anchored on economic interest.

The appointment of African chiefs, via the use of direct and indirect rule systems, was purely to maximise profit by the imperialist power with no intention to develop Africa and Nigeria in particular, which was also inherited by Nigerian leaders after the attainment of independence.

The advent of Western domination, to a great extent, demystified and reduced diametrically the power of traditional institutions in African society. This scenario was much more pronounced after the local government reform of 1976 that transferred the traditional ruler's functions and role to the head of the local government area. This affected their relevance and functions in their domain. They had the following challenges that limited their authority and operations.

Elias (2016) stated that native authority was beset by such challenges as poor funding, control, checks and no clear-cut functions. Traditional institutions were tied to local government areas, with no sources of revenue; the local government areas were either underfunding traditional rulers or not funding at all. Money is needed for day to day administration of any organization. The absence of funds makes it impossible for any administration to achieve its goals. Traditional rulers had serious and excessive checks from local government areas chairmen, governors and other political office holders in their areas.

The local government reform of 1976 transferred the roles and functions of traditional rulers to the local government area. This not only limited traditional rulers' powers and authority but made them puppets and errand boys for politicians. They were left with little or no function. they were allowed to perform ceremonial functions.

Traditional institutions (rulers) have no constitutional provision and backing in the nation's constitution. This, to a great extent, hindered and limited their operations in terms of legislation, execution and adjudication of justice. Adeniyi (2016) opined that even though traditional institutions remain the oldest surviving cultural political institution, which has always served as the pivot for social security, national cohesion and meaningful socio-cultural development, the operative constitution has failed to make any provision for the existence of the institution. Ibrahim (2018) averred that traditional rulers cannot help the government on security issues without legal backing and so stressed the need to define constitutional responsibilities for traditional rulers in the constitution.

Another challenge facing traditional institutions (rulers) is the use of modern government institutions, mechanisms and machinery in governance, like the use of courts, police, army, and security agencies in the administration of justice. Nwani (2011) noted that the emergence of the public court destroyed the use of our traditional conflict resolution mechanism because it encouraged people to bypass traditional court to go to regular court. Abdulqadir (2016) averred that the instruments of coercion, the police, courts, and prison, were removed from its control. There is no constitutional provision for the enforcement of

the resolutions reached in arbitration. Alagoa (2001) stated that traditional institutions no longer have full reign of operation since they have to operate in a context where their authority is limited; without the means to enforce resolutions reached in arbitration, the parties may refuse to abide by the terms reached.

The negative influence of Western culture and the education of our people is a major challenge. The Western culture, mostly education and religion, was seen as an eye-opener. As a result, some educated, civilized Africans challenged some obnoxious, draconian policies and programs of traditional rulers in churches, shrines, juju and courts. They won this reduced the power and authority of traditional institutions.

Another challenge facing traditional rulers is the issue of corruption and the struggle for political leadership and affiliation. Many traditional rulers have left their divine roles and functions as demanded by humans and gods to their selfish aim and desire for material resources. They collect bribes to pervert justice and embezzle community money for development. This has led to crises in many communities, mostly those communities endowed with natural resources like oil, gas and companies. Adesoji (2010), Olali (2010) and Onaja(2010) the mentioned authors in their respective findings concluded that traditional institutions in modern Nigeria are confronted with several matters, such as the struggle for headship among traditional leaders in the association of traditional rulers, participation in biased politics for individual gains and given support for the reigning government are problem militating against traditional rulers.

Akani (2010) African traditional rulers have also contributed to destroying the traditional African institution as a result of their unending attitude in joining party politics. It must be mentioned that the creation of states, local government and the emergence of autonomous communities in the already nation has weakened the powers and authority of traditional rulers in their domain. This balkanization had a lot of negative influence and impact on traditional institutions; some of their subjects were either removed or added to them, which created room for a lack of respect and disobedience on both sides.

Another challenge faced by traditional rulers is their involvement in politics. In Nigeria, politics is seen as the best and quickest means to make money and remain relevant in the scheme of things in the nation. Many traditional rulers abandoned their customary role to dance to the wins and caprices of political leaders' actors and gladiators for the sack of money. Ganiyu et al. (2016) traditional rulers have become pencils in the hands of elected political officeholders who determine for them what to do and what not to do As a result of this, many traditional rulers lost their authority and influence, both physical and spiritual, in their domain.

Traditional Institutions And Sustainable Development In Rivers State

The political-administrative structure has swallowed some of the powers, respect, authority and duty of some traditional institutions in Rivers State as a result of the 1976 local government reform nationwide in Nigeria. River State was within the eastern region during the first republic before the creation of the state in 1967. The creation of Rivers State in 1967 marked the birth of a new administrative system in the created state. Rivers state population as of the 2006 census is 5,185,400, the sixth populous state in the country. In 1996 Bayelsa State was created out of rivers state.

There has been a traditional ruler's council in existence before the creation of Rivers State. In 1953 Council of Rivers Chiefs was formed, renamed in 1954 as Rivers Chiefs and People Congress and in 1956, changed to Rivers People Conference. The organization was made up of traditional rulers from all the ethnic communities, clans, and groups in Rivers State.

Africans had a well systematic incumbent dynamic system of administration before the advent of imperialism. Boege (2006) averred that traditional African societies indeed had well organized and well-established system of administration where public orders were provided and maintained, where laws were made and implemented, and where inter-communal and intra-tribal conflicts were settled. This was before the coming of the colonialist, and they saw that it was good. That was why they retained most of it and destroyed those cultures that were against their imperial policy and religion.

Rivers state can be described as a loose federation with many other ethnic groups, both major and minor, different languages, cultures and religions. The state is heterogeneous and pluralistic under one umbrella. In Rivers state, we have the following ethnic groups Ikweerr, Ogoni, Ekpeye, Ogba, wakirika, Etche, Kalagbari, Okirika, Igbani, to mention but few. There are traditional rulers in all the ethnic extractions with their unique nomenclatures as names. For instance, in Ikwerre traditional rulers are called Nye-we ali, and Eze, Ekpeye is Eze, Ogba is Oba, Ogoni is Mene, Kalagbari is Amanyanagbor. The role of traditional rulers has already been explained in the previous page. They performed their role with other people that formed the cabinet and also delegated authority to other organs of administration under their jurisdiction.

The government of River State recognized traditional rulers; there were first class, second class, third class and what I refer to as the village class or family class. The first-class traditional rulers have an association called Rivers State Council of Traditional Rulers, under the headship of His Majesty King Jaja and King Dr Dandeson Douglas Jaja traditional rulers.

In Rivers State, we have the legislature, executive, judiciary and traditional rulers. The traditional rulers are just like advisory bodies with no specified legitimated authority over their powers. They exist to whims and caprices of the governor of the state. There are cases

where some traditional rulers were deposed because of party politics. Some were not recognized, and some were derecognized. The upgrading of these traditional rulers is politically done based on party loyalty.

Rivers State has embarked on so many projects and development initiatives sad to note that the state is highly underdeveloped compared to the human and material resources available in the state. Rivers State is only one city-state apart from Port Harcourt no other city is developed; the state has the highest unemployment in the country NBS (2021). Federal projects are not exempted.

Federal allocations to the state, local government and internally generated revenue, if well utilized, are more than enough to put the state topmost in the community of developed states in the world. Resources are siphoned by political actors and gladiators through corruption and bribery. Contracts are awarded, nobody cares for its implementation and completions, monies are shared in bags, stores for future political electioneering processes, and stomach infrastructure with nothing to show. Traditional rulers are bought, and as puppets, they cannot do more than a hanging shirt. Marginalization and deprivation, denial of employment, empowerment, social amenities and other infrastructural facilities and amenities that make life enjoyable led to confrontations, conflicts, frictions and public disorder.

Lack of empowerment and employment has made led to an increase in the level of criminality in the state, illegal refining of crude oil, and other ugly development in the state. The high level of lawlessness has been on the increase from early 2015 to 2019. The state witnesses a high level of criminalities, lawlessness and kidnapping. The security agencies were doing nothing to combat the activities of these miscreants. Hence palpable fear was created everywhere in the state.

The state government called on traditional institutions (rulers) to help restore normalcy in the Rivers state. The first of its kind was initiated first in Omoku, a town in Ogba Egbema Ndoni Local government area of the state. ONELGA came up with the ONELGA Security Peace and Advisory Council (OSPAC) set up in 2016 when there was war, total disorder and anarchy in ONELGA because of the activities of some cult groups that overthrew both the traditional rulers and the modern political system under the leadership of Don Wani. The local civilian militia group was able to contain and subjugate the activities of the hoodlums, cultists, and miscreants through African science and protection from gunshots and anything metal. What the security agencies couldn't do was perfectly done by the traditional intuitions in Omoku and its environs. There were cases when OSPAC from Omoku came to Ahoada to sanitize the area using African science.

The successful operations and achievement of peace in Omoku as a result of OSPAC made other local government areas and communities do similar things, namely Emohua, Ikwerre,

Etche , Omuma, and many others. The introduction of OSPAC in Runde, Rumuji, and Elele made East-West Road passable at any point in time, both night and day, which government security agencies couldn't do for years. From all indications and assessments based on realities on the ground, it is clear that Traditional Institutions have helped to maintain peace, which the government and its security agencies couldn't do.

The relative peace now in ONELGA has attracted speedy development in the area. Those banks that left Omoku are planning to go back, with new one planning to open branches there. Peace is a requisite for development, either immediate or sustainable.

The fact that traditional rulers were not carried along properly in developmental policies and initiatives has led to the misplacement of the community priority in terms of developmental projects and policies for the people,

The Nexus Between Traditional Institutions (Rulers) And Sustainable Development

Sustainable development has attracted serious attention in the global scenario, both in developed and developing nations. The pathetic excruciating features of underdevelopment in Africa and Nigeria, in particular, an alarming rate despite the myriad of human and natural resources the nation is endowed with. It is laughably lugubriously lugubrious. One might ask, what are the factors that negate development in African nations? I have explicitly explained that in one of my papers.

There is a great correlation between traditional institutions and sustainable development. In the first place, development can only be initiated in an atmosphere of peace and stability. Traditional rulers are imperatively needed to help maintain peace and stability in their domain. There are numerous examples of inter-communal and intra-communal crises. It was a traditional institutional mechanism that was used to settle those disputes and conflicts.

Traditional rulers have a direct link with the people and understand the environment within their domain; they know what their people want and the needs and desires of their people. Government at all level should integrate, interact and seek the input of traditional rulers when they want to make policies and program that relates to that particular community. We have seen and read where development projects in some communities led to friction, confrontations and demonstrations because the people were not consulted. This is a misplacement of the priority of the community people, which will not be tolerated by the community of any development projects, policies or initiatives. The success of any sustainable development policies, projects and programs depend on the traditional ruler's ability to galvanise, sensitise and educate their people.

The recent clarion call of all traditional rulers by the governor of the state to ensure that peace and stability are maintained in their domain and to stop all illegal refining activities in their locality is a clear indication that traditional institutions are instrumental for peace and sustainable development.

In corroboration with the work of Mbouua (2014;67), he states emphatically that African culture has assisted in the development, progress, solidarity, hospitality, co-responsibility and environmental protection, to name but few. I add capacity for sustainable development and stability in the polity. On that note, then, to exclude traditional African institutions from governance is the invitation of confrontation, friction, and crisis as we have in Nigeria today, which, if not addressed, will lead to total anarchy and collapse of the system.

Conclusion

The paper examined the role of traditional institutions in government and why their powers were denigrated and relegated by politicians as a result of the local government reforms that made them mere advisory bodies with no legal backing. The challenges faced by traditional institutions were explained. The nexus drawn between traditional institutions and sustainable development. Traditional institutions with legitimate authority to act will guarantee peace, stability and sustainable development. African traditional institutions are a panacea for sustainable development as it provides the enabling environment for development to take place—the enabling environment for sustainable development to be initiated and implemented area created by a traditional institution.

Traditional (rulers) institutions must educate, sensitize and mobilise their subjects for any development projects. To report to the appropriate authority whether the developmental projects are carried out or not, in any community, the traditional rulers report to the government, non-governmental organizations or corporate bodies.

The following recommendations were made on how traditional institutions can effectively help to achieve sustainable development in Rivers State.

1. Traditional institutions should have legal backing in the constitution stating their fundamental roles with authority, not as advisory bodies.
2. The government, as a matter of urgency, should create a traditional rulers commission and their salaries fixed in a consolidated fund as we have judges.
3. Traditional rulers should eschew corruption and face their traditional roles as a leader not involved in active politics but focused on the maintenance of peace, stability and development in their domain.
4. There should be a pollination of cultures between the Western culture and the traditional system, picking the best that meets the need of the current realities.
5. For accountability, this paper advocates for the use of the African system of oath taken, using one shrine, juju, as all those that looted our resources are either

Muslims or Christians. They take the oath of office and still steal our resources. This is not to denigrate any religion, but the duo has failed us when it comes to corruption and siphoning of public funds.

6. The restoration of African values, customs, culture and tradition that meets the need of current realities should be done. Africans are gifted with a good cultural heritage. Ancestral African science and metaphysics should be encouraged positively as it will help us to restore the lost African values in our society. The combination of African epistemology and Western education can strike a good balance.
7. Political officeholders should respect traditional institutions and the laws of the land. Traditional rulers should be apolitical rather be dedicated and committed to their fundamental categorical functions of peace, security and welfare of their subjects.

All developmental agencies, both local and international, including United Nations and other nongovernmental organizations, should work with traditional institutions closely if they succeed in any developmental policies, programs or initiatives.

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FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION AS STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS: AN APPRAISAL OF DOGO NAHAWA MASSACRE IN POST-CONFLICT SITUATION

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Abstract

This paper examines the aftermath of an act of community cleansing at Dogo Nahawa of Barkin Ladi Local Government Area of Plateau State and the recent trend of the escalating explosion of anger and bitterness exhibited by some of the survivors. In an effort to underscore the underlying factors that causes the regret and bitterness among survivors of the cleansing, the paper seeks to consider a strategy for a healthier healing and forgiveness. The paper observes that the massacre of March 7th 2010 which led to killing of over 500 members of the community has had lingering wounds of the heart among survivors. The paper considered how the people of Dogo Nahawa think about and make use of forgiveness in their lives? It also considered if religious beliefs promote forgiveness, and if so, how. This paper affirms that community cleansing and ethno-religious conflicts have affected mutual relations among Christian and Muslims and have brought untold hardship among survivors especially in Dogo Nahawa community. Thus, this paper argues that forgiveness and reconciliation can contribute to the emerging relationally based theory of Christian-Muslim relations in post-conflict situation. It understands forgiveness as a process of moving from ill will to goodwill toward offenders, and as compatible with various forms of justice. Forgiveness is often the basis of reconciliation, the restoration of right relationship. Both of these depend in some ways on the acknowledgment of truth. Forgiveness and reconciliation play a vital role in efforts to promote mutual relations among Christians and Muslims with restorative justice, which seeks to address harms suffered by victims, wider communities, and even perpetrators. This paper further argues that an ethic of forgiveness can support the political and social goals of reconciliation and restorative justice for the promotion of Christian-Muslim relations in Northern Nigeria and Africa at large. Through qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews with survivors of the attack in Dogo Nahawa community numbering twenty people, data were collected. Consideration was given to the ways the people think about forgiveness and make use of forgiveness to

deal with hurtful experiences, which befell them. Results indicated that for all participants their motivations and strategies to forgive reconcile could be classified as both secular and sacred. The results also highlight the implication and benefits of forgiveness to the community.

Keywords: Christian-Muslim Relations, forgiveness, reconciliation, conflict and massacre

Introduction

Forgiveness is a very useful strategy for promoting peaceful coexistence as it focuses on the future; it connects itself equally with the past and the present. Forgiveness and reconciliation put together is a good strategy for use in building mutual trust and peaceful coexistence. It gives room for reconciliation to flourish among individuals or communities that have experienced ethnic cleansing and community extinction, especially in Northern Nigeria. In any discussion about forgiveness, it is important to make it clear that forgiveness does not necessarily mean reconciling with the wrongdoer. There may be good reasons why a victim may forgive but may not wish to reconcile. Reconciliation is an additional choice. On the one hand, it is nearly impossible to reconcile with someone you have not gone some way to forgive (Morris 94). Here, forgiveness may require relinquishing something important to you, such as giving up your moral indignation, your desire for retaliation or your attachment to being right. Forgiveness is still useful to community building because people who forgive tend to be more flexible and less certain in their expectations; both in how life will be or how others will treat them (Tutu 72). Forgiving people have chosen not to perpetuate a historical grievance; they are somehow able to turn the page, loosen themselves from the grip of the past and reframe their story.

Reconciliation in the context of community building assumes a need, a will or an actual effort made on the part of an individual or a group of people to live side-by-side in peace with a person or another group they had considered to be their adversaries in the past, however, granting that forgiveness may aid reconciliation, it is not always a condition for the latter to unfold. There may be pragmatic reasons for communities to make a conscious decision not to seek to punish or retaliate (Philip 58). This is a form of “pardoning,” which may lead to reconciliation but is different from forgiveness. Just as a victim may forgive a perpetrator serving a prison sentence but still sees the necessity for them to be incarcerated, equally a victim may still feel resentment towards a perpetrator but see the practical sense of not doing anything about it in order to end a cycle of violence. Reconciling with others who caused harm to someone is an outward gesture made to re-connect with others and to renew relationships (Trudy 46). In this sense, reconciliation lies at the heart of building and maintaining peace in a community, especially in promoting local reconciliation initiatives between divided communities and the reintegration of people who have been displaced back into their community.

Clarification of Terms

Literature Review

In an effort to forgive, it is the principled decision to give up your justified right for revenge and accept the perpetrator in spite of what was meted out to you. Enright opines that:

It is an act of generosity on the part of the victim(s). There can be many different motives; for instance, it may stem from compassion for an offender, the wish to free oneself from pain, or simply a pragmatic means of moving forward (143).

It is important to recognise that if you attach too many conditions to forgiveness, it may become almost the opposite with characteristics akin to being vengeful or vindictive. It is important to note that forgiveness does not exclude a passionate or painful response to being hurt, or witnessing others being hurt. Enright further argues that:

Anger, sorrow, rage, and despair are a part of the process, and may be the launching pad for forgiveness. Essentially, this means that we do not endlessly replay past gripes and grievances; it is rather the ability to live with the hurt without being held captive by it; it means not being defined by those who have hurt us and not being broken by our own victimhood (144).

Memories of past wounds are presumed to disappear once the underlying issues are resolved; however, it is now widely recognized that communities that have experienced violence of serious proportions either from different identity groups or from an ethnicised state cannot achieve sustainable peace without a process of social healing. Joseph argues that “healing and reconciliation in violent ethnic and religious conflicts depend on a process of transactional contrition and forgiveness between aggressor and victims” (112). Despite the fact that it is not easy to let the past behind us, human beings have the capacity to do so. Andrew also argues that “it is this capacity to let go of the past, to forego the quest for revenge, which is at the heart of forgiveness” (3). Hatred and the search for vengeance can consume people and unless people manage to forsake their determination to get even, there can be no new beginning, no transformation of relationships, no possibility for a shared future, thus the need to tow the path of forgiveness.

When people choose to forgive, it can bring new insights, it can help transform attitudes, and also help repair broken relationships as well as help to break the cycle of violence. Forgiveness liberates people from the resentment and anger that they have carried with them (Blackaby and Blackaby 106). Some feel inspired to forgive because they experience compassion for those who have hurt them; others see a spiritual value in forgiveness because they recognise that we are all connected and therefore each individual is in some

way responsible for the pain in the world (Luskin 227). In considering forgiveness as a strategy for promoting peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria, it is important to consider these propositions: a. Forgiveness can contribute to creating a foundation for dialogue. b. It can help release bitterness and anger and facilitate the re-humanisation of the “other.” This is key to the reconciliation process, which cannot happen without eradicating dehumanisation. c. It can induce a shift in mindsets and transform harmful attitudes. d. It can build bridges between opposing parties and help repair fractured relationships. e. It can help break the cycle of violence, aid post-traumatic reconciliation, build a more peaceful common future and ultimately sustain peace (Luskin 229-230).

Many communities have difficulty in coming to terms with the traumatic loss that they have experienced in history through ethnic cleansing and community extinction. The researcher understands from the field research that most people who experienced ethnic cleansing and community in Northern Nigeria often wanted not to revive memories of such trauma and created a form of forgetfulness as a defensive strategy. This has not however truly helped some of them as they still nurse hurts and hate for the perpetrators of the acts. At the same time as it is important to use forgiveness as a strategy for promoting peaceful coexistence, it is also good to recognise that victims must not be forced to forget. Trudy opines that:

It is said that only those who remember can forgive and that memory and not forgetting is the necessary condition of forgiveness. A forgetful person cannot forgive because he or she cannot remember. Without remembering, forgiveness as a conscious act is impossible. The slogan, therefore, is no longer forgive and forget, but remember and forgive. Collective turning from the past does not mean ignoring or forgetting the misdeed, but recognizing the humanity of the commissioning agent. Forgiveness is on when that comes from the victim (74-75).

President Nelson Mandela was quoted to have said that “South African people must remember their dreadful past in order to be able to deal with it, to forgive when it is necessary, but never to forget” (Mahmood 144). In the same vein, Archbishop Desmond Tutu argues that “There is no future without forgiveness, but to forgive, one must know what happened. In order not to repeat what happened to others, we must remember” (110). It is also very important to note that for any meaningful forgiveness to be effective; separating the deeds from the perpetrators is needful. Trudy also argues “We do not forgive deeds; we forgive people who have committed deeds. When we forgive, it is another person we forgive” (103). From her submission, it is unnecessary to talk about forgiving deeds as such ethnic cleansing and community extinction, but to forgive the perpetrators of the crime which led to the displacement and the destruction of lives (Tutu 87). Only persons can be forgiven -perpetrators of the acts. In support of this position, Trudy argues that “No deed ever expressed remorse, apologized, asked for forgiveness or faced the challenge of moral transformation... it is persons who are the subjects and objects of forgiveness; persons who

forgive or do not forgive” (105). Deeds and doers are separable in a significant way because people are capable of a moral transformation that distances them from their deeds.

Forgiveness and reconciliation are often sub-processes for promoting peaceful coexistence and should be intentionally integrated into the resolution process of deep-rooted ethno-religious conflicts. It is not a one-shot process or act. It could be part of an ongoing process or the culmination of a process of previous attempts at reconciliation. Its value to break the cycle of violence, hate and despair is particularly pronounced in protracted conflicts. Recognising this and in order to stress the importance of forgiveness among people in Plateau State, the government had declared February 7 every year as a Day of Forgiveness and Reconciliation. The Governor, Simon Bako Lalong noted that although acts of criminality must be swiftly investigated and punished by Government and its relevant organs, the long-term ambition of every Nigerian who desires peace is to tow the path of forgiveness and reconciliation. He argues that:

The bloodshed, destruction of property and cycle of violence in the country will not abate except Nigerians learn to forgive one another and foster peaceful coexistence in communities. Unless Nigerians learn to forgive one another and avoid revenge and reprisals, the nation will continue to witness needless bloodshed and destruction of properties. As a government, we are very conscious of the fact that the process of restoring peace and confidence among the people cannot succeed without forgiveness and reconciliation. On this day therefore, we do not try to trivialize or gloss over the trauma, pain and agony that many people have undergone on account of the various crises that took lives and properties. Others are still bearing physical scars of their experiences (Vanguard 2).

He made this known during an inter-denominational service at St. Louis Catholic Church, Jos to mark the State’s third Day of Forgiveness and Reconciliation. He further stated that “this day emphasises how to make the best of the past ugly experiences and chart the way forward. If truly we want to move forward, then there is every need to encourage healing that makes us do things differently” (Vanguard 2). Below is a picture of the garden of Peace and Forgiveness as created by the Plateau State government to encourage peace and forgiveness on the Plateau.



Plate 43: A Picture of the Garden of Peace and Forgiveness Created by the Plateau State Government to Encourage Peace and Forgiveness Among her People. Source: Researcher 16/08/2021

Forgiveness can work not only towards conflict resolution but also for post-settlement peacebuilding. It plays a connecting role in transforming transitional communities emerging from conflict. Tutu says “Forgiving means abandoning your right to pay back the perpetrator in his own coin, but it is a loss that liberates the victim” (10). The plea for forgiveness may be perceived as an act of humiliation and subsequently hurt the pleading party’s status. On the one hand, the victim who is asked to grant forgiveness may feel that “to forgive is to relinquish the victim role and the rewards that go with it” such as “the power to induce guilt, to demand apologies and reparations or to seek punishment of the perpetrator” (Sabina, Rupert, and Emanuele 363). The ultimate purpose of forgiveness and reconciliation is restoration of relationships and the reestablishment of connections with the affected communities. Public apologies and seeking and granting of forgiveness create a new dimension to repairing fractured relationships especially between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria where ethno-religious conflicts have ravaged the mutual trust amongst people of different ethnic and religious identity. As a result, forgiveness and reconciliation remain the key strategies for promoting peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims and they should be carried out with utmost sincerity. Apologies, when carried out at the appropriate time, are useful. The sincerity of such apologies should also be felt by the victims and forgiveness should be pursued at all cost.

It is imperative to note that forgiveness in Christendom is becoming more difficult now than some centuries ago. Darmani postulates that people who constitutes the church today come from different backgrounds and understand matters differently, in spite of common

Christian beliefs. Friction is bound to arise among church members and in the leadership necessitating regular reconciliation (146). Kulign confirms that on this point many Christians have failed and need to learn from Jesus himself as he hung on the cross. He prayed, “Father forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:34). He raises a question: “If this is the example he set for us, how can we, who due to our own sinfulness often play a part in the alienation and confrontation we experience with other sinners claim that we need not be forgiving people?” (Kulign 163-164).

Using forgiveness and reconciliation as strategies for promoting peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims in this context is therefore about shifting and even transforming people’s attitudes, prejudices and perceptions about the “other” (Luskin 230). Forgiveness is not an act of kindness born out of the victim’s generosity but rather a re-humanising gift emphasising the humanity of the perpetrator. In other words, it is about reducing fear through the recognition of the human being in “the enemy.” In the softening of positions comes the acknowledgement and possibility of each side’s complicity. Another way forgiveness and reconciliation promote peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims towards community building is that they allow people who were once hostile towards one another to live together again (Luskin 233). Forgiving past wrongs may be a key to reconciliation between friends, family members, spouses, neighbours, races, cultures and nations. More complete reconciliation means that we engage co-participants honestly and respectfully in the construction of a newer world through meaningful and faithful relationships. The process results in decreased motivation to retaliate or maintain estrangement from an offender despite his or her actions. Forgiveness can be a critical ingredient in rebuilding broken relationships and repairing damaged communities. It can be an important part of any peacebuilding process and sometimes the only thing that can help divided communities move towards reconciliation.

Research Method/Scope of the Research

The qualitative method was used in the research with writer’s observations and semi-structured interview as instrument of data collection. This includes purposive sampling, oral interviews and FGDs, which was conducted by researcher in Dogo Nahawa of Barkin Ladi, Plateau State Nigeria. Structured questions were designed and used for interview, and simultaneously administered in the community for 20 twenty people; both Christians and one Muslim in the community; Men and women; the Aged and the Young; Religious and community leaders; the educated and the less educated; as well as farmers. Also, data from related materials and scholars were collected and used, while descriptive statistics were also employed in data analysis. To make this study meaningful and avoid any complexity, the research covered only the affected community, Dogo Nahawa, which happens to be the scene where the massacre happened.

Results And Discussion

Dogo-Nahawa

Dogo Nahawa is a village in Jos South LGA of Plateau, which shares a boundary with Jos East LGA is one of the communities that was targeted by the perpetrators for total destruction of an ethnic group living there. This community (Dogo Nahawa) came under heavy attack by suspected Fulani herdsmen on 7th March, 2010. Rasat, a neighbouring village to Dogo Nahawa was also attacked on the same day. Berom are the majority inhabitants of the village. The villagers buried dozens of bodies, including those of women and children, in a mass grave on Monday after attacks in which several hundred people were feared to have been killed. Armed police and soldiers stood guard as residents of Dogo Nahawa, about 15 km (9 miles) South of the central city of Jos, carried bodies wrapped in multi-colored cloth from trucks and lowered them into a large open pit in the red-brown earth. Some residents of the small village; Rev. Gyang Chuwang (Religious leader), Mr. Elisha Bot (the Youth leader), Mr. Bitrus Danjuma, and Iliya Danjuma who interacted with the researcher all said that Fulani herdsmen from surrounding hills attacked in the early hours of Sunday, opening fire to force them out of their homes before slashing them with machetes. Rev. Gyang Chuwang, a survivor of the attack orates that:

Fulani Herdsmen came from Jos East LGA and attacked the village and were not caught at the crime scene. Over 500 bodies were buried at the mass burial that took place. Part of the grave was the grave of a General in the Nigerian Army who was also killed. Government did not offer any assistance after the incident. Assistance came from private individuals and NGOs (Interview 18/06/2021).

Nigerian villagers wailed in the streets as dump trucks carried hundreds of bodies past burned-out homes towards a mass grave. This was the scene of insurmountable grief after rioters armed with machetes slaughtered more than 500 people in a revenge attack following religious clashes near Nigeria's city of Jos. In an interview with a survivor of the Dogo Nahawa carnage who managed and returned to the community after the attack, Mr. Choji Ayuba, recounted how his wife and two children were killed by the attackers. He narrates thus:

What I thought was a joke flashed on me and made me a widower, after losing two children and my car to the attack among other valuables that were destroyed when my house was set ablaze by the attackers. My wife, Deborah was killed in a room adjacent to the one I was hiding in. I almost ran out to fight the assailant, seeing how he slashed her throat like an animal and opened her stomach with a very sharp knife; but I had to control myself, though in severe pain and tears. I saw when the attackers broke down the door by kicking it. They used machetes to butcher our two children who were sleeping in the same room with my wife (Interview 27/2/2020).

Narrating his own ordeal in the hands of the attackers, Mr. Barnabas Gyang, in an interview with the researcher lamented that it was a sad day for them when their village was attacked by some Fulani herdsmen. He orates that:

The attackers were not Berom, but Fulani herdsmen who were singing in Fulfulde and shouting Allahu akbar. When they entered our house, they shot my brother who was running helplessly in the room, with no escape route as the only door out was blocked by them. They also shot his wife who was in the other room with their three children. They also killed my neighbor and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Barry John who was sleeping in a room a few feet away from their children which shares walls with that of my brother. I heard gunshots and voices of their dying children being hacked down but I was helpless as I watch from my hiding place. I managed to escape by climbing the roof and hanging upon the rafters. When they were done, they sang songs of victory before moving to the next compound. They were singing in Fulani language and I could not pick the words but I believe they were celebrating because they sounded happy as they sang and fired shots in the air. I lost over 10 members in different houses in the same pattern of attacks (Interview 14/03/2020).

Narrating his ordeal in the hands of the Fulani herdsmen in Dogo Nahawa, Mr. Charles Amos laments that their attackers had warned them before the attack that they will come and kill all the *arnas* (infidels) of this village soon. He narrates thus:

Few days before the attack where we lost most of our people, we had heard from some of our people who met with the Fulani herdsmen around our village that we should be ready that they are coming to kill all the *arnas* in the village. They alleged that we have not allowed them to graze freely in our land, so they are coming to kill every *arna* and take over the village. When we heard that, we did not take anything serious because we have been living peacefully with our Muslims brothers in the village for more than 5 decades. When the issue persisted, we formed a joint vigilante group with the Muslims as members. However, a few days before the attack, we noticed that they stopped coming out for the watch and some of them sent their families away. When we confronted them, they said there was no problem. On that fateful day, some of them were the ones showing the houses of our people to the Fulani herdsmen who came from Bauchi sides to attack us. We could hear some of them shouting, “Where are the *arnas* who said they are ready for us?” They first labeled our people as *arna* before destroying our houses and killing us (Interview 18/06/2021).



Plate 2a: Burying the dead bodies in a mass grave: These were the people that were killed during the attack of Dogo Nahawa. Source: SaharaReporters 22/03/2010 (online 4)

The above picture shows a sad situation which is also evidence of this systematic and deliberate act of ethnic cleansing and community extinction in Dogo Nahawa. This has become so due to the fact that such gruesome killings and the vicious acts of perpetrators do go unabated. It was a gory scene as the victims of Sunday massacre in Dogo Nahawa were buried in a mass grave on Monday by indigenes of the state. Human bodies were dumped in tersely opened ground without coffins or obituary dressing associated with traditional burial in local communities. Bodies of the dead were moved in vans to locations of burial by relatives. The perpetrators had shown no mercy. They did not spare women and children or even a four-day-old baby from their machetes. In one area alone, five babies and 28 children aged five or less were killed. The violence in three mostly Christian villages appeared to be reprisal attacks following the January unrest in Jos -when most of the victims were Muslims (SaharaReporters 3). The then Acting President, Goodluck Jonathan, in a national broadcast said:

Security agencies would be stationed along Plateau state's borders to keep outsiders from coming in with more weapons and fighters. "We will undertake strategic initiatives to confront and defeat these roving bands of killers," he said in a statement. While it is too early to state categorically what is responsible for this renewed wave of violence, we want to inform Nigerians that the security services are on top of the situation (Premium Times News 08/03/2010).

Another survivor, Mr. Elisha Bot, the youth leader of Dogo Nahawa interviewed by the researcher lamented that the attack came as a shock to them as they were all living peacefully without any crisis recorded in the area. He orates that:

I came back from Bauchi on that fateful day, the 7th of March 2010. During the night, I heard heavy gunfire around my compound and went out to check what was happening and I was attacked by four Fulani herdsmen who were armed with guns, machetes and knives. Luckily, they did not enter my room. When I saw them, I jumped over the fence and ran away, but I suddenly met another group who were also armed and ready to attack me too. I tried to fight them to defend myself but they were very much in number which I could not count. They first used cutlasses on me, but with the help of God, I ran to my neighbour's house where I met with another group of herdsmen. They had just killed my neighbor and his wife unknown to me. At this point, I was not that lucky as before, they shot me with a gun and hit me on my right arm. With the gunshot I ran to a house which was already burnt down thinking they will not come to the spot again. That was how I was saved. The security came but they stayed at the outskirts of the village and refused to come to the area, until damage had been done much and the herdsmen had also left. I lost my father; his body was found around the neighborhood. However, my wife and children and the wife of my brother were all safe (Interview 18/06/2021).

When asked if they sent the Muslims away after the attack; the Youth leader, Elisha Bot said that they left on their own saying there is no problem. He postulates further that:

We were living peacefully with them, eating, sleeping and playing football together. There is still a single Muslim living in the village. He refused to go along with the attackers and they tried to kill him, but they could not succeed. Some Fulani are still coming into the village for grazing today. And we still receive threats from the Fulani herdsmen that we have not seen anything yet, as they are still coming back until they take over the land. These threat messages are always reported to the security personnel for necessary action. The sector commandant is aware of the threats. He said the attack also affected their king. He lamented further that, assistance came from individuals and organizations, but not from the government when the attack happened, except for the construction of roads the government did (Interview 18/06/2021).

Narrating his account, Mr. Bitrus Danjuma, a student of Federal College Kuru, studying soil conservation. He avers that "I came home for the weekend on that fateful day when the incident happened. My mother was killed in the attack. Since she was the one who was paying my school fees, I could not return back to school. All our food was burnt and my brother, David Danjuma was stabbed in the head. He was rushed to the Jos University Teaching Hospital where he was treated and he spent several months in the hospital. With the help of God, he recovered. At least 500 people were buried at the grave and no single Muslim was buried along" (Interview 18/06/2021).

In a similar way, Mr. Iliya Danjuma also recounted how he escaped when the Fulani herdsmen attacked them. He recounted that, “When I heard gun shots, I ran out while they were shooting sporadically at people. Some people we were running for safety together were killed. I managed to get to our primary school nearby, but there also. I met people killed there as they were stabbed and some slaughtered with knives. I quickly lay down with those that were stabbed, and rolled myself in the blood of the slain. So, when they came there, they thought I was also dead, that was how God saved me” (Interview 18/06/2021).

Following the interaction established in the community with the observations made by the researcher, it was clear that the perpetrators intended to remove the ethnic group living there so they could occupy the village. A careful observation on how the Muslims who were living there before the attack occurs show that they were asked to leave the village before the said day of the attack that was why they all left few days before the unfortunate incident occurred. However, for the quick intervention of the security personnel, their plan was aborted but not without living scores of people killed and many with life threatening injuries and property destroyed. Similar attacks were witnessed in the following villages: Rakweng; Dashugu; Diyan-Hei; Maseh Kampwas; Kasa and Zere all in Barkin Ladi LGA of Plateau State. Investigations into some of these communities revealed that the ethnic groups that were the original inhabitants of the communities have been targeted and sent away with many killed. Some of the communities are now being occupied by people from another ethnic origin.



Plate 2b: Rev. Ajijiga Timothy of COCIN Dogo-Nahawa and the Researcher at the Site of the Mass Burial. Source: Researcher 18/06/2021

In the pictures above (plates 1 and 2), the Reverend of COCIN Church Dogo-Nahawa, Rev. Ajijiga Timothy, the Youth leader, Mr. Elisha Bot and other members of the community narrated how they were called names by their attackers, killed over 500 people and houses razed down. The mass grave where the victims were buried is seen in the picture above.

Implications Of Forgiveness And Reconciliation In Dogo Nahawa Community Tolerance

The world needs reconciliation and the biblical gospel of reconciliation remains “good news to a world fractured by alienation and estrangement. Unfriendliness, indifference and hostility are everywhere and evident in our global society” (White 56). Tibbits and Halliday explain some misconceptions about forgiveness: Forgive and forget, forgiveness that implies ‘It is ok’, forgive and make up, and forgive and set others free. To forgive and forget contains the idea that if you have not forgotten then you did not forgive. But forgiveness is developing a new relationship with what hurt you. The one that implies ‘it is ok’ is simply assuming that it will turn out right. However, forgiveness is what measures our maturity. Forgive and make up involves one person to forgive even if the other person is unwilling. Forgive and set others free, is forgiving without removing accountability (3).

Following the mayhem unleashed on innocent lives in Dogo Nahawa and some of the surrounding villages such as Timtim in Barkin Ladi and Jos South LGA respectively among many others, it has left the survivors wondering what they did wrong to have deserved the kind of senseless and gruesome murder meted out to them considering the fact that they have lived together for decades without any conflict. A visit to these two villages (Dogo Nahawa and Timtim) by the researcher reveals that no Muslim is left in Timtim and Dogo Nahawa except this old man, Mallam Inusa Bello who is seen in the picture below with the researcher. However, Muslim have been going to Dogo Nahawa for business purposes and on visits to members of the community. Some, especially the Fulani herdsmen still graze in the community without being hunted for or any attack by the Christians in the community.



Plate 37: Mallam Inusa Bello, the only Muslim still at Dogo Nahawa After the Attack.
Source: Researcher 18/06/2021

In an interview with Mallam Inusa Bello, he lamented the heinous attack against the community by people he called foreigners. He avers that he will not leave the village he has come to know as his home. He currently lives alone as all his family members were evacuated a few days to the attack. He is being assisted by other people around him. He orates that:

I have no other place to call my home besides this place (Dogo Nahawa) where I have been for over 70 years. I lived here with my family until these foreigners came and attacked our community. They did everything possible to carry me along with them, but I refused, insisting that I have no other place or people to call my own besides here. I am grateful to my people here who did not attack me after it was alleged that the attackers are Muslims and I am a Muslim too. Currently I am the only Muslim in Dogo Nahawa and nobody has harassed me. The Christians here allowed me to practice my religion freely and they are the ones feeding me most of the times (Interview 18/06/2021).

This indicates the fact that in spite the attack which resulted to ethnic cleansing with the aim of displacing the entire community, the people were tolerant and forgiving of one another. In spite the menace of ethnic cleansing and community extinction in some parts of Northern Nigeria caused by incessant ethno-religious conflicts, women from different religious faiths

came together to protest. Women (both Christians and Muslims) in Plateau state all dressed in black clothes protested against the systematic agenda of ethnic cleansing and community extinction on the Plateau and other parts of the nation.



Plate 38: Women Protesting the Senseless and Systematic Acts of Ethnic Cleansing and Community Extinction in the Plateau State. Source: Premium Times 11/04/2018

Benefits of Forgives and Reconciliation for Dogo Nahawa Community

a. It has helped them enjoy peace with God, themselves and one another

Forgiveness is one of the keys to peace. When we cannot forgive other people for what they do or say, we keep ourselves in a state of war with them. Timothy Gyang in an interview posits that, “ever since the ugly incident, we have long forgiven our attackers and have since moved on with our lives. We still see some of the around, but we have never thought of taking revenge at them. This has helped us enjoy peace with God, ourselves and others” (Interview 18/06/2021). Simi Dusu collaborated his statements when she said that, “Although we were pained by the loss of our loved ones and property during the attack, we have long forgiven them. Initially, some of our people suspected some insiders from amongst our own people, but we later resolved to leave each man to himself and his God. Since then, we have enjoyed the peace of love and love amongst us and even one of the Muslim men still living here with us has been cordial.” She further submits that initially, we battle over how right we are, and how wrong these people were when they attack us because they wanted to take over our land. That thought alone affected everything in a very negative

way to the extent that we never wanted to see any Fulani herdsman around us. But as you can see for yourself today, they are still grazing here today” (Interview 18/06/2021). As at the time of conducting this research, the researcher saw Fulani herdsman grazing in the area without any intimidation. A sign of true forgiveness from the parts of the people of Dogo Nahawa. It is imperative to note that crises, whether big or small has great consequence. Usually, the consequences involve the loss of time, energy, happiness, relationships, property, relations among many others. Therefore, one of the benefits of forgiveness, and experiencing peace instead of war, includes things like gaining time, gaining energy, gaining happiness, and gaining relationships with God, yourself, and others as seen among the people of Dogo Nahawa.

b. It has brought Development to the People and the Community

Whenever there is no forgiveness, there will be no meaning development and progress. Even among couples, forgiveness and reconciliation often bring about the development of the family. Following the attacks on Dogo Nahawa, which led to the killings of lives and property, the community was left like a desolate. Having let go all the emotions of pain, regret and of any possible reprisal, the community witnessed the blessings of God. In his words, Dara Choji Pwajok submits that, “following what happened to us, we thought we would never survive as a people in the same community. All those who saw us immediately after the attack would not believe that we are the same people today” (Interview 27/2/2020). He further alludes to the fact that the community was visited by different Non-Governmental Organisations and philanthropists as well as the government which brought about the new face being witnessed. In his words, he avers further that, “Our road which has been untarred for years was tarred, new buildings were erected by different NGOs and other philanthropists. We did not seek to retaliate what was meted to us, but accepted our fate and left everything in the hands of the Lord. Today, we are still moving doing our things without any molestation. We have seen development restored in our community again. Although we are not celebrating this on the account of the lives we lost, but are grateful to God that in spite all that happened He still blesses us” (Interview 27/2/2020). Dogo Nahawa has since received a new touch which has brought the community closer to the town due to the road network connecting it with other towns among many other social amenities that have been made available there.

c. It has made them More Compassionate Towards others

When you forgive others the wrongs they have done to you, you can see things differently and will develop compassion for the offenders knowing that they do not know what they are doing. Jesus saw those who crucified Him and the entire world in the same manner, thus He prayed the father to forgive them for they do not know what they are doing (Luke 23:34). According to Augsburg, Jesus took it upon himself to reconcile us with God. He proposes that “forgiveness is acceptance with no exception. It accepts not only the hurt you have

received, it accepts the one who did the hurting, and it accepts the loss caused by the hurtful actions or words” (27-29). It is important to note that having forgiven your offender, you will see and discover his folly in all he did against you. Philip Thomas posits that “Forgiveness requires you to see things from another point of view, which helps you become more understanding and sensitive to other people. It is important to see that they were not happy when they did what they did to you. They were confused, upset, hateful, or in a state of negativity. When you can see that in someone who has hurt you, then you can see that in everyone” (32). A survivor posits that, “Having forgiven those who massacred our loved ones and destroyed our property, we have learned to see life from a different perspective. We see the perpetrators as people who lack love, people who do not have the light of God and are in dire need of the mercy and love of God. We have since been praying for them to repent and have salvation as we do today.” Looking at people through compassionate eyes is rewarding. It helps you relate to other people, which improves your relationships. It helps you avoid confrontations and negative feelings, which we all know feels better than getting into fights and feeling angry with someone.

d. They have Become More Present in Life

When you do not forgive your offenders, they will become the centre of your discussions. You will begin to focus on them more, complain about them and what they did to you; and eventually, you will begin to think about revenge. This will become the cycle of your imprisonment. Philip Thomas opines further that “Often not being able to forgive means stalking, especially now when we can access other people’s lives online. We stalk our exes, old friends, and everyone who has done us wrong. And that takes a lot of time. It takes time to search through their profiles or drive by their house. That time that could be spent doing much better things” (39). However, when you are able to forgive and sought for reconciliation, you can focus on yourself and your life, not on what other people are doing. Kaneng Dalyop avers that, “When the Fulani herdsmen attacked us, we felt very bad and always had the thought of revenge. The Fulanis became our vocal point of discussion even in the Church, on our farms, in the market place and in our homes. Much time was given to discussing them and how bad they treated us. This affected our healing process. Things changed differently after some of us attended a Trauma healing program, we began to talk less about them and what happened. We began to focus on our lives and how to move on with life having lost so much” (Interview 27/2/2020). This truly is a great benefit that people can derive when they forgive their offenders. You can only focus on yourself, the people that matter and activities that matter most to you when you have truly forgiven. Grace Palmer posits that not only do you have more time to create the life you want, you are more present and capable of experiencing life fully, unlike when you are unable to let go. Holding on to anger keeps you stuck in that moment. Becoming more present in your life has a whole list of benefits itself, including more creativity, less stress, and less regret. And, of course, it is a way to really experience every moment in your life and not waste a second stuck somewhere that has no benefit for your life at all. The clearer forgiveness becomes,

the more useful it is to people who will be transformed. “The sinner does not initiate forgiveness, it is offered by God who takes the initiative to clear our past and open a new relationship of love” (Leon-Dufuor 138).

Conclusion

The study discovered that the use of and competition for land has triggered many of the violent clashes among communities, resulting to killing of lives, destruction of property land grabbing. The growing presence of pastoralists from the Northern Senatorial District of Plateau State seeking grazing pastures for their livestock and the increasing cultivation of land by local farmers have resulted, in a number of cases, in violent inter-communal conflicts. Availability and exploitation of natural resources, quest for economic and political dominance have been recognised as key issues that propels some of these attacks and wanton killings.

That while different evidences abound on the existence of the massacre of the people of Dogo Nahawa as reflected in this paper, it is quite disheartening to note that when such heinous acts are meted out against such community and its inhabitants, it often reported to have been carried out by “Unknown gunmen” or by “Faceless miscreants.”

Recommendations

In a bit to finding solution to some of the crises that have bedeviled some communities on the plateau and to promote peaceful coexistence, the paper thus made the following recommendations:

1. Religious leaders should encourage Christian-Muslim dialogues and support local peace initiatives. Dialogue between Christians and Muslims, particularly at the local level, is crucial to ending the ethno-religious crisis by strengthening mechanisms already existing at state and local levels.
2. Improve security and end impunity: government at all levels should improve security arrangements by boosting the numbers of security personnel, particularly in the most vulnerable communities. Security services must also improve on their ability to gather intelligence and predict attacks, including through closer engagement and communication with local residents in order to ensure the safety of lives and property, hence promoting a peaceful and safe communities.
3. Governments at all levels should also hold perpetrators of crises accountable. For persons already arrested and are in custody, the government should make special arrangements to expedite trials, provide justice for victims and send a strong signal against impunity. Leaving perpetrators to move round the streets freely will deepen grievances and the risk of further reprisals.

4. Governments at all levels should also hold perpetrators of ethnic cleansing and community extinction accountable. For persons already arrested and are in custody, the government should make special arrangements to expedite trials, provide justice for victims and send a strong signal against impunity. Leaving perpetrators to move round the streets freely will deepen grievances and the risk of further reprisals.

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LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

SN	NAME	AGE	PLACE	OCCUPATION	DATE
1	Mr. Choji Ayuba,	58	Dogo Nahawa	Farmer	27/02/2020
2	Rev. Gyang Chuwang	46	Dogo Nahawa	Clergyman	18/06/2021
3	Mr. Barnabas Gyang	39	Dogo Nahawa	Civil servant	14/03/2020
4	Mr. Charles Amos	41	Dogo Nahawa	Civil Servant	18/06/2021
5	Mr. Elisha Bot	43	Dogo Nahawa	Youth Leader	18/06/2021
6	Mr. Bitrus Danjuma	28	Dogo Nahawa	Student	18/06/2021
7	Mr. Iliya Danjuma	47	Dogo Nahawa	Farmer	18/06/2021
8	Malam Inusa Belo	52	Dogo Nahawa	Business	18/06/2021
9	Timothy Gyang	28	Dogo Nahawa	Student	18/06/2021
10	Simi Dus	56	Dogo Nahawa	Civil Servant	18/06/2021
11	Dara Choji Pwajok	63	Dogo Nahawa	Community Leader	27/02/2020
12	Kaneng Dalyop	43	Dogo Nahawa	Business	27/02/2020

CULTURAL COLOURATION OF GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGENNI IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

Global Christianity (the Christian church) since the twentieth century is coloured with some African cultural practices which have changed certain aspects of religious and cultural values of Christianity and the Engenni culture in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. There are concerns of cultural alienation in Engenni, as was the case in Kenya (Bair 2013). The paper examines aspects of global Christianity and the Engenni culture that are affected and how they affect the development of Engenni in the 21st century. Adopting the historical and phenomenological methods of investigation, the paper observed that the Value Added Theory of Smelser (1963) logically explains the dynamics of the discourse on “Cultural Colouration of Global Christianity to the development of Engenni in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria”; and represents it in a Venn Diagram showing inculturation. Development studies recognise the diffusion of African culture in Global Christianity and the reverse order. This interplay opens up a broad spectrum study of academic scholarship by investigating the elements of culture in global Christianity and its effect with particular reference to Engenni as an ethnic nationality. The diffusion of culture and global Christianity in the development matrix of Engenni is expressed in gains, losses and a change mantra in the development landscape of Engenni. The paper recommends that the Engenni culture and Global Christianity should respect their identities and promote their core values to the advantage of the corporate development of human society.

Keywords: Culture, Christianity Colouration, Development, Engenni.

Introduction

Christianity (the Early Church) has a Jewish cultural background colouration. For example, the Jews observed and celebrated several festivals. One Jewish festival – “Shavuot”, was celebrated annually to mark the end of an event – the Grain Festival by farmers and their families; as a Jewish tradition. “Later, Christians celebrated a feast that is closely related to Shavuot, the Christian Pentecost or White Sunday, which comes 50 days after Easter,

marking the beginnings of the church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Ward 1989). This could be regarded as a colouration of the early church.

There is a noticeable shift in the practice of Global Christianity in Africa, including Engenni. The shift is from the early church and Baptist Missionary pattern of worship to the contemporary Pentecostal or charismatic pattern of worship. Scholars identified reasons for the shift to include the emancipation of African culture and preserving African identity in the global marketplace to avoid alienation and possible extinction of the African cultural heritage.

Onwuejogwu asserts that cultural traits and complexes originate through innovation and spread through diffusion and geographic distribution. Cultural colouration, therefore, is a deliberate innovation domesticating global Christianity in Africa, including Engenni. Colouration in this context is used in terms of differentiation between the Engenni culture and Global Christianity; not in the common term of shade of colour – white, black, red, yellow etc.; but change from what it used to be, giving it a new face, the aftermath of a process such as diffusion, acculturation, etc.

The paper is discussed under the following outline to enhance delivery – abstract, introduction, theoretical anchor, the background of Engenni, Global Christianity in Engenni, Cultural Colouration of Global Christianity in Engenni – the case of Spiritual Faith Christ Church (SFCC), the impact of the cultural colouration of global Christianity in Engenni, recommendation, conclusion and references.

Theoretical Anchor

Considering the topic “Cultural Colouration of Global Christianity to the Development of Engenni, it is imperative to put into proper perspective a theoretical framework that can accommodate culture and religion.

Culture and religion are key functional and inseparable human phenomena that are fundamental to the development of society. Scholars have given different explanations and definitions of each from various perspectives and contexts.

Geertz (1973), in his sociological perspective on religion as a cultural system in Pals (2015), asserts that cultural analysis is not “an experimental science in search of a law but an interpretative one in search of meaning”. It becomes imperative to understand the meaning of culture and religion in this context to give meaning to the discourse. Simply put, culture is a people's lifestyle, while religion is a people's belief system. As people engage in both activities, value is added to society. Based on this consideration, the value-added theory of Smelser becomes relevant to this study. According to Smelser (1963), certain conditions are necessary for the development of a social movement. They are structural conduciveness, structural strain, spread of a generalised belief, precipitating factors, mobilisation for action

and social control factors. Following the economic principle, Smelser argued that each step in the production process adds value to the finished product. Similarly, the introduction of Engenni Culture into Global Christianity adds value to the individual and society, and this brings development. Kendall (2016) states that structural strain could be disruptive to society, particularly in times of tension and conflict, as is sometimes the case between culture in Africa and Global Christianity (the church). The value-added theory logically describes the dynamics of cultural colouration of Global Christianity because it adds aesthetic value to Global Christianity (the church) and identity to the Engenni Culture, as explained in this paper.

Background of Engenni

The origin of the Engenni people is shrouded in oral tradition until recently, when few scholars documented their research findings. The earliest documentation by Talbot (1965) in a personal interview with a chief whose name was not mentioned from the Isua community, one of the earliest settlements in Engenni, traced the origin of Engenni to the Isoko people in the present Delta State of Nigeria (James 2020). Some scholars traced the origin of Engenni to the Old Benin Kingdom, the root of the Isoko people and some other groups such as the Ekpeye, Ogba and Ikwerre ethnic nationalities (Agi Otto, 2019). Agi Otto stated that groups of disgruntled people migrated from the Ancient Benin Kingdom when Ewuare the Great (1440 – 1473) introduced some reforms that were not favourable to them. The various groups of immigrants settled in different places. A team travelled southwards through the River Niger to the Orashi River, where the Engenni people currently settle in Cluster communities dotted along the Orashi River, also known as the Engenni River (Joel 2019, Izeogu 2019). The only Engenni Community that is not located along the Orashi River is the Edagberi Betterland community which settled on a tributary of the Orashi River called Taylor Creek (Joel 2019).

A later documented source (Abadi, 2009) asserted that the earliest settlement of the Engenni people when they left the ancient Benin kingdom was at Ewurebe, a site near Eliabi (Akinima), which is the present headquarters of the Ahoada West Local Government where Engenni is situated politically. From Ewurebe, a group moved on to settle at Udekama, Degema, Usokun, Krakrama etc.

Recall that the name “Ewuare” (name of the Benin Chief) suggests to researchers that there could be a possible connection between the group that settled at Ewurebe in Engenni and Ewuare, the great Ancient Benin King, as stated by Agi Otto. Could it be a mere historical coincidence of name resemblance? There is, however, other evidence of a connection between both groups, as reflected in the Edoid group of language classification by Kay Williamson and other language experts. With regards to occupation, the present location of Engenni along the Orashi River flowing through the equatorial rain forest of Nigeria offers the Engenni people the privilege to engage in fishing, farming, hunting, carving and trading

occupations. Their trade items included agricultural products, food, timber, canoe, paddle, fishing gadgets etc. In terms of politics and administration, a traditional institution was in place, such as age grades, families and religious cults, Okilom Akie, Okilom Ibe, Okilom Opiri etc, as custodians of the culture. Nyang stated that “traditional African religion suffered a severe blow when it came into contact with alien religions. This was particularly true in the case of Euro-western Christianity that planted itself in Africa in the nineteenth century. The arrival of Christianity coincided with the unchallenged supremacy of Europe. Besides, material transformation ushered in by the Europeans helped to weaken African culture and religion.

James (2004) asserts that Engenni Cultural contents which include norms, values, folkways, and rites of passage such as naming ceremonies, teething ceremonies, puberty initiation for boys, marriage, coronation, burial and shaving rituals, festivals, dance performances, masquerade displays etc have gone into oblivion. However, some aspects however, such as the drums and voices, clapping and dance steps, have infiltrated into the church (Global Christianity), giving Christianity the African Colouration.

Global Christianity in Engenni

Global Christianity – (the Christian church) came into Engenni, a primordial African community in the Niger Delta region of Rivers State, Nigeria, in the late twentieth century. According to James (2004), “about 1900 onward, Engenni was confronted with an entirely new religious message and one which posed a direct challenge to the gods”. The message of Christianity, which was centred on salvation through confession of sin, denouncing the traditional religion and culture and the acceptance of Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Saviour, was a strange message. This message was crowned with baptism by immersion as a symbol of death to sin and identification with the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The early Baptist missionaries who brought Christianity to Engenni failed to teach and preach about the Holy Spirit. It does appear that the missionaries came with the word, not the Holy Spirit. Even with the scriptures, certain aspects such as clapping, drumming and dancing, as recorded in several parts of the scriptures, were not taught to the people. A typical example is: Come, everyone! Clap your hands! Shout to God with joyful praise! For the Lord Most High is awesome. He is the Great King of all the earth (Psalm 47:1-2). Global Christianity spread through the length and breadth of Engenni through the missionary effort of the American Baptist Mission. Most families in Engenni had at least a Christian convert. The Baptist church became a household word in Engenni (Joel 2012).

It is pertinent to note that before the incursion of Global Christianity (the Christian church) to Engenni, the Engenni cosmology recognised the awesomeness of God and His supremacy over other gods – (Oniso no Odemufeya ne ekunu). The art and act of drumming, singing, clapping and dancing were cultural modes of praising God in Engenni for His numerous blessings (Joel 1987). However, they did this through deities and ancestors who were

venerated. Jesus Christ was completely out of the picture as the son of God. What the Engenni people erroneously regarded as the son of God was the insect known as a caterpillar that is usually found on the leaves of plants in an ecology. The caterpillar insect stings people who come in contact with the leaves in the habitat without anybody seeing it. This physical insect though invisible at the time of contact, was referred to as the child of God - "Omini Oniso". They believed that since God could not be seen with the naked eye, His child also could not be seen. This seeming mythology points to the fact that the Engenni cosmology recognised the supremacy of an invisible God who was acknowledged. What became worrisome and strange was that the European missionaries came with a religion that abhorred praising God through the use of musical instruments, dancing and clapping, contrary to the scriptures which they preached. This was a violation of cultural passion for praise and celebration by the Engenni people that needed to be filled because nature abhors no vacuum. The alternative readily came with the establishment of an indigenous church that filled that space and accommodated that aspect of the Engenni (African) culture with the establishment of an African Indigenous Church.

The first indigenous church in Engenni was the Spiritual Faith of Christ Church (SFCC) Betterland/Engenni. At inception, it was formally called "The Faith Tabernacle Congregation". It was founded by an indigene of Edagbari called Ekwenmodi George John, popularly called Okwukwu, who was converted to Christianity. He became a dedicated member who served as a Sunday School Teacher at the First Baptist Church, Edagberi-Engenni, now Faith Baptist Church, Edagberi. According to an oral source, Okwukwu, while serving the Baptist Church Edagberi, was inspired by the Holy Spirit of God with gifts of prophecy and healing. He exercised these gifts in the Baptist church, but the missionary leadership, including a section of the community who had been converted, condemned the gifts, which were described as demonic (Joel 2019). He had a running litigation with the church and was eventually acquitted and discharged for lack of sufficient evidence for conviction. He was later excommunicated by the church. So he eventually established the Spiritual Faith of Christ Church, which introduced the Engenni colouration of global Christianity. The prophetic healing powers, Engenni drums and voices etc. (Joel 2019) added colour to worship and attracted members to the church. Some members of the community and the Baptist Church identified with the new church to meet their spiritual needs and their passion for Africanness in the Spiritual Faith of Christ Church. The leader's spiritual prowess spread in the area, and people came from far and wide to worship God. Branches of the church were established in partnership with some of the members in their communities at Ogbia, Nembe, Epie, Okordia, Zarama, Engenni, and Biseni, including Oboburu (Agi Otto 2019 & Joel 2010). The Christian gospel also spread, and people were converted from the traditional religion and from the other churches that came to Engenni – the Niger Delta Pastorate (NDP), the Roman Catholic Church, the Christ Army Church, the Three Cross Society in 1965, the World International Sacred Peace Movement in 1965, later there was a proliferation of Christian and Para-Christian Churches including Neo-orthodox, spiritual, Pentecostal churches. In the 70's, after the Nigeria Civil War 1967 – 71. All these

churches have shifted from the early church mode of worship to include the African cultural colouration of dancing, drumming, clapping, healing, prophesying etc.

Cultural Colouration of Global Christianity in Engenni

The word colouration is derived from the noun ‘colour’ as used in English, French and Latin in the 13th Century. Colouration is a phenomenon that refers to the appearance of something in regard to colour. It could depict vividness or a variety of effects of language and interest.

Note that appearance could be subjective or deceptive, like a mirage or colour blindness, depending on a person’s perspective or circumstance. However, in the text, colour is used empirically to connote a change that differentiates one thing from another and does not necessarily change the substance of the thing, which remains what it is; but adds another value to it. In this sense, the cultural colouration of Global Christianity is the added value to Christianity from the Engenni Cultural perspective, giving it cultural aesthetics and emotional satisfaction.

Culture identifies a people, or simply put; culture is the identity of a people. The human element in culture makes it flexible and susceptible to the dynamics of change and its complexity, as is characteristic of human nature. Scholars define culture from contextual humanistic perspectives. According to Maduka (2010), “Culture is the totality of a people’s mode of living” Culture envelopes a people's arts, mores, technology, scientific inventions and attitudes to life (Wosu, 2012). The cultural content of a people subtly permeates into the culture of other peoples through an inculturation process and pressures which gradually transform both cultures. In our context, the Engenni culture and of Global Christianity.

Culture and religion, including Christianity, are intertwined. They are two sides of a coin, two inseparable bedfellows that influence each other in all facets of human development. Culture assumes a superstructure of world religion. Religion incubates in a cultural environment acquiring some cultural traits that colour it, particularly when one is alien to the other, as the case with Christianity in the African culture. In Engenni, culture has influenced the practice of the Christian religion – (the church) in reverse order. Such cultural impact is evident in all Christian movements that came after the Ethiopianist and nationalist wave of religious movements (Gyadu 2016) asserts that “the early twentieth century itinerant prophetic movement led by charismatic figures such as William Wade Harris of Liberia, Garrick Sokari Braide of the Niger Delta, Simon Kimbangu of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Isaiah Shembe of South Africa, tilled the soil on which modern Pentecostalism thrives”. There is the dirt of scholarly documentation or mention of Wachikwe George John, popularly known as ‘Okwukwu of the Niger Delta, who shared a similar worldview about Christianity with those chronicled above. Kalu asserts that such prophets were “closer to the grain of African culture in their responses to the gospel, and so

felt the resonance between charismatic indigenous worldviews and the equally charismatic biblical worldviews. “A cumulative resonance of the African worldview of these prophets has coloured Global Christianity (the church). The Engenni experience of Cultural Colouration of the church was initiated by Prophet Okwukwu, who introduced the Engenni dance steps, drum beats, voice pitch, clap rhythms, ethnic music, congregational responses etc., all in the Engenni way (culture). This is the pitch of Cultural Colouration in Engenni Global Christianity (the Christian Church). Some of these cultural aspects spread to modern and contemporary Christian churches, particularly the Pentecostal churches, including the evangelicals and Orthodox such as Baptist, Anglican, Catholic, Methodist etc. Okwukwu was a Charismatic leader of the Spiritual Faith of Christ Church that introduced valued aspects of Engenni culture into Global Christianity (church). A symbolism of cultural colouration of Global Christianity in Engenni is shown in the Venn diagram below:

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The Venn Diagram explained

The new colours give the old (original) a pseudo status. The original is old in terms of comparison. Therefore, the early church (Christianity) is old, while Global Christianity which is new, symbolize cultural colouration like the rainbow, Joseph’s coat of many colours, and the chameleon that assumes different colours of its ecological habitation. These objects of simile retain their identity and uniqueness despite their colouration. In a similar vein, the Engenni culture should retain her cultural values, identity and uniqueness despite

the impact of Global Christianity – (the church) as is the case with Global Christianity (the church).

Impact of Cultural Colouration of Global Christianity on the Development of Engenni

The Engenni people are homo-religious, culture-oriented and development driven. Their trade contacts with neighbouring people, western merchants and missionaries sharpened her worldview about commerce, culture and Christianity. With their engagement in these activities, the Engenni people introduced elements of their culture, particularly Christianity.

The missionaries presented the gospel in terms of “cultural superiority” that gradually eroded the culture and identity and undermined cultural continuity from the pre-Christian period. This was the Engenni experience, where barely the entire community accepted Christianity through conversion. This development was a cultural loss to Engenni and a cultural gain to Christianity because there was a shift in Engenni traditional culture. Religion is closely integrated with all other facets of culture, especially socio-economic and family life. Contrarily, Helleman argued that “Christianity neither ignores nor destroys a culture but seeks to change it to reform and restore it to what it should be, a healthy, positive environment for human life and society”. For example, translating the scriptures into the Engenni language changed the people’s worldview that favoured continuity and discontinuity of some aspects of the Engenni culture in favour of the Engenni people still recognised the supremacy of God; while in favour of discontinuity, the taboo associated with the birth of twin babies was stopped. The consideration for values is applicable here. Another consideration is language. Engenni language is a cultural tool (Ogua, Eديو, Enedua) dialects that colour global Christianity. For example, the translation of the scriptures and interpretation of the gospel message into Engenni language serve as a veritable tool for effective communication as expressed in the Engenni New Testament Bible translation, which has given colour to the practice of Christianity in Engenni as was never the case in the first instance.

Thirdly, according to Ella (2002), Ethnic music is the music of the people by the people for the people. It has the cognitive capacity to elicit emotions capable of forming attitudes and moulding character. It is a veritable tool for education, enlightenment, awareness and counsel about immoral lifestyles and moral virtues”. The drums and voices of the Engenni people (culture) in Christian worship suggest cultural identity and colouration of global Christianity. It imparts moral values to solicit peace, security, trust, better and more attractive place to live. Ella further states that music is an ethnic communion that portrays group spirit, thoughts, myths and aspirations that links the ultra-terrestrial forces; and gives psychological and therapeutic essence to the listeners. The Engenni music conveys all of these attributes in the worship experience. It is little wonder the Engenni ethnic music is preferable to the hymns, which have more of a Western attachment. To buttress this point (Rottenbary, 1941 and Hildebrandt 1951, Wemann 1960) state that the gospel be conveyed

through music and hymns produced on the local soil, speaking a language that is familiar and meaningful”. All of these impacts are expressed in the establishment of the Spiritual Faith of Christ Church (SFCC) in Engenni, which pioneered a process of inculturation and emotional emancipation that has coloured Global Christianity in Engenni. The Spiritual Faith of Christ Church established a Christian community (Betterland), now a community recognised by the government. The church respects core Christo-cultural values such as Christology of scriptures, healing, prophesy, love, communalism etc., which are also cultural in Engenni culture except for the Christology theology.

Recommendations

Global Christianity should incorporate Engenni cultural values that will promote the spread of the gospel and enhance the cultural renaissance in Engenni. For example, the catholic synod accepted the need to integrate customary marriage into the sacramental celebration and urged the Episcopal conferences to work out this inculturation (Baeta 2018). The idea is to make Christianity ‘native’ as it is ‘native’ in Europe and America (Mbiti J. 1965).

The cultural colouration of global Christianity in Engenni should make a conscious and systematic effort to enculturate and domesticate Christianity as African in line with Mbiti’s perception that such will eradicate the wrong impression that Christianity is simply a Western religion and that the Bible is a European book. This will also show that Christianity is not so foreign and remote and will open up a creative way of interpreting biblical teaching in a context with which the people are familiar.

Conclusion

The topic “Cultural Colouration of Global Christianity to the Development of Engenni in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria is expressed in the summary of two circles, A and B. A represents the early Christian Church (Christianity), a crystal clear tabular rasa, void of external encumbrances, except some aspects of the Jewish Culture etc., while Circle B represents Christianity from the perspective of the early church as a crystal clear void of other encumbrances except the Jewish culture which conflicted with the church as presented by Jesus Christ. However, in the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria and other parts of the world, including Engenni in Africa, other cultures smeared on it, including the Roman, European, and the African culture as represented in a Venn circle diagram C, in a section of colouration Global Christianity meshed with the Engenni culture. The aspect of Engenni culture that colour Global Christianity is the language, music, drums and voices, clapping and dancing impressed in the pioneer indigenous Christian church called the Spiritual Faith of Christ Church International (SFCC) Edagberi – Betterland established by Prophet Warchikwe George John popularly known as Okwukwu, a Baptist Church convert who left the Baptist church and established the Faith Tabernacle Congregation in 1939.

The Spiritual Faith of Christ Church International (SFCCI), Betterland, is perceived in this context as a Cultural Colouration of Global Christianity in Engenni. However, the physical attractions of Global Christianity, such as the provision of Western education, health care services, white collar jobs, technology, industrialisation etc, overwhelmed the Christian converts. Some are overwhelmed by traditional culture. The matter of conviction is outside the scope of this study. However, suffice to state that whatever adds value to a people's need informs her culture and religion. Both are two bedfellows in human existence and the development of society.

The Engenni culture has added colour to Global Christianity in Engenni as gain to Global Christianity and loss to the Engenni culture, which is experiencing alienation. A synergy is necessary at this point to build a balanced society that would add value to each system.

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AFRICAN MUSIC AND AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY IN A GLOBAL COMMUNITY

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Abstract

Music is a human enterprise as animal musicum. It is a human heritage that is as old as humanity and its chequered history. The master playwright and poet William Shakespeare mentioned music many times in his works. Bob Marley and many inspired musicians have shown a great connection between Music and Philosophy in their work of arts and humanities. Coming from the world of arts, Music and Philosophy share differential limits as well as differential coefficients. Great musicians have been known to be very philosophical in their content which is always enduring and prophetic. Using the method of critical analysis, the researcher discovers a healthy connection and a therapeutic relation between music and philosophy in line with Plato's enduring maxim that philosophy is the highest music.

Keywords: Music, philosophy, African music, African philosophy, global community.

Introduction

Music, being part of art is an essential part of early human life. It is a *practical philosophy* within the bounds of aesthetics which modern writers understand by the phrasal expression of *the theory of beauty and art*. It remains a popular saying that *music is the universal language of mankind as well as the language of the spirit*. Bob Marley the Reggae Legend believes that “one good thing about music is when it hits you, you feel no pain.” Plato nevertheless asserts that “music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything”. And in furtherance of this singular view, he reiterates that “musical training is a more potent instrument than any other because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul”.

Music is the most widely practised and accessible of all the arts. Supporting this idea, Enoch (2006) opined that in almost every sector of this country (and elsewhere) music is ever used music for one purpose or the other because music is accessible to all. Music has been

defined as a universal language because everybody in every culture recognizes music when he or she hears it or needs it. This is because, according to Okafor (2001) music is culture-bound. According to him “It doesn’t have a single answer. Every culture decides on what is music. It is culture that gives music its definition”. Music, therefore, remains a very important means of expressing the beauty of one’s culture. It is used in every aspect of human activities, from birth to death, and for some, right before one’s birth and after one’s death, music is employed as such.

In different sections of this paper, music will be portrayed as a fundamental and salient aspect of human life and interaction. Embedded deep in human culture and tradition, music is a discipline that enlivens humanity as a sociocultural cum trade-political animal. Man in contradistinction from other animals remains a musical animal, *animal Musicum*. Hence, a man not only listens to music but creates one for his pleasure and entertainment. This is beyond some mere animals that sing, *utter sounds* and listens to music. Man as a *homo loquens* (speaking man) and *animal cogitans* (thinking animal) listens to music and equally, create his own in different patterns. Music is a form of companionship. This is why Leo Tolstoy writes that *music is the shorthand of emotion*. Ratcliffe (2017) quoted saxophonist Charlie Parker on his popular remark that ‘music is your own experience, your thoughts, your wisdom. If you don’t live it, it won’t come out of your horn’. Benjamin (2020) maintains that music is a philosophy rich in ideas that language cannot say. In furtherance, she reiterates that music is a Socratic teacher. Its melodies and call-and-response mechanisms, together with the subsequent variations in modulations and rhythms, steer us away from linear thinking and direct us towards nuance. African music, beyond entertainment, is rooted in African realities and world-view and nevertheless informs and inspires the global community as such

Understanding Music

The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (2023) defines music as "the art of combining vocal or instrumental sounds (or both) to produce beauty of form, harmony, and expression". As a discipline or course in any academic system, music is an organized sound. It’s an art and most popularly a performing art. The Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary (2022) on-line edition’s definition of music is a typical example thus: "the science or art of ordering tones or sounds in succession, in combination, and in temporal relationships to produce a composition having unity and continuity". Etymologically, music with its old English *music* of the mid-13th century; the old French *musique* of the 12th century; and the Latin version of *mūsica* derives from the Ancient Greek *mousiké* meaning "(art) of the muses".

Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus. (2023) defines music as “a pattern of sounds made by musical instruments, voice or computers, or a combination of these, intended to give pleasure to people listening to it”. Man as a social animal, known for

movement, is a danceable animal and very cadenced. Hence, it's very easy to respond to rhythms and other musical time and periodicity while observing intervals and regularity. However, with regard to music, we can say that human beings are rhythmic beings. A human being, however, observes such pulsations and rhythms seen in the heartbeat, breathing and brain waves are all rhythmic. Often, we talk of someone possessing music-ear showing that one naturally responds to rhythm and repetition, tones and tunes. Musical aptitude, talent and disposition are very particular to human beings as *animal Musicum* as a result of his ability to speak and manipulate sounds with his mouth and tongue.

Appreciation of Philosophy

Philosophy, etymologically from the Greek lexicon is *philos* (love) and *sophia* (wisdom) transliterated *love of wisdom*. To this point, philosophy remains a human science that seeks wisdom and a personal enterprise with an unaided reason. It is a human enterprise. Maritain (2005) maintains that Philosophy is the highest of the human *sciences*, that is, of the sciences which know things by the natural light of reason. But there is a science above it. For if there be a science which is participation by a man of the knowledge proper to God himself, that science will be superior to the highest human science. Such a science, however, exists; it is theology. The word *theology* means the science of God. Philosophy is *cognitio rerum per altissimas causas, solar rationis* (science that studies all things in their ultimate and universal principle). It is *scientia rerum per ultima causas*- knowledge of things through their ultimate causes.

Maritain (2005) strongly thought that traditionally, philosophy is divided into three principal sections: logic, speculative philosophy and practical philosophy. The division of philosophy into *speculative* and *practical* depends, not on the specific character of the various philosophic sciences or disciplines, but on the end which they pursue. If that end is *knowledge alone*, the philosophy is speculative; if it is for the *general good of man*, then it is practical. Art and Philosophy of Art, therefore, are practical philosophies. Taking cognizance of the sections, it is divided into *main and minor branches*. There are four main branches of Philosophy: Metaphysics, Epistemology, Axiology (Ethics and Aesthetics) and Logic. There are many minor branches of Philosophy and they are technically regarded as *Applied Philosophy or Philosophy and Special Discipline*. Applied Philosophy, therefore, is any Philosophy in combination with any other Special Science. Hence Applied Philosophy has to do with *the Philosophy of something* as shown below: Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Arts, Philosophy of Education and other *Philosophies of*.

From Philosophy of Arts: Unto Philosophy of Music

In a very strict sense, art is anything human-made. Within the ambit of this precise definition, fine arts, paintings and sculptures as well as buildings, furniture, auto-mobiles, cities, and garbage dumps are all works of art. Here we appreciate performing arts vividly

seen in theatre arts and music. Therefore, every change brought about by human activity making a difference in the face of nature is art, be it good or bad, beautiful or ugly, beneficial or destructive. In a large sense, the power of arts is expressed scripturally thus: And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (cf. Gen. 1:28). This is humanity’s fulfilment of the biblical injunction to conquer the earth is better expressed in a great many works of arts.

Maritain (2005) maintains that “art belongs to the practical order in the sense that it instructs us how to make something, considering not the use we should make of our free will but how the work as such and in itself should be executed. We may thus say that art is concerned with what is to be made, *factibile*” (p.171). Furthermore, Maritain (2005) holds that “the formal character of making is fulfilled primarily in the material objects produced or fashioned by man (the *factibile* in the strict sense). But in a wider sense, it is to be found also in works of a purely spiritual nature” (p.171). Philosophy of Art is an Applied Philosophy within Practical Philosophy. It is the philosophy of making and through it, man procures other goods by some action for the well-being of humanity. Such philosophy regulates human activities as such. Philosophy of Art is an applied philosophy. It is an application of philosophical principles to works of art. Those who use the term *philosophy of art* typically use it to refer to works within the field of aesthetics and general philosophy. Philosophy of Art is the reasoned inquiry into the nature, origins, concepts and usage of the products of arts. However, *Britannica*, an online dictionary gave the task of philosopher of Arts thus: “to heighten understanding and appreciation of works of art but to provide conceptual foundations for the critic by (1) examining the basic concepts that underlie the activities of critics and enable them to speak and write more intelligibly about the arts and by (2) arriving at true conclusions about art, aesthetic value, expression and the other concepts that critics employ”. Philosophy of Arts, therefore, studies nature or art as a discipline expressing a form of interpretation and or representation while manifesting beauty and value. This is why the philosophy of art is related to aesthetics. Maritain (2005) nevertheless holds that “if we would accurately describe this branch of philosophy, we should term it the *philosophy of making*, but we shall call it simply the philosophy of art”(p. 171).

Art as a disciplinary act and practise of making, therefore, is man’s attempt to reproduce reality, participating through his imaginative creativity. Through art, ideas as ideals are realized as reality as such. To this extent, art is in making; reflecting a kind of transformational reality with value. Philosophical enterprise on art remains a product of interaction between the prototype ideals in imaginative and concrete realization of a new product that speaks of *a being there*. These thoughts are the background of Aristotle’s four causes *formal, material, efficient and final causes*. Through these Aristotelian dispositions,

something is brought into existence from many *a given*. Odimegwu, I & Eyis (2007) in their review of a paper titled: *Nze on Art, Communication and Development* reiterates thus,

Art is the product of the interaction between the unchanging model and the artistic idea which engenders the concrete ideal and the ideal form, the material object and the instruments and media of art. The artist comes in as the mediator in this struggle to transform both the ideal and material substances into the final art...Inevitably, therefore, art is a *mediative* activity that involves compromise and relativization of being and essences, (p. 481).

Art as a reality communicates. Aesthetically, art extends unto truth and value through the goodness it relates to hidden realities. Part of this communication is seen in music. It is very possible through man because he is a *homo loquens* and equally a *homo cantata*, *animal Musicum*. In this regard, music not only stimulates but soothes the listener. Humanity has had the privilege to be known as a singing animal because he can speak and utter words and organized sounds in the form of communication. Music is an art form that doubles up as a form of expression, a form of communication. Music as an art of combining vocal or instrumental sounds harmoniously or expressively purifies art as an act as such. This is why music is generally perceived as the most universal of all art forms. Some even see it as a language that communicates pending on the type of music and one's mood.

Complementing this idea of music as something with great soothing psychological effect, Caesar of William Shakespeare, (as described in *Julius Caesar, Act 1, Scene 2*) enters a public square with Antony, Calpurnia, Portia and hosts of others, followed by a throng of citizens who were ready to celebrate the feast day with a ceremonial run through the city. In that setting and scenario Julius Caesar gave a succinct description of Cassius as a queer man and strange human being who rarely smiles, does not enjoy life, does not listen to music and is always observing the hidden motives in others thus:

He reads much. He is a great observer and he looks quite through the deeds of men. He loves no plays, as thou dost, Antony. He hears no music! Seldom he smiles and smiles in such a sort as if he mocked himself and scorned his spirit. That could be moved to smile at anything. Such men as he is never at heart's ease whiles they behold a greater than themselves. And therefore are they very dangerous.”=

Inability to cherish musical contraptions is abnormal Caesar opined. Ndeche, Chidirim in an online paper on *Fela Kuti: Ten Thoughtful Quotes* writes that Fela Anikulapo Kuti is a musical icon well known for pioneering the Afrobeat genre with provocative style of music. For Ndeche, Fela was a multi-instrumentalist, human rights activist, political maverick, and revolutionary who was never afraid to stand up for his beliefs. He was one of Africa's most controversial musicians who, frustrated with the willingness of Nigerians to accept oppression, fought throughout his life for the rights of the common man despite vilification,

harassment, and even imprisonment by the Nigerian government. Fela, K (2011), the music legend, nevertheless maintained that: *Music is the weapon. Music is the weapon of the future* in a YouTube musical video. Art, as well as music, in any of their forms, are brought forth by a person, or a group of talented yet usually inspired or ordinary people, expressing an opinion, often times with regard to present situations. This is why music and art, both visual and performing arts, have a long-standing relationship. One new study explores music as a source of creativity. Since music has been shown to improve cognition and enhance learning and memory in other studies, it makes sense that perhaps, it has an impact on creative thinking as well as critical thinking.

Music, Psychology and Child's Development

Philosophy, as a human enterprise achieved *via* unaided human reason, by and large, gives credence to all forms of learning to the extent of being regarded as the mother of all-knowing, *mater scientia*. There is a relation between music and psychology within philosophy as *the highest of the human sciences*. Hence, there is *Music Psychology* or *Psychology of Music* as it pertains to one's methodological approach. The Psychology of Music may be regarded as a branch of both psychology and musicology aiming at explaining and understanding musical behaviour and experiences, including the way we appreciate music, well created and reacted to as part of human life, rejuvenating our everyday life, bringing the health of mind and body. William Shakespeare's in his great comic play *Twelfth Night (Act 1, Scene 1)* started with the very first line thus "if music is the food of love, play on". Psychology of Music, therefore, remains an application of musical innuendoes on the human psyche, trying to ameliorate the human mind by way of relaxation and proper healing effect as therapy defines it.

Levitin (2019) in *Encyclopaedia.com* defines the Psychology of Music "as a field of scientific inquiry studying the mental operations underlying music listening, music-making, dancing (moving to music), and composing. This field of study is drawn from the core disciplines of psychology, cognitive science, and music, and music-related works in the natural, life, and social sciences". Many novel research works have been done in this area of musical therapy in relation to musical behaviour affecting human sensation, cognition and perception. Indeed, music has been shown to systematically arouse and provoke emotional responses in its adherents and listeners producing soothing effects. Ongoing research by the University of Sheffield (for September 2023) has it that:

Research on the Psychology of Music uses psychological theories and methods to interpret and understand musical sounds, musical behaviours, and the effects of music. The subject is strongly inter-disciplinary, and generally combines empirical data collection, through observation, experiments, surveys or otherwise, with theoretical innovation. The scope of research in Sheffield ranges from fundamental questions related to music perception and cognition to applications of music psychology in everyday life.

There are other ongoing researches. *Wikipedia* has it that there is “a significant amount of research concerns brain-based mechanisms involved in the cognitive processes underlying music perception and performance. These behaviours include music listening, performing, composing, reading, writing, and other ancillary activities. Also, it is increasingly concerned with the brain's basis for musical aesthetics and musical emotion. Scientists working in this field may have training in cognitive neuroscience, neurology, neuroanatomy, psychology, music theory, computer science, and other allied fields. According to continued research, listening to music has been found to affect the mood of an individual. The main factors in whether it will affect that individual positively or negatively are based on the music tempo and style. In addition, listening to music also increases cognitive functions, and creativity, and decreases feelings of fatigue. Again, one of Shakespeare’s most famous quotes is: “If music be the food of love, play on” (William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*. Act 1, Scene 1). Music has indeed been the source of many creative and inspirational quotes, with many likening it to a universal language, evolving with rich history, very much rooted in religious and secular society. Research has equally shown the therapeutic and mood-altering qualities of music with great relief to many with different ailments while promoting better brain activities.

Psychology over time has been a part of philosophy. Philosophy of mind we must admit relates to psychology as the study of the mind *and psyche*. Onebunne (2015) defines psychology as the scientific study and systematic appraisal of the human mind and its cardinal functions, especially those affecting behaviour and human nature in a given context. In the areas of abnormal psychology and child’s developmental psychology and general well-being of *homo cantata*, music and in a large sense, psychology of music *via* music therapy plays a major role of positive influence. Malloch and Trevarthen (2018) in the paper published on-line on *The Human Nature of Music* reiterate that “music is at the centre of what it means to be human – it is the sounds of human bodies and minds moving in creative, story-making ways... The central importance of our abilities for music as part of what sustains our well-being is supported by evidence that communicative musicality strengthens emotions of social resilience to aid recovery from mental stress and illness.” *Wikipedia*, was apt in expressing that, “music therapy is an intervention sometimes used to promote emotional health, help patients cope with stress and boost psychological well-being. Some researchers even suggest that your taste in music can provide insight into different aspects of your personality”. Nevertheless, in the area of abnormal psychology, music is a great therapy besides psychotherapy and chemotherapy.

Music-Child’s development is part of *Music Psychology*. The ties between music and our emotional and cognitive states as humans are as old as music itself but beyond both its soothing and energizing effects, music has been shown to play a tangible role in learning and human development and works as a transcending tool of wellness, lifestyle and attitude within humans. In the thoughts of Adeogun (2009), music is one of the most comprehensive

and universal ways of expression and communication for humankind which is present in the everyday lives of people of all ages and from all cultures around the world. Listening to music, singing, playing (informally, formally), creating (exploring, composing, improvising), whether individually and collectively, are common activities for the vast majority of people. Music represents an enjoyable activity in and of itself, but its influence goes beyond simple amusement. These activities not only allow the expression of personal inner state and feelings but also can bring about many positive effects in those who engage in them. According to Akuno (2011), there are many dimensions of human life including physical, social, educational, and psychological (cognitive and emotional) which can be affected positively by successful engagement in music.

Human development entails the development to full maturity of all the faculties of man seen comprehensively, *all the potentialities of the body and all the potentialities of the mind*. In addition, *Longman Dictionary* (2005) describes the development as an increase in the ability of an individual to function properly at any age and in a given situation. As a person grows and matures over the years, he is expected to exhibit corresponding behaviours which should show more refinement and be geared towards better adjustment and more effective solutions to daily problems of life. By implication, human development concerns the entire or overall change in human beings, which accordingly does not happen abruptly but rather takes a gradual process. During such moments a lot of actions take place to modify the behavioural changes that occur in the human person. Our concern, however, has to border around developmental Psychology as such.

Developmental psychology is concerned with the scientific study of how and why humans adaptively grow in the course of their lives. Related to this is our general concern with Child's development. Child development or child's psychology is the study of differential psychological processes of raising healthy children, unto mature adolescence differing from adults. Other scholars describe six stages of child development that include newborns, infants, toddlers, preschool, school age, and adolescents. Failing to reach some of the milestones may signal a developmental disability. This is why developmental psychology, however, recognizes the effect of children's rhymes at that stage of development. Novel research has shown that music is known to improve human intelligence and focus, ameliorate mental health, and boost the human immune system while assuring one's self-esteem and confidence. Music gives one a better personality as it helps one to relax and affects one's most positively just as Bob Marley will say: *one good thing about music is when it hits you, you feel no pain*. The music hits one into activities with no pain.

Children's rhymes vary in style, subject, tone and theme, although many are marked by the use of rhythm and rhymes that makes them easy to remember. Endraswara (2009) explained that nursery rhymes are songs that have cheerful and fun vibes which nevertheless consist of meaningful lyrics. They include crèche rhymes or nursery rhymes, lullabies, finger play, counting-out rhymes, riddles, games, songs, and ballads, among other types. While some

rhymes seem designed purely to amuse, others are didactic and educational, including those intended to help children learn the alphabet and numbers. Many nursery rhymes have variants in their languages, with similar rhymes appearing in different nations.

Children or nursery rhymes are part of a long-standing tradition in early childhood education. Many generations of children have learned and recited nursery rhymes in their homes and schools. Gauthier and Lejeune (2008) observe seriously that when they learn nursery rhymes, children face linguistic and musical challenges that trigger their cognitive development through pleasant social interactions mediated by adults and peers alike. According to Procter (1990) nursery rhymes are short traditional songs or poems for children. From the above definition, it is clear enough that nursery rhymes are suitable for children or younger learners. In this context, thereof, nursery rhymes provide a unique teaching and learning context in which one can also be embedded with explicit and functional instructions that promote early literacy and numeracy, attitudinal and musical development in young children.

However, in Children, crèche or nursery rhymes vary in style, subject, tone and theme, although many are marked by the use of rhythm and rhymes that makes them easy to remember. Endraswara (2009), explained that nursery rhymes are songs that have a cheerful and fun vibe, that also consist of meaningful lyrics. They include nonsense rhymes, lullabies, finger play, counting-out rhymes, riddles, games, songs, and ballads, among other types. While some rhymes seem designed purely to amuse, others are didactic and educational, including those intended to help children learn the alphabet and numbers. Many nursery rhymes have variants in their languages, with similar rhymes appearing in different nations.

Nursery or crèche rhymes are part of a long-standing tradition in early childhood education. Many generations of children have learned and recited nursery rhymes in their homes and schools. Endraswara (2009) reiterated this stand when he observed that to learn nursery rhymes, children face linguistic and musical challenges that trigger their cognitive development through pleasant social interactions mediated by adults and peers. This is why Procter (1995) maintains that nursery rhymes are short traditional songs or poems for children. From the definition above it is clear enough that nursery rhymes are suitable for children or younger learners. Nursery rhymes provide a unique learning context in which can also be embedded explicit instructions that promotes early literacy and musical development in young children.

The entire world process is dependent on development. The general idea of evolution is all about becoming, that is, a form of change, a progressive process. Becoming fundamentally characterizes all of us and everything around us in the world. In Contemporary philosophy, development is seen from the point of view of becoming, a kind of process philosophy, that is, a form of *dialectical process*. Dialectic or dialectics, also known as the dialectical method, like the Socratic method, is at the base, a discourse between two or more people

holding different points of view about a subject but wishing to establish the truth through their reasoned arguments. However, the primary aim of development is human well-being, and in special order, human development.

The broader concept of development places man or human beings at the centre of development. Of course, the main or most fundamental to development is the development of the people which nevertheless borders on human, social, economic and industrial growth. Development in this sense is captioned sustainable development. However, man as *animal laborans* is at the centre of it while *education* is the sure way to achieve it as no nation grows beyond the quality of her educational system. This simply leads to any form of *sustainable development*. Education is, therefore, regarded as the bedrock of any society, hence, its importance to national development cannot be overemphasised. Any society that is serious about development must, therefore, educate its citizenry starting with a well-established and good children development program.

It is against this background that the dwindling fortune of Nigeria's educational sector is worrisome. Education has become everybody's right. That explains why international human rights instruments insist that education is a fundamental human right. These instruments include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. This is what led to the declaration of the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) which took place in Thailand in 1990. In its first article, it was decided that every person: child, youth and adult shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities, which will, in turn, help the society to grow. In our paper, the role of music in a child's development must be upheld.

Philosophy of Music

Music and Philosophy complement each as arts and humanities. It equally extends to the proper idea of the Philosophy of Music. As a minor branch of philosophy as well as an applied philosophy, philosophy of music. *Philosophy of music*, as an applied practical philosophy, is a reasoned inquiry into the role of philosophy in music. Philosophy of Music remains a fascinating area of research at the intersection of philosophy as *mater scientia*. Music as a human enterprise borders on the human spirit *via* his emotions. Therefore, it means that music is spiritual. This form of spirituality which is beyond religious innuendo is hereby understood as the quality of being concerned with the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things. Spirituality in this order entails a kind of recognition of something beyond mere physicality, a feeling or sense or belief that there is something greater than myself, something more to being human than sensory experience. This is the realm of Music as a transformational piece in human enterprise. This is why at the dawn of philosophical movements, Music for the Greek philosophers was a part of their metaphysics. Music was a part and parcel of how they thought the universe was structured. Even in ancient times, music was at the heart of their religious celebrations. And

in contemporary religions, music is very central. Mere listening to classical music and music from *the masters*, both local and international, ancient and contemporary, shows that music has a kind of aura that goes with it. Benjamin (2020) captions the relationship between music and philosophy in this sensitive caveat thus:

The art of musical thinking offers a perspective and a context for composing our experiences. It provides a philosophical foundation that embraces dissonance alongside harmony and casts sound and silence as equal protagonists in a democracy, where the realisation that dualities such as tension and consensus coexist is a core tenet of a vibrantly realised life. If we learn to sit with the inexplicable sounds of our historical moment, we'll open an unexpected path of self-elucidation, and contribute to questioning and redefining the society we're creating, (p.243).

Socrates, in an on-line source, *The Mindless Philosopher* (2013) was accredited for this good and appreciative understanding of music thus: "Rhythm and harmony most of all insinuate themselves into the inmost part of the soul... they make a man graceful if he is correctly reared, if not, the opposite." The purpose of music, Socrates says, is to encourage the development of a good soul. The philosopher Plato suggests in *The Republic* that music has a direct effect on the soul. Equally, Plato was credited with the saying that *music is a moral law*. It is often thought that music can affect our emotions, intellect and psychology; it can pacify our loneliness or prompt our passions. Prešev Center for Refugees (2016) in a paper cited Plato as saying that "music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything".

Equally, the prominent Greek philosopher Aristotle, a disciple of Plato toed the same line to affirm that music contained an intrinsic element that was conducive to the promotion of moral or spiritual harmony and order in the soul. *Generate Press Forum* (2023) refers to Socrates as saying that music is very important, but not for pleasure, rather a utility to educate. So the philosophy of music is the study's basic questions with regard to the nature of music and humans as *homo contains* the experience of it. Therefore, the Greek philosophers saw a relationship between music and mathematics, envisioning music as a paradigm of harmonious order reflecting the cosmos and the human soul. Many famous names in philosophy celebrated and blended the idea of Music and philosophy as Leibniz, Kant, Schelling, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche. For them, music is philosophy in singable words. This is why the philosophical study of music has many connections with philosophical questions in metaphysics and aesthetics as beauty. In our ear the man and best brain of the 20th Century Albert Einstein himself acknowledged that sound, in the form of music, gave him more pleasure than anything else in life and it played such a significant role in his scientific prowess. However, the beauty of this section is seen in the recent area of study known as introducing African Music and African Philosophy in the world of academia.

Appreciation of African Music from African History

The geography of continental Africa shows that the history of Africa begins with the emergence of hominids, archaic humans, that anatomically modern humans (*homo sapiens*), circa 300–250,000 years ago in East Africa. If we do not understand how vast Africa is as a continent, we may not appreciate the length and breadth of her natural environment and endowment. In line with this, Africa has been regarded as the mother or cradle of ancient civilization with Mesopotamia in the lead. Through years of research, it is accepted that Alkebulan meaning mother of mankind remains the original ancient name of Africa. Africa is the most tropical of all continents with five geographic regions North, South, West, East and Central. The climate and vegetation range from equatorial rainforests, tropical deserts and savannah grassland to the Mediterranean. The Sahara Desert, the largest of its kind anywhere in the world, is over 10.4 million km² North-South is approx. 1800 km and East-West is 5600km.

As an acclaimed mother of civilization, the history of Africa is not contentious even though some enlightened but frustrated philosophers like Hegel and Hume declined as such. In the 1830s the German philosopher G. H. F. Hegel remarked that Africa “is no historical part of the world; it has no movement or development to exhibit.” From Hegel's perspective, Africa is said to be unhistorical; undeveloped Spirit: *Geist* – still involved in the conditions of mere nature; devoid of morality, religions and political constitution. This came with the justification for Europe plundering and ravaging, from exploration, exploitation, slavery, colonialism, neocolonialism, capital flow and now debt. Africa has been a victim of misinterpretation since the first African exploration. This remains a form of pedagogy of the oppressed which thwarted African progress leaving it with yet another contemporary great divide in the global south.

This is why Colonizers, unfortunately, made some of us believe that before their visit and exploration Africa was backward, barbarous and uncivilized savages without art and culture. Yet we had Artefacts they took away and kept in their museums. Many of our arts and crafts of men that were not progressive for example, Igbo bronze and Mali bronze were carted away into their museums. Africans traditionally cured many ailments, tapped their palm wine and lived a comfortable life before the colonialists interfered in their development and progress. Many African arts are now decorating European museums while many African legacies which they removed dot their world and history as they partitioned Africa. Amidst all these about Africa, there remain two Africas: One, Africa, Europeans created for their selfish gains, the other Africa, the original black Africa, the pride of Africa. The latter is making it possible for the contemporary quest for Africans to be or not to be.

History shows that Africans have art and by implication music. Blain Muema in an on-line paper, A Brief History and Background of African Music asserts that “African music has undergone many and significant changes over the years, as is acknowledged. Traditional

music now is likely to be different from African music in the past; neither has African music been associated with certain ethnic groups in the past. Individual musicians, their styles, and their originality have always been significant". Even as African people migrated in large and small groups, they did so with their musical styles and instruments. Equally, most African music literature is based on Western theoretical frameworks, with categories such as African music, world music, global music, and ethnomusicology. Nevertheless, the *Africanity* of African Music, as well as the *Musicality* of African Music, makes this paper ad rem as African Music and African Philosophy will be dealt with as an effort is made to understand the interplay between the duo.

Music is an integral part of African life in general. African music is a discipline sharing in the world's musical heritage. It is African music because it is done within Africa and or by Africans outside the Africa Continent. It is African as long the theme or the message is African as such, African music is a result of the unique African musical tradition that smacks styles and spans across the African continent. African Music, often referred to as Traditional African Music or Music of Africa is as vast and varied as the continent's many regions, nations, and ethnic groups. Thus, Hagar (1993) maintains that the *New World Encyclopaedia* on Music of Africa, formerly Music Library explains that:

Africa and music intersect with every aspect of life and express life through the medium of sound. By helping mark the important moments in life, music helps to underscore the divine and eternal value of human life. African music also helps to connect people in a variety of ways, strengthening the fabric of the community, which in turn reinforces people's commitment to support each other and the community, toward mutual health and prosperity. Another crucial role of music in Africa is as a mode of communication. Traditional African music simply communicates.

African music is as diverse as its cultures and nations, languages and peoples. It has flourished in many indigenous forms as well as shaped by foreign influences. Of great benefit is African music to the existential life of the people that own it. However, the Hagar (1993) opines that the *New World Encyclopaedia* maintains that Music of Africa, formerly Music Library reiterates that:

As African society has changed in response to the forces of colonization, independence, and globalization, the role of music changed as well, adapting to the new situation in which the people of Africa find themselves. Though there have been changes in some of the forms of music, including the infusion of instruments, musical styles, and genres from outside the African continent, music remains very important in Africa today. Also, as Africans travelled from Africa to other parts of the world, both as a result of the African slave trade and later migrations, the music and dance forms of the African diaspora influenced several international musical styles and genres (Paragraph 4).

The current idea of African Music as well as African Philosophy and other African disciplines are simply championed because Africans have come to stay. Most importantly, liturgical music has seen a lot of adaptations or properly put, inculturation with regard to her music becoming soothing for Africans. Iroegbu (1996) envisages this complementarity and inculturation ecclesiology when he writes thus:

African traditional cultures, religion and thought patterns cannot cohabit side by side with now the arrived Christian religion. An authentic African ecclesiology must dynamically integrate these ...The languages, symbols and ritual expressions like Ofo, Ogu, colanut and Music (African Music of course-emphasis mine) are to be used to express Christian truth (p.72).

African Philosophy

African Philosophy traditionally is knowledge of African realities and African realism in their englobing universal principles. In Contemporary times, African Philosophy is primarily a discipline and secondarily a movement. It is more of a movement as it tries to reclaim its position as a discipline within the world's philosophical heritage. It is, therefore, fundamentally a disciplinary movement as it tries to rediscover itself within the world's philosophical heritage and equally establish itself as such. In *lato sensu*, African Philosophy is that branch of knowledge that grew from African Philosophical Tradition as a philosophy done within and outside continental Africa for humanity as a human enterprise with regard to authorship, scholarship and literature. Moreover, the adjective African qualifies the noun Philosophy and beyond delimiting it, it expands such critical enquiry on the far side of just African. In *stricto sensu*, it is that course that is African and Philosophical within the limits of Africanity and *philosophicality* or *Africanness* and *Philosophicalness*.

Moreover, as a discipline, it is the love of African wisdom, that is, *Philosophia Africana*. Iroegb (1994) was very premier in giving this succinct definition. In this definition, one can read a kind of defence as regards African philosophy. This is why for Iroegbu (1994) African philosophy is a *philo-sophia*, a quest for African wisdom. African Philosophy, therefore, is *scientia rerum per ultima causas* within African realities. It is the search for the unaided authentic human knowledge that is philosophical and African. It is the habit of every wise and reasonable African man. Consequently, African Philosophy as a movement is a clarion invitation by Bob Marley's redemptive insinuation to "emancipate yourselves from mental slavery...non but ourselves can free our mind". His redemption song demands a total breakaway from the stereotype innuendoes that philosophy is the prerogative of the West, therefore, questioning directly our human nature as *homo sapiens* and *homo cogitans* as well as *animal rationalis*.

As a movement, African Philosophy, rooted in and springing from African philosophical tradition, is a cursory look into the problematiques and prospects of Africa as part of the

world's philosophical heritage. As a movement, African philosophy is an effort at recovering all lost status as a result of the stolen legacies with regard to philosophy and its origin. As a movement, African Philosophy searches for the authentic knowledge that is Philosophy and African within and or outside the African cultural world-view. Therefore, a definitive-thoughtful interpretation and critical analysis of the symbols of African cultures would be the African philosophy *qua tale*. More so, a reflection with the profound application of criticality, analyticity and originality on African thoughts and cultures will give credence to Philosophy and rightly put, African Philosophy. However, rather than Western philosophy of Western philosophical tradition and her philosophy which started with wonder, African philosophy according to Chimakonam (2023) opted that African philosophy started with *Onuma*, that is, having been frustrated by the colonialism and racialism and other bumps of African predicaments orchestrated by many years of doubt its historical existence, greatly shrouded in controversies and submerged in conspiracies of lies, Africans lately woke up to rediscover the truth about philosophy and the western connection. Therefore, as a movement, African philosophy started of frustration by many lies against Africans' literary disposition.

Recognising Contemporary African Music

Traditional African musical forms, despite their diversity, are rhythmic with an entertaining melodious and harmonious air amidst a body movement that scintillates as such with the whole person. African music always informs and communicates. Muema (2021) reiterates as such that African music is often used to transmit messages and ideas; and to record and recount historical events. Today than ever, it is good to know that there is an Africanization of every form of music within and outside Africa as long as it suits our musicians, with their local languages and styles, versions and presentations. One can equally allude that Africans have a natural disposition to sounds and beatings. This plays out as every African culture is very much in tune with a musical style as the people respond easily to every African musical beat.

Modern African Music is highly influenced by Traditional African Music. Contemporary African Music is equally vast, vibrant and dynamic. African Continent can boast of multicultural popular and musical genres, from Reggae to Afrobeat. Equally, Contemporary African music continues to develop more national musical and international genres, emerging throughout the continent, assimilating and adopting global musical styles such as *jazz, Rhythm and Beats (R&B), hip hop, rock'n'roll, country music* and Reggae as they make their impacts on today's African musicians. Successful musicians are usually the ones who successfully blend some of these foreign musical styles with the musical traditions of their different African countries. Contemporary African music continues to Africanize global musical genres while retaining our traditional ones even with a tincture of Westernisation. At this point, a special reference is made to Reggae as an African genre.

African Philosophy of Reggae

Reggae is a brand of musical genre, very original to Africa. Reggae is *African Spec* and African-made. Reggae is a musical genre developed by Jamaicans of African ancestry in the late 1960s. Reggae bands incorporate musical idioms from many different genres, including *mento* (a Jamaican folk genre), *ska*, rock steady, calypso, American soul music and rhythm and blues. Etymologically, Reggae comes from the term “rege-rege” which means “rags” or “ragged clothes”, and this gives the first clue into the story behind reggae music. Another source had it that reggae is said to derive from the term “streggae,” which is a derogatory term meaning a woman of low morals. The former seems to align with what reggae portrays all along. Reggae was recognized by UNESCO and added to the list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2018. Reggae has been a medium for sending messages to the world condemning the ongoing inequities and forms of injustice that affect not only Black people but people everywhere. At the front of that worldwide trend was Jamaica’s planetary icon: Bob Marley and the Wailers. Often referred to as Rastafari, Reggae bloomed on its mission of salvaging all from the shackles of man’s inhumanity against mankind.

Rastafari, sometimes called Rastafarianism, is a religion that developed in Jamaica during the 1930s. It is classified as both a new religious movement and a social movement by scholars of religion. Rastafarianism has symbols associated with it as the Lion of Judah, Pan-African colours, dreadlocks, and *ganja*. The online Merriam-Webster defines Rastafarianism as a religious movement among Black Jamaicans that teaches the eventual redemption of Black people and their return to Africa, employs the ritualistic use of marijuana, forbids the cutting of hair, and venerates Haile Selassie as a god. The boast alongside Rastafarianism was dramatic. Homiak (2021) in *Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage Magazine* recalls thus:

Like so many other things that have altered the course of Jamaican history, the birth of reggae music would require a catalyst from beyond the island’s shores. It came in the form of the three-day state visit of Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie I to Jamaica in April 1966. Emperor Haile Selassie I—deified by the Rastafari from the early 1930s as their God and King—had attracted the support of the entire Black world when Italy invaded his kingdom in 1935. He arrived in Jamaica not merely as the biblically enthroned monarch of Africa’s oldest state, but as a champion of racial equality and as the recent founding chairman of the Organization of African Unity (1963), the organization then spearheading efforts at decolonization on the continent.

The name Rastafari is taken from Ras Tafari, the title and first name of Haile Selassie I (Ras Tafari emperor of Ethiopia) before his coronation. In Amharic, Ras, literally "head", is an Ethiopian title equivalent to prince or chief, while the personal given name Täfäri means

one who is revered. Reggae from its root and origin is a movement like African philosophy. Onebunne (2022) explained this in his lecture notes on African Philosophy thus:

As a movement, African Philosophy, rooted in and springing from African philosophical tradition, is a cursory look into the problematiques and prospects of Africa as part of the world's philosophical heritage. As a movement African philosophy is an effort at rediscovering and recovering all lost status as a result of the stolen legacies with regard to philosophy and its origin. As a movement, African Philosophy searches for the authentic knowledge that is Philosophy and African within and or without the African cultural world-view (p. 21).

Reggae was made in Africa, for Africans and their invaders rooting Africans of their natural and human resources. Reggae became a message with *Onuma*, that is frustration as Chimakonam (2023) would opine with regard to the effects of colonialism and racialism and other bumps of African predicaments orchestrated by many years of doubt of its historical existence that is greatly shrouded in controversies and submerged in conspiracies of lies against the African continent and Africans. Other scholarly works have shown great interest in Reggae as African music and movement as Marcus Garvey's *Garveyism: Back to Africa* and Barry Chevannes' *Rastafari: Root and Ideology*.

African Philosophy Redefining African Music

African music is as vast as the continent of Africa as well as the cultures and languages and people of Africa, in and beyond geographical Africa. Having come to stay and influencing the world with its message, African Music becomes the conscience of society with its nature of entertainment. An On-line paper by Peralta (2018) published in *Save the Music Foundation* on "Benefits of Music to the Brain" has it that, "music shows something about who we are as people. Our identities can be communicated through what we play, create, and the music we share with others. We can illuminate our cultures through music... With music education in schools, teachers can encourage students to use their voices, expressing themselves through music". Music, by this sublime understanding becomes a *cultural right*, aiding in the *promotion and protection of other human rights*. It can assist in healing process, dismantling walls and boundaries, reconciliation, and education. Around the world, music is being used as a vehicle for social change and bringing communities together in a very *celebrative* mood of joy and often mourning"(Paragraph 3)

African Philosophy can only redefine music as African Philosophy of Music. African Philosophy of Music is an applied philosophy as well as a Philosophy of Arts under Practical Philosophy as a major broad division of Philosophy. African Philosophy of Music, therefore, is a reasoned inquiry into the role of philosophy in Music creating musical transformation. It delimits excess and encourages musical creativity especially as there are many vulgarism in music in general. As some African music is gradually losing its lustre

and literary genre. Even though music has been defined as an organised sound but traditional African music is beyond an organized sound to a meaningful organized sound that invigorates as well as entertains amidst a specific rhythm. Today, many contemporary African music has lost the lustre or the musical genre for which music is made. Much of what is called music today does not entertain nor inform rather they exalt a kind of titanic moral uproar. Some of the lyrics often are incoherent if not for the sake of the beatings that have a kind of rhythm.

African Music and African Philosophy in a Global Community

The world continues to tilt towards a global hub as a result of globalisation. The yawning gaps between the Global North and Global South divide expand more with the contemporary Global digital divide. An *Online TechTarget* defines the global digital divide as the gap between demographic and regions that have access to modern information and communications technology (ICT) and those that don't or have restricted access. Despite this seeming and concrete divide especially in socio-economic cum political dispensations, globalization brings humanity and nature under one umbrella.

In principle, the basic orientation of globalization is the liberalization of trade and integration of free markets to enhance social, economic, and political stability across the world. Then why the divides? Why promote the divides? Globalization according to *Peterson Institute for International Economics* as in global community is “the word used to describe the growing interdependence of the world's economies, cultures, and populations, brought about by cross-border trade in goods and services, technology, and flows of investment, people, and information”. Music is a universal language often with philosophy underlying it. African music as such depicts the life of African people in totality. The community, however, is the focal and receptive point of this music as such. *Wikipedia* defines global community as a “term world community used primarily in political and humanitarian contexts to describe an international aggregate of nation-states of widely varying types. In most connotations, the term is used to convey meanings attached to consensus or inclusion of all people in all lands and their governments”. *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* has it that global community is “the people or nations of the world, considered as being closely connected by modern telecommunications and as being economically, socially, and politically interdependent”.

Music, African music, is ever at the disposal of technology. African Music, being part of art is an essential part of early human life and is a practical African philosophy within the bounds of aesthetics which modern writers understand by the phrasal expression of the theory of beauty and art. It remains a popular saying that music is the universal language of mankind as well as the language of the spirit. Bob Marley the Reggae Legend believes that “one good thing about music is when it hits you, you feel no pain.” Plato nevertheless asserts that “music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination

and life to everything”. Plato’s enduring maxim is that philosophy is the highest music. And in furtherance of this singular view, he reiterates that “musical training is a more potent instrument than any other because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul”. This is why African music carries a message for the community that appreciates. Within the global community African music resounds the tenets of the African philosophy of to be. This sole idea is realized in Africanism and Pan-Africanism.

Africanism, Pan-Africanism

Africanism as a theory and a school of thought is all about Africans and the African continent. Africanism defines and interprets *Africanity* in relation to African *Weltanschauung*. The spirit and full understanding as well as the appreciation of Africanism are equally expressed in belongingness. Belongingness as one of the definitive principles of communalism defines Africans and African ideologies. *Merriam-Websters* On-line dictionary defines Africanism as “a feature of language or culture regarded as characteristically African”. Continuing, it defines it also as “the belief that black Africans and their culture should predominate in Africa”. Africanism portrays the content of Africa as an exclusively *whole* continent with peculiar history and particular characteristics. This is why it is “allegiance to the traditions, interests, or ideals of Africa”. History is replete with common trends of sociocultural and traditional outlooks. The truism of this fact is seen within the dispersed descendants of African people who have displayed many forms of cultural retention of their African ancestry amidst different interpretations and misunderstandings. This is why Africanism is a kind of devotion to African customs and traditions. Specifically, Africanism is a strong promotion of independence for the African continent or of Pan-Africanism. Africanism, nevertheless, spells identity, autonomy and recognition of all that makes an African to be known as an African as such. Africanism, therefore, is a theory that simply identifies and links every African and her entities as such. This form of identification or association in Africanism underlies belongingness. Belongingness, therefore, situates Africanism within the context of communalism in African Philosophy. Belongingness is nevertheless pillared in Africanism as an African Metaphysics of to be. ‘To be’ is ‘to be with the other’, in a community of beings. This is based on the African philosophy of community, which is the underlying principle and unity of African Traditional Religious and philosophical experience. The whole thrust of belongingness lies in the fact that there is unity and commonness of purpose within an entity of a sort. The spirit of Africanism is rekindled in Pan-Africanism as Bob Marley musically begged: *Africa unite!*

Music and philosophy are very foundational in that they are at the centre of what it means to be human sharing in man’s exploration and conquering of his environment. Music and philosophy are, therefore, mutually exclusive of each other as arts. They are in line with the fact that man who is fundamentally *homo cogitans* is by extension *animal cantata*. The rationality of this fact is related to the singular act of singing. Here, we see the human nature

of music, making true the popular saying that *philosophy is the highest music and music is the universal language of mankind*. Malloch and Trevarthen (2018) in their novel work *On The Nature of Music* asserts that “our innate communicative musicality is the 'raw material' for cultural forms of music and the rules of grammar and syntax. For them, humans are innately musical and respond to it intuitively. To any extent, Philosophy of Music and Music in Philosophy or Musical Philosophy are forms of complementarity between Music and Philosophy.

Music is not only a special field of knowledge or an art but it's also an experience, a reality which is considered as a philosophy. These musical works are created, obtained and composed by *homo loquens* (speaking man) from pure human language. This is why musical productions are concrete and abstract at the same time. Music, therefore, bears a critical meaning. This is the philosophical nature of music. Music in its fundamental nature as an art is all about the expression of an idea and ideals that border on reality as truth as such. Equally, this form of truth or reality remains the prerogative of philosophy. And this philosophy etymologically is all about striving for truth, which is expressed in *a love of wisdom*. The word music, however, opens up within philosophy. A philosophy of music or Music in Philosophy complements each other as an ontological condition that captures man as *animal rational* (rational animal) and *animal music* (musical animal).

Conclusion

African music and African philosophy take cognizance of the interplay in Traditional African Music amidst other world musical heritage. The global movement of Western or world music influences African music as such as musicians continue to experiment with African Musical compositions and instruments mixed with international styles of music. This gives room to the Africanization of music or Africanized style of musical genres. With African philosophy as an applied philosophy on African rhythm and sounds as well as on African lyrics and instruments, African Music will have a great influence and also be a major factor in the shaping of contemporary African music and reshaping of traditional African music. To this end, African Music will be very significant in African philosophy qua tale.

African traditional music which was greatly prevalent before the era of the exploration, through slavery unto colonization, lost most of its glorified genre to those unspeakable moments in which Africa was plundered. Traditional African music lost its originality and finesse as a result of such reticulation and was often regarded as assimilation. The era of and after independence became another good moment for marriage and total absorption even with the local languages between Traditional African music and Western music with regard to musical genre, styles, instruments and new varieties giving birth to High-life, Afro-beats and many more. More so, in the 21st century, African music has simply developed into many musical facets with many global and successful blends of musical styles. With the

methodological moment of proper hermeneutics, one can dependably and realistically infer that African Philosophy is Philosophy with an African source and is nourished from African culture as its cultural reservoir and primary critical nourishment. African music in its entirety remains a value in any functional African society and equally tries to address the realities in and around Africa from the point of view of bringing order and harmony, bringing a kind of equipoise in one's personal life and existential living.

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ENTREPRENEURSHIP: IMPACT OF AKWETE CLOTH REINVENTION ON CAPACITY BUILDING

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Abstract

Today, the Nigerian labour market is oversubscribed and mostly saturated with paper certificate degree holders without entrepreneurial skills. Nigerian universities, on yearly bases, churn out thousands of graduates with little or no job opportunities in sight. It is in light of the above that the Nigerian University Commission introduced Entrepreneurship in Nigerian universities. Despite this, students pay little attention to the aspect of practical training except for passing their exams hence defeating the actual intended outcome. The importance of entrepreneurial skills in the present global economic situation cannot be overemphasized. This researcher is perturbed by the rising unemployment level in Nigeria and therefore believes that the reinvention of the Akwete cloth weaving, particularly among the Ndoki people, will help cushion the adverse effect of the geometrical increase of unemployment in the country. It is imperative to note that the Akwete weaving industry, which was at its peak in the early 20th century, provided not just skill but served as a major source of sustainable income for families. Unfortunately, this once-thriving industry has become a shadow of itself with little interest and patronage. Methodologically, the research is qualitative and historically contextualised. An oral interview was used to elicit relevant data required for this research. The writer is of the view that the reinvention and modernization of this industry will not only rekindle the interest of its producers but will also attract patronage. It will also enhance capacity building among youths and reduce youth unemployment in Nigeria, specifically in the Southeast.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, reinvention, capacity building

Introduction

Cloth weaving is one of the earliest ingenuities evolved by man in recorded history, which the Ndoki people, who are either found in Abia, Rivers or Akwa Ibom States, are renowned for.

Oral tradition in Akwete and generally in Ndoki is consistent with the claim that the Akwete cloth had become famous during the 1850s. However, Akwete cloth weaving had been in existence before the arrival of the Portuguese traders around the 15th century. Intelligence reports had it that the Potokiris were trading on the Akwete and Ijebu cloths which they sold to Congo, Gold Coast and Brazil during 1500. By implication, therefore, the actual origin of the Akwete weaving predates the arrival of the Portuguese traders in Nigeria.

Cloth weaving is an ancient craft by women in Ndokiland dating to the early new Stone Age and before the arrival of the Portuguese traders when they began to make a rough kind of clothing from the fibres of flax and raffia plants. Weaving is described as the orderly interlacing of fibres and pressing them together to make the cloth.

In Nigeria, cloth weaving is universally practised in most rural areas and some cities like Akwete, Ilorin, Iseyin Abeokuta, Okene, Benin, Sokoto, Borno, Kano, Bida and Iseyin area among others. Raffia and cotton are most widely used in cloth weaving in Nigeria.

The economic, cultural, political and social importance of cloth cannot be ignored or wished away. Before the introduction of coinage currency in Nigeria, cloth was used as a currency item. It is worn for body beautification and decoration, and ceremonies. There are different types of cloth-making among various ethnic groups in Nigeria. The Ndoki people are known for the production of the famous traditional Akwete cloth, and the Yoruba are famous for Aso-Oke traditional fabric weaving.

The Igbo also are known widely for Akwete-cloth weaving which is done by women. Akwete cloth is a special woven fabric made by Igbo women in the Ndoki area near Aba in Abia State. It is originally referred to as "Akwa Miri" (Cloth of the water), meaning towel. Akwete cloth weaving is said to be as old as the Igbo nation. Because of the dexterity of the weavers who demonstrated evincing great mastery of technique and beauty of design, the art of Akwete-cloth weaving has a long history and socio-cultural relevance to the Igbo and the Ndoki people.

However, Akwete cloth comes in different colours and designs. Some are in the patterns of red and black designs, interwoven in geometric patterns on a white background which is favoured by Igbo men. It is mainly used as a towel for bathing. The Akwete cloths, woven from sisal-hemp fibres, are of coarse type, used by masqueraders and by warriors as headgears, while those made from raffia fibres are used on religious occasions like the Ozo title taking and for mourning by women.

But the most popular Akwete cloth is the type of cotton fabric woven from cotton fibres in colourful patterns; the weavers have much preference for bright and strong colours like red and yellow. These modernized cotton woven Akwete cloths of different shapes, sizes and

patterns are used for traditional ceremonies and as uniforms for organizations, especially women's organizations. It is imperative to observe that the Akwete cloths are currently being used for the production of special handbags and shoes. Traditionally, the raw cotton fibres that surround and protect cotton seeds do undergo some processes before use, namely: First, ginning process, by which the cotton seeds are removed from the fibres by rolling a rod over the cotton ball. Second, the bowing process, which involves making cotton fibres by flicking the string of a small bow against them until they look like cotton wool

Scope of the Study

This study covers the reinvention of the Akwete cloth as an imperative for encouraging entrepreneurial skills among youths. This writer is aware of the fact that the Ndoki people are not the only weavers in Nigeria; since this work is not a comparative study, the interest shall be confined to that of the Akwete cloth woven by the Ndoki people. The area of this study is Ndoki in Ukwa East local government of Abia State, and the period to be covered shall be between the periods of colonialism through independence, military and successive civilian administrations.

The area of this study is known as Ndoki, which is located in Ukwa East Local Government Area in the present-day Abia State in the southeastern part of Nigeria. Some of their kits and kins are also found in Rivers State and Akwa-Ibom State. They speak a dialectal variation of the Igbo language. The story of their Igbo origin is not yet very clear. The Ndoki people claim Igbani origin. By this, they claim that they migrated from the Atlantic area. This claim of a riverine origin gives them an air of difference (nay superiority) from the regular Igbo, especially in their attitude to life. This issue of origin will come to the fore again when the researchers try to examine and investigate the reasons for their balkanization between three (3) different states and their actual origin. The Asa people are their neighbours in the east, while the Ikwerre border them in the west. The Opobos are in the southern part. They all are otherwise considered the people of the Niger Delta.

Statement of Problem

Suffice it to categorically state that today, the Nigerian labour market is oversubscribed and mostly saturated with paper certificate degree holders without commensurate entrepreneurial skills. Nigerian universities, on yearly bases, are churning out thousands of graduates with little or no job opportunities in sight. It is in light of the above that the Nigerian University Commission introduced Entrepreneurship as a General Studies in Nigerian universities. Despite this, students pay too little attention to the aspect of practical training except for passing their exams hence defeating the actual intended outcome. The importance of entrepreneurial skills in the present global economic situation cannot be overemphasized.

This researcher is perturbed by the rising unemployment level in Nigeria and therefore believes that the reinvention of the Akwete cloth weaving, particularly among the Ndoki people, will help cushion the adverse effect of the geometrical increase of unemployment in the country. It is imperative to note that the Akwete weaving industry, which was at its peak in the early 20th century, provided not just skill but served as a major source of income for families. Unfortunately, this once-thriving industry has become a shadow of itself with little interest and patronage. Its reinvention and modernization will not only rekindle the interest of its producers but will also attract patronage.

No doubt, the Igbo, widely known for the Akwete-cloth, seem to have lost their grip on the production of this naturally endowed skill for a reason that will be investigated and presented in the body of this text. The interest of this group of researchers is to investigate the various reasons that may have accounted for the weaning of this famous cloth to proffer useful suggestions towards its reinvention. The writers are of the view that its reinvention will enhance capacity building among youth and reduce youth unemployment in Nigeria and specifically in the Southeast.

Objectives Of The Study

The primus inter perez of the objectives of this study is to investigate to establish a relationship between the reinvention of the Akwete weaving industry (Akwete cloth) as an entrepreneurial skill that can enhance job creation among the youths in the southeast. Other objectives will include:

1. To examine how entrepreneurship can create employment and improve economic development.
2. The study will also investigate the reasons that may have accounted for the decline of the weaving industry in Ndokiland.
3. It will also examine and question the rationale for the loss of interest among the owners of this skill.
4. Another important aspect which this research will examine is why there is low patronage of the Akwete cloth.
5. To examine the external influences on cloth weaving in Ndokiland, market accessibility and other issues that may be considered to be impediments to the growth and development of such an important one-time economy of the Ndoki people, Nigeria and indeed the whole of West Africa.
6. We shall attempt a critique of policies towards promoting the growth and development of indigenous crafts in Nigeria with a special focus on Akwete weaving.
7. To examine the importance of cloth weaving to the economy of the Ndoki people, its nature and its characteristics to establish the cloth as a natural gift rather than an

acquired skill. It will also explore the processes of production, thereby establishing the cloth as an ecstatic intermix of beauty and tradition.

8. It will also examine the role as well as the impact of the Akwete Co-operative Society as well as that Abia state government in promoting the weaving of Akwete cloth in Ndokiland. This will lead us to examine the challenges and prospects of this industry.

Significance

It is usual for a community to improve itself socially and economically; hence this research is considered imperative in view of the fact that by looking back on a people's past, surveying the present and using the evidence based on its experiences, it will serve as a springboard for prospecting into the future weaving in Ndokiland. The indigenous cloth produced in Ndokiland requires that the product be not only continued but improved upon. According to Okeke, such innovation takes off better when the ecology and the environment of the people are well understood. This has made this study a worthwhile venture. This study is also considered imperative in view of the fact that it will help in reconstructing the erroneous notion that Dada Nwakata is the founder of Akwete cloth.

Literature Review

Akwete Cloth Weaving in Perspectives

The art of cloth weaving is as ancient as the people of the Ndoki Kingdom and definitely cannot be said to be introduced by the Europeans. The people have been weaving for their use and commercial purposes as most of the cloth woven was sold to their Ijaw neighbours and beyond. Aronson Lisa, one of the foremost researchers in this field, has this to say in relation to a clue that might lead to the actual origin of cloth weaving in Ndoki land:

In the 16th century and later, Portuguese slave traders bought huge numbers of indigo-dyed cloths woven on vertical looms from Ndoki and Ijebu for sale in Congo, Gold Coast and Brazil. The earliest known example of Ikaki cloth in the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh dates as early as 1790. The cloths were once traded along the coastal lagoons to the Niger Delta region, where they became known as Ikakabite... and were highly prized in local rituals.³

The above submission of Aronson seems to give a clue to the origin of cloth weaving in the Ndoki area, which dates back to the 16th century. The above statement implies that not only is the legendary craft older than Dada Nwakata, but it is also equally older than the arrival of the Portuguese, who traded in cloth. An attempt to ascribe the origin of this ancient craft to a woman who flourished in cloth weaving around the 1850s will mean a historical

injustice to the origin of this cloth and the people of Ndoki. It would have also succeeded in throwing away a large chunk of the historical past of this cloth.

Corroborating Aronson's view on "... The cloths were once traded along the coastal lagoons to the Niger Delta region where they became known as Ikakabite... and highly prized in local rituals". When the British merchant Captain Hugh Crow visited the town of Bonny in the Eastern Delta region of Nigeria in 1801, he observed that:

...chief's wives have sometimes five, six, or more pieces of different kinds of cloth tied about them, especially when going to any of their festivals, so that the body looks like a roll, or truss of yarn, tied at both ends. On these occasions the ladies always use paint, daubing their faces in a remarkable manner...They are extremely fond of anything gaudy or uncommon amongst them in dress, and if they get hold of a showy article of European clothing, such as a coat or vest, will strut about in it with all imaginable consequence, as if it constituted an entire suit.⁴

Crow's observations no doubt marked the beginning of what would become a dramatic rise in the manufacture of European textiles for importation to Africa, with Manchester, or "Cottonopolis," as the major British centre for cotton production. By implication, therefore, the above observation does not mark the beginning of weaving in the Ndoki ancient kingdom as erroneously opined by some disgruntled Eurocentric scholars, but this paints a vivid picture that the Ndoki people were already weaving even before the arrival of the Europeans. The above submission of Captain Crow clarifies the fact that the Akwete cloth, as ancient as it was, was not a foreign craft and that its know-how was acquired either from the Europeans or from any other group within or outside Nigeria. The Akwete cloth is an art that identifies the Ndoki people. The weavers in Ndoki did not weave only for their local consumption but also for commercial purposes little wonder why the cloth is widely celebrated by her immediate and distant neighbours - Opobo, Bonny and Ijaw, who were among their patrons.

The cloth is woven by women in the villages in Ndoki in Ukwa East Local Government of Abia State, Nigeria. Akwete, Obohia, Ohanso, Obunku and Umuagbai are the five main villages in Ndoki ancient kingdom noted for weaving using a women's vertical loom with a continuous warp. This view may not be wrong because even though almost all the villages in Ndoki weave but not all. Hence, the four villages mentioned above are where one can find the majority of the weavers of Akwete Cloth.

However, the earliest known cloths before the knowledge of cotton are "Mkpuru" and "Aji" weaves. The "Mkpuru" was woven from raffia palm leaves, grasses and bark fabrics and later "Egerebete".⁵ The weaving of cotton cloths have been in existed in pre-colonial Ndokiland. The Igbo-ukwu excavation has revealed craft is long in existence among the Igbo, stretching to the period about the 9th century AD as recorded in the works of Thurstan

Shaw's archaeological finds in 1959. He observed that... "there was evidence that some of the vessels (founded by him) have been wrapped in cloth"...6 Isichie also contends that "the nature of the techniques used suggest that craft men passed a high degree of textile skills as also does the quality of the materials".7

The implication, therefore, is that cloth weaving in Ndokiland started long before the 9th century AD and must have attained a comparatively high standard. One of the basic questions that may be agitating the minds of many is where did the textile materials used for weaving come from. It is likely, however, that most of the cloths from Akwete might have been part of the textile extracts excavated from Igbo-Ukwu. This may be true because Akwete Cloth happens to be one of the earliest in the Eastern Province and falls into the area described by Shaw east of the Niger and South of Benue. Okeke shares this view. According to him, Akwete is synonymous with Igbo traditional cloth, for it appears to have been prominent both within and outside Igboland. He further opines that it had a longer history than any other hand-woven cloths in Igboland.8

Conceptualizing Entrepreneurship

The promotion of gainful employment and reducing the rising rate of rural and urban unemployment are today among the major issues agitating the minds of successive governments in Nigeria. The strategy adopted for ameliorating these problems is entrepreneurship development.

In recent times, many people now regard entrepreneurship as an important aspect of job creation, and government should not be left in an attempt geared toward promoting entrepreneurial culture; this is because today, entrepreneurs can use their innovation and creativity to create wealth from nascent businesses.

The word entrepreneur is in French coinage by Jean Baptiste Say. It comes from the word "entreprendre", meaning undertaker or adventurer. Drucker defined an entrepreneur as a person who starts a new business, has a high level of achievement and is naturally endowed with the business has a high achievement and naturally endowed with the qualities of enthusiasm, idealism, a sense of purpose and independence of thought and action.7

An entrepreneur is a person who focuses on finding opportunities instead of accepting security, getting results instead of following routine, earning profit instead of earning interest, and trying new ideas of seeking short-term vision.8

Furthermore, the entrepreneur contains resources innovatively, thus creating something new. The entrepreneur does things in a novel fashion. The entrepreneur's decision-making is guided by intuition, not by past models. An entrepreneur is a person who desires to find a

private kingdom. He has the willpower to conquer, the joy of creating, of getting things done, or simply exercising one's energy and ingenuity.⁹

Entrepreneurship as a culture is something that most governments are poised to cultivate, and this they have done by encouraging their teeming population to become more entrepreneurial. It is seen as a fundamental imperative part of modern economic practice necessary for economic growth.

Otaha defines entrepreneurship as "the ability of an individual or firm or group of firms to invent and innovate idea, an opportunity or better way of doing old things. The result of this process is formed under conditions of risk and considerable uncertainty. He went further to explain that entrepreneurship consists of two major aspects; the human aspect and the institutional aspect.¹⁰ The human aspect is the stock of trained skill, procedure, risk-taking and innovative persons capable of creating a business or industrial activity where none existed before. The institutional aspect, on the other hand, refers to the available organizational structures and processes, such as public policies, traditions and culture, as well as the democratic environment of the entrepreneurs, the enabling environment and the commitment of the government to encourage the development of entrepreneurship through the provision of physical infrastructures and appropriate policies both micro and macro.¹¹

Ronstadt went further to define entrepreneurship as "the dynamic process of creating incremental wealth. This wealth is created by individual who assume the major risks in terms of equity, time and/ or carrier by individuals who assume the major risks in terms of equity, time and/ or earlier commitment to providing value for some products or services. The product or services itself may or may not be new or unique, but the value must somehow be made by the entrepreneur by securing and allocating the necessary skills and resources."¹² Entrepreneurship is also seen as the process of creating something different with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychic and social risk and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence.¹³

Methodology

The area of this study is known as Ndoki, which is located in Ukwa East Local Government Area in the present-day Abia State in the southeastern part of Nigeria. Some of their kits and kins are also found in Rivers State and Akwa-Ibom State. They speak a dialectal variation of the Igbo language. The story of their Igbo origin is not yet very clear. The Ndoki people claim Igbani origin. By this, they claim that they migrated from the Atlantic area. This claim of a riverine origin gives them an air of difference (nay superiority) from the regular Igbo, especially in their attitude to life.

The un-balkanized boundary of Ndoki stretches parallel to the Imo River on the East, where the clan is bounded by the villages of Ika and Obong clans. The Imo and Aba rivers roughly correspond to the South and East boundaries of the clan. Apart from the riverside villages, the majority of the villages are connected with either of these rivers by creeks and roads. The area covers approximately 450 square km. With its abundant endowments, which include rich farmland, intersecting rivers, rich creeks and forests, and crude oil deposits, Ndoki had early contacts with the world economy, having acted as major routes for slave trading, purchase food for slave caravans, trade-in rubber (Akwete Rubber Research is the largest rubber plantation southeast of Nigeria), palm oil, etc. but there was little economic progress on account of the coercive economic controls by the colonial imperialists.

The Ndoki are a group of people that have lived together for a long time with a common identity. They speak a dialectical variation of the Igbo language. They have been politically balkanized today and are found in three separate states - Abia, Rivers and Akwa Ibom. It is in the view of this researcher that this balkanization was meant to weaken the Ndoki people so that their neighbouring Akwa Ibom and Ogoni groups would reap the benefits of their oil resources. But the sense of a common identity among these people to date remains strong.

Ndoki ancient kingdom included Ayama, Okoloma, Umuosi and Obeakpu, Egberu, Afam-Ukwu, Afam-Nta down to Umuagbai, Azuogu, Maraihu, Okponton Okwanku, Obunku and Obete, Akwete, Azumini, Mkpuaejekere, Mkpunkpuaja, Nkpunkpule, Ogbuagu, Akirika-Ukwu, Akirika-Nta, Ohambele, Abaki, Akanu, Akirika-Obu, Eti, Obohia, Obozu, Obunku-Ugbor, Ohaobu, Ohandu, Ohanku, Ohanso, Ohuru, and Ubaku.

The research methodology was mainly qualitative and historically contextualised. The oral interview was used to elicit relevant and useful data required for this research. On the whole, I interviewed both men and women, youths, politicians and traditional rulers who were considered germane to arrive at a logical conclusion. The researcher also chatted with many others informally to gather useful information. However, the researcher ensured that respondents cut across different segments of Ndoki land and that they were indigenes but not neglecting some of her immediate neighbours. It is important to note that not all the villages in Ndokiland have the weaving skill, but in the interview, all the villages were taken into consideration to determine why it is so and the extent to which they can also be incorporated in the reinvented Akwete weaving industry.

The researcher painstakingly made sure that sentiments were disregarded and that every piece of information gathered was properly scrutinised by comparing it with the views of other informants.

During the period of the sketchy interviews conducted, many of the respondents kept asking if the attention of the government would be drawn to their plight (with regards to revitalizing the weaving industry). I made no commitments but told them that the project

was purely for academic purposes and hoped that the final report would be published and made available for all to see, including the governments at the local, state and national levels. Many of the respondents expressed optimism that the final work may be the “Messiah” they have been waiting for to rejuvenate the waning Akwete Cloth industry, while others cautioned that they would like to see the outcome of this research change the attitude of the government towards the growth and development of the art of cloth weaving in Ndokiland. The expectation is that the outcome of this research will bring something good to my progenitor Ndokiland and her people.

Expected Outcome of the Research

The expected outcomes of this research are:

1. It will help reinvent the dying weaving skill among the Ndoki people
2. It will help sensitize as well draw government attention towards reviving the weaving skill through promotion and modernization of means of production
3. In the light of the global emphasis on entrepreneurship, it will no doubt create jobs and reduce unemployment as well as youth restiveness
4. It will create alternative means of income generation for the people
5. The imperativeness of small and medium-scale industries in the contemporary global economic structure cannot be overemphasized; hence the reinvention of this entrepreneurial skill of the people will revive the Akwete Weaving Cooperative Society, which will serve as a platform for attracting investors.
6. Cloth weaving in Ndokiland is a cultural heritage which should not be allowed to die for the sake of posterity and cultural identity. Therefore, the outcome of this research will help ensure that it happens.

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MATRIARCHY IN TRADITIONAL AFRICA AND ITS RELEVANCE TO CONTEMPORARY FEMINISM

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Abstract

Bachofen and other evolutionary theorists gave an elaborate narration on how matriarchy began, rose, fell and was replaced by patriarchy. The conclusion is that patriarchy is superior to matriarchy and thus, is the culmination of human development. This position justifies male supremacy and the exploitive and domineering character of patriarchy. Feminism arose to fight for the equality of men and women in society. This research examines matriarchy in the traditional African worldview. Using the method of hermeneutics, the research attempts to interpret available data on the subject matter in accordance with the present reality. The research tries to address these issues: what is the meaning of matriarchy in traditional Africa? In traditional Africa, is matriarchy inferior and in opposition to patriarchy as seen in the Western world? Would feminism have risen in traditional Africa? And how can matriarchy in traditional Africa enrich contemporary feminism? The research finds out that in traditional Africa both patriarchy and matriarchy are like two sides of a coin: they interacted, intersected and checked and balanced each other in their different but related spheres of power and influence through the principle of complementarity. The research finds out that contemporary feminism is being entrapped in the same flaws it accuses patriarchy of—flaws of exclusion. The research concludes that contemporary feminism needs to understand and apply the principle of complementarity in its approach for it to succeed in its fight for the equality of men and women in contemporary society.

Keywords: Traditional, African, Matriarchy, Relevance, Contemporary, Feminism.

Introduction

In the last century, certain theories have been advanced by scholars on the existence of matriarchal and patriarchal phases in the development of human society. On the one hand,

some scholars, prominent among them Henry Maine (1861), argued that the patriarchal system of authority was the original and universal system of social organisation. It was further contended that the matriarchal system was only an unstable and degraded form of social organisation which only occurred where women outnumbered men. On the other hand, according to Bachofen (1861) in his *Das Mutterrecht*, matriarchy was the original primate stage of culture, preceding patriarchy. Bachofen (1861) has argued that before matriarchy there had been, in the history of each society, a state of sexual promiscuity, with no stable family life. Thus, he saw each society as evolving through three phases: promiscuity, matriarchy and patriarchy, which is the culmination of human development.

Furthermore, the most noticeable characteristic of these theories was their very sweeping posture. These theories tried to postulate a pattern of development which would be true for every society. This tendency betrayed these theories as part of the whole colonial and capitalist project aimed at the domination and suppression of a part of a class or a section of society. So, patriarchy was projected by these theories as being superior and better than matriarchy. This point is made clearer by Bahlieda (2015:17) when he says that “an encompassing, overarching, multidisciplinary ideology that affects everyone – men and women alike- across multiple cultures, histories, religions, economies, geographies, and institutions.” Thus, the fight for the liberation of the people from colonialism, which is a struggle for the liberation of the people from the domination of the few, brought about the fight for the liberation of women from the domination of men under the umbrella of patriarchy. So, feminism arose to fight against the patriarchal patrimony of society. Williams (2003: 74) was so correct when he observed that “the problem with patriarchal, masculinist institutions is not that men are in charge or that men hold important posts. The interest of a feminist is to show that such structures and institutions are rooted in masculinist presumption and patriarchal framework.” Unfortunately, feminism falls into the same fallacy of generalization that the evolutionary theorists found themselves. Williams (2003:83) was quick to notice this as he observes:

Historically, therefore, it is a defeatist inclination if feminism is seen as constructing a universal paradigm of women's experiences which much of what serves as the content of its central grievances is the surmounting of Western patriarchy, not universal patriarchy. This is because women's experiences globally cannot be regarded as monolithic.

So, contemporary feminism has failed to take cognizance of the unique experiences of women all over the world who are suffering from different shades of patriarchy. In Africa, it is even worse, as African women are battling with the two-pronged predicament of being both a woman and a black. Colonialism has created an environment of strife, conflict, and contradicting positions that contemporary feminism has fallen into. Hence patriarchy and matriarchy are been presented as two opposite positions of which one should be greater and should prevail. This is a consequence of the evolutionary conception of human development

that presented patriarchy as the culmination of human development. On the other hand, many scholars are now moving towards the position, that instead of a universal transition from matriarchy to patriarchy, humanity has from the beginning been divided into two geographically distinct cradles of which one is favourable to the flourishing of patriarchal and the other to that of matriarchal, that these systems encountered one another and even disputed with each other as different societies, that in certain places they were superimposed on each other and even existed side by side. This is very near to the conception of these realities in traditional Africa.

In continuation, in traditional Africa, patriarchal and matriarchal are not seen as opposites but as complementary. Thus, in traditional Africa, it is not a question of when or where patriarchy or matriarchy held sway but understanding the spheres of patriarchy and matriarchy in the same society. Hence, Dine (2007: 96) agrees with the position that in African “traditional society, the problem of women’s emancipation did not exist because traditional society understood the positions of the sexes differently from what obtains in modern societies.” There is a clear demarcation and distinction between the roles and functions of males and females in traditional Africa. It is the argument of this research that matriarchal in traditional Africa plays a complementary role to patriarchal in the same society. The understanding of the distinctive roles of males and females in traditional Africa through the application of the principle of complementarity has helped in bringing about unity and stability in traditional Africa. What is matriarchy in traditional Africa and what is its relevance to contemporary feminism? This is the focus of this research. But it is important to first clarify important concepts employed in the research.

Clarifications of Concepts

It is important to clarify important concepts that are used in this research. In the first place, patriarchy, according to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, is a hypothetical social system in which the father or the male elder has absolute authority over the family group; by extension, one or more men (as in a council) exert absolute authority over the community as a whole. The theories of biological evolution developed by Charles Darwin served as an impetus to many 19th-century scholars who developed a theory of unilinear cultural evolution. This theory, which was championed by Bachofen(1861), proposed that human social organisation evolved through a series of stages: animalistic sexual promiscuity, matriarchy and patriarch. Patriarchy is presented as the culmination of human organisation.

Moreover, According to Uberoi (1995: 196), “the term matriarchy was used in the nineteenth to designate the hypothetical form of society in which women were leaders and rulers. Anthropologists now agree that there was no evidence to substantiate the claim that any society has ever come under such control.” Still on this, Staples (1981:27) defines matriarchy as “ a society in which some, if not all, of legal powers relating to the ordering and governing of the family – power over property, over inheritance, over marriage, over-

the-house – are lodged in women rather than men.” Many scholars, especially, Staples,(1981), and Gould and Kolb, (1964), argue that despite the various myths about matriarchy, real matriarchy never existed in history. The present study aligns with Farrar (1997: 582) that the concern of scholars “should not be whether a genuine matriarchy ever existed in Africa or elsewhere for that matter. What we truly seek is an understanding of the political power and range of social status available to women in ancient and pre-colonial African societies.” The research, therefore, tries to examine the scope of political power available to women in traditional Africa. This is what it means by matriarchy in traditional Africa.

Furthermore, traditional Africa has to do with the African worldview as was in existence before the incursion of the West into Africa with slavery and colonialism. Traditional African, according to Isife (2022b:51- 52), “can be sought out from three areas: communalism(social), religious and ethics or values” uninfluenced by foreign accretion. In traditional Africa, patriarchy and matriarchy are seen not as evolutionary or contradictory terms as seen in the Western conception, but as complementary spheres of power control. Traditional matriarchy is about the scope and status of political power available to women in traditional African societies. Today, Africa has changed but her social, religious and ethical aspects of living are areas where “traditional Africans left their imprint on the sand of time.”(Isife, 2022b:52). Hence, traditional Africa through these areas still exists in contemporary Africa.

In continuation, the principle of Complementarity was first employed by Bohr (1950) in quantum mechanics, a branch of Physics. According to Bohr (1928), nature has complementary aspects: an experiment which illustrates one of these aspects necessarily obscures the complementary aspect. To put in another expression, one can observe that each experiment or sequence of experiments yields only a limited amount of information about the system under investigation. Hence, as one piece of information is gained, other equally interesting information (which could have been obtained from another sequence of experiments) is lost. Explaining further the meaning of the complementarity principle, Asouzu (2004:96) maintains that “ the human mind cannot operate without contraries and we know due to the ability of the mind to contrast and differentiate. It is for this reason that we know certain ideas better if we can contrast them with what they are not.” It is within the principle of complementarity that one can appreciate the meaning of patriarchy and matriarchy in traditional Africa.

Finally, feminism refers to a range of political and social movements and ideologies based on the belief that women should have the same rights, opportunities and power as men, and be treated in the same way. Hence, the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines feminism as the advocacy of the rights of women based on the theory of equality of the sexes. What then, is the relationship between patriarchy and feminism? Allen(1999: 1087) answers that: “the

very conception of patriarchy as a historical phenomenon, contingent on time and place, provided the basis for the emergence of a feminist critique of male supremacy, both in the past and in the present, that has continued throughout the century.” In continuation, Williams (2003: 80 -81) maintains that: “feminism consists in the search for the method for the defence of women against the entrenched patriarchal system which tends to dominate women in social and political realm of social existence.” So, feminism fights the patriarchal system of society to restore gender equality to society. Feminism is complex, vast and fragmented. Hence feminism has resulted in various and different movements, with each fighting for the liberation of women from its perspective. Today, one can talk of radical feminism, socialist feminism, Marxist feminism, the Lesbian separatist movement, womanism feminism and so on. Feminist movements have been described in terms of “waves.” Therefore contemporary feminism encompasses all the different divisions and waves of feminism since all are geared towards fighting for the rights of women based on the principle of equality of the sexes. The word contemporary as applied to feminism implies feminism as it is in the present moment.

Matriarchy in Traditional Africa

Whenever the issue of matriarchy in traditional Africa is brought up, there are always divergent views on whether matriarchy existed in traditional Africa and if yes, what is it. But really, it is through the understanding of what matriarchy is that one can affirm or deny its existence. Women play important roles in traditional Africa. In traditional Africa, the problem of women’s emancipation or feminism did not exist because people understood the positions and roles of the sexes which are contrary to what is obtained in modern-day society. There are two major approaches to studying the roles of women in traditional Africa. One is through the study of the roles played by royal and aristocratic women in traditional Africa. Many scholars have used the cases of powerful women or queens in traditional Africa to prove the existence of matriarchy in traditional Africa. The other approach, which this study follows, is to study the status and political authority accorded to women generally in traditional Africa. Hence, supporting this approach, Farrar(1997: 582), has argued that the concern should be to seek “an understanding of the political power and range of social statuses available to women in ancient and later pre-colonial African societies.”

Moreover, the concept of “matriarchy” has to be interpreted away from the eighteenth and nineteenth-century European cultural evolutionists understanding of it as contrary and opposite of patriarchy. In traditional Africa, patriarchy and matriarchy are complementary realities which depend on and enforce each other. Of course, this is different from the Western conception of patriarchy and matriarchy as contraries and opposites which are in antagonism with each other and where patriarchy is placed as the acme of civilization and matriarchy as the greatest symbol of savagery. Many scholars, especially African feminists,

argue that patriarchy and matriarchy in traditional Africa are opposed to each other. It is in this regard that Amadiume(1998,19) maintains that:

This ideology of gender had its basis in the binary opposition between the *mkpuke*, the female mother-focused matricentric unit and the *obi*, the male-focused ancestral house. The structure of relationship, in the Levi – Straussian sense, between two paradigmatical gender structures, reflected in the wider social organisation and politics of Nnobi, the contest between the moral kinship ideology of motherhood and the jural force of patriarchy.

But many African scholars see this view as arising from Western influence on those who held the view. That is why Farrar (1997, 582) opines that, in studying matriarchy in traditional Africa, “we wish to more thoroughly free ourselves and our scholarship from the biases that characterize Eurocentric worldview and models of history.” Hence, the relationship between patriarchy and matriarchy, just like many other realities in traditional Africa, follows the principle of complementarity. The argument is that matriarchy in traditional Africa cannot be adequately understood in isolation from patriarchy. Neither can the two be separated from each other. *Mkpuke* and *obi*, *umunne* and *umunna* are two sides of a coin in the Igbo/ African worldview. So, in traditional Africa, both patriarchy and matriarchy exist side by side, interact with each other and each of them has its sphere of power. This research is geared towards exploring and exposing the spheres of influence of matriarchy in traditional Africa.

In continuation, sex distinction plays a key factor in leadership organisation in traditional Africa. This implies that there are areas where women exercise their power and influence and there are areas where men likewise do theirs. The important thing is that society sees the roles or functions of men and women as complementary and as important in bringing about stability to society. According to Dine (2007, 96), “By sex distinction, we mean the separation of male from female in matters of leadership.” The feminists’ aphorism that what a man can do, a woman can do better, has no place in traditional Africa. There are leadership roles assigned to men or women because of their nature as men and women respectively. So the roles assigned to women are expressed or carried out in the context of matriarchal leadership.

Moreover, the important question to ask is, does matriarchy in traditional Africa implies that there is gender equality in traditional Africa? Of course, Abendroth and Smith(2008:49) answer immediately that matriarchal “patterns are not just a reversal of patriarchy, with women somehow ruling men – as the usual misinterpretation would have it – rather they are, without exception, gender-egalitarian societies, and in many cases, full egalitarian societies.” But, not agreeing that traditional African society is egalitarian, Omegoha (2022: 33), argues that “women have similar status with children, and in like manner were beaten frequently by men.” Although there are some elements of truth in this latter position, as not everything

done by our forbearers was good, the point remains that the concept of gender equality as it is known today is strange to traditional Africans. And the present understanding of gender equality cannot be adequately applied to traditional Africa if one should be fair to them and their history.

Furthermore, it has been argued that, in traditional Africa, men are superior to women. Hence, Dine(2007:96 – 97) supports the claim as he states that Africans “conceive existence and things that exist as real and going in pairs – one naturally being higher or superior to the other... God created heavens, igwe or elu and Ala (sky and land), male and female, ala ndi mmuo na ala ndi mmadu(land of spirit and land of humans). The first in each pair is always higher than and superior to the other.” This position affirms that women are under men. Hence, Basden(1983: 88) supports this position as he maintains that “ women have but few rights in any circumstances, and can only hold such property as their Lord’s permit.” Is man taken to be superior to women in traditional Africa? If so, why? The answers to these questions require further interrogation of traditional Africa which is ongoing and this research is a great impetus to that.

Furthermore, another aspect of matriarchy in traditional Africa is the dual-sex character of its political system. This means that any position a man attains or acquires that his chief wife or wives attain or acquire the same. Hence, collaborating on this point, Farrar (1997:6) observes “ this practice of maintaining separate, parallel political hierarchies for the female and male sections of the population is a fundamental and presumably ancient feature of Akan political organisation.” This dual-sex character of the political system in traditional Africa is also observed by Okonjo(1976) who studied the political organisation of the Western Igbo of Nigeria. Okonjo(1976: 46) posits that “the monarchs were the male “Obi”, who in theory was the acknowledged head of the whole community, and the female “Omu”, who in theory was the acknowledged mother of the whole community but who in practice was charged with concern for the female section.” Therefore, the division of spheres of power between men and women starts from the family and moves up to the community. Although there are spheres of power and areas of jurisdiction between men and women in traditional Africa, yet, the male is seen as the general overseer or supervisor of the affairs of the family or the community as the case may be.

Finally, in traditional Africa, it is in the typical family setting that the sphere of power of matriarchy is well appreciated. In the traditional family, there is a man with his wife. There is the man’s hut (his Obi) which is the seat of power of his family and each of his wives has a place for cooking(Ekwu) and a hut(Mkpuke) where she and her children leave. The role of the Obi both as the seat of power and the power of the man over her family is more of supervisory and general control. The research agrees with Amadiume(1998) that the mkpuke is the centre of matriarchy. It is where women exercise their power in the family and society as wives and mothers. But, both the Obi and Nkpuke, as Asouzo(2004) argued, play complementary roles in the family. For instance, a married woman answered the name

of her father instead of her husband's name. The researcher's maternal and maternal grandmothers continued to answer their fathers' names till they died. Also, it is the right of the woman in many African cultures, especially Igbo, to give names to their children. The child also answers the name of her mother for better recognition not that of her father. The child answers the name of his father mostly when there is a need to honour him. This intricacy confirms the African philosophy that the mother is supreme (*Nneka*) in traditional Africa.

Dimensions of Matriarchy in Traditional African

Having examined what matriarchy in traditional Africa is all about, the next point is to look at the dimensions of matriarchy in traditional Africa. The sphere of power of matriarchy in traditional Africa is broad but most of the time not noticed easily. The first dimension of matriarchy in traditional Africa is the economic dimension. Women play important roles in advancing the economy of the community. This economic dimension can be traced back to the family. According to Amadiume(1998: 19),” The *mkpuke*, which I regard as the matricentric structure of matriarchy, is the smallest kinship unit and the smallest production unit. It is a good example of where the structure of the production unit determines the consumption unit for it is a unit which eats what it produces.” Hence, matriarchy is the economic base of the family as it determines the production, distribution and consumption of goods. Women in traditional Africa were seen as the main drivers of agriculture which is the main economic earning of traditional Africa. Polygamy is highly valued in traditional Africa because it was believed that more wives bring more wealth and riches to men. Also, women are fully in charge of markets in traditional Africa.

Furthermore, every woman in traditional Africa is being trained towards acquiring the qualities of a good mother. Women as mothers are the foundation of the social life of the community. In Igbo, it is a mother (*nne*) before father (*nna*) and the Igbo believe that “*Nne ka*” means that the mother is supreme. Confirming this line of thought, Onukawa(1998, 208) opines that “ this is because, despite Igbo patriarchy, matriarchal forces are subterranean and mystical in the culture. Matriarchal heritage is superior and this explains why *Ala*, the greatest Igbo deity is a female.” Socialization in traditional Africa is based on matriarchy. Although it may seem that women are silent in traditional Africa they control the greater part of the social life of the community be it marriage, cultural festivals, rite of passage, title taking etc. The maternity of children is taken more seriously than paternity. This is one of the reasons why children answer the name of their mother or maternal uncle. The Igbo used to say, “*nwa ka ugwu n’igwunne ya*” meaning a child is accorded more respect in her mother's place of birth.

In continuation, scholars, like Basden (1982: 88), think that the only place left for traditional African women is the home. But this is not so. Hence, according to Asiimire and

Twinamatsiko(2021: 5), “the political power that women had in the pre-colonial Ankole was very instrumental resulting from the collective voice that women had, unlike men. The Council of wise women and women courts were established to preserve and uphold women's dignity.” The point is that women as mothers play active roles in their different families. Thus, women as wives receive the same status as their husbands. Also, women as groups play important roles in organizing the community. Among the various women groups in traditional Africa, two are well known. Dine(2007: 129) notes that: “there are associations of two essential groups of those who are married and are living with their husbands: the married ones living with their husbands are called (Ndiom ala) and daughters married out to other places are called (umuada/umuokpu).” The daughters of the land married outside the land(umuada) is the most powerful organisation in Igboland. It is more powerful than the organisation of married men in the community(Umunna). Ubesie (1978), in Dine (2007: 131), was correct to have noted that: “ in any village, when the umuada as a group, decides their capacity as daughters of the land, nobody dares to go against it.” Hence, Umuada is like the present Supreme Court which is the final destination of all cases and the last locus of judgment.

Finally, in traditional Africa, the Earth Goddess (Ala) is a female and plays a key role in sustaining the peace and unity of the community. Hence, Abendroth and Smith(2008: 51) are correct when they explain that:

In matriarchy, divinity is immanent, for the whole world is regarded as divine, feminine divine. This is evident in the widely held concept of the universe as the Great Goddess who created everything and of the earth as the Great Mother who brings forth everything living. And everything is endowed with divinity, each woman and man, each plant and animal, the smallest pebble and the biggest star.

Although, men are her priests the presence of the Earth deity is to preserve and sustain the femininity and female values of the community. There is a great link and interaction between the dead, the living and the unborn which is perpetuated through the knowledge and worship of the Earth Goddess. Crimes that violate motherhood, like fratricide, adultery, and stealing of yams, are grave and offend the deity. Many sanctions are put in place to make both men and women uphold the matriarchal values of the community. Although women are not fully involved in certain religious rites once a woman attains the age of menopause, she is taken as a man and plays the same or similar religious role as a man. According to Carswell (2003), most cultural activities in traditional Africa centre on upholding or preserving the feminine values of the society. One sees this in celebrations of rites of passage, childbirth celebrations, and marriage and death ceremonies. In these celebrations and ceremonies, women play centre roles.

Contemporary Feminism and Gender Equality

Feminism can be defined as “the struggle for equal rights, and as a political and social movement. It has been described in terms of ‘waves’”(Martha Easton, 2012,99). There are up to three or four such waves. The first wave started within the context of the bourgeois revolutions, precisely of the American and French revolutions of 1776 and 1789 respectively. This first wave has its foundation in the Seneca Falls Convention held in New York in 1848, where more than 200 women gathered and discussed the social, religious and civil rights of women. But it was only in 1920 that America ratified the 19th Amendment, which granted women the right to vote. Thus, for Easton(2012, 99), the achievement of the first wave of feminism is “women’s suffrage.”

Moreover, Williams (2003) was quick to observe that after the achievement of women’s suffrage in the 1920s, there arose an enduring division within feminism between the feminist objective of equal rights with men in the public domain and the recognition of women’s differences with men to enhance women’s status in the private sphere of the family. This gave rise to the second wave of feminism which was concerned with fighting against wider inequality in society, trying to break the age-long stereotypes that maintain the disadvantages, especially to women. There are many strands of the second wave of feminism. For example, Liberal feminism fought against domestic violence, for the provision of equal working status for both men and women and the right of women to decide on their reproduction. The achievement of the second wave of feminism is social equality. But whether the wave was successful in this regard became a big issue for the third wave of feminism.

In continuation, the third wave of feminism, according to Easton (2012: 99), “focused more on identity politics in the attempt to correct what some perceived as a lack of attention to race, class, religion, and other markers of difference between women.” Third wavers fought for the redefinition of womanhood, gender, beauty, sexuality femininity and masculinity. It has been noted that while second-wavers were trying to establish sexual liberation, third-wavers tends to claim that gender identity and sexuality have been formed by society, and everyone should be able to choose and express their authentic gender identity. The third wavers fought the stereotypical image of women where women are seen as highly demanding, weak and dependent. They want women to have a powerful image and control of their sexuality (Burkett& Brunell, 2020). Third-wavers have continued to criticize second-wave feminism as exclusive, whitish, rigid, judgmental, anti-male, anti femininity and anti-fun. Although there are some elements of truth in this, Snyder(2008, 180) maintains that “while it is commendable that third-wave feminism makes diversity a central feature, it is a misconception to believe that second–wave feminism was composed of all white, middle-class women.” Hence there are writings of feminists of colour that are parts of the second wave. Also, third-wave feminism emerged from a strand of second-wave.

The diverse tone of the third wave makes it appeal to contemporary feminist movements especially Third World feminism and transnational feminism. So, Third World feminism and transnational feminism have one common objective against second-wave feminism and this has to do with their rejection of unfounded universalism of white feminism and their emphasis on Third World Women's complex and intersecting oppressions as well as their multiple forms of resistance to women's oppression. But they differ in that Third World feminism is concerned about the Third World women's actions in their particular localized or nationalized context but transnational is primarily interested in feminist organizations and movements as they occur outside and beyond individual nation-states at the transnational level (Herr: 2014).

Finally, according to Grady (2018), quoted in Bakytzhanova (2020), fourth-wave feminism, which started in 2010, created a pro – sexualization, pro–skinny, anti-fat movement. It also created a hashtag “Me too” on social media to fight against harassment, violence, and overall stereotypical views about women. The fourth wave is unlike the third wave for it uses the internet and social media as its main tool with which it opens the door to intersect with other movements like anti–racism, trans-sexuality, LGBT community. This research agrees with Barkytzhanova (2020) that the first and second waves of feminism achieved much by getting women the right to vote, fighting for equality in working places and spaces in many spheres and spreading awareness of domestic violence. But the conflictual views and diffused goals of the third and fourth waves seem to be a drawback to the achievements of the first two waves. This has led to what Dean(2010: 9) described as “two relevant sets of narratives” regarding feminism. The first set of these narratives are melancholic narratives that present feminism as having gone into decline as a result of shifts in feminist goals and divergent and conflicting views of feminists. And the second narratives are those with positive tones that celebrate the re-emergence of dynamic feminism in recent years. This Dean(2010: 13) that: “they both converge in their emphasis on a feminist paradigm break between qualitatively different old and new feminisms. In so doing, both sets of narratives arguably over-emphasize break and discontinuity over continuity across time.” But one thing is clear from this; there is still room for evaluation and progress as women are still oppressed and there is still gender inequality in society. This is why it is important to examine how matriarchy in traditional Africa can help to advance this cause for gender equality in Contemporary society.

Relevance of Traditional Matriarchy to Contemporary Feminism

Traditional African matriarchy is still alive to a greater degree in Contemporary Africa. It is important to examine how African Matriarchy will be of help in advancing the cause of gender equality in contemporary society. In the first place, the African worldview is rooted in dualism, which refers “to parts of interconnected and interactive concepts, which may or may not be opposite.” It is this dualism that will help one appreciate the relationship

between matriarchy and patriarchy in Traditional Africa. Western patriarchy was boosted by colonialism, and colonialism focused its attention on universalizing the Western culture and turning it into a paradigm for all. In the same vein, western patriarchy universalized the male experience and turns it into a paradigm for all human beings. Of course, the evolutionists made every effort to demonstrate that patriarchy was the peak of human development. So, feminism started as an opposition principle to patriarchy. One of the errors of feminism, however, according to Williams (2003: 83), is “constructing a paradigm of women’s experiences in a way that seems universal in scope.” But dualism in traditional Africa allows matriarchy and patriarchy to interact as complementary principles. Hence the principle of complementarity as located in traditional Africa needs to be applied to contemporary feminism. This will help feminism to see differences in males and females not as points of division and quarrel but that of interaction, dialogue and cooperation. It will enable feminism to see weaknesses in patriarchy as a vacuum to be filled with its own different but related principles.

Moreover, in traditional Africa, there is a division of labour and distinction of the sexes. The principle of matriarchy in traditional Africa allows both men and women to know their sexes, respect their sexes and carry out their functions according to their gender. Hence, there is a difference between ontological equality and functional equality. Ontologically, traditional Africa believes that men and women are equal. But functionally, understanding traditional African matriarchy will help one to appreciate that function has more to do with equity rather than equality. One of the travails of feminism is its principle that “what a man can do, a woman can do better.” Feminism has to acknowledge that there is a distinction between man and woman and both equality and equity have to be considered whenever one talks of what a man can do or what a woman can do. Elaborating more on this, Dine (2007: 100) asserts: “Women recognize positively their distinctive position and roles before men. They are under men not as slaves but as integral parts of the African Philosophy of family. The recognition of the role of motherhood of the womenfolk is universally upheld and indispensable element in the organisation of leadership.” It is this superior role of mother in the society as represented in matriarchy that feminism is daily sacrificing at the altar of women's liberation. This has affected both the family and society negatively.

Furthermore, matriarchy in traditional Africa is the foundation of the family. In traditional Africa, motherhood is the greatest demonstration of matriarchy. Mother is supreme in Africa. This point is made clearer by Diop (1989: 32), as he says that “in Black Africa, it is almost everywhere thought that a child owes more from a biological point of view to his mother than to his father... a child is wholly what its mother is and only half of what its father is.” Hence, a mother should first take charge of her family for her to take charge of society. Traditional African women understood this fact and were really in charge of the family. So, Sesanti (2016:489) is correct to say that in traditional Africa “paternity is a probability and maternity is certain.” Also in traditional Igbo African society, the women's

organisation, *Umuada*, is the most powerful political organisation. Contemporary women should look to the family as the root of women's liberation. Contemporary families are in tumult because women are no longer in control of the families. So, Taiwo(2010: 232) is correct that “the survival of the family *depends* fundamentally on the women.”

In continuation, matriarchy in traditional Africa is paradigmatic to contemporary feminism. Diop(1989) understands African matriarchy as a shift of focus from the man at the centre of control of power to the primacy of the role of the mother in economic, social, political and religious institutions. Hence, Amadiume (1998: 80) correctly observes that “ the European writers did not seem to have had a parallel historical experience of mother-focused systems to draw from. Their patriarchal paradigm was taken from the fixed point of the father.” Unfortunately, it is this patriarchal paradigm that feminism encountered and was consumed by it. Thus, contemporary feminism, in the words of Williams (2003:83), has“fallen into the error of constructing a paradigm of women’s experiences in a way that seems universal in scope.” Feminism is founded in the principle of monism but traditional African matriarchy operates within the principle of complementarity. Thus, for contemporary feminism to be inclusive, including all women, especially black women, it has to change from the principle of monism to that of dualism or complementarity.

Finally, matriarchy in traditional Africa is a custodian of nature and protector of the environment. This is hinged on the fact that, as Amadiume (1998: 101) reiterates, traditional African matriarchy was “ couched in a very powerful goddess–based religion, a strong ideology of motherhood, and a general moral principle of love.” Hence there is a strong relationship between the land and the earth goddess(Ala). So the land, in the words of Kanu(2021), “is not just a solid part of the universe, it is the mother that is the abode of the living and the dead as human beings come from it and are buried in its belly. It is regarded as a person and not just a thing to be used when needed. It is a person deserving respect and care.” Therefore, the Earth is the Super mother of which every mother in the family is a real representative. Understanding the earth as a mother brings in the qualities of love, empathy, care and respect and these helped traditional Africans in promoting the good health of their environment. To Mawere(2013, 6), and this applies to most traditional Africa, “Unlike in modern Zimbabwe where expert science is officially used as the sole agent for environmental conservation, pre-colonial Zimbabwe deployed a myriad of traditional strategies enshrined in indigenous knowledge system to conserve the natural environment.” These strategies include taboos, folktales, totems and the conception of the environment as divine and as common property. Some lands, trees, animals and even human beings were dedicated to the gods. So the conception of the earth as a mother to be loved and cherished, as was applicable in African traditional patriarchal society, will help not only feminism but more so contemporary society towards the conserving of the environment.

Evaluation

One of the main obstacles towards gender equality especially in third world countries is colonialism. Although colonialism has come and gone in many parts of the world especially Africa its impacts have refused to go or it has continued to exist as neocolonialism. If colonialism is a tragedy to an African man then it is a double tragedy to an African woman. Woman is mostly affected by colonialism Hence, Ladner (2009: 65) was quick to note that “there can be no doubt that indigenous women have been disproportionately affected by colonialism.” This is why it is important to talk about the decolonisation of gender before one can talk about gender equality. Again, Ladner (2009: 72), asserts that “decolonisation must, therefore be a degendered project. It must be a project that is grounded in indigenous understandings of gender...” This is why it is important to re-evaluate matriarchy in traditional Africa, as has been done in this research, to understand what roles both male and female genders played in traditional Africa. Some elements of traditional African values are still in existence. There has to be conscious living out of these values, especially as regards matriarchy in contemporary society.

An important aspect of the African person that needs to be decolonized is the mind. This is because the mind is the centre of human activities and conscious living. In this vein, Isife (2022a: 113) argues that “ the decolonisation of the African mind will channel the people’s attention to unfolding indigenous ways of knowing and being as well as the important indigenous ways to move forward.” In Africa, there should be a conscious introduction of African values, especially as regards matriarchy and the roles of gender in traditional Africa, into the school curriculum. Children should be made to internalize these values beginning from their homes, to the schools and religious affiliations. The government should also try to make laws and formulate policies drawn from traditional African values which will be geared towards the advancement of gender equality in public places. Unfortunately, Nigeria is still far from actualizing the United Nation’s 35% affirmative action for women. So matriarchy in traditional Africa can only be relevant to contemporary feminism if contemporary Africa begins to apply its principles in her daily activities.

On the other hand, there are also aspects of traditional African matriarchy that are not relevant to the contemporary world. The story of women in traditional Africa is not entirely positive. Although women have some spheres of power in traditional Africa, yet women were not always treated as men’s equals especially in marriage and inheritance of family property. Women in some parts of Africa do not inherit their father’s property. Also, widows in most traditional societies were treated badly. Omegoha(2022: 33) lament this ugly situation that “apart from that, women have similar status with children, and in like manner were beaten frequently by men. They were treated as objects, not people.” This maltreatment of women by society was carried on to present-day African society. Efforts are being made and should be more concerted, by all stakeholders to make women free from

domination, maltreatment, subjugation and objectification by society. The values of matriarchy should be amplified with the modern values of democracy to create an equitable society for both men and women.

Conclusion

Many evolutionist scholars presented patriarchy and matriarchy as two opposing principles of which one should be allowed to stay. For these scholars, patriarchy is superior to matriarchy and is the summit of human development. Colonialism rode at the back of this theory and contributed in no small measure to the exploitation and subjugation of women. Feminism that rose to fight Western patriarchy followed the same principle as patriarchy and alienated third-world women, especially black women. Hence, traditional African matriarchy can provide an alternative to feminism towards fighting for gender equality. And traditional African matriarchy provides a better principle or rather a paradigm to underscore, understand and understudy the distinction of sexes, and gender roles as regards gender equality in contemporary society. Africa is a starting point towards implementing the values of traditional African matriarchy not only because these values are coming from Africa but more so because African women are worst hit by gender inequality in contemporary society.

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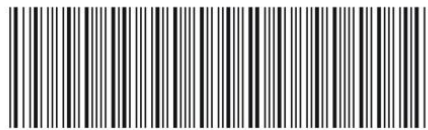
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ABOUT THE BOOK

AFRICAN THEOLOGY AND CULTURAL IDENTITY 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 Theology And Cultural Identity In a Global Community* is a collection of papers presented at the conference bordering on African theology and cultural identity. Through this piece, the Conference shares the fruits of her research with the rest of the academic community.



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