COMMUNITARIAN ETHICS, SOCIAL CHANGE AND SOCIAL PEACE IN THE NIGER DELTA

EEGUNLUSI, Tayo Raymond Ezekiel, PhD
Department of General Studies
Institute of Technology-Enhanced-Learningand Digital Humanities
Federal University of Technology,Akure, Nigeria
kingadetayo@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper argues that communitarian understanding is required to address and proffer lasting solution to the Niger Delta crises, which basically derive from an unflinching agitation of the Delta communities for social justice and warding off of human indignity. The Niger Delta area of Nigeria has been characterized by incessant violent revolts rendering attempts at ensuring social peace and national security futile. These conflicts are predominantly due to a number of factors: the prolonged state's neglect of the region, the exploitative nature of the transnational corporations producing oil in the region, the greedy dispositions of some powerful and influential citizens of Nigeria and the avarice of some Delta indigenes. The Delta indigenes' perceived social injustice and inhuman treatments, based on the activities of these groups, prompted a determination to disallow resolution of the crises until they are given adequate attention and eventually get social justice. For long, the situation in the region deteriorated with the state's determined counter-attacks and attempts towards repressing and suppressing the Delta peoples and their militant groups in order to scuttle their protests and efforts. Apart from the fact that these reprisal attacks never daunted the Delta peoples' zeal, despite that many lives were lost, they portrayed the state as vicious, autocratic, dominating and unconcerned about the welfare of the Delta communities. In later years, governmental efforts at resolving the crises yielded some fruits but problems in the region are far from ending. Thinking about these, using the methods of conceptual, theoretical and historical analyses, this paper unearths the issues and events that portray injustice in the Delta and their attendant indignity. It argues that adopting communitarian values in national reconciliation can ensure social peace in the Delta region.
Keywords: communitarian ethics, human dignity, national development, reconciliation, security, social justice, social peace

Introduction

The overly individualistic emphasis of liberalism created the impetus for the communitarian debate. The intensity of this debate makes

several writers consider communitarianism as a virile alternative to liberalism. The stands of some communitarians are, however, vastly opposed to this perspective as they seek a blending of the social and moral ideals communitarianism emphasizes with the individualistic orientation promoted by liberalism. This is the trend this paper follows. The paper predominantly argues that the neglect of communitarian social and moral values in Nigeria as a viable operational paradigm for ordering the Nigerian society and dealing with the situation in the Niger Delta (henceforth Delta or the Delta) is the source of injustice and violation of human dignity in the area. Communitarian understanding is required to address and proffer lasting solution to the Delta crises, which basically derive from an unflinching agitation of the Delta communities to get social justice and ward off human indignity. Since crude oil was discovered, the Delta area of Nigeria has been found to be essentially problematic and characterized by incessant violent revolts rendering attempts at ensuring social peace and national security futile. These conflicts are predominantly due to a number of factors: the prolonged state's neglect of the region, the exploitative nature of the transnational corporations producing oil in the region, the greedy dispositions of some powerful and influential citizens of Nigeria and the avarice of some Delta indigenes. Also, generating internal strife is the issue of autochthony or claim of original ownership of land. As discussed by Courson (2020: 73-74), the conflict over autochthony was:

> …engendered by colonialism, but was deepened by ethnic political action on chieftaincy and, in the contemporary period, transformed to an insurgency by government-oil firms' complicity. Ijaw-Itsekiri are at loggerheads over claims to lands in New-Warri or Ogbe-Ijoh, Benin River and the Escravos River environs. At the same time, Urhobo-Itsekiri are daggers drawn over ownership of Agbassa, Okere and Okumagba lands in Warri. Beyond the legal space and reliance on land leases signed by Dore Numa, other avenues to the resolution of this intractable problem are either rebuffed and/or ignored. Land ownership squabble in Warri is long and protracted without any concrete steps by the government (colonial or postcolonial) to address it. Since the late-1990s, the question of land ownership in Warri has turned violent. The Ijaw and Urhobo fought over land ownership in Aladja (the site of a gigantic steel company in Nigeria) and over Garigilo and Esama in 1996; the Ijaw and Itsekiri fought over ownership of Jones creek in 1996, and over LGA creation, relocation and ward delineation in, 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2003; and the Urhobo and Itsekiri fought over both land in 1999 and

ward delineation in 2003. All the three groups have crossed paths over land squabbles in Warri. Recently, the extension of territorial claims for the whole of Warri Division by each of the three ethnic groups rather than for Warri urban itself has been attributed to the renewed violent armed conflict in the Region. It is conflict over space but layered by petropolitics.

The strife resulting from autochthony has thrived more because the state and certain interested persons in the Delta have profited from it while allowing things to degenerate to serious crises with dire national and international consequences. Those involved played politics with and around the issues to the detriment of the Delta populace. In all these, the Delta indigenes' perceived social injustice and inhuman treatments, based on the activities of the various groups and elements, prompted the Delta people's determination to disallow resolution of the crises until issues are given adequate attention and they eventually get social justice. The youths, who are mostly restive form the vanguard of these efforts. The situation in the Delta was difficult to manage because the state acted as a high-handed protagonist rather than an impartial umpire in welfarist toga. Thus, for a long time, the situation in the region, worsened daily, with the state's determined counter-attacks and attempts towards repressing and suppressing the Delta peoples and their militant groups in order to scuttle their protests and efforts. Apart from the fact that these reprisal attacks never daunted the Delta peoples' zeal, despite that many lives were lost, they portrayed the state as vicious, autocratic, dominating and unconcerned about the welfare of the Delta communities.

Over time, due to continuous agitations, the Nigerian state conceded to certain solutions to the Delta crises. However, the initial solutions provided through certain groups as the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) never really put the people's dignity and feelings into consideration. Apart from the fact that the factors stated above allowed some influential Delta indigenes who are supposed to mediate in the Delta crises and help alleviate the sufferings of their people to excessively benefit at the expense of the community, the state-centred, colonial-oriented and dominating nature of the Nigerian nation played out in these factors and reflected the *modus operandi* of the groups involved. These, thus, constitute derisive approaches that frustrate real dialogical and consensus based quest for social justice for a long time. As government realized its mistakes, efforts at resolving

the crises, such as the creation of the Niger Delta Ministry and the Amnesty programme, yielded some fruits but problems in the region are far from ending. On one side are Delta indigenes still threatening to sabotage national efforts while agitating for resource control, on another side are the activities of those entrusted with the resources of the agencies created to address the welfare of the region that have either looted or mismanaged the resources in their care, or work in their interest to the detriment of the majority in the region. Thinking about all these, using the methods of conceptual, theoretical, historical and empirical analysis, this paper unearths the issues and events that portray injustice in the Delta and their attendant indignity. It suggests that the moral issues and the situation of injustice that promote constant anger and revolts in the Delta area have deleterious consequences for and undermine Nigeria's national development and, at large, global peace and security. On these bases, due to its dialogical and consensus-motivated reconciliatory approaches, it is necessary to adopt communitarianism, as a means of solving the Delta problems. Thus, arguing that adopting communitarian values in national reconciliation can ensure social peace in the Delta region and Nigeria, this work shows how cultivating and harmonizing individual virtues and values with those of the society, with the ultimate aim of sustaining the state, will promote beneficial reconciliation and social peace in Nigeria.

The Niger Delta on Resource Control: Pre-Independence and Early Post-Independence Agitations

Resource control and sharing have been the major issues promoting social unrest in the Delta. The problem in the Delta predates the modern era. With involvement in trades – slave trade, colonial palm oil trade and now the crude oil trade – the region has witnessed seasons of attempts at ensuring the control of its resources. Due to trade consideration and being eventually subdued by the British, alongside other tribes merged into various colonies and protectorates under British colonial rule, the region became amalgamated into Nigeria in 1914 after an effort that started in 1900 when the British took over the administration of the area once controlled by the Royal Niger Company founded by Sir George Dashwood Goldie. At the drumbeat of Nigeria's independence, the Delta people were part of the various minority groups that expressed fear of domination by the majority groups in the nation and sought independent existence as states within the nation, agitating against being merged with the dominant tribes. In response to their fears, as expressed at both the 1953 and 1956/57 Constitution Conferences held in London, a four-man *Enquiry Commission on Fears of*

Minorities (otherwise known as the Willink Minority Rights Commission), headed by Henry Willink, was set up in September 1957 to hear the peoples' grievances. As Courson (2016: 55) notes:

> The outcome of…minority petitions to Britain was the inauguration of the Henry Willink Commission in 1957. The Commission, however, confirmed the fears and disadvantaged position of minority groups in every region. It concluded that state creation was not the solution and even could obstruct the proposed granting of independence to Nigeria in 1960. The Commission therefore recommended the constitutional classification of the Niger Delta as an area with "Special Development" needs that requires cooperative efforts of the Federal, Eastern and Western Governments because it was "poor, backward and neglected," and it suggested the establishment of a Federal Board to address the peculiar problems of the Niger Delta people. This recommendation led to the post-independence creation of the Niger Delta Development Board in 1961 by Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, then Prime Minister. But the Board failed in all parameters to meet the desire and aspirations of the people of the area; hence the demands for autonomy and fair treatment continued in post-independence Nigeria.

As evident in later years, the first point of crisis was that the recommendations of the commission defeated the peoples' expectations while their fears were largely unaddressed. At independence, the 1960 Constitution was not so expressive on issues relating to the Delta. The 1963 Republican Constitution's provision for the Niger Delta Development Board only stated that the Board was to be "responsible for advising the Government of the Federation and the Governments of Eastern Nigeria and Mid-Western Nigeria with respect to the physical development of the Niger Delta". It also referred to an August 26th 1959 "proclamation relating to the Board" [41] and that the section of the constitution on Niger Delta shall no longer be effective or valid from 1st July, 1969. In short, the people were not allowed autonomy and were still subjected to the domination of majority groups against their wish with possibility that their case would probably be unattended to after 1st July 1969. Such considerations as these might have led to the agitations by Isaac Adaka Boro (1938-1968) and his Niger Delta Volunteer Force to declare the Niger Delta Republic on the 23rd of

---

[41] Constitution of Nigeria. 1963. Chapter XII, 5. ttps://gazettes.africa/archive/ng/1960/ng-government-gazette-supplement-dated-1960-09-30-no-67-part-c.pdf

February, 1966. Though this initial agitation was unsuccessful, the seeds of the militia activities, restiveness and resistance sowed blossomed and manifested in serious crises in later years. Thus, the consequent dastardly facilitation and sustenance of infamy acts of violence that are coterminous with the situations of crises throw the Nigerian nation and the entire global community into repeated tantrums of traumatic experiences and agony as they witnessed great threats to the sustenance of human and material resources and the economic survival of nations and the transnational corporations that are involved in oil exploration in this region.

Justification for Communitarian Ethics in the Delta Crises: Looking Towards Nationally Beneficial Relations

The threats to material and human resources in the Delta, no doubt, are threats to global peace and economic sustenance. This is because many nations are represented in the companies carrying out oil exploration in the region and the price of Nigerian oil is among the factors that, in some sense, determine the strength of global economy. However, the crises in the Delta took their tolls on development in the area in the immediate than on the global community. It is hence necessary to adopt communitarian understanding in solving the Delta crises. Granting the fact of the social embeddedness of the self into African communities, the idea of communitarianism is not at all alien to the nation. However, the form that currently thrives in the nation appears to be a closed communitarian system – largely tribalistic and sectarian in nature. This excludes other tribes, leaving them to fashion out ideals that can unite them and help them define their communal identities. The long and short of this is that, rather than promote national unity, this form of communitarian understanding is divisive. Closed communitarianism is in fact a wrong interpretation of the real communitarian agenda. The communitarian understanding that should reign in Nigeria is one that has universal appeal and capable of promoting national unity, catering for the welfare and equality of all the different Nigerian tribes, rather than being sectarian in nature. To cater for this situation and evolve a really beneficial social system, this paper essentially perceives communitarianism as a philosophy of social change in the Nigerian socio-political and economic milieu, as far as resource distribution is concerned in the Delta area of the nation.

In lieu of this, this paper shows that social development is impossible in Nigeria and in the Delta without a conscious and passionate adoption of communitarian values and ideals targeted at sustaining the society. It

further argues that the breakdown of order in the Nigerian society is as a result of the breakdown or neglect of a national orientation towards promoting the two phenomenal and intertwined ideals of shared-meaning and shared-understanding. These are very essential because the meaning of one may become obscure without the meaning of the other. The cry of marginalization and injustice in resource distribution in Nigeria – which is the question of / agitation for social justice - really boils down to the fact of the neglect of or lack of the real understanding of these ideals (Tusabe, 2005:95; Young, 1990: 15-38; Miller, 1976:17-19; Rawls, 1972: 60-105; 1974:156-178). We may find every effort geared towards finding a lasting solution to this problem elusive if we refuse to address the fact that we have deviated from these ideals that kept the African society together long before colonialism. An examination of these ideals reveals them to be essential in defining the common vision, objectives, goals, values and requirements of moral virtues as elements useful for mutual beneficial relations among stakeholders in national issues relating to justice and fairness in dealings in the Nigerian society. In earnest, these ideals form the pedestal for defining the basic elements that guarantee social peace, and facilitate positive social change and the sustenance of the human community. Thus, they underlie our seeing social change as the socio-cultural, political, economical and moral developments within a social system as they affect human and national life and create an atmosphere conducive for peaceful coexistence and community sustenance. I argue in this work that giving attention to these ideals will help clarify and guarantee mutually beneficial relations among the peoples in the Nigerian society and its various tribes and communities, one of which is the Delta, and facilitate national integration, social peace and unity.

The Failure of States Agencies, the Failure of Methods of National Reconciliation and the Urgent Need for a Paradigm Shift
For decades, the crises in the Delta depict a conscious effort by the Delta people to get social justice at all cost. They, equally portray a strong competition between stakeholders of national politics: the strong groups with the paraphernalia of institutions behind them and the weak minority groups determined to fight oppression. The understanding of the implications of the Delta crises propelled the Government to provide some solutions to the crises in its attempts to remedy the situation of injustice in the Delta. The solutions include the 13 Percent Derivation Formula, NDDC, OMPADEC, and a host of others. Government believed that these arrangements would allow for proper management of the Delta situation and the championing of the

cause of ensuring fair distribution and sharing of resources in ways beneficial to the Delta people. Unfortunately, neither the constitutions of these groups nor the implementation of the programmes permits adequately addressing the unbiased sharing of national resources directed at national integration without controversies, mismanagements and upheavals. This is usually because of certain intrigues in the polity. These groups' limitations boil down to the fact that they have continually followed the rigid and sometimes subtle colonial and parochial methods inherited by the Nigerian nation. Thus, the old and unpopular solutions they represent showcase approaches that are based on state-centric, master servant relations, top-down social engineering and dictatorial policies that generally did not take into consideration the dignity, feelings and desires of the affected people. As highlighted by Ujomu (2002:252):

> the contributions of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) project to the *Ogoniland* have been minimal. This programme or project is another evidence of lack of careful planning and consultation….Presently, the NDDC is rehabilitating old native roads….The rivers in the area are bad due to oil spillages. There is a community hospital but it is not functioning. Drugs are not given to indigenes. The existing infrastructures are inadequate because *Ogoni* community is a very big area. It covers Tekana, Kpean, Yokaa, Baen, Tai, Gokan, etc. It shares boundary with parts of Eket about 75km away from Bori. In Bori town like many other towns and villages in the rural *Ogoni* axis, the only tarred roads pass through the town center. Other roads were neither tarred nor graded. These roads in Bori and other near-by villages were not motorable. There are just electricity poles for the sake of having them.

The more reason why these groups have been unable to discharge their responsibilities boils down to the fact of a prevailing "consistent pattern of misuse and misappropriation" of funds in these groups (Ujomu (2002:253). At the same time, these groups have a heavy reliance on state-doctored programmes that do not promote real meaningful dialogues capable of ensuring real national reconciliation. Thus, as the chaotic situation in the Delta worsens by the day, it is obvious that there is need for a paradigm shift from the non-dialogical, non-consensus-driven and non-reconciliatory but conservative and managerial-natured strategies these institutions adopt at solving the Delta problems. However, the problems in the Delta, in being fair, also aggravates with the cheating of the people by their own leaders who siphon larger parts of the money meant for the development of the region and keep them

for their selfish uses within and outside Nigeria. In this regards, the failure of the state and its institutions and the powerful Delta indigenes at a successful handling of the Delta crises necessitates embracing the dialogical communitarian approach that promotes reconciliation in tackling the challenges posed by these situations.

A Further Exploration of the Historical Antecedents in the Delta Social Imbroglio and Crises

According to Ikelegbe (2006:24), the Delta region of Nigeria "is embroiled in resistance against the Nigerian state and the transnational companies (TNCs). The region is generally restive with pockets of insurrection and armed rebellion." What Ikelegbe regards as "pockets" of resistance is in actual fact a strong life-threatening revolt which attracted an equally strong military espionage and action. It should not be taken for granted that any national situation that requires military intervention, and not mere police action, already has a life-threatening dimension to it. This is because the military, by its constitution, is not supposed to have reasons to defend the nation from within against itself but to protect its territorial integrity against external invasion. For the military to defend a nation against its members where it should engage police action shows a completely unhealthy national scenario. Apart from the fact that the crises in the Delta constitute a vehement revolt against the TNCs and the Nigerian state, two of the principal actors in the crises, it is also a vehement agitation to be heard and given attention at all cost. The region, because of this habitual violence and anarchy that led to loss of lives and properties, is a centre posing a very great security concern to the nation and the entire world (Omeje, 2006: 479-480; Volman, 2003: 578-582).

The anarchy situation in the Delta which was initially a solemn protest and gradual revolution led by the likes of Boro, added a radical and guerrilla-warfare-like dimension capable of engineering a destructive national influence. As earlier noted, the crises in the region which began in the pre-independence days of Nigeria reached its peak in recent times. The discovery of oil in the Delta shifted the attention of the entire nation from reliance on agriculture as the main source of national income to crude oil exploration (Obi,2002: 264-265). Like many other nations where oil or other mineral resources are discovered, the conflict in the Delta originates from the discovery of oil in the region. The Delta crises and other negative outcomes from oil exploration, as well as the sharing of the proceeds of oil, have made many critics claim that Nigeria's oil is a curse rather than being a blessing (Courson, 2020:65).

Thus, as is common in discussions in the international arena, nations just discovering oil are said to be carefully fashioning out means of profiting from oil proceeds without communal crises so as to forestall their oil becoming a curse to them like Nigeria's.

It is common knowledge that Nigeria experienced so much oil boom in the 1970s that it globally ranked among nations with the strongest, globally and widely acclaimed, very successful economies. Despite this boom, the Delta which contributes the larger part of the nation's national income and gives her economy its strength, suffered so much neglect from the Nigerian nation and the transnational corporations that explore crude oil in the region. This neglect used to be very visible in the lack of attention to the area despite having suffered so much environmental hazards and degradation resulting from the effects of oil spillage and activities of the TNCs. The situation in the Delta was made worse by the protracted military rule in Nigeria. For decades, the efforts by the people to get the state to come to their aid met with vehement repression by the state's autocratic military regimes that dispatched military forces to the area to quell revolts by the people. However, over the years, the peoples' revolts continued unabated. As reported by Ibeanu (1997: 3):

> In 1981, 1000 villagers in Rukpokwu blocked the routes to 50 shell oil wells, while the inhabitants of the three villages in Egbema seized Agip installations at Ebocha. In October 1989, oil drilling equipment worth 10 million Naira ($1, 000) belonging to Elf was destroyed by angry villagers at Oboburu. Two expatriate engineers were among 22 persons who were seriously injured. In 1990 when the *Ogoni* resistance began in earnest, there were 75 recorded incidents of oil spillage in the delta area, involving over ten thousand barrels of crude oil. Many of the incidents have been attributed to sabotage of equipment by unhappy rural communities.

This clearly shows that the lingering agitation by the different groups in the Delta to get justice escalated to an almost uncontrollable and daily-deteriorating extent. The painful aspect of the reactions of the Nigerian nation to the anger-driven resistance of the communities of oil exploration is that, rather than being reconciliatory and peace-driven missions towards pacifying aggrieved parties and attaining real national unity, they continued a chain of very violent reprisal attacks on those communities. These vengeful attacks depict lack of sensitivity on the path of the national governments to the suffering of the Delta people and their agitation for change. Instead of solving the problems

between the Delta people and the nation, the situation led to further violent protests from the communities. Ibeanu (1997:3) highlights further that:

> one widely published case took place on 1st November, 1991 when over twenty villages of Umuechem were brutally murdered by para-military forces in early morning on the village, a sequel to protests staged by villagers against the multinational oil giants, shell, a day before.

Elimination of the *Ogoni* Seven and the Failure of National Punitive Action

Omeje (2006: 479), rightly, observes that these protests assumed a new dimension with the elimination of the *Ogoni* Seven which include one of the Delta intellectuals, Ken Saro Wiwa, who led them, by the Abacha junta. These persons who had began to command much respect were seen as threats to the nation by the Abacha regime. Saro Wiwa, in particular, had formed the popular Movement for the Survival of the *Ogoni* People (MOSOP). Omeje (2006: 478) stresses that his group influenced "the anti-oil campaign by mobilizing and conscientizing large sections of the Delta grassroots populations and civil groups to fight for environmental justice". Thus, his 1995 execution with other members of MOSOP is one of the cases that shifted the attention of the international community to the Delta region. This is because this event generated worldwide condemnation from human rights groups who considered the killing of the activists as a further pointer to this insensitivity to human plight by the Abacha regime. This lack of concern for the *Ogoni* people's agitations and sufferings only further heightened the level of insecurity in the Delta communities and the entire nation. What shows that this situation of gross insecurity depicts the unhealthiness of the Nigerian social system, as the *Human Rights Watch* (2002:2) reported, is the continual heavy military presence in *Ogoniland* for a period of five years before the Obasanjo Regime took over power in 1999. This situation of protracted and relentless engagement of military intervention and activities in the area only further sent wrong signals to other quarters of the globe to underscore the smear in our national political image. As we could see, the actual reason behind this killing of the *Ogonis* and the long sustenance of military presence in their community was to suppress and restrain the entire Delta people from further violence and protests. However, the methods of punitive expedition based on military action and capital punishment never deterred the *Ogonis* and the entire Delta community. Instead, the lingering oppressive situation only further incensed the

members of the Delta communities to champion more virulent combatant-like revolts that have made the Delta another zone for civil war – with the Nigerian government and the TNCs on one side and the Delta ethnic militia groups on the other.

The Damages of the *Odi* Massacre

In order to bring the deteriorating situation of repeated militant action and society protests under control the government adopted stronger military campaigns that attracted further widespread condemnation and promoted injustice. As reported by the *Human Rights Watch* (2002: 2), "In November, 1999, five months after the new Government headed by President Olusegun Obasanjo took office, soldiers destroyed the town of *Odi* in Bayelsa State, killing hundreds of people." This destruction of the entire community of *Odi* town in 1999 by a dispatch of soldiers by the Nigerian Federal Government, in a bid to quell the people's revolts and permanently check their excesses, has since been an incentive towards a stronger agitation for liberty from state oppression in the Delta. The *Odi* case, clearly enough, is one of the cases that showed well-pronounced lack of welfare and concern for the people and, essentially, raised questions concerning human dignity and rights in the Delta. The *Odi* massacre, as the *Ogoni* execution and other cases that generated deadly national upheavals, largely demonstrates an equally strong destructive tendency to worsen the Delta situation. A lot of damage was already done by this daylight mass murder of the people. Apart from the physical damage done to the people and their material resources, the psychological damage done to them by the killings goes a long way to affect their trust in the national system. This, thus, is one of the cases culminating in long term, well-organized violent insurrection that does more serious damage to the nation's economy and security. That the Federal Government even allowed it to happen, no doubt, indicates that the Nigerian state has a lot to learn in government-citizen relationships. The worrisome thing is that this attack on human dignity in *Odi* came in a democratic dispensation. A democratic system is expected to be more tolerant about and hesitant in violating the ideals of human rights. At this stage, we examine communitarianism.

Communitarianism: A Theoretical Insight into Africa's Modes of Social Change
Communitarianism as a philosophy of community sustenance has been largely dominated by the insight towards integrating the individual

person into the society. This background theoretical understanding portrays a strong conflict between particular persons' values and community values. This conflict between individualism and social integration of the self into the community, without an undue sense of independence from the community, in this postmodern era of globalization, has been the same across centuries of human existence. This is because the moral human nature in every human is the same and the individual has a high tendency to exalt himself above the community's values, ideals, orientations, and judgments. The innate abilities in man to be independent are essentially very enormous. These potentials, if well harnessed and well-converted for societal development can become instrumental to a monumental social change in the human society. Social contract theorists as Locke, Hume, Mill, Bentham, Hobbes and Rousseau, with some of their views hypothetical, have at different times shown how human nature brings to fore and, when properly regulated, sustains the establishment of the human society. Locke's virulent revolt is against the then prevalent elitist view of the monarchical order of his days that the king possesses divine rights to rule the people. This somehow erroneous view portrays the kings as having full custody of the properties in the land. Thus, having the consequence that the individual lacks the rights to acquire private properties, it marginalizes the people and justifies injustice. Locke, thus, argues that the ruling power of the king and ownership of properties derive from the contract mutually signed by members of the society rather than claims to divine authority. In lieu of this, individuals in the society have rights to acquire properties without hindrances to their liberty by the government or others in the society.

In what seems to be a deliberately collaborative effort, Locke's view is supported by J. S. Mill. Mill argues that persons in a democratic society lack reasons to allow limitation to their liberty and should act as such. He stresses that any limitation to human liberty will consequently or completely exterminate his happiness through hindering his social development. So, in order to attain maximum societal development, it becomes essential for the government to ensure individual liberty. The only precondition for the violation of these rights is the threat to the liberty of others in the society.

Though a painstaking perusal of these theorists' classical arguments for liberalism still retain the necessary materials for defining and sustaining the human community, some communitarians still perceive the liberals' arguments as capable of subverting the ideals that sustain the society. A

subversion of the ideals that are capable of sustaining the society may, consequently, result in violence and disorder. However, much as the liberals' views are capable of destabilizing the human society when there is excessive empowerment of the persons, Gbadegeshin (1998:292-294) and Menkiti (1979;157-159), in what has often been thought to be an African perspective to communitarianism, argue that individuals are capable of being of immense benefit to the society. As such, individuals that produce social change in the society should be promoted by permitting them to fully utilize their abilities through their full integration into the community for its common good and social peace. According to Gbadegeshin, Africans in the previous generations have at some time or the other allowed certain individuals to front for them at moments of dire need. At such times, these persons spearhead the common cause of the society to ensure its continuity. Such individuals, in what later results in corporate social responsibility (CSR) for the communities, spur the entire communities to act as necessary to produce a significant social change for their long-term advantage (Owolabi, 2003: 16, 17). This shows that communitarianism is not just directed at community sustenance but also social change in the society. Thus, the change envisioned by the communitarians is that which ensures strong societal development and allows individual participation in this development for the common good of the entire society. The issue of social change in the African societies in the pre-independence era was dependent on communalistic modes of life. One of the ways by which this issue is addressed is through a community action that considers the society as the heart of its activities. Thus, priority attention is given to the wellbeing of the society and its members. Individuals concede their rights to ensure the society's sustenance and guarantee that it constantly experiences a highly rewarding social change that reflects the changing times and protects the collective vision and common good. The resulting changes had at one time or the other been monumental in their own respects such that they beneficially affected the people and further gave them some high sense of dignity.

The Question of Human Dignity and the Delta Situation
What has made the African social order more cohesive and strong in pursuit of the essential ingredients that promote human dignity is their commitment to a social bond that is highly strengthened by strong believe in spirituality. This, till date, is a strong factor affecting and motivating the African societies. It still has strong roles in promoting the struggle in the Delta communities. The evident trust in charms by

the ethnic militia in these communities fosters an audacity that further engenders the Delta crises. These militia groups usually claim to be operating for the sake of promoting human dignity. This emphasis on human dignity, as Ujomu (2002: 251-253) shows, constitute an important basis for agitating for justice in the Delta. This further shows that the people have a high sense of dignity. The sense of dignity is the ability for the perception of issues that promote or do not promote human dignity. The whole essence of it is to identify what violates human dignity and seek to eliminate them to promote this dignity. In earnest, the awareness deriving from this sense of dignity as the underlay for a sense of justice forms an impetus that channels and reconfigures the human mentality towards attaining an epistemic understanding of the moral and social anomalies in human dealings. Thus, consequently helping to create and sustain a moral and social epistemic foundation for redirecting human and societal actions to create a beneficiary situation for the society and the individuals in it. This sense of dignity is a strong factor promoting justice. The sense of justice, essentially, is the sense of appropriating rightness or wrongness as far as human actions are concerned. Without a sense of justice there may never be a way to determine which actions are right or wrong and an individual may never have a feeling of being cheated. The person who is not aware of being cheated or being unfairly treated does not consider himself to be having a basis for any agitation against injustice as long as he is ignorant of the situation of injustice. Without mincing words, the sense of justice is largely based on the perception of human indignity. Pritchard (1971: 299) seems to acknowledge this fact by asserting that justice and dignity can be brought into relationship with each other. He emphasizes that justice depends on the individuals' perception of themselves. According to him,

> It can readily be seen that …feelings of inferiority have a serious effect on one's sense of justice. Imagine a slave who somehow still regards himself as the equal of his master. He would be expected to be specially sensitive to the injustice of his enslavement and to feel the appropriate resentment. In contrast, a slave who actually regards himself as inferior to his master will not be sensitive to the injustice done him…he might accept his lack of freedom as perfectly just…The conclusion…is that the lower a person's regard for his worth or dignity the less sensitive he will be to the injustices done him.

I can, thus, deduce from Pritchard's viewpoint that the whole essence of every human action boils down to this factor of dignity and that a sense of human dignity is the basis for agitations and claims of justice. As

such, every effort from different groups, such as the human rights groups, social organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations, the world over has this factor of human dignity as its underlying trigger, most especially where there are real sincere motives to act for humanity.

Human Dignity, Distribution and the Communitarian Ideals of Shared Meaning and Shared Understanding
The issue of human dignity may be said to be the most fundamental factor in communitarian ethics. Human dignity is what the communitarian perspectives attempt to protect by promoting the different elements constituting the community: the family, the person, the various institutions and organizations, in short, the different arrangements made for the ordering of the human society. Those who devote themselves to any form of moral rules, seek to achieve human-welfare, deal fairly and engage in mutually participatory and beneficial actions do so on the basis of human dignity. Thus, all efforts by communitarians to define what the society and human relations are, on this basis, fall under many unique headings. According to Markate Daly (1994: xiv):

> Some communitarians view community as the most natural and highest form of life for human beings, some argue that the community is a basic human need, that frustration of this need leads to alienation, addictions, crime, and effective families; some identify true democracy with a community controlled by an active citizenry; some look at the customary morality of a community, winnowed and refined by generations of intelligent members, for an ethical standard. But all communitarians believe that under the influence of a revitalized community we would be able to live more fulfilling personal lives than is now possible under the dominance of individualistic ideal.

What actually defines the personhood, community values, the ethical ideals and the communitarian world-view are the ideals of shared meaning and shared understanding. Walzer (1983: 3-20) construes shared-meaning as the meaning common to members of the society of all the objects and concepts that promote social cohesion in the community. These affect the distribution of social and material resources in a nation. Walzer elucidates the fact that goods "have different meanings in different societies". Thus, "…it is the meaning of goods that determines their movement. Distributive criteria and arrangements are intrinsic not to the good itself but to the social good. If we understand what it is, what it means to those for whom it is good,

we understand how, by whom, and for what reasons it ought to be distributed. All distributions are just or unjust relative to the social meanings of the goods at stake… Social meanings are historical in character; and so distributions and just and unjust distribution change over time." (Walzer, 1983: 104 - 105). This change is largely dependent on the paradigm shift in people's shared-understanding of the meanings. Shared-understanding is the understanding of social-meanings common to the people of a particular community. The actions of persons in particular societies "depend for their force on some shared understanding of knowledge, influence, and power. Social goods have social meanings, and we find our way to distributive justice through an interpretation of those meanings. We search for principles internal to each distributive sphere" (Walzer, 1983:.108)

Communitarian Social Change Perspective, National Reconciliation, National Consensus and the Delta Imbroglio

Social change that, in a general sense, is the progressive and fluctuating spate of development in the society is promoted by the ideals of shared-meaning and share-understanding of social goods in the society. The breakdown in understanding the meanings of these two ideals has led to the downturn experience of social change in Nigeria. There have been different conceptions of social change. Oladipo (2007: 20) perceives this as "socio-cultural reconstructions" while Bamikole (2007: 26-29) conceives of it as the various faces of social development and societal transformations whether domestic or international. These two scholars' views have roles to play in our attempts at defining social change. According to Johnson (1960: 615), social change in a broad sense is the substantial change experienced on a daily basis by humans in their social systems. Thus, change in this sense defines a retinue of ideas such as the physiological changes resulting from organic growth in persons, the psychological changes due to either negative or positive influences of members of the society on one another, "social action" which, according to Daya Krishna (1954:568- 569), is the action consciously directed at "others in their characters as a group rather than as individuals" for the "perpetuation of an existing value or change in a new valuational direction", and so on. This kind of tangible change is such that may not be easily and conspicuous noticeable but which is a subtle change in cases "where a social system is a subsystem of a larger one". Krishna asserts that this tangible change may likely be the "results of immanent forces operating, mostly unconsciously, within the social structure itself." Thus, Johnson (1960:615) asserts that "in a narrow sense, social change is change in the structure of a social system; what

has been stable or relatively unchanging changes…In its basic sense, then, social change means change in social structure". This change in structure is a change that affects the different structures of the social system such as the social values, the social institutions, the distribution of resources, and so on. These changes may be a part of the social system or due to social environment or "the impact of non-social environment" (Johnson, 1960: 615). The social change in the modern African societies witnesses a high-handed domination by a sometimes oppressive and self-willed ruling class and incorporates a set of new ideas and initiatives that seem to play down a communitarian understanding and orientation. Thus, it serves to merely justify the personal aggrandizement of certain individuals and cabals and, in some sense promote unfounded ethnicity xenophobia and jingoism. Before colonialism, the change in the structure of the African social systems was affected by a myriad of events which include intertribal wars, civil wars, peaceful change of governments, peoples determination to create and enforce change, proper arrangement of communities' institutions, and so on. During these times, as Mair (1960:447- 456) describes, "throughout Africa south of the Sahara production for exchange was far less than production for subsistence. Valuable goods changed hands less often for economic than for social reasons. Those rendered services, whether to neighbours or to persons in authority, were rewarded than paid and the obligation to make due return were moral rather than contractual." In these regards, the then rustic social arrangements have well-managed social structures that promote societal development and communal integration in manners that guarantee peace co-existence and sustain human aspiration (Sullivan, 1994:193). Modernism brought by colonialism has destroyed this structure by infusing it with ideas that enhance the current conflicts in most African societies one of which is the Delta. Thus, another type of social change has been created, which, though reflects a retinue of events, as the reality of post-colonialism, the ever proliferating challenges posed by the modern societal structures as they incorporate a new form of civilization and successful intercultural relations, has lost its grips on the essential communitarian values, virtues and ideals that once gave the African nation its social and moral meanings and uniqueness. According to Mair (1960:449), in what seems to be a veil of economic and technological revolutions and appears to do nothing better than show the entire continent as a people existing for the colonial masters' economic agenda:

> This continent of small states divided into yet smaller village
> communities, is now a part of a world system of production for

exchange created by the use of machine invented in Western Europe and North America. The greater part of it becomes so through incorporation in the political systems of European nations. Whatever the motives behind this process, it is clear that the changes which it has made in African society were logically inevitable if Africa was to take advantage of these new techniques.

This devotion towards analyzing the reality of the modern change in the Africa social structure appears to be a mockery of the entire continent. The effects of the colonial masters' ideas and operations have led to the emergence of a more volatile social structure in Africa that has not really helped the constitution of its states. This is the problem the Nigerian nation and the Delta community have faced. This volatile nature of the Nigerian social system has been worsened by certain ideological conceptions deriving from the nation's citizens' exposure to the Western and Eastern blocks of the world. This is also the same across Africa. Some parts of these ideologies conflict with the orientations that guaranteed peace in the African societies for several centuries before colonialism.

One of the most formidable ideological underpinnings to social change in the current African situation of social upheavals is Islamic extremism. The manifestations of this in Nigeria include the activities of groups like Boko Haram and Ansaru, with links to Al-Qaeda. Though the activities of Islamic extremists rivet Nigeria's North, they are limited in the East and South. Besides these, ferociously revolutionary Marxist ideology holds sway in some parts of Africa. Thus, the Marxian conception of change that is the revolution of the proletariats to ensure the evolution of a free and independent classless society has been the most predominant idea that has constantly featured in the discourses on societal change among Africans, which has had serious consequences for their states. Even though the Delta people are not clamouring for the abolition of the Nigerian state but resource control, this view has also played a major role in the Delta crises. This, in some sense and to a large extent, has also been the energizer for the incessant crises in most war torn African states. In this wise, the importation and unmitigated practice of this idea of social change seem to have become a serious mishap or, at least, a tool for setback to these nations' political structures and has largely sometimes often defeated their efforts to attain peace. This contradicts the erstwhile prevalent orientation in Africa before colonialism that allows for peace without first engaging violence unless it becomes so unavoidable to attain this situation of

peace. The current orientation, most especially among most Delta youths, based on Marxist perspective is that peace is impossible without violence. This is the sense in which the African nations become war zones with series of repeated violent conflicts even when efforts are already made to end such conflicts. Thus, progress-driven social change in such societies becomes unrealistic as the success already achieved in development becomes reversed due to the situation of war.

The two most essential ideals of communitarianism on which other ideals and value depend clearly spell out the yardsticks for running the human society to create social change. As can be gleaned from our discussion so far, the whole discourse on communitarian ethics boils down to the need to promote certain individual values and virtues such as tolerance, fellow-feeling, patriotism, dedication, diligence, selflessness, respect, temperance, fortitude and so on, for the societal common good. The communitarian understanding of justice, underpinned by and derivable from the communitarian sense of ethics, seems to prove to be different from the current type of justice prevalent in our societies. Justice as we have it now fulfills certain roles that include safeguarding the individual's rights and desires, thus, giving him some forms of compensation; sending warning signals to the members of the society as deterrence to harmful actions to individuals as well as the society. The methods adopted in getting justice in these instances may only denigrate and humiliate individual persons and the society without really achieving the purpose of reconciliation. In this regard, what is the paramount is to derive some fulfillment that leave others out and satisfies just a group. As distinct from this, communitarian justice has the moral and social considerations towards societal harmony as is main agenda. A communitarian society seeks justice not by putting blames entirely on any party in a dispute but to identify, whenever necessary, where both parties are both right and wrong and show them such with the intention to reconcile them. In this regards, both parties may be right or wrong. This reconciliation agenda of the communitarians usually often take dimensions invoking in people the values of tolerance and forbearance. The communitarian in this instance does not believe in promoting ideas that can endanger the social institutions capable of sustaining the society but to promote things capable of ensuring their survival.

Essentially, the problem in the Delta is the failure of a communitarian agenda directed at national reconciliation and proper national restructuring. The vestiges of the communitarian orientation towards

reconciliation reside in the three parties that are the major protagonists to the Delta crises. First, the Nigeria government and the ruling and influential elites who are strong stake holders in the Nigerian national polity. These have all the instruments and paraphernalia of office and the influence to ensure national reconciliation. These have for long grapple with different methods of conflict resolution and reconciliation in the Delta which are yet to yield the expected dividends. Second, the Delta communities, their elites and the militants, some of whom have very sincere motives to derive justice and ensure reconciliation. One cannot claim that there is a trace of an orientation towards reconciliation in some members of the Delta community who determined not to allow peace to reign as long as they continually benefit from the situation of violence in the Delta. Things deteriorates with many of the Delta influential and power-thirsty elites taking undue advantage of the people by diverting the funds meant for the development of the region to personal coffers. Thus, for this group, greed largely colours their thinking and beclouds them from seeing the reality of the danger and insecurity the entire nation is subject to and the deplorable condition of the Delta states. Lastly, the TNCs that continually explore oil in the Delta region without real adequate compensation for the people's losses over the years. The TNCs have often been criticized and attacked for being insensitive to the plight of the Delta people. They have also often been expected to consider the people's welfare first above their own economic gains. This has, however, already been incorporated into their programmes, especially the CSR. According to Ifeka (2004: 144), in 2003, Shell spent $60 million on community development to generate unemployment and calm 'restive youths'. This situation has been further addressed in later years. Although, the TNCs now give some social welfare to the inhabitants of these communities, the major crisis they have with those communities is that they have been unable to satisfy them or respond to all their requests. The communities consider what they have benefited from the TNCs as quite infinitesimal compared with the dividends the TNCs have derived for several decades from the Delta community. This consideration has usually ruptured fresh violence in the region. Thus, also originating fresh initiatives for peace meeting to resolve the conflicts. The outcome of these peace meetings have usually been that the region experiences temporary peace that regularly burst into further more deadly violence. This volatile situation can be curbed by a sincere and high demonstration of communitarian understanding and actions evidencing good/cordial relationships by all these major dramatis personae in the national struggle for justice. The evidence that the

above three groups have in them traces of communitarian understanding is not far-fetched. This often shows in their giving consideration and attention to some elements that can engender national survival. The manifestation of this is that they have usually, in recent times, been forced into dialogue to ensure the survival of their businesses, economies, communities and national interests. Thus, what should have come first in national reconciliation and national consideration unavoidably comes to the fore due to circumstances. Thereby, staring us in the face is the reality that any national programme that will permanently resolve the current Delta imbroglio must have at its heart a communitarian understanding that has wide participation and favour real humanitarian considerations among the three parties above and most especially pacifies the aggrieved Delta people.

The Motivations for Social Peace and Eradication of Violence in the Delta

There have been attempts to define what peace really is. Ekanola (2004a:1-8), in a characteristic theological manner portraying human ontological status, makes a very useful distinction between two types of peace: the inner peace and social peace. This distinction shows inner tranquility as the peace within the individual and social peace as peace brought about by good relationships between members of the same society or community. Though Ekanola did not show the relationship between these two types of peace, we take his distinction as a point of departure for what we intend as to achieve in this work. The conflicts in all human societies, including the Delta, are really the results of lack of inner peace in the individuals originating those conflicts. The agitations in these persons are strong indicators of absence of inner peace in them that consequently affect the society. The cord of relationship between the individual person and the society is so strong that they bilaterally affect each other. According to MacIntyre (1981:124), individuals are indefinable if separated from their societies. Persons always have their stories narrated in relation to others in their societies. MacIntyre essentially thinks that philosophers like Locke and Hume, engrossed in the debates on personal identity that have run across centuries, only succeeded in creating more futile brain-tasking puzzles. This is because their omitting the fact that social links in individuals are the real basis for personal identity makes the subject of how to define human identity more traumatic and meaningless. The social links with others in the society invoke a memory in humans and determine their historical, social, and moral identities. Thus, every man identifies himself:

> I may justifiably be taken by others to be in the course of living out a story that runs from my birth to my death. I am the subject of a history that is my own and not anyone else's … I am someone's son or daughter; someone else's cousin or uncle; I am a citizen of this or that city, a member of this or that clan, that tribe, this nation…I inherit from the past of my family, my city, my tribe, my nation, a variety of debts, inheritances, rightful expectations and obligations. These continue to give my life…its own moral particularity.

MacIntyre points out that the above crucial communitarian standpoint may warrant serious objections from the liberals who conceive of humans as capable of the power of self-determination. He, thus, stresses that though a human being may have the power of choice and decision he cannot do anything to alter his social background. The fact that the individual is in relationship with others in the society shows the strength of his abilities to influence them to advance the society and facilitate its peace or destabilize it and continually draw them to war. Where there are no inner conflicts and crises the individuals are happy enough to contribute to the successes of their societies. This inner tranquility is what the liberals really aspire to achieve by their project of human empowerment which unfortunately is carried to a far extreme which is almost destroying the social fibers capable of sustaining the society. The liberals' agenda, if properly situated within society-promoting values, really possesses the qualities necessary for human emancipation that will not neglect his ontological and spiritual aspects and at the same time guarantee the social peace of the society.

Anta Diop (1991: 211-219) seems to understand this fact in his definition of three factors that culminate in and guarantees man's cultural/ communitarian identification: the historical, linguistic, psychological factors. According to him, to "define …the collective personality…every attempt…must consist of carefully studying the appropriate mode of action on these three factors. Perfect cultural identity corresponds to the full simultaneous presence of these factors in these individuals." The historical factor invokes in persons the historical consciousness which ensures their cultural security and historical continuity. The linguistic factor shows the linguistic relevance of a people that strengthens their kinship ties while the psychological factor shows the psychic feelings they have of the historical and linguistic ties to their societies. These factors have been fundamental in the social struggles in most African societies in the primitive periods as well as these modern periods. The psychological factor in communal identity seems to be the pivot on

which the other two rest that gives them their strength and serves as the basis for violent or peaceful actions. The identification of the individual's social and moral identities depends on his historical and linguistic identities as affected by his psychological identity which really can invoke in them a communal and ethnic spirit that is intolerant of other cultures within the same socio-political arrangement. This no doubt has a role in the events in the Delta and in creating social change. What then is social peace? Peace is generally taken to be the absence of conflicts. Conflicts may be violent or non violent. The non-violent conflict is, however, very unreliable and possesses a latent incendiary article that may later develop into full-blown violent conflict at the slightest provocation. Ekanola (2004b: 42-52) has identified two types of social peace: negative or minimalist and positive or maximalist conceptions. The latter is peace as the "absence of violence" while the latter is that in which certain conditions are satisfied that guarantee the continual emotional stability of the members of a state to forestall any situation of crisis and violence. Ekanola proceeded by identifying and describing three types of violence from Galtung's views:

> Physical violence…occurs when people are hurt somatically to the point of death. Psychological violence which includes lies, brainwashing, threats and anything that serve to decrease mental potentialities. The second relates to the distinction between personal or direct violence and structural violence. The former occurs when there is an actor who commits the violence while the latter exists when no such actor can be identified…The third dimension...is the distinction between latent and manifest violence. Violence is manifest when it is observable while latent violence is something not actually there but which can easily come about with very little provocation or challenge.

I agree with Ekanola that a situation of peace will be devoid of these situations of violence. From our discussion thus far, I reconcile that real social peace is a product of a harmonious interrelationship between members of a society which ultimately guarantees the conditions of non-violence, favours conditions that promote the social wellbeing of as well as ensures the inner tranquility of the members of the society. This working definition is required to ensure peace in the Delta communities and nudge the Nigeria state and its members to be awake to their responsibilities and promote social peace and reconciliation in the nation. As has been observed, the violent conflicts that have been prevalent in the Delta societies within the last three to six decades have incorporated the various dimension of violence listed by Ekanola. To curb these, the nation and its members must return to prom oting and

applying the communitarian ideals and values that once thrived in Africa and sustained its social structures that have been jettisoned for conflict promoting ideas.

Conclusion

This paper debated that communitarian understanding is necessary in addressing the Niger Delta crises characterized by violent agitations that not just threaten Nigeria's economy but also its peace and security. The work examined the factors that sustained the crises for long, such as prolonged state's neglect, exploitations by the oil-producing transnational corporations and the greed of those entrusted with solving the problems or alleviating the sufferings of the Delta people. The people's perceived social injustice and inhuman treatments, based on the identified factors, made them throw caution to the wind to fight for their rights and existence. To find lasting solution to the Delta crises, this paper both unearths the issues and events portraying deep injustice in the Delta region and argued for the adoption of communitarian values in the region and, by implication, Nigeria to ensure social peace.

References

Ekanola, A.B. (2004a). "Realizing the Value of Peace in Africa".Paper Presented at the 30th Conference of Philosophy Department, University of Ibadan, pp. 1-8.

Ekanola, A.B. (2004b). "What is this thing called Peace?", *Ibadan Journal of Humanistic Studies*, vol. 13 and 14, pp. 41-53.

Alasdair MacIntyre. (1994). "The Concept of a Tradition," in Markate Daly (ed.), *Communitarianism: A New Public Ethics.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Caroline Ifeka. (2004). "Violent, Market Forces & Militarisation in the Niger Delta, *Review of African Political Economy, No. 99, pp.* pp. 144-150.

Cheikh Anta Diop. (1991). *Civilization or Barbarism.* New York: Lawrence Hill.

Elias Edise Courson. 2016. *Spaces of Insurgency: Petro-Violence and the Geography of Conflict in Nigeria's Niger Delta.* A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Satisfaction of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Geography in the Graduate Division of the University of California, Berkeley. Retrieved 1st June, 2022, from https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8rp958w7

Elias Courson. 2020."Territorialization of History and the Historicization of Space: Ethnic Relations and the History of Ijaw Petro-Militancy in Warri, Western Niger Delta, Nigeria."

Legon Journal of International Affairs and Diplomacy, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 64-96.

Daniel Volman. (2003). "The Bush Administration & Oil: The security Implications of US Energy Policy", *Review of African Political Economy, No 98., pp.* 573-584.

David Miller. (1976). *The Concept of Social Justice*. London: Oxford University Press.

Daya Krishna. (1954). "Social Change – An Attempt At a Study in Conflicting Patterns of Social Action", *Philospohy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. XIV., pp. 567-573.

G. Tusabe. (2002. "Ethnicities and the Challenge of Social Cohesion in Contemporary Africa," *Ethics, Human Rights and Development in Africa, Ugandan Philosophical Studies III, Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change Series II, Africa*, Vol. 8., pp. 83-100.

Harry M. Johnson, 1961, *Sociology: A Systematic Introduction.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Ifeanyi A. Menkiti. (1979). "Person and Community in Africa traditional Thought", in Richard A. *Wright, African Philosophy*, 2nd edition. USA: University Press of America.

Augustine Ikelegbe. (2006). "The Economy of Conflict in the Oil Rich Niger Delta Region of Nigeria", *African and Asian Studies*, Vol. 5, No.1**,** pp**.** 23-56. doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/156920906775768291

Iris Marion Young. (1990). *Justice and the Politics of Difference.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

John Locke. (1974). "An Essay Concerning the True and Original Extent and End of Civil Government", *Book II of Treatise of Government.* London: Guernsey Press.

John Rawls, 1971, *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press.

John Stuart Mill, 1969, *On Liberty*. Cleveland : World Publishing Company

Owolabi, K. A. 2003, "The Quest for Corporate Social Responsibility in the Plural Societies: Towards An Ethical Foundation of Sustainable Development and Democracy in Africa". Seminar Paper Presented at the Department of Philosophy, University of Ibadan.

Karl Marx, 1974, "Critique of the Gotha Programme". Joris de Bres (trans.), in *the First International and After*. Hammondsworth, Penguin.

Kenneth Omeje, May 2006, "Petrolbusiness and Security Threats in the Niger Delta, Nigeria," *Current Sociology*, Vol. 54 (3), pp. 477–499.

Mair, L. P. October 1960, "Social Change in Africa", *International Affairs*, Vol. 36, No 4.. pp. 447–456;

Lawrence O., 2007, Bamikole, "Culture and Development in Africa," *Philosophy and Social Change: Discourse on Value in Africa*. Ibadan: Hope Publications.

Michael S. Pritchard. (1972). "Human Dignity and Justice", *Ethics*, Vol. 82., pp. 299-313.

Norman P. Barry. (1981). *An Introduction to Modern Political Theory*. London: Macmillan.

Cyril I. Obi,. (2002). "The Politics of the Nigerian Oil Industry: Implications for Environmental Governance". Akinjide Osuntokun (ed.), *Democracy and Sustainable Development in Nigeria..* Lagos: Frankad (For Friedrich Ebert Foundation).

Kanu, I. A. (2023). Igwebuike ethics: Towards the unity of ethical traditions in Africa. *AMAMIHE: Journal of Applied Philosophy. Vol. 21. No. 2. pp. 1-20.*

Okechukwu Ibeanu, 1997, "Oil, Conflict and Security in Rural Nigeria: Issues in the *Ogoni* Crisis", *Occasional Paper Series*, Vol. 1, No.2., pp. 307-331.

Olusegun Oladipo, 2007, "On Philosophy", in Temisan Ebijuwa (ed.), *Philosophy and Social Change: Discourse on Value in Africa*. Ibadan: Hope Publications.

Philip Ogo Ujomu, 2002, "Environmental Degradation, Marginality and the Quest for Human Dignity in the Delta: Rethinking Development and Envisioning Social Order in the Niger, in *Democracy and Sustainable Development in Nigeria*." Journal of Black Studies Vol. 34, No. 5, pp. 686-701

Robert Nozick, 1974, *Anarchy, State and Utopia*. New York: Basic Books.

Segun Gbadegeshin, 1998, "Individuality, Community and the Moral Order", in P.H. Coetzee and P.J. Roux (eds.), *The African Philosophy Reader*. London & New York: Routledge, pp.292–305.

October, 2002, "The Niger Delta: No Democratic Dividend", *Human Rights Watch,* Vol., 14, No. 7(A), pp. 1-38. https://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/nigeria3/nigerdelta.pdf

December, 2003. "The Warri Crisis", *Human Rights Watch*, Vol. 15, No. 18, pp. 1-30. https://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/nigeria1103/nigeria1103.pdf

William M. Sullivan. (1994). "A Renewal of Civic Philosophy". In Markate Daly (ed.). *Communitarianism: A New Public Ethics*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.